

ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

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ALL ABOUT MENTORING

Issue 40 • Winter 2011

“The intense, wondrous encounters between mentors and students, shining four, five, six times a day, every day in our offices, flicker and wink across long dark distances. How shall we make a visible posterity?”

*Lee Herman and Miriam Tatzel,
From the Editors, “The ‘Real Thing’:
A Visible Culture to Honor Our Work,”
All About Mentoring, 1, September 1993*

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“to catch particles of words ... ”

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Thank you. All about mentoring.

Alan Mandell

Transformations: Lifelong Learners in the Era of Globalization

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Globalization and the Quest for the Renewal of Identity

Identity has been one of the most debated concepts in both the history of human thought and the field of education. Two themes stand out in these discussions: identity and its relation to place, and the link between “I” and “the other.” I contend that in the era of globalization, which challenges inside/outside opposition and an association of the local with the national, these themes become intertwined. A firm connection between these themes makes a renewal of identity a desired open-ended process, where self-invention and self-discovery coexist. Lifelong learning plays a key role in this process, the important element of which is the development of cosmopolitan outlooks and sensibilities. They are indispensable, in my view, for the success of globalization and for the life of democracy in the contemporary world, with its historically cherished values of tolerance, solidarity and social justice.¹

The renewal of identity is closely connected with the changing notion of place. Globalization challenges stability associated with both geographical place and identity. In contrast to the place-identity-relations continuum, typical for anthropological assumptions about place in modernity, a “nonplace” of contemporaneity according to the French scholar Marc Augé is equivalent to “passage,” whose archetype is a travel space. This change has several implications for the formation of identity. On the one hand, the trope of mobility, central to globalization, weakens the ties of culture to place, making it impossible

to map traditional anthropological notions of community or identity on to locality. As the North American anthropologist George Marcus observes, identity “is produced simultaneously in many different locales. One’s identity where one lives, is only one social context and perhaps not the most important one in which it is shaped” (1992, p. 315). It can be further argued that identity can be then conceptualized in performative terms in parallel to what Benedict Anderson defines as a nation: an enacted space within which we try on roles and relationships of belonging and foreignness. On the other hand, these dynamics bring about a renewed emphasis on the “territorial principle” (1998, p. 67). Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman views globalization and reterritorialization as two complementary processes, which exemplify two forces in action, “yearning for individual freedom of self-creation and the equally strong desire for security” (2008, p. 19).

The operation of these forces, I suggest, is driven by the constant reconfiguring of the relationships between the self and the other, which always has been at the core of identity formation and renewal, and which globalization arguably makes more intensive, dynamic and unpredictable. As the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin suggests, the architectonics of being has three fundamental elements, around which all values of actual life and culture are arranged: “I, the other, and I-for-the-other” (54). He affirms that life that ignores these relationships, falls away from responsibility or answerability and cannot have a philosophy. Emphasizing the importance of transition from abstract models to the empirical world of action, Bakhtin underscores singularity and uniqueness of each particular action, performed answerably or responsibly by the particular individual in a particular time and in a particular place. Each of



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these actions, either explicitly or implicitly, exemplifies interaction, which is essential for the identity formation that is for bringing an individual to “Being” in a responsible and answerable way. Jay Lemke’s approach to identity intriguingly coincides with Bakhtin’s view, when the North American educator asserts that a construction of identity is a combination of prior patterns of interaction with others, as well as uniqueness of the moment (Lemke, 2004). Socialization also is at the core of Claude Dubar’s concept of identity, which the French sociologist views as a “result simultaneously stable and provisional, individual and collective, subjective and objective, biographical and structured, of diverse processes of socialization which at the same time construct the individuals and define the institutions” (1991, p. 113).² The Canadian educator Bonny Norton points out the need to develop a conception of identity “that is understood with reference to larger, and frequently inequitable, social structures, which are reproduced in day-to-day interactions” (2000, p. 5). Furthering these approaches, I suggest that on-going transformation of relationships at all levels,

which globalization celebrates, makes the definition of identity a particularly challenging task. Instead, globalization allows one to view identity as a “work in progress,” a creation “on the move” and in need of continuous renewal. I contend that this renewal is largely shaped by both the apparent geographic, cultural, and economic flexibility, which globalization brings, and the reaction to it: the growing sense and even fear of insecurity.

Lifelong learning, which emphasizes a development of cosmopolitan outlooks and sensibilities, can be both a constructive response to this reaction and an approach, instrumental for the facilitation of identity renewal and indispensable for the empowerment of individuals in the era of globalization. There are at least two major challenges for educators in the fulfilling of this task: global racism, which opens the door to the paralyzing power of stereotypes and prejudice, and consumerism, which leads to political apathy and the prospering of ignorance.³ Both challenges impede globalization and undermine the very foundation of democracy as a structure based on active participation of its citizens in public deliberations and discussions, where everybody has a right to intervene and question the naturalization of order.

The overcoming of these challenges implies a transformation of the perception of the world order, the change, or at least a questioning of the “common sense” in which happiness becomes synonymous with accumulation, and well-being is measured by the ability to purchase goods and services. Lifelong learning can and should facilitate this transformation effectively. In his influential theory of transformation, Jack Mezirow (2000) emphasizes the fostering of critical reflection on our assumptions, which, for him, is a key element in perspective transformation. He suggests that transformative learning may lead to a fuller realization of human capabilities. One may add that perspective transformation is closely linked to the renewal of identity. In this process, I contend that self-invention, the fundamental elements of which are fantasy and innovation, and self-discovery, which implies deepening understanding of oneself and the unraveling of the potential that was not evident before, coexist. Lifelong

learning opens broad opportunities for both perspective transformation and identity renewal in formal and informal settings. I view this task as linked to reaching across boundaries that separate oneself and one’s group from the other and the other’s group, to the development of cosmopolitan identity position, and to recognition of the essential humanity of others.

As I will further demonstrate, this boundary crossing can be achieved via engaging learners in debates on controversial topics, interest in which can be stimulated by research via “noneducational” websites, which may appeal to students’ emotions, as well as by encouraging learning through social spaces and building of “relational capital.”⁴ These activities can be instrumental in dismantling global racism through questioning and reconsidering the self/other dichotomy, exercising critical thinking and fostering learners to take responsibility for their views and their lives as active, responsive and creative individuals in the consumerist age. The discussion of two transformative experiences (which follows here) will permit me to demonstrate that lifelong learning allows students and educators alike to test their own beliefs and attitudes, to enter into a dialogue with oneself and “the other,” and to open themselves to what can be considered life-changing experiences. I believe that these steps are at the core of education in global citizenship and intrinsic to the empowerment of individuals in a contemporary democratic society.

Foreign Language Education and the Renewal of Identity

Language learning opens up multiple opportunities for self-examination, identity renewal and for the exploration of the phenomenon of “foreignness,” inherently bound to education in democracy and citizenship. My goal has been to make these opportunities available to adult students who enroll in the online courses *Introductory Spanish: Language and Culture* and *Spanish for Health Care Professionals*. Most of these students enrolled in foreign language courses to satisfy a State University of New York general education requirement. In my view, in addition to the development of four basic skills associated with language

acquisition (speaking, writing, reading and listening), it is my responsibility as an educator in world languages to foster cross-national and cross-cultural understanding and acceptance. One of the activities, which I designed in order to achieve this goal, focused on examining the issue of immigration. This activity allowed students to question/reassert their previous views about immigrants, to become engaged in national political debate on this topic, as well as to explore complex relationships between this debate and the international phenomenon of globalization.

Immigration has been one of the most widely debated issues in the United States from its birth, and it continues to be “a heated matter” in media and press today. The dramatic increase in the number of undocumented aliens to some 11.1 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. in 2009 (according to the Pew Hispanic Center), and their presence and possible competition for scarce jobs are sources of ongoing political and ethnic controversy and tension. The signing of the Arizona Law of Immigration by Gov. Jen Brewer in April 2010, which makes the failure to carry immigration papers a state crime and gives police officers the right to detain under “the lawful stop” anyone suspected of being in the country illegally, exemplifies this tension and controversy par excellence.⁵ As we all probably know, a federal judge in Arizona blocked this requirement, and this action was supported by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, which ruled against the State of Arizona in April 2011.

The potential enactment of this law, however, can be seen as a voice in the continuing struggle to define America’s cultural self-understanding. This voice seeks to define and virulently defend the borders of identity: American citizen or other, or a certain type of American citizen or other – views that correspond to an understanding of the concept of “nation,” which are tied to an imagined reading of what defines America and Americanism. Thus one can ask: Are we white Christians of English and Scots-Irish stock? Are we the embodiment of our civic religious symbols such as the Constitution or the office of the president? Or, are we our multicultural “other” as

defined by such ethnic hyphens as Chinese-American, Jewish-American, African-American, or Mexican-American?

As Anderson has pointed out in his seminal work *Imagined Communities*, a nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (1991, p. 6). For the purposes of his definition, a nation is limited by the fact of its boundaries, is made sovereign by its having cast itself in its bid for freedom, and as an *imagined community* in its “deep, horizontal comradeship,” that makes blood sacrifice possible in defense of it (1991, p. 7). One is left to ask, however, who gets to choose? Why is one depiction more valid than another? And what happens over time?

I suggest that a closer look at personal experiences can shed light on the complexity of these questions. Given the setting of the online Spanish language courses and being inspired by Michael Apple’s rhetorical question, “How do we enable the histories and cultures of different groups, who are in every community of population, to be taught in responsible and responsive ways?” (2000, p. 39), I have chosen to focus on Spanish speaking immigrants. The specific activity is called Understanding Personal Experience (the title was in the course before I actually came to the Center for Distance Learning). While the title remained the same, I changed the focus of the activity, which I created with four purposes in mind: (1) to expand students’ knowledge about culture(s) of the Spanish-speaking world and the life of Latinos in the U.S.; (2) to enhance students’ critical thinking by engaging them in implicit debates on the most controversial topics, including the “natives”/“foreigners” dichotomy and immigration in its relationship to both American politics and globalization; (3) to develop respect for diverse members of the world population, indispensable for democratic citizenship in the era of globalization; and, (4) to foster appreciation of lifelong learning as a lifestyle, which empowers people of different ages to become independent thinkers and responsible “doers,” to form their own opinions, and plan their actions in a responsible way.

This activity is made up of four parts:

Recognizing the importance of interpersonal communication in informal settings as a source of learning, in the first part, I asked students to interview a native of a Spanish-speaking country – an immigrant who lives in the U.S. Biographical stories can be an efficient and personalized way to challenge people to confront complex human issues. With this assumption in mind, I required students to read personal stories from the online article “The Undocumented American Dream” (Martin, 2008) and the website My Immigration Story (MyImmigrationStory.com, 2008), and express their own reflections on immigrants’ experiences. The first two parts prepared learners to complete the third part of the assignment, where they offered their opinion about Arizona’s new immigration law and explored its relation to globalization. In the final part, students were asked to reflect on the impact of this learning activity on their views about immigration and about their own identity development. In designing this activity, I worked under the assumption that democratic transformative education can have an impact on learners’ views and beliefs. I see it as instrumental in the development of cosmopolitan outlooks and sensibilities, which in my opinion is a highly desirable goal in advancing learners’ growth as democratic citizens who are eager to explore and appreciate the diversity which surrounds them.

When I designed this project, I knew that according to the Rasmussen Poll (2010) 70 percent of Arizonians and 60 percent of Americans were in favor of the new Arizona law. In my view, this data exemplifies the growing sense of insecurity and the renewed emphasis on the territorial principle in response to globalization. I also suggest that this reaction was influenced by ignorance and apathy, which are themselves results of the acceptance of both the supremacy of the marketplace and the nation-state’s need to protect and regenerate itself. In my opinion, such views impede cross-cultural and cross-national understanding and acceptance. My hypothesis has been that learning experiences that foster critical thinking, empower students to form their own informed opinions, and enhance the development of a cosmopolitan identity

position may have an impact on students’ perception of the new law. This proved to indeed be the case.

My findings are based on the review of 42 students’ projects. Thirty-nine students indicated that this activity changed their views on immigration, immigrants and the Arizona Law, and 12 stated that it had been an “eye-opening learning experience.” As Mezirow (1995) points out, transformation implies a deep shift in frame of reference. From the review of students’ responses, it became clear that one of the shifts, which took place in 31 cases, is the change in the negative perception of immigrants. As one student, for instance, noticed, this activity allowed her to distance herself from the commonly accepted attitude in the area where she lives,

In the area where I live, there is much debate, stigma and even hatred surrounding Hispanics and the issues of illegal immigration ... Although I never had a very strong opinion on immigration one way or the other, I experienced many of the same feelings ... However after interviewing X and getting to know more about his life and culture, and in reading through many of the profiles for the purpose of this project, my attitude toward illegal immigration has began to significantly change ... I now am more empathetic toward those who choose to come here illegally, and better understand the challenges that they faced, both in their countries of origin and in trying to live a “hidden existence” here in America.

Another student referred to overgeneralization and the lack of information as major reasons for his negative approach to immigrants that has been changed,

Had it not been for this essay, I honestly can say that I had a rather negative viewpoint of illegal immigrants in general. That generality generated some negative stereotypes that regrettably I carried over to prejudice. I had a preconception of immigrants that was unfair and based on personal ignorance. I cannot blame someone for wanting a better life for them and their families.

Developing empathy for people different from themselves is one of the important steps in building cross-cultural connections; it is necessary for the formation of cosmopolitan views. Several students indicated that this activity allowed them to see parallels between themselves and immigrants. They discovered that people across the globe have “common dreams: better lives for themselves and their families” and that “people in North America and South America are not that different.” As one student states, “I have gained a new understanding of immigrants, the activity helped to put me in the shoes of immigrants and their families.” Thus, an interaction with immigrants as well as the reading of biographical and autobiographical stories allowed students to recognize the universal nature of humanity. Further, discussions of immigrant experiences led to more in-depth thinking about ethical ways of relating to “the other,” which is a part of the human family as myself. As a student pointed out, “This activity inspired me not to think just about immigration and race, but about humanity and the fair treatment of people.”

The ability to interconnect with people of different backgrounds can lead to cross-cultural understanding and is an important condition for fostering solidarity. According to the British political theorist David Held, solidarity goes further than empathy: “[solidarity is] not just empathetic recognition of another’s plight, but the willingness to stand side-by-side with others in the creation of solutions to pressing collective problems” (2007, p. 241). Students’ growing understanding of the necessity to act in order to resolve burning immigration issues, demonstrates such solidarity. As 28 of them noticed, the newly gained understanding of the complexity of the issues related to immigration, made learners active advocates for change in immigration policies in the U.S. and critics of the current system.

Displaying civil engagement and solidarity, as well as distancing themselves from the previous position and opinions, 22 students stressed the need to “fight for the right laws,” for the new reform. As one student observed, “My attitude toward immigrants was not changed as much as my attitude towards how the U.S. deals with and

is prepared to deal with immigration.” Thirty-one students connected the necessity for action, critique and revision of U.S. immigration policy with the fight for social justice. In this way, learning about “the other” deepened students’ understanding of themselves and of their country. The exploration of the topic of immigration became a point of departure for the formation of cosmopolitan thinking through the exploration of such notions as identity, democracy and social justice.

Furthermore, the discussion of immigrants’ experiences unraveled the complexity of the concept of “citizenship” as a form of group identity, previously taken for granted by many of the students. This became evident when students began asking themselves who “real” Americans are, what it means to be a citizen and who deserves this right? As one student questioned,

Does being born and raised in a place give one more right to belong or does taking an enormous risk and fighting for entry into one’s desired place of residence deem one more worthy of being a citizen? I have to say neither carries more weight than the other.

Another student noticed that immigrants’ motivation to contribute to the country of their choice should be taken into consideration when a right to citizenship is in question and that overgeneralization may lead to erroneous decisions. For another student, the concept of citizenship is intertwined with the appreciation of American multicultural openness: “This activity reinforced the concept that the U.S. has a rich heritage of ethnic inclusion and cultural variety.” Thus, meeting with another culture enhanced identity renewal through the process of learning, including self-learning, which encourages one to rethink things that were previously taken for granted, including one’s own culture and system of beliefs.

This learning also has been a key for the transformation of students’ perceptions of the Arizona law. As one student stated,

After learning the details of the Arizona law and considering the potential pros and cons, I too disagree with it and feel that it is a form of discrimination ... I

also agree that this law would lead to many people being unjustly profiled and harassed, perhaps simply because this is allowed to take effect, knowing that this is largely based on public opinion, it might lead the way to other unfair laws to be enacted.

Six students answered in favor of the law, and their responses revealed fear and desire for security to be a major motivation for their support. As one student stated,

I try to be a neutral person. I am a type of person that gets nervous for hurting peoples’ feelings, although I do think, and I only think this way due to the facts of terror on the USA, that having stricter laws on immigration is only right.

Several students indicated that the activity allowed them to test their views and confirm them. Most students agreed that the law has some relations with globalization, and 32 pointed out that “it takes us back.” As one student noticed, “In order to accomplish globalization there needs to be more a mixture of races and cultures intertwined in different areas and this law is promoting the exact opposite.”

There also is evidence that students developed an appreciation for lifelong learning, instrumental for the development of critical thinking through research and interpersonal interaction, both of which, in the case of this activity, enhanced independent thinking, engaged citizenship, and facilitated the formation of cosmopolitan views and perceptions. Students developed an understanding of the need not to take any opinion and information for granted and to form their own opinions in a responsible way. As one of the students noticed,

What struck me as I researched for this essay was the diametric viewpoints on immigration people have. I too must admit that I am guilty of carrying certain prejudices and preconceptions of what, and more importantly who, illegal immigrants are. It was not until reading the viewpoints of both sides of the argument and approaching the topic with an open mind that I was able to formulate an opinion on immigration.

Due to the impact of the learning experience, another student had chosen to keep informed of current immigration issues, which did not interest her before, "Because of this assignment, I have learned about the Arizona Immigration Law. It will no longer be a headline in the paper that I skim by."

This activity, with its infusion of "heated" topics and dialogue with dominant discourses, real people, and oneself into the online courses, exemplifies foreign language education as an engaging and productive way to enhance identity renewal. This renewal goes hand-in-hand with the formation of cosmopolitan views and sensibilities, and with the fostering of a democracy-engaged citizenship in a globalized world.

Lifelong Learners as Agents of Globalization

Globalization brings unique challenges to faculty members as they facilitate the learning of students with increasingly diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. To be successful in this task, I suggest that educators need to develop a cosmopolitan identity position, to open themselves to opportunities for identity renewal, and to adopt lifelong learning as a lifestyle. One of the efficient ways to achieve this goal is through experiential learning, which can occur through the immersion in the culture of "the other," which is different from one's own. For the faculty members in this study, all of whom also are our colleagues, this immersion took place while teaching with the college's Center for International Programs. Participants included nine professors – four females, five males – whose expertise lie in such diverse areas as American history, mathematics, psychology, business and writing. They were asked to discuss their motivations behind teaching for CIP and how this teaching affected them personally and professionally along with their views on international cultures, globalization and social justice. In the course of our conversations, it became clear to me that teaching international students in their home countries in the Middle East, Latin America and Eastern Europe had a long lasting impact on the identity development

of these educators. Their views and actions proved them to be lifelong learners and agents of globalization.

The desire for experiential learning through the "experience of other cultures" has been named as a major motivation for all professors who accepted the teaching position at CIP. One of the faculty members discussed the advantages of the work abroad vis-à-vis visiting as a tourist. She points out the benefits of "participation," which allows direct communication with international colleagues and students, as opposed to a limited perspective gained through the observation, typical for a tourist: "Being in the country and the culture as a temporary local is a much richer, often life-changing, experience. I couldn't ask for more."

Becoming aware of the intrinsic embeddedness of the local in the global, another colleague indicated that he wanted to understand better the fellow immigrants in the U.S. who came from the country where he was invited to teach. In his opinion, "In the U.S. and Canada we are often unaware of our neighbors. U.S. faculty can learn a lot from other countries."

All faculty members acknowledged that their work for CIP changed them in some way. Seven colleagues pointed out that this change had started with the challenge of their frame of reference. For example, one of the faculty members discovered parallels between cultures about which she was not aware before: "The culture [of the Dominican Republic] was much more familiar to me than I thought it would be." The deeper understanding of North American culture had been reached through the unique experiences of life and learning in another country. This allowed four professors to develop a critical approach to American mass culture and dominant discourses:

It wasn't until I worked with those students that I realized how much my extremely uninformed view of the Middle East had been shaped by the concept of "terrorism" and many American movies. (This recognition also served as a personal wake-up call about my own ignorance and unexamined assumptions.)

Another faculty member stated that due to her experience teaching with CIP, she "listen[s] to the news with the different ear." When one engages in a relationship with members of another culture, there resides the possibility of seeing and understanding the world and therefore oneself differently. As one colleague points out, "I am more sensitive to how Americans are sometimes too insular in their sensitivity to the world around them."

This experience also led to the critical examination and questioning of previous assumptions and beliefs, both personal and professional. As one colleague noticed,

Working with students in CIP raised questions I had not previously considered. Questions about language and the requirement that students understand English, which for some was their second or third language; questions about the nature of American schooling.

The connection between personal renewal and professional development also is evident in another colleague's remark:

I owe quite a bit of my personal development to my work with international students. They showed me how privileged my life is. I am very careful with any assumptions I make about any student. I don't assume, for example, that what I say is what the person has heard. I think I have become a better listener and, I hope, a better learner. ... I am more aware of cultural differences and how something written can be interpreted differently, when I develop curriculum.

Teaching as a learning process enriched another colleague's perception of the material she teaches, and thus had an impact on her personal intellectual development, as she stated,

It helped me see the material I teach in a new light. I teach American history and culture so it really expanded my ability to concretely compare other cultures and the U.S. with experiential knowledge. I found that extremely valuable for my intellectual development.

Further, eight professors developed a vision of themselves as professionals and individuals who enhance cross-cultural understanding and trust. Seven colleagues referred to learning as a key element, which allowed them to achieve this goal. In one case, for example, knowing that common language can work as a bridge between different cultures, which reduces resentment and fear of “the other,” one professor decided to learn elementary Arabic. This allowed him to create a comfortable atmosphere, conducive to students’ learning,

I did that because I had a student who had never met an American before and was totally intimidated by my presence. We were doing registration and I got one of my prior students to calm the woman down. I’m not an intimidating guy so I said to myself if I just knew a little Arabic it would help so I now have 6 general education credits in Arabic.

Through their personal example as lifelong learners who developed a deep appreciation and respect for cultural differences, faculty members felt empowered to challenge the misconceptions many of their students had regarding their perceptions of North America. These perceptions were often influenced by accepted negative views and/or dominant discourses. Several professors considered this to be an important step in promoting cross-cultural understanding and acceptance. As one colleague stated,

What I do helps promote international understanding. When my students sit in a coffee shop in Beirut and the people at the next table start badmouthing Americans, I am hoping they are saying, “Well, you don’t know my professor X he’s not like that.” ... To me that is a big thing. Even if it makes one student over there look at us differently, it matters, it matters at least to me.

This sentiment was shared by another colleague, who noted,

I hope as faculty we are ambassadors for a positive view of the American people: not our government, but the everyday American. Personally, I try to be respectful of the cultures where

I find myself, learn what I can about them, and try to fit in.

A conservative perception of the role of women in societies where education for centuries has been a privilege reserved for men is another cultural dogma that one professor wanted to challenge through her work and personal example. As she stated,

One of the reasons I teach with CIP is that we have a presence in areas of the world where education is often reserved for males; where sometimes far less than half of the women in the country are given an education. Maybe that’s my feminist belief: if we educate women, not only are they able to have a more rewarding life and improve their lot – they also are able to pass this value onto the next generation. Studies have shown that when resources are given to women, they are more equitably distributed among the community – so everyone benefits.

The striving for the equality of opportunities in education for men and women also can advance the struggle for social justice. One of the faculty members discussed the impact of CIP on this cause:

Regarding social justice, I don’t know if I personally have an impact but our program has. When I first started in 1999 we had probably 100 plus students. In my first class, I had one woman. Now, ... it’s almost 50/50.

Promoting equal educational opportunities to people worldwide also serves the social justice goal, according to another colleague, who is proud of “[b]ringing opportunities of American education to places where they otherwise would not have them.”

These comments also can be viewed as expressions of an act of solidarity with developing countries, which results from the care for students. As one of the faculty members noticed, this goes both ways: “Certainly our worldwide social relations were intensified – we came to care very much about our students ... we are much more aware of each other.” One of the faculty members was in the Dominican Republic at the moment when the Haitian earthquake hit. This experience had a profound effect on him and shaped his

feeling of enhanced solidarity with the global community: “Being on the same island had a profound impact on me because I was able to experience even in a tiny way the repercussions from literally the aftershocks of a real global catastrophe.”

Six faculty members indicated that their work for CIP influenced their views on globalization and made them feel like active participants in this process. One colleague, for instance noticed, “Globalization has a more real feel for me.” Another faculty member stated that his work allowed him to develop a critical approach toward globalization. For another colleague, this experience unraveled complexities of globalization, as a force, which leads to further stratification of society.

Thus, teaching international students in their home countries turned out to be an enriching and transformative life and learning experience for faculty members which enhanced their professional and personal growth. Working as agents of globalization, in addition to sharing their knowledge in specific fields of study, our colleagues opened themselves to integration and cooperation with the hope of reducing inequality of opportunities, and enhancing intercultural dialogue. This work also deepened their understanding of both the challenges and rewards of globalization. There is no doubt that the identity renewal that resulted from this experience will be an asset to their life and work in any setting, and will make them more engaged citizens in a global world.

To conclude, analysis of the results of this study of both students and faculty suggests that at this time of pressure by the neoliberal discourse of market-oriented pedagogy/education, the tasks of both bringing the equality of opportunities and promoting intercultural dialogue remain priorities for adult education, whose major objective and obligation is an expansion of the freedoms of all human beings. In the era of globalization, the fulfillment of this goal more than ever depends on fostering cosmopolitan citizenship and enhancing solidarity, developing an ability to interconnect with people of different backgrounds, and making it possible for them to participate in intercultural dialogue

on equal terms. These goals deserve a place at the forefront of the agendas of education policymakers as well as in the work by researchers and practitioners of adult education in the 21st century. To paraphrase Randy Newman's Academy Award-winning song of 2011, "We all belong together."

Notes

Quotes from students and faculty in this essay were collected from online assignments, discussions and interviews during 2010. I want to give special thanks to Dr. Lisa Snyder (CDL) for her editorial assistance and for her help with some interviews. I am thankful to colleagues who shared their thoughts and experiences about their work for international programs, which informed part of this research. They are in alphabetical order: Jianhao Chen, Xenia Coulter, John de Luca, Kim Hewitt, Betty Hurley-Dasgupta, Oto Jones, Deb Smith, Chris Whann and Eric Zencey. I am most grateful to Alan Mandell and Karen LaBarge for their helpful comments on this essay.

- ¹ The development of the cosmopolitan position of identity is often viewed as a threat to "cultural identity." John Tomlinson (2007) defines "cultural identity" as "collective treasures of local communities," as an "existential possession, an inheritance, a benefit of traditional long dwelling, of continuity with the past" (161).
- ² Translated by Zygmunt Bauman in *Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers?* pp. 18-19.
- ³ According to Walter Mignolo (2006), the racial structure with which the imperial and colonial differences have been historically founded ... is the major impediment today to thinking seriously of global citizenship.
- ⁴ Jackson defines "relational capital as "the development of relational understanding of different realities of knowing and experiencing sometimes competing worlds" (251).
- ⁵ On July 28 a federal judge in Arizona blocked this requirement. Breir expressed her determination to file an expedited appeal at the United States

Court of Appeals. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-10607927>. Criticizing the law in his keynote speech and urging for immigration reforms, President Obama pointed out that "It would tear at the very fabric of this nation because immigrants who are here illegally are already intricately woven into that fabric." In addition, recalling history, President Obama, reminded the American people that "migrant workers, who are mostly in the U.S. illegally, had been the labor force for farmers and agricultural producers "for generations." <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10478829> One also may recall strong historic and cultural ties between the land of Arizona and Mexico. Arizona was one of the Mexican territories prior to the Mexican American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.

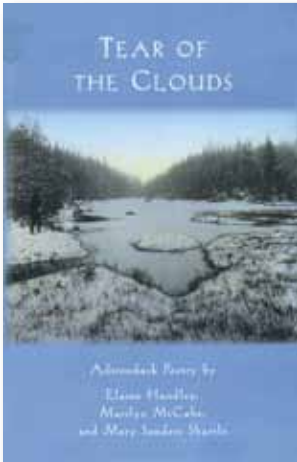
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“But I also hallucinate a voice that asks why I assume that future learning is, or should be, the target of my vector. Is that indeed what we should expect from ourselves? To that basically cynical question my answer is unhesitatingly, ‘Yes!’ How do I know? Very simple. I recently found out that two of my students had been employees of the very nursing home in which my mother resides. It is therefore to my fundamental self interest that they continue to learn. I myself may need them at some future time. The persistent cynic may say, ‘But suppose that you move elsewhere. What good will it do you to have had students who continue to learn?’ Well, suppose that my wife and I moved to the San Francisco Bay area of California to be near our daughter? It just happens that the quality of life there may be influenced by two of my former Empire State College students, one a poet, the other a painter. There’s no hiding place down here!”

– Bob Rodgers, “A Commentary,” All About Mentoring, 10, 1997



Three Poets on the Adirondacks

Elaine Handley, Northeast Center; Marilyn McCabe, Coordinating Center; Mary Sanders Shartle

Mentor Elaine Handley, Admissions Advisor Marilyn McCabe and Mary Sanders Shartle, who has served as a learning coach for the Northeast Center and the Center for Distance Learning, have collaborated on four books of poetry to date. Their first three, Notes from the Fire Tower: Three Poets on the Adirondacks (2004), Glacial Erratica (2006) and Winterberry, Pine (2010), each earned a Best Poetry Book award from the Adirondack Center for Writing. The following is a sample of their latest work, Tear of the Clouds (Ra Books), which was published in the spring of 2011.

Mary Brown's Refusal

Elaine Handley, Northeast Center

Mary married widower John Brown and became the mother of his five children when she was 17 years old. She went on to bear him 13 more children.

I have learned to mete out pleasure
the way daylilies close their throats
at dusk, refusing to sing their orange blaze
in moonlight.

Why fling yourself into high grasses
and lie there hidden, breathing in the earth?
Why snap your heart open except to receive
what you've earned?

The white clover recovers from footsteps
crushing it, and the pond wears its silk
sheath again when the storm passes.
We must do what we are bidden – no more,
no less. Like the exactness and purpose of a thorn,
or the shininess of the railroad track
sliding away from us to places we should not go.

I know there are shooting stars late on August nights
that plummet and are lost in the sky.
If I were lying there with you in the damp grass
the chill creeping up my spine –
I'd be forced to turn
to you for warmth. For purpose too selfish.

Double Amputee Below the Knee

Mary Sanders Shartle

Born with no fibulae, she wears
carbon graphite running legs,
space age prostheses
of silicone on the fashion runway.

Legs, hand-carved out of ash,
shaped by a London craftsman
in the form of
a Louis Sixteenth boot with
6-inch heel, design of tiny flowers,
grapevines and stained
a deep cherry red.

She sees body parts as art.
Six pairs of legs, another for
higher heels coming.
“Ultimately, I’d love to have legs
made of snakeskin, vinyl,
glass. Who knows?” she told Vogue.

We are lucky to perch on
skin and bones, avoid wars and wheelchairs,
trudge the sidewalks with sore and
aching feet; work and worry for the
bills, the food, the split ends.
And baby always needs shoes.

Long Pond

Marilyn McCabe, Coordinating Center

Claret cup of shattered bits, soft
wanton of blueberry bush, ash turned ashen.
Paddle’s drip bothers an untidy wild of sky
wrangling tufted lashes of sundew,
an unsuspecting bug. (The old eat and be eaten. I like
that the small world circles back on itself,
its elaborate violence)succor of something other.

Found Things: Seeking Alternatives II (1973)

In 1973, James Hall, Empire State College's first president, provided an update to Ernest Boyer, chancellor of the State University of New York. The document, Seeking Alternatives II, offered a "report on the progress" of the college between 01 July 1972 and 30 June 1973. Empire State College had been created by SUNY in 1971 and students had begun studying in September of that year. At the time of the publication of this document, the college had about 1,700 students across the state. "The College has shown," the document argues, "that many unserved students need access through alternative approaches to learning." "We have moved toward major redefinitions of the College degree, stressing greater planning and coherence, closer integration of life, work and study, emerging individual interests and social needs, while reaffirming certain traditional goals of liberal education and general development." The sections of the 17-page report included here are titled "Program" and "Accreditation." Thanks as always to our college historian, Richard Bonnabeau, for his ongoing help in making documents such as this one available to us.

PROGRAM

Orientation. The College has gained considerable experience in bringing students into the institution with more accurate information about the ways in which study will proceed, and with a sharpened sense of personal goals. This has required experimentation with ways of orienting students to the College. New groups of students orient at each learning center about once a month. This orientation may extend from a day to as long as a full month. A student does not register until after the orientation session or period is complete and there is an understanding of the College's expectations and the student's study objectives. Orientation has helped students and the College to work together

more effectively and has markedly lessened the number of persons who subsequently find themselves unable to maintain the motivation and independence required.

Program of Study. During the 1971-72 developmental year, heavy emphasis was placed on the learning contract as an instructional instrument. As contract procedures have been refined, our focus has shifted increasingly to the overall *Program of Study* of each student. The *Program of Study*, in some ways comparable to an academic concentration, is a statement describing a student's educational goals and an outline for achieving them. Such a Program usually describes several learning contracts focused around the particular goals defined by the student in consultation with the faculty. Each student studying for a degree from the College must have an approved *Program of Study*. The *Program of Study* may describe a traditional disciplinary orientation (e.g., English, History), or it may describe an interdisciplinary or emerging area of inquiry.

Learning Contracts. Learning contracts are the building blocks for fulfilling the *Program of Study*. In the past year, contract format has been standardized into four parts: a brief reiteration of the student's goals, a statement of the specific purposes for the particular contract, a statement of learning activities to be undertaken in achieving the specific purposes, and an explanation of how the work will be evaluated. The contract is the key instrument in holding together a wide variety of activities and insuring rigorous evaluation. Learning contracts tend to average between two and four months in length.

Assessment of Prior Learning. The assessment of prior learning gained through life experiences and other nontraditional means is an emerging national issue for higher education. For colleges which already recognize student learning gained outside the

classroom, the development of sophisticated, high quality, yet flexible procedures and criteria for assessing the knowledge and competencies of individual students is critical. As part of its initial charge, Empire State College was asked to develop, test and implement such new assessment procedures across a diverse range of students and on a statewide basis.

During this year, the College made good progress in developing procedures for reviewing and awarding credit to students who presented extensive portfolios documenting prior learning, both academic and nonacademic. Faculty committees gained increasing experience in making judgments about the evidences of learning, and attention was given to identifying broad guidelines. The College seeks in the coming year to cooperate with other nontraditional institutions and with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in developing new instruments and practices.

Building on the Resources of the State University. A mandate of Empire State College was to build upon the strength and resources of the existing State University campuses. The success of the College in finding ways to meet this challenge has gone well beyond what the planners of the College anticipated. Administrations and faculty have been graciously cooperative in extending support of many kinds.

One area of successful cooperation is in library use where the College has worked out highly effective procedures for students to use State University libraries. The Trustees' resolution opening all libraries to Empire State College students (as well as to persons from the community at large) was helpful, but most campuses had already followed a most generous practice. Though procedures vary from campus to campus, students are usually able to gain borrowing privileges upon presentation of their Empire State College identification card.

The College Office of Research recently conducted a preliminary study of library usage which is available for circulation.

Sharing of faculty with other institutions has been extremely helpful, though in some cases this is a more difficult form of cooperation to achieve. A number of State University faculty have joined Empire State College on a visiting basis for periods from three months to a year. Though these faculty have generally worked on development of new learning resources, in several cases they also have been directly involved in mentoring students at one of the Regional Learning Centers. Many faculty members of State University colleges also participate as tutors in relation to a specific student's learning contract. These tutors may receive modest additional remuneration using the extra service compensation procedures of the State University. Some campuses, however, have specific policies with regard to acceptance of outside compensation and it will be necessary for the College to continue to develop procedures which make possible the sharing of faculty talents within the State University.

Students enrolled in 259 courses offered at other campuses, both SUNY and non SUNY, as part of the total learning contract. This option is particularly helpful in the considerable number of academic areas where Empire State College alternative resources are not yet prepared or in those areas where the students must gain approved study towards certification (e.g., education). Again, simple procedures have been devised, working closely with other campuses, which allow students to enroll in these courses with a minimum of procedural difficulty. Students have enrolled for courses at most of the Community College[s], the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, and University Centers of [the] State University, and at various colleges of the City University [of New York]. In addition, they have been enrolled at a long list of private institutions including C.W. Post, New York Institute of Technology, Marymount, New School, Skidmore, Siena, Russell Sage, Nazareth, Rochester Institute of Technology, Syracuse, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and others. Students also have enrolled in a number of specialized institutions or other instructional programs

which contribute considerably to the range of study in various communities across the State of New York. Although a relatively small percentage of the students at Empire State College are pursuing study through classrooms, the ability to enroll students in these courses for particular needs is an essential ingredient in the flexibility which the College program affords to students.

ACCREDITATION

The College was granted **Correspondent Status** by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association in December 1971. During the year the College continued to develop its academic program and prepare the College Master Plan in consultation with Dr. Ernest Lynton, dean of Livingston College, Rutgers University. On July 1, 1973, the status was changed to **Candidate for Accreditation**. The College is beginning its institutional self-study this fall and will work toward full accreditation in the coming year.

“17. There is no precedent for what we are struggling to create. We have to make it up ourselves.”

*– Eric Zencey, “Theses on Sustainability,”
All About Mentoring, 36, 2009*

Reflections on Mentoring From an Early Childhood Perspective

Tracy Galuski, Center for Distance Learning



The lessons learned from early childhood from the perspective of both the teacher and the student can revisit us as we consider the adult mentoring relationship. Consider these art projects that were completed by young children. Which one is more interesting? Do you see a confusing mess or a creative masterpiece? Is it the creative work of an enthusiastic little girl or a craft created to teach a formal lesson? How you interpret these pictures may help determine what type of early childhood program you attended. Was it a preschool where activities were carefully prescribed by a teacher, a child-centered program where children were encouraged to be creative or somewhere in between? Your answer may determine how you think and feel as a mentor at Empire State College. If you found yourself in a high-quality program, ripe with creative opportunities, you may find that your experiences support your work as a mentor in ways you didn't realize. Similarly, those positive experiences in early childhood will help the students you mentor find success.

Early Childhood Art: Then and Now

These examples of a young child's artwork illustrate the changing view of how we understand our role as a teacher in early childhood. Years ago, a teacher would take the time to design an entire theme complete with patterned art projects such as birds or cars. He or she would carefully trace and

cut out the shapes, count out the eyes and prepare the glue. The children in his or her class might find all of the materials arranged on a table when they arrived. The children would sit at the table, follow the instructions and complete the plan, frequently as a group. Their projects would look relatively the same and if not, a teacher might be so bold as to assist the child in moving the pieces to the accurate places. At the end of the day, the teacher would proudly display all of the matching pictures in the hallway for parents to view and ultimately evaluate with a simple, "Good job!" We saw ourselves as teachers, clear and simple. After all, how would a child learn to make a bird if we didn't show them exactly how to do it?

As we have embraced the popular teachings of Dewey, Erikson, Piaget and Vygotsky, and the guidelines of developmentally appropriate practice, things have gradually shifted in early childhood. Today, we see ourselves as teachers, but also caregivers, facilitators and in many ways, mentors. Today, we understand that learning should emphasize the whole child as he or she participates in activities such as art. The teacher may have an idea in mind based on the curricular topic or theme, but the focus becomes the interests of an individual child as that child constructs knowledge around a topic during the daily activities. The teacher might leave out a variety of materials such as feathers, bird seed, straw, or encourage the children to collect natural

objects while outside in the yard. The teachers support, guide and facilitate the learning of the children in their care, rather than instruct. They might provide pictures of birds, visit a pet shop or bring in a real bird and design an inquiry around it. The teachers will encourage the children to work at their own pace, offering suggestions and guidance as they create with the materials. A teacher focuses on the whole child, rather than the simple outcome of an assignment. We have discovered that we do not need to teach children how to make a bird out of construction paper, but rather teach them how to think and observe and allow them to construct their own knowledge as they experiment with the materials we provide. Perhaps their interpretation of a bird looks very different than ours.

We try not to evaluate these works of art. Instead of "It looks great," we might respond, "I appreciate all the time you put into this." Again, the focus becomes the process. Are they proud of the work, or do they wish to throw it out and try again? Often times the children will make several pictures in one sitting, simply to test out their skills. It is not uncommon to see toddlers glue a stack of papers together and form a pile, then pull each piece off one by one and walk away. They are more interested in how the glue pours out of the bottle, sticks to their fingers, and looks on the paper than in what type of a design

forms. They do not need or care for our evaluation unless they have been trained to expect it.

You can probably guess where I am going with these two examples. Which situation seems more comfortable to you? Do you prefer to make all the plans and expect the children (or in your case, adults) to follow your directions, or are you comfortable giving them the power to create on their own? It probably doesn't surprise you that both teaching styles are still prevalent in the early childhood programs I visit. You don't need to go very far to find a teacher cutting out dozens of leaves, eyes or buttons for a project. These teachers are comfortable with their concept of how art should look and, despite my repeated attempts, they will continue to do what they are used to doing. Other teachers leave out a variety of materials in a completely open-ended environment so that the projects are creative and unique, while parents pepper them with questions about what their children are actually learning.

Truthfully, although I am a "purest" when it comes to developmentally appropriate practice (with a fondness for the second example), most child care providers and teachers have struck a balance between the two. While they may emphasize either teacher-directed or child-directed instruction, they probably offer both dimensions of learning and provide a balance as suggested by Prescott (1994) They might offer completely open-ended art projects such as an art easel or collage center, followed by a structured activity such as puzzles or a lesson paired with a craft. Prescott (1994) goes on to emphasize that the majority of learning should include open-ended materials because they allow children to experience success and a sense of initiative. Gesticki (2011) agrees that the key to using these dimensions is that we include both ends of the spectrum rather than the either/or approach that was prevalent for years. All programs ultimately find a balance based on the beliefs of their stakeholders that include teachers, administrators, children and families.

From Teachers to Mentors

Somewhere within that balance, I believe that mentoring at Empire State College takes on the same feel as the second classroom. We provide the tools and materials to assist our students, but we allow them to focus on the process and select their studies in a way that makes sense. We offer guidelines, but focus on their individual learning rather than on a predetermined outcome. Even when we think we may know what a student needs, we try to give them the power (and space) that will enable them to construct their own learning. The focus is on the process of planning a degree and growing as an individual, rather than on the final outcome of a degree plan (although that is ultimately important, as well).

Despite our support, the process of completing open-ended assignments (such as degree planning) can be daunting for a student, especially if they are used to following the teacher's instructions. New students want us to tell them what to do or give them a pattern to follow. Perhaps our students have come to expect this format. After all, isn't that what they have learned after years of following the patterns laid out for them? If we are lucky we might get an obvious, "Help me, I don't understand!" Other times it might be much more a subtle cry for help, such as the student who disappears from a course, neglects to register for the next term, or never submits the final rationale essay. Taking the time to assess, follow-up and ask relevant questions while encouraging them to seek out support is the key to getting them back on track.

Ultimately, your success as a mentor may depend on the confidence of your students, and your students will fall back on the important lessons from early childhood. Will they expect you to give them a plan to follow or will they run with the degree planning process and do the work necessary to complete the process without a lot of prompting? Are you going to acquiesce and just tell them what courses to take or what their degree should look like, or will you patiently wait and ask questions while they figure it out for themselves? How do we shift the balance from teacher-directed

instruction to students who are actively engaged in their learning? For the answers, we can look back toward early childhood.

Shifting the Balance

When I first began teaching preschoolers, I found myself in a program where the teacher had followed a very structured and patterned approach. I found that when I left materials out for the children, they would just sit and look at them in a confused manner. Some students would complain, "But I don't know what to paint." Another child would begin to paint a house (the typical square house with a triangle roof and chimney with swirling smoke) and the other children would lean over to take a look and try to copy the work. Inevitably, my assistant would show them what to do, or start drawing it for them, and we would end up with several very similar (and uncreative) projects.

New students want us to tell them what to do or give them a pattern to follow. Perhaps our students have come to expect this format. After all, isn't that what they have learned after years of following the patterns laid out for them?

I began by taking small steps and shifting the balance from teacher-directed to child-directed projects. We offered one creative project a week and called it "Free Art Friday." I would sit them down and offer boxes of scraps and scissors and we would talk about all of the interesting things they could make. At first, it was very challenging for the children. I would hear numerous complaints such as, "I don't know what to make" and "Can you cut it out for me?" I declined to tell them what to do. Instead, I relied on the new vocabulary of our trade

that included open-ended questions such as, “What do you think it might look like?” and “How do you think we can do that?”

We moved from once a week to every day creative activities as their skills and comfort levels increased. After a few months, the confidence and creativity started to flourish. The children moved from copying each other to discussing their new ideas together. I knew we had been successful when I observed a little boy cut out one little piece of brown paper after another and glue them into a three-dimensional pile. He was making a picture that represented a bowl of guinea pig food for the classroom pet. If a 4-year-old can figure out how to design a complete original project out of nothing, certainly our adult learners can design a degree plan using the wide variety of tools we provide. How can we apply this to our work with adults? We need to rely on small steps – perhaps even baby steps.

Conclusion

We need to have confidence and trust that both children and adults can accomplish tasks laid out for them when they are meaningful. We need to trust that children will learn what a bird looks like and create one when they have acquired the necessary skills, just as an adult can select individual studies and entire degree programs in a way that makes sense if we give them the guidance to accomplish this task. Perhaps the hardest part is finding tasks that are challenging and worthwhile within the process.

For the purpose of illustration, I have stayed true to the language of my early childhood colleagues, using the terms and texts that are popular in our field. Although I am talking solely about my reflections of teaching and mentoring young children, perhaps we can find a common language in our work with adults.

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“ ... ultimately we need to recognize that student learning will never be an ‘efficient’ enterprise – at least not as long as it involves a transaction between teacher and student. Perhaps, someday learning will consist of machine-brain interactions as described in science fiction; but that day is not here. So, for now, the best lesson I may have acquired from this case ... is that these struggles should not be seen as failures by either the teacher or student. Learning, understanding, mind-changing – they take more time and effort, and they are much ‘messier’ processes than our current system of education acknowledges.”

– Xenia Coulter, “What Do We Know About Study Learning? A Case Study,”

All About Mentoring, 31, 2006

Money and Mission: An Interview with Bill Ferrero

Ed Warzala, Genesee Valley Center

Introduction

Following lengthy and detailed conversations, I am left with great admiration and respect for William Ferrero and for his many contributions to Empire State College. Bill served the college for most of his 34-year tenure as chief financial officer and vice president for administration. In that role, Bill served every president, including interim presidents, and numerous other cabinet-level college administrators. His stewardship of the institution's finances left the college with in excess of \$30 million in reserves that were made available to a new president and new CFO, as Bill's career was winding down. At one point in the college's history, Bill Ferrero managed 13 state-imposed budget reductions in a three-year period. During that stretch, which Bill refers to as the "darkest days," not one employee was terminated due to budget cuts.

On a personal level, despite the gruff exterior, I am most taken by Bill's modesty and genuine affection for the college, our students, and the individuals with whom he so closely worked. When discussing accomplishments, he could easily have taken credit for, Bill always deferred to the collective work of college employees or others in the administration. At the same time, I can think of no one in the college I would prefer to have on my side when things get tough.

The Interview (07 June 2011)

Ed Warzala: Bill, thank you for granting me this interview. I think what you have to say as you approach retirement is very important to the college's historical record, so thank you again. I think it's important in light of the expansion of the college and all of the new employees, to capture for the record your thoughts and observations as you look back on a long and productive



Ed Warzala (left) and Bill Ferrero

career. When does your retirement begin and what do you intend to do with your free time?

Bill Ferrero: My retirement begins at the end of July (2011). Actually, my last day will be July 29. My time will be filled with golf and plenty of long put-off projects around the house. My wife Wendy and I have started a list of things that have been delayed but will now move forward. My estimate is there is at least four years of work to do.

E.W.: Will you continue on in any official capacity, if so, in what way?

B.F.: Vice President for Administration Paul Tucci and President Alan Davis have been very generous in allowing me to transition into retirement. I will always be available to Paul and Alan if they think I can be of any assistance but I do not see a real need for that.

E.W.: Will you attend college events or annual conferences? Will you keep an eye on college activities?

B.F.: I do not plan to attend any college events or conferences. I've done that for nearly 34 years. I will always keep an

interest in what is happening at the college. It has been a major part of my life for a very long time.

E.W.: When did you start with the college and in what capacity?

B.F.: I began at Empire State College in September 1977 as the director of budget and finances.

E.W.: What led you to apply for a position with Empire State College and what kind of training did you have for the job?

B.F.: I was working in the senior vice chancellor's office in the State University of New York administration: oversight of the financial aspects of Empire State College was one of my assignments. Jim Hall, president of the college at that time, called me one day and asked if I might be interested in working at Empire State College. My on-the-spot response was that Empire State College was the only college for which I would consider working. I had been doing many special projects for the senior vice chancellor and they provided

me with a broad range of experiences – experiences that would come in very handy at Empire State College.

E.W.: You had been at SUNY System Administration for 10 years when you were recruited to play an oversight role at Empire State College.

B.F.: Right, the senior vice chancellor asked me to work with the college as needed and provide oversight for him.

E.W.: Were you familiar with the college at the time? Were you aware of the unique nature of the college?

B.F.: Yes, but very tangentially. You could see that Empire State College was coming on the horizon. The college had initially been funded with grants such as those offered by the Ford Foundation and was not receiving much state support, but you could anticipate that more state support would be forthcoming.

E.W.: Who hired you and who were the members of the administration at the time?

B.F.: Jim Hall hired me along with the support of Ron Corwin who at that time was the executive vice president of Empire State College. The senior staff back then consisted of: Jim Hall, president; Ron Corwin; John Jacobson, vice president for academic affairs; Richard Debus, vice president for administration; and Ernie Palola, who was serving as vice president for institutional research. I think that was the makeup of the Cabinet in 1977, but I may have omitted someone – I apologize for any omissions. I was contacted totally out of the blue. I was surprised and very flattered that Jim Hall called me. I felt it an honor to be considered for a position at Empire State College.

E.W.: Aside from the 10 years at SUNY System, did you plan to make a career in higher education?

B.F.: Actually, at the time, I was in the process of leaving SUNY for the private sector. I considered other colleges, but mostly I was looking at the private sector when the call came from Jim. It was an opportune moment, one that changed and enriched my life.

E.W.: Of the executive-level administrators you worked closely with, who was most influential on your career in the early days and in more recent times?

B.F.: I would have to say Jim, Ron and John were the most influential. Richard Debus was very busy trying to handle day-to-day operations. Over the years, there are probably too many people to mention, but the obvious ones are Jim Hall and Ron Corwin. In recent years, Jane Altes and Joe Moore were highly influential. As I said, there are many others but the list would be very long and I would inadvertently omit some.

E.W.: Having spent your career at Empire State College, what are your general thoughts about the college and its place in New York higher education? How do you think the college fits into the larger scheme of things, such as the college's place in SUNY and higher education more generally?

B.F.: Well I would have to say that Empire State College had to be one of the most successful experiments ever undertaken by New York state. Its place now seems to be secure but there are always those who will be nipping at our heels. By any measure you'd have to say we've been tremendously successful. We've led the way in higher education with our pedagogy. Student centeredness: we've always had that here. Meeting students on their time, not on ours, individualized degrees, learning contracts – think about that; what a concept that is! We say to students, “what do you want to learn?” Imagine that: here's the roadmap that you've developed, and it's a contract between the college and you and you're going to sign it and so are we. That's pretty amazing when you stop and think about it.

The concept of student-centered study, individualized education; student/mentor designed learning contracts, the removal of all barriers to education, the evolution to Internet-based distance learning were all unique when they were being developed. The challenge (and it continues to be a challenge today) was how to properly budget for what were unheard of approaches to higher education. How do you translate individual student/mentor work into FTE [full-time equivalents]? How do you explain it to those outside of

the college from whom you are requesting considerable financial support? We developed individualized billing cycles, which began when the student signed an enrollment contract. We needed to develop some way of explaining and justifying the cost of property rental; there wasn't much of this going on in SUNY. I could probably write a dissertation on this subject. Suffice it to say there wasn't anyone outside the college who really understood what we were about. As I said, it is an issue that continues today, but fortunately, on a much smaller scale.

E.W.: This must have been exciting. You were still figuring out how to run and fund a unique college.

B.F.: It was truly exciting. I started in September and was marrying Wendy in the same month. I asked for time off for the wedding almost as I was starting the job. When I returned, I became thoroughly involved in the challenges and would come to work early in the morning, stay in the office until 10 or 10:30 p.m., bring home arm-loads of paperwork and continue working at home until 3 in the morning. Not an ideal way to begin a marriage, but it was all-consuming in a good way.

It got to the point where Wendy would lock the door and leave a beer out on the stoop with a note saying: “drink this, and then you can come in.” She knew I needed to wind down. She had great insight; she knew I was wired from the intense work we were doing. Many things on the financial end were being done incorrectly, not because of any malice or bad intent, but because no one knew how to run a college like this one. It was an incredibly complex position to get into, but very, very exciting.

E.W.: Does Wendy still leave a beer on the stoop for you?

B.F.: (laughing) It's not necessary at this point.

E.W.: Did you imagine in the beginning that the college would grow as it has?

B.F.: This is actually a funny story. I was with the college for a couple years when Jim and Ron asked me to project where I thought the college would be in five, 10, 15 and 20 years given sufficient funding. By

this time, I was a complete convert to the idea of education Empire State College style, and I probably went a little overboard when I said the college could easily serve 10,000 FTE students within 20 years and have an operating budget of \$100 million. There was more detail behind those projections, but both Jim and Ron looked at me as though I had three heads. So, my vision of Empire State College was pretty grand. It took more than the original estimate of 20 years, but we are pretty close to those numbers right now.

E.W.: What were your thoughts when CDL (the Center for Distance Learning) began to emerge as a central contributor to college revenues?

B.F.: When CDL began at Empire State College, it was anything but a “contributor” of revenue; it was actually a drain on the resources of the college. It really wasn’t until the advent of the Internet and the ability for online, asynchronous learning that the potential of CDL began to be realized. While others were looking at distance learning (DL) as the silver bullet to deliver education to ever larger numbers of students at very low cost and thus using the windfall profits to support the “main” campus budget, Empire State College was concentrating on delivering a high-quality academic program with sufficient student services and other supports to ensure the student had a quality learning experience. Our model was much more expensive than our competitors, as we established maximum section sizes, and the need for full-time faculty to develop programs as well as monitor all aspects of the part-time faculty. But there was a sense that in the field of DL there were going to be pretenders and there would be contenders. The pretenders would fall by the wayside as students would recognize the lower quality of some programs. Empire State College was determined to be one of those still standing and leading when the dust settled. I would say we succeeded. There is, no doubt, an economy of scale associated with the CDL model, but we have allowed CDL to retain the majority of excess funds for future program development and program updating.

E.W.: Interesting. These days, CDL is known to be a major contributor to the revenues of the college. I believe CDL now is responsible for more than 40 percent of total credits generated by the college. It’s hard to imagine it ever operated in the red.

B.F.: Actually, I recall a President’s Council meeting at which the fate of CDL was decided by Jim Hall. The regional center deans had reached a consensus that CDL should be not be funded at the “expense” of the regional center budgets; there were plenty of skeptics about the viability of distance learning in pre-Internet days. The discussion was heated at times, but some brilliant people openly stated their positions in opposition to continuing the DL program. I had my doubts as well. After this lengthy discussion, I remember that Jim thanked everyone for their thoughtful input and then asserted his leadership, stating that the college would be going forward with the DL operation. And that was that!

E.W.: What are you most proud of in terms of your contribution to the development of CDL?

B.F.: My contribution was minimal. I was a cheerleader. I worked very hard with senior leadership within CDL to develop various allocation models and formulae, but I am most proud of the success of the program.

E.W.: That seems overly modest given 35 years of budgetary and financial leadership. I’m not buying that your contribution was minimal.

B.F.: I had the best job in the world; I was able to work on a daily basis with some of the most brilliant people in all of higher education. Every day was like another graduate school seminar. It was fantastic.

E.W.: Of the administrators you worked with at SUNY System and Empire State College, who was most influential in your career?

B.F.: At SUNY, I worked closely with Harry Spindler, the senior vice chancellor, Bill Anslow, the vice chancellor for finance, and Ernie Boyer, the chancellor. They all had a great deal of influence on my career. Of course, at Empire there was Jim [Hall]. He was the leader of the institution and had incredible foresight and wisdom. He was

more of an academic than an administrator and I mean that in a positive way. Jim and John Jacobsen were focused on the academic program; Ron Corwin was running the operations of the college and he was very good at that and influenced me greatly. Many others came and went, but Jim served for a long time and built the college from the ground up. It was a small Cabinet and its members made all the decisions. It was a visionary group.

Jane Altes came after Jim and ended up serving for three years in a very difficult time for an interim president. Jane had retired from the vice president for academic affairs position and came back to be interim president. The first search failed, and in the end it took three years before Joe Moore was appointed.

Jim was more hands-off regarding day-to-day operations. Jane was more hands-on as a president and I enjoyed working with her a great deal. It was different than with Jim, but both experiences were great. I don’t think Jane is given enough credit for the hard job she had as an interim president. I thought she was great in her role and deserves to be recognized for her accomplishments. There were some people external to the college who did not mean well for the college, and Jane had to fend off those threats to the college from a tenuous position as interim president. I just don’t think people give her the credit she is due for that period.

E.W.: What was the transition to Joe Moore’s presidency like?

B.F.: Joe Moore hit the ground running. It was another paradigm shift for the college, and he brought the college to an entirely different level in the seven years that he was here. Joe would not stand still or delay progress for budgetary reasons – he always wanted to move ahead, always ahead, and we did under his leadership. He was the first to go down to SUNY and to the state Legislature to obtain capital funds. Remember, when we started, Empire State College was known as “the college without walls,” so asking for funding for buildings was discouraged, but Joe was able to argue that our regional centers would always remain, and that we couldn’t go on living like vagabonds, moving from building to

building every several years. Joe got people at SUNY and in government to accept our need for permanent, college-owned centers. We were able to demonstrate the costs associated with leases compared to ownership of our own buildings made economic sense and we were able to make a convincing case. In Rochester, for example, we purchased land in the Town of Brighton, and we hope to secure the land on Long Island. We can even prove that it will be economically viable to buy property in New York City! A lease in NYC for 10 or 20 years amounts to the cost of potential purchase. We can show that.

E.W.: What was the most challenging thing about the job?

B.F.: There are challenges with all jobs, but probably the biggest challenge at Empire State College has been to make converts out of the skeptics. The college is limited by funding issues that have been facing New York state for the last 30-plus years. The external controls imposed by the state are the most restrictive of any state in the nation. Empire State College receives less than 20 percent of its funding from tax revenue, yet the state insists on having 100 percent control over all expenditures. The state says how many students we can enroll and how much it will cost students to attend. It's these types of controls that drive administrators like me to distraction. There have been many attempts to get the state to relax some of the controls but not much progress has been made.

E.W.: What were the best of times?

B.F.: There have been many great times – it is hard to say which were “best.” There was a stretch about 10 years ago when enrollments were strong and we made a case to the System Administration to allow the college to grow beyond the artificial limits imposed, and we also were allowed to retain the excess revenue generated. Another “best” time was when the college was finally recognized as needing capital funding in order to make permanent facilities for the regional centers. While we have yet to actually get a shovel in the ground for the centers in Rochester and Long Island, as I just mentioned, the New York State Legislature has appropriated funds for these

projects. It is now time to begin the process of seeking more capital funding for the remaining centers.

E.W.: What were the worst of times?

B.F.: The worst times were the budget cuts of the late '70s and '80s. I remember a period when 13 budget cuts were made by the state in three years. I remember when Jim Hall was ordered by the chancellor to close one of the centers in response to yet another budget cut. Jim refused and held out for as long as he could, but finally had no choice but to send out the notice that the Metropolitan Center was going to be closed. Imagine Jim's anguish. Shortly after the letters were sent to close the center and retrench the entire faculty and staff, the order was withdrawn, but the damage in the relationship between the Coordinating Center and the Metro Center lingered for many years.

E.W.: In light of the current budgetary situation, and as one who is active in university and college governance, I'm curious to know how you interacted with the college's governance system.

B.F.: We worked especially closely with the PPBC [Program Planning and Budget Committee] and used it as a critical sounding board for the administration. We didn't expect PPBC to be involved in budgetary decisions, but we did put PPBC and its faculty members in a position to respond and react to potential courses of action. I needed PPBC reactions to tough decisions. There was often tension over issues, but never animosity. In the worst budgetary times, I wanted PPBC, and so did Jim Hall, deeply involved in discussions. We needed to know what members of the faculty were thinking and how they would likely respond to different scenarios. We put everything on the table, including losing positions and layoffs. We didn't hide anything; we tried to be open and transparent.

You asked about things I'm proud of. Now that I think about it, during those days of 13 budget cuts in three years, and since, we never lost a job, we never laid anyone off. There were wide-scale retrenchments all around SUNY, and we never had to lay anyone off. We did that and I'm proud of it.

E.W.: As you should be; that's really something about which to be proud. Compared to the best and worst of times, how would you rank where we are today in terms of the college's budgetary situation?

B.F.: I'm not sure I could answer that question; Paul Tucci [current vice president for administration] could give a more informed response. Suffice it to say that the fiscal situation in New York isn't very good, and until that condition changes, times will be more difficult for the college. It's bad, but we have a great team in place.

E.W.: What were the challenges of working with SUNY?

B.F.: The biggest challenge was our difference with regard to the other colleges in the system. Once again, it was and continues to be a case of helping to understand what a treasure Empire State College is and how it should be recognized. It is very difficult to make this happen in the largest university system in the country – everyone is fighting to make the same argument. It goes back to explaining the college to people who only understand traditional higher education. We need to stay on-message and repeat a consistent message.

E.W.: What kind of strategies did you employ in working with SUNY System on budgetary matters?

B.F.: The presidents through the years and I spent so much time in the SUNY headquarters that we basically had our own parking space in their garage! We talked with the budget staff, we talked with the IR [institutional research] staff, we talked with the provost and we talked with anyone else we could think of. I would have to say that for the most part the SUNY staff was supportive of our position, but there were only so many slices one could get out of an ever shrinking pie. The key has always been getting more budget autonomy from the state.

E.W.: So, is it safe to assume you were a supporter of last year's PHEEIA [Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act] legislation?

B.F.: For sure. Anything that allows for more autonomy and a more rational tuition policy will free us to secure the institution. We don't need any outside agencies looking over our shoulders. We're professionals; we know how to administer our institution. If we go too far, go ahead, punish us, but otherwise, let us run the college – we know how to do that.

E.W.: What strategies did you employ in working with the various administrations over the years?

B.F.: I was truly blessed with having Jim Hall as the leader of the college; he was followed by Jane Altes as the interim president until Joe Moore arrived. When Joe left, Joyce Elliott did an extraordinary job until Alan arrived. I had fantastic relationships with all those who sat in the president's office. There was a high level of mutual respect and interaction. I was a big proponent of a wide-open budget process: there should not be the suspicion of something being withheld or hidden. All those I mentioned agreed with that principle. I have not worked with Alan [Davis]. I was in the process of retiring from full-time activity when he was arriving, but I would suspect the open process continues.

I worked hard to establish the credibility of my office by transparency in the budgetary process. The fact that we've had only three presidents and a few interims helped, and Jim was here for a long time. That stability helped me to make the Office of Administration credible. There was some competition for resources and some disagreement, but nothing major; there was always mutual respect.

E.W.: In the last several years, the college has benefited from cash reserves that you are responsible for accumulating. How did you manage to build those reserves?

B.F.: The reserves were the result of the work of the college. The cash reserves were the result of strong enrollments and several successful IFR [income fund reimbursable] programs; I did nothing to generate them. Having been through many years of meager budgets, I was a big proponent of saving for a "rainy day." The college also had \$20 million in ongoing IFR programs, and if the support for these programs dried up, it

would take time to close them down. We agreed that we should hold in reserve six months' operating expenses for all IFRs in the event that we needed to close any of them down. In this context, I would be remiss not to mention Dennis Belt's role in making sure that our fiscally austere measures were implemented – not an easy task!

Prudence suggested that a reserve of six months of expense should be created in order to ease any discontinued programs out of existence without tapping into state-provided funding. The only thing I would say is that we should minimize placing salaries in the IFRs, because it's hard in a budget crisis to bring salaries on to the state-side budget.

E.W.: Do you feel the current use of reserves in tough budget times is appropriate? Are the reserves being used as you had hoped?

B.F.: I am in no position to answer that question. I am confident that Paul Tucci and President Davis are doing what is best. The reserves are for a rainy day, and we're in a budget crisis now, so yes, I think we're doing the right thing and doing what should be done in light of the current budget crisis.

E.W.: What fiscal advice would you give the college administration in light of the current trends in state support?

B.F.: Without a great deal more detailed knowledge regarding the current trends in state support, I could not offer advice. There is a good team in place now; they know what to do. It would be presumptuous of me to say. If either Alan or Paul asked, however, I would be pleased to help, but I don't foresee that.

E.W.: What does the college need to do to thrive and prosper in light of fiscal realities?

B.F.: More budget autonomy particularly with regard to enrollment: that's it! It's hard when they're sitting on your shoulder or when you have to fill out a form for everything you do.

E.W.: What is your assessment of the state of the college's facilities and plans to purchase or build facilities?

B.F.: This is extremely important to the future of the college; as I mentioned earlier, the college must continue to seek capital funding for these projects. We can't lose the momentum. It's hard to go back to the Legislature to ask for the next round of construction projects without having broken ground on approved projects. That said, what we have done to date is impressive; we have improved all of our leased properties, and have made major improvements in our physical plant in Saratoga Springs.

E.W.: What do you imagine the college will look like in 2025? What do you think the headcount might be?

B.F.: I gave that crystal ball away when I made my projections 30 years ago. What the college needs is a vision, like Ernie Boyer's and Jim Hall's. Alan is doing what he needs to do – he has to look ahead, and he's doing the right things.

E.W.: What do you think the future holds for the traditional mentoring model upon which the college was founded?

B.F.: Mentoring is a wonderful concept; students love it and have told us so in SUNY student satisfaction surveys. You've attended graduations – you hear it from the students; just listen to what they say. One-to-one guided study, residencies, group studies and even CDL are variations on the mentoring model. We've tweaked it. I think it will always be with us in some form, but ultimately, this should be addressed by Provost Meg Benke and President Alan Davis in consultation with other members of the college community. Everyone is a stake holder.

E.W.: Is there a message you'd like to send out to the college as a whole – to the administration, faculty and staff?

B.F.: This is a wonderful place with many deeply committed staff. There are challenges ahead but the leadership of the college is strong and the staff is used to overcoming obstacles. We all need to work together. There has to be trust.

E.W.: Do you have any closing thoughts, suggestions or recommendations?

B.F.: I think I have probably said too much already, but there is one more thing I'd like to mention. I just mentioned graduation

celebrations. I have been fortunate enough to attend many of these ceremonies over the years and I have found this to be one of the most special things about Empire State College. When you hear graduates talk about their struggles to balance home, family, jobs and education, you get a real understanding of what makes Empire State College different and very special. Graduates invariably identify a single mentor or staff person as their “life line,” and how they could not have made it through without that person. They speak of the support of family

members and mention their children who preceded them through college. They say what a life changing experience Empire State College was for them and that there was no other place where they could have done what they did here. I know I can’t capture it here, but at the end of each graduation I’ve attended there was not a dry eye in the audience – certainly not mine.

Over the years I’ve encouraged my staff to attend any graduation they could. When you start thinking about how much time you

spend running into brick walls, you may tend to lose sight of the purpose of the job you do every day. Attending a graduation will make it clear again and you realize what a special place this college is and how fortunate you are to play a role in making what you just witnessed happen. It is an experience like no other.

E.W.: Thank you once again, Bill, it’s been a privilege.

“A religious tradition grows by the reinterpretation of its original vision; interpreters do not set out to create new knowledge, to overthrow received teachings; they seek to understand received texts or traditions and what they ‘reveal’ more fully. The interpretive strategy is one of acknowledging the work of prior interpreters and then calling attention to what they didn’t see, what they missed, what was there all this time but not seen. Reformers use this strategy, announcing that what the established community and its current authorities are teaching is not really a correct reading of the text.”

– Bob Carey, “Shrines,” All About Mentoring, 17, 1999

All About Rementoring

Cindy Conaway and Bernard Smith, Center for Distance Learning;
Christopher Whann, Metropolitan Center

This essay grew out of a panel held at the 2011 All College Conference. Center for Distance Learning faculty member Cindy Conaway convened the panel, making sure it represented both faculty and those who work in assessment from a variety of centers across the state. Along with Conaway, the panel included faculty member Christopher Whann, and assessment professionals Bernard Smith and Maggie Schultz. The discussion involved the issues of “re-mentoring” – a phrase coined several years ago by CDL faculty and staff members (including Mentor Eric Ball), who came up with a list of Good Practices for Mentoring. It led to a lively discussion. Important topics that were raised included the role of the assessment committee and the question of whether collegewide area of study (AOS) and concentration guidelines are written more for students or for mentors.

The purpose of this writing is to be constructive and to find a way to make change for the better. We all feel that the work of assessment committees can be valuable and that having high standards is extremely important for everyone at Empire State College. It is our intention to encourage that the work be done in a kinder, more logical and efficient way.

Cindy Conaway

A student enrolls at Empire State College and is assigned a mentor. She is excited about getting started on a path of reflection and exploration, and reads carefully through the guidelines for several areas of study and several concentrations before deciding on a study from several areas in her first term so she can try them out and see what fits. After this first term, during which she has enjoyed two of her studies much more than the other, she chooses an area of study and potential concentration based on this

experience – something off the beaten track, but that accurately reflects her interests, skills and ambitions for the future.

During the next term, she enrolls in an Educational Planning Workshop with her mentor, preparing a reflective rationale essay, explaining how her experiences at work, at previous other academic institutions, and as part of her hobbies or community service might demonstrate knowledge in the AOS or in her concentration. She then explains how she will use each of the rest of her studies to achieve her goals. She justifies each past, present, and future choice thoughtfully and also applies for prior learning assessment credit, which is approved enthusiastically by an expert in that field. Her mentor feels extremely confident as she clicks on the “Mentor-Submit” button on the Degree Program Planner tool that now holds a list of all the student’s past and future studies and the student’s degree program rationale. Both mentor and student are confident that when the center assessment committee (consisting of an assessment professional and three or four faculty members) meets, it will enthusiastically approve the program.

Alternatively, another student enrolls at the college and is assigned a mentor. The mentee has a basic idea that he wants to concentrate in a popular area of study and common concentration he has chosen because he has some work experience in that area and wants to be promoted at his job. He also is coming to the college with some amount of transcript credit earned a number of years ago. “Tell me what to take. I want to finish as quickly as possible,” says the mentee. The mentor introduces the student to the *Student Degree Planning Guide*, the areas of study and their guidelines, that some concentrations have their own guidelines, and that each step will require the student to reflect and make choices that fulfill the guidelines and then justify these choices to a faculty committee.

The student, after protesting that he just wants to be told what to take, reluctantly chooses a few courses to fulfill general education guidelines and a few in the concentration in his first year at Empire State College. Although the mentor reminds him each term to take the CDL course, Educational Planning Workshop (sometimes known as Planning and Finalizing the Degree), the student puts this off until late in the program and then treats it as a lower priority issue than his other “real” studies. The mentor sends each section of the planning work back multiple times with suggestions, but ultimately, as time is running out and the student has taken his maximum 128 credits and, in addition, wants to be able to participate in the annual June graduation ceremony, the mentor hits the Mentor-Submit button with trepidation and hopes for the best. She imagines that the assessment committee will reiterate several of her misgivings and may have a few issues she cannot anticipate. She is concerned that the committee will want the student to take some different courses and that the mentee will blame her for not finding a way to maximize his transfer credit. If the mentor is a pre-tenured faculty member, or a pre-permanency professional, the implications of a student complaint or a bad review on an evaluation may be dire, particularly if similar situations happen two or three times in a review period.

Yet, is it just as likely, in today’s Empire State College, that both programs will be subject to “re-mentoring” and that the first program may be subject to the same amount of rementoring as the second one. Rementoring essentially means the process of second-guessing the choices made by a student and approved by a mentor because the program does not meet any particular assessment committee member’s ideal vision of a degree program. This could include redefining the student’s area of study, renaming the concentration title, suggesting

studies at a different level or ones they believe would better fulfill guidelines for liberal studies or general education, not wanting to accept the approved “prior learning credit,” or expecting different studies than those the student has proposed to comply with the AOS or concentration guidelines.

While deciding whether to approve each student’s degree plan is exactly the role of the assessment committee, the line between doing its job and rementoring is not always clear. Those who serve on the assessment committee can be from any area of study or specialty, can be adjunct instructors or full-time mentors, may be early in their careers or have been at the college for more than 20 years, and frequently have ideas about guidelines, expectations for the field, expectations for graduate schools, and appropriate course titles that are not explicitly manifest in the often intentionally vague AOS and concentration guidelines as set out in the *Student Degree Planning Guide* and on the college’s website. Some committee members, like most academics, may want to demonstrate their expertise and effort in reviewing a large group of student portfolios, and therefore may express concerns or question decisions as a way of proving their worth, potentially undercutting the work of the original mentor.

For instance, a mentor with a Ph.D. in English may feel that students cannot possibly graduate with a degree in English without at least one course dealing with literature from before the 17th century (preferably Shakespeare), at least one course from the 17th to 19th centuries, and at least one course in poetry (even if no one at that center regularly offers such a study or is entirely qualified to do so). A mentor from the field of business may firmly believe that the guideline for students to take a course in Understanding Organizations in a Larger Context must include a course or study with the words “international” or “global” in the title.

If a student puts a degree together that doesn’t comply with the guidelines as the committee sees fit for that title, it often recommends that the concentration title or sometimes the area of study be changed, even if both were agreed upon between the

student and a mentor with a much closer alliance to that specialty than anyone on the committee. Sometimes, the concentration is labeled “weak but acceptable” or a weaselly word like “studies” is added to the concentration title of such a weaker program so that, for example, a student in psychology with a mentor who isn’t an expert in that area, who really hasn’t guessed at the meaning of the opaque guidelines in the *Student Degree Planning Guide* (which basically refers students to another website) will find herself with a degree in Studies in Psychology or Psychology Studies, neither of which were her goal. The mentor is then forced to say to the student something like, “That’s OK, your concentration title is not printed on your diploma, anyhow,” even though it *does* show up on the transcript that will be examined by graduate schools and some employers. Both students in situation A and B are probably confused, frustrated, and surprised by the changes, and their mentors are equally upset that they’ve worked hard and yet been second-guessed.

I wanted to convene this panel, and then co-write this article and start an online dialogue, because mentors and assessment professionals, others who attended, and still other colleagues with whom I’ve spoken in other situations – from student services, the Office of the Registrar, administration and other groups – feel that students are being short-changed while assessment committees spend a lot of time questioning things that may not be of consequence – at least not sufficient to generate a flurry of often anxiety-provoking emails among assessment professionals, mentors, and students, and a lot of re-work during time that might be better spent teaching students, helping them complete the degrees they want (relevant to their goals of getting jobs or getting into graduate school), doing research that would make the teaching better, or streamlining processes at the college that would improve the educational experience and make things clearer for students.

It also is frustrating to those of us in “support” of AOSs such as Cultural Studies (my own area), to be asked to approve programs far from our areas of expertise such as emergency management or information technology. In such situations,

we may attempt to defer to those in the room with more expertise; yet such deference may itself be misconstrued as an unwillingness to do our jobs. At the same time, when we are familiar with a field, such as when the occasional media studies, communications, or Cultural Studies program crosses my path, or when the degree plan and rationale of a student one mentors in those areas is set before a committee in which the members have less or no experience in those fields, we may feel that our expertise is not taken into account at all.

I have found that when the Good Practices for Mentoring document is handed out (which often happens toward the beginning of an academic year at CDL), or when someone in the group gets others on the committee to agree not to rementor (which sometimes happens), there is much less of this often superfluous activity. There are still questions, and sometimes the student does indeed need to change or clarify the degree plan or rationale essay, but the consideration then seems simply to be about standards not being met, rather than the imposition of the personal preferences of committee members. Therefore, it seems to me that we can stick to our high standards without making things unnecessarily tougher for our co-workers and, especially for students.

Bernard Smith

The idea that a group of faculty can consistently review degree plans without rementoring may be more a hoped-for wish than a reality because it strikes me that there are powerful forces at play that encourage rementoring rather than discourage this practice. Let me touch on three or four.

First, the college has several layers of review through which degree programs must go, culminating before graduation in the concurrence by the Office of Collegewide Academic Review (OCAR) of center or unit approval of programs. Before OCAR sees a program, the primary mentor has typically “OK’d” it before submitting it to the local Center Office of Academic Review (COAR), and the COAR reviews it before scheduling a committee of faculty to consider it for center approval. By way of demonstrating that they have engaged with

all due diligence, faculty, we might argue, will tend to add their thumbprint to the degree plan under review in much the same way they would tweak a memo or a draft of a paper if they were asked to simply read it. Doing something rather than nothing is a more likely activity and that “something” in this context is likely to be viewed as an act of rementoring.

Empire State College has adopted a radically open curriculum. Students are thrown into the deep end and told to devise their own curriculum. At some colleges, faculty are involved in internecine wars over curriculum decisions and, where many heads with much knowledge are often unable to reach consensus, we expect undergraduate students to develop a curriculum for one – for themselves – that will pass muster among a group of faculty that sometimes claim ignorance of the field they are asked to consider and sometimes claim great expertise.

And yet, neither camp is correct because we don't ask faculty to consider degree plans as subject experts. Rather we ask them to read students' rationales for their selection of studies. In other words, we ask faculty to leave their particular and specific expertise outside the door of the committee room and take their seats as reasonable readers, as critical thinkers. We ask them to adopt a generalist approach to the curricula (the degree programs) that they are asked to consider. The college provides them with some help. It provides them with guidelines for all the areas of study and guidelines for the more common concentrations. But two distinct problems arise.

The first is: how are faculty to invoke and use these guidelines? Guidelines don't have to be like train tracks for many members of faculty to consider them like the lines you find in children's painting books. Is the idea then that one may freely ignore those thick black lines, or should the student carefully attend to them, making sure that her crayons or brushes never transgress a line? While some members of the faculty committee argue that the guidelines are simply there to help both student and faculty think about the plan of study, others argue that those guidelines are strictures that need to be adhered to if the degree in question is

to mean anything. What some faculty see as calling attention to guidelines, others see as rementoring.

The second problem that arises from guidelines is in how a reader makes sense of the information published. The guidelines say what they say, but how does one make sense of what they say? Does a student who intends to graduate with any concentration in the Business, Management and Economics area of study need basic knowledge of economics? Does she need to know something about accounting? What kind of quantitative skills are appropriate for someone seeking a concentration in management or human resource management?

Over time, each center seems to develop its own understanding of how guidelines are to be understood. Published guidelines tend not to be viewed as transparent texts to be read in literal ways but as opaque documents to be explicated. They don't mean what they say. They mean what seasoned members of the assessment committee have come to share as their underlying meaning. This means that when a primary mentor is relatively new or when members of the committee are rather unseasoned, their literal reading of these guidelines are very much at odds with the more ingrained culture of the center. And when seasoned mentors constitute the committee, these differences in reading are experienced as rementoring.

Kenneth Pike in 1954 coined the expressions “emic” and “etic.” These concepts very quickly became tropes of anthropologists who used these terms to highlight two very different ways that one could explain actions. An emic approach is the account given by insiders to explain their actions. An etic approach is the account given by the outsider, the scientist, or the anthropologist to explain the same action. Today, I would argue that good anthropology and certainly good sociology treats very seriously and uses emic accounts to explain members or actors' actions, although to read the flagship sociology journals of the American Sociological Association, one might be compelled to disagree with that claim.

But that said, members of the assessment committee often struggle to make good sense of the student's selection of studies.

The problem is that the students' degree program rationale is frequently written as a circular argument: My degree plan is good and should be approved because it contains the studies that should be in this study because the studies that are in this study should be there because I say they should be there. Given such help by some students, members of the committee look for some way to make good sense of the plan they have been asked to assess. They unpack the expertise they left at the door and they now invoke it. And there are two kinds of expertise that are hauled in as they make sense of programs. The first kind is the seasoned mentor who has attended dozens and dozens of assessment committee meetings and who has reviewed hundreds of similar programs. They have seen scores of concentrations in human services, dozens in human development, in U.S. history, in biology or information systems. They know what committees look for and they know what programs need to include. And so they rementor.

A second kind of expertise also is available. The rationale doesn't help but a mentor's scholarship is in the student's area. Such a mentor is unable to make good use of the rationale because the rationale is inadequately written, so the mentor invokes his or her own understanding of the student's degree. In other words, in such a situation that mentors adopts an “etic” approach to understanding the degree plan. An etic approach will result in faculty using their own reasoning to make sense of degree programs and all but ignoring the emic understanding of their plans of study offered by students.

One consequence of this is that faculty will offer their own partisan, skewed, provisional idiosyncratic understanding of the field as something far more universal and uncontested and fundamentally sound (recall again the wars that faculty fight over curricula). But another related consequence is that because they are unable or unwilling to search for the good sense of students' degree plans, and because the plan of study they would draw up would be different,

then this difference is presented in a very peculiar light. Typically, it is presented as an index of irrationality. If faculty's plan of study is right, reasonable and rational, and if there is a gap between what faculty would do and what the student is asking to be permitted to do, then this difference points to the irrationality of the student's plan. And if the plan is irrational, then rementoring makes good sense. In other words, the corollary of this would be to require that faculty struggle mightily to look for the good sense of students' degree plans, rather than begin and end by expecting to find that most or many plans are going to be found wanting. The search for the good sense of a plan would eliminate a great deal of what we come to think of as "rementoring."

Christopher Whann

When I arrived at Empire State College in 2008, I came with almost 16 years of experience in developing individualized degree programs for students at Skidmore College's University Without Walls. Most of the students with whom I worked included experiential learning in their degree plans, and all of that had to be assessed by knowledgeable faculty and experts in the fields. Although my previous background helped me adapt to my responsibilities at Empire State College, there were two things I had not yet encountered: AOS guidelines, and a formal *Student Degree Planning Guide*. In the past three years, I have struggled with both, but not nearly as much as have my students.

Area of study guidelines are central to a mentor's work life and central to a student's understanding and ownership of her or his degree. To an outside observer unfamiliar with the internal operations of this college, the guidelines play an important role, since they define to an outsider the intellectual and academic integrity of a student's plan of study. For a student looking to attend graduate school or seeking a new position or promotion at work, this can be crucial. For a human resources professional, hiring supervisor, or graduate admissions committee, the guidelines can make a large difference in whether a student or alumnus/alumna is prepared and qualified in an area in which she or he claims to be knowledgeable. This may not be terribly

problematic in some areas of study in which traditional "majors" are already reasonably flexible, but it may be a significant challenge in an area where expectations are more structured. As a mentor and teacher in business and management, I have a special set of concerns for students learning and growing in these areas. I will begin with a discussion of Business, Management and Economics curricula, and expand to analyze the implications of this for faculty in other area of studies mentoring BME students, and the implications for guidelines in other AOS areas.

At the risk of repeating information that readers may already know, let me describe some of the internal and external issues that affect some of the guidelines in my AOS. Business departments at traditional institutions (or schools of business in larger universities) have pretty clear expectations of what should be in a student's major. Small schools may offer a general degree in business, business administration or management. Larger schools may even have a series of highly structured, even more in-depth choices of majors, such as marketing, management, human resources, management information systems, finance, accounting and others.

Many schools define the seriousness of their departments or degrees by membership in the AACSB, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.¹ AACSB considers itself flexible in letting its member institutions develop majors and hire faculty in different ways, depending on the institution's varying missions and visions. As such, a small liberal arts college with a business department would have a different mission than a business-focused undergraduate college. Also, a research-intensive institution offering master's and doctoral-level degrees would have yet different missions and visions. Hence, their majors, faculty, and department structures would all be different, even though schools from each of these categories might well be AACSB members. AACSB member institutions generally only recruit and hire faculty from other AACSB accredited institutions, unless there is a compelling explanation for doing otherwise.

While many schools offer business educations and are not AACSB members, and most do not even aspire to be AACSB members, the AACSB expectations still lurk in the background of most American (and increasingly global) business education. No BME faculty member worth his or her salt would be utterly ignorant of this issue, whether she or he followed AACSB expectations for a business curriculum to the letter or not. Examples of "traditional" business degree expectations usually include a basic microeconomics and macroeconomics sequence; a sequence in principles of financial and management accounting; foundational courses in marketing, organizational behavior, statistics, finance (which requires accounting and statistics), information systems, significant exposure to global phenomena in business, and some sort of advanced capstone course in the area of business strategy (often called strategic management or business policy). Scattered through a business major also would be advanced courses in these different areas, such as human resources information systems, marketing management, international finance, cost accounting or corporate taxation, or organization theory. At Empire State College, there is clearly little or no interest among the faculty in seeking AACSB accreditation, but the specter of the AACSB floats in the distance. But does an academic generalist in another field have the same expectations or background? I think not.

Hence the problem: Mentors who sit on assessment committees reviewing degrees in business are fighting battles on several fronts. First, faculty members outside of business may not know about the narrative arc of the history of business education in the U.S. Second, they don't know if all of their colleagues share identical understandings of the sociology of knowledge of business education. Third, they (and we) have a shared philosophy of education at Empire State College that is student-centered, which means that student degree plans are individualized to reflect individual students' goals, interests and experience – that is, *not* to reflect the AACSB's preconceptions of what a contemporary business education should include. Finally, if committee members are

not part of the business faculty but are mentoring business students, they likely know very little about the content of various business studies or the unarticulated assumptions that their business colleagues use when developing, revising or interpreting the BME area of study guidelines.

This is not simply a challenge in business or in working with business students. There are professional associations and accrediting bodies in all kinds of other fields related to those in which our students engage in learning. Perhaps a student graduating in Historical Studies at Empire State College might have a different set of goals than one graduating with a history degree from, say, UCLA. But if both students are planning to earn graduate degrees at Rutgers or Dartmouth, what will faculty members there expect our students to know, and will our students be ready to succeed? Or what about Empire State College students in Community and Human Services hoping to complete an M.S.W. (Master of Social Work) at Hunter or Smith?

We are asked to partner with our students, to respect their interests and needs. We develop guidelines in our areas of interest and expertise, and we are expected to treat them as guidelines, not prescriptions. We are asked to treat degree plans holistically, not as a rigidly set litany of courses. Yet, when we operate in our areas of expertise, we often bring implicit or unarticulated “requirements” to the assessment process and impose them on our generalist colleagues who do not have the same internalized understandings of the field because we know what employers or graduate schools need, and we know the difference between a minimally acceptable degree plan and a strong one. We even bring those ideas to conversations with colleagues inside our area of study, and many of us disagree about what is and is not essential in “our field.” And, unlike students who almost always go through this assessment process only once (or sometimes twice if they complete both A.A./A.S. and B.A./B.S. degrees), we are fully aware of what

assessment committees can and cannot do, and what they do and do not expect, in a degree plan.

One of my greatest anxieties is that the *Student Degree Planning Guide* is not always clear to the students, and is often opaque to us. The further from our own comfort level we get in mentoring a student, the more we depend on the *Guide* to help us along. The less sure-footed we are, the more our students can be subjected to the local center practices and “hidden” expectations that our colleagues who seem more knowledgeable than we are bring to assessment.

I have participated in many conversations about the necessity, timing and even meaning of educational planning. We do not all agree about whether educational planning is a technical matter of entering data so students have a “completed” plan, or whether it is or should be an actual exploration of a “field.” The issues I raised earlier might well be resolved if students knew more about the meaning of what a field is. If they take the educational planning process seriously, and they do develop a common baseline of understanding about what they need for graduate school or for the job market, maybe this problem can begin to resolve itself. But if they are studying with so-called generalist mentors, then the mentors have to share this baseline of understanding, too. In any event, the tensions between generalists and experts, and the tensions between the organic development of student’s individual learning and the external pressures of discipline(s) are not going away anytime soon. If we agree on the necessity to articulate those tensions and try to find ways to ensure that our students understand and can respond to them, perhaps we can create better learning experiences for them and better professional experiences for ourselves.

Conclusions

We understand completely that, especially in this climate, everyone wants to appear to be doing their jobs, and going above

and beyond their jobs, and that a shared commitment to excellence means that we have to have high standards in our various fields. We also understand that students often are not really prepared to be planning their degrees, are not willing to do the work, or may not have the writing or skills in logic required to write the ideal essay for the committee or assemble the best possible program. We also understand that although some want efficiency and to “finish as soon as possible,” others are drawn to Empire State College because they value the flexibility we offer and really want to develop their own programs that may diverge from the ones graduate schools or industries might expect. Either way, it seems to fall to mentors to explain why the committee is asking for changes and to feel responsible for not “steering the student right.”

We hope this piece of writing will lead to some positive action that will improve the lives of those who work at the college, and especially our students. We charged everyone who attended the workshop, and charge *All About Mentoring* readers as well, to continue this discussion in your centers or with members of your area of study groups. We think doing so might help us figure out ways to help students with their work, including raising our “student completion” levels, while making our work lives more satisfying. We’ve also opened a Facebook fan page for discussion. Please “like” the page *All About Rementoring* to participate. Topics to discuss could include: the role of assessment committees; who are the AOS guidelines really for; how to apply high standards without second-guessing your colleagues, and more.

Note

- ¹ The AACSB website is <http://www.aacsb.edu>. The site includes information about how accreditation reflects the institutional mission of member and applicant schools.

Sustainability Education: Theory, Methodology and Engagement: A Sabbatical Report

Lorraine Lander, Genesee Valley Center

From August 2010 through February 2011, I engaged in a sabbatical leave focused on sustainability education. The nature of this sabbatical was both developmental, to increase my knowledge of sustainability and sustainability education (SE), as well as productive, to benefit my own scholarship, professional development and education at the college. It was my hope that this leave would support my ongoing work and interest in SE, and assist me to become a mentor to others as they pursue learning and engaging more with the topic.

My Six Month Sabbatical Leave

This was my first sabbatical and I found the opportunity especially valuable in the context of being a full-time faculty mentor and unit coordinator at SUNY Empire State College. The diversity of work and responsibilities, along with the multitasking skills necessary for my position, are sometimes daunting; thus the extended and concentrated time of the sabbatical to focus on subject matter of great interest to me was especially helpful. There was a certain adjustment phase to entering into the sabbatical and disengaging from many of the ongoing activities of the college in order to concentrate on my sabbatical topic. When I returned to my job responsibilities after my half-year absence, I found myself remarking to several people that my multitasking abilities had definitely become rusty while I had been otherwise engaged.

I became interested in sustainability about five years ago after attending a local conference on the topic. On a personal level, I was at a point in my life where I had moved beyond the demands of raising children and felt that this was an important topic in which to engage in order to make a difference in the world around me. On a professional level, I have been intrigued with the possibilities and challenges of education around the topic of sustainability, a broad and interdisciplinary field that, like justice

and diversity, can be difficult to define. In fact, the most commonly accepted definition of sustainability is “to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations Commission, 1987). On an intellectual level, SE seems to connect well with my previous interests and knowledge concerning achievement motivation, self-directed learning, wisdom, transformational learning and critical thinking.

Prior to my sabbatical, I had read on the topic of sustainability and had attended several conferences, some local and some national. As I engaged in this pre-reading, I became aware of a lack of academic material on methodology for SE, although much has been written about why we should educate about the topic. The need for more sustainable practices in a variety of contexts is the subject matter of many of the writings in the field of sustainability. Thus, for example, colleges and universities are being urged to engage in education around the topics relevant to sustainability in a wide range of academic areas, as they prepare the leaders and managers of tomorrow.

The first part of my sabbatical consisted of reading broadly across a variety of content material relevant to the topic of sustainability and reading the existing literature on sustainability education. In total, I read 25 book-length references, in addition to numerous articles. In order to share this work with others, I composed an annotated bibliography of these readings, which is available upon request and also will be part of the Web page on SE that I am currently constructing with Sadie Ross, Empire State College’s director of environmental sustainability.

During the third month of my sabbatical, I also attended two important conferences on the topic of sustainability. The first was the annual conference of the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher



Lorraine Lander

Education (AASHE), an organization made up of almost 900 institutions of higher education from the United States and around the world. AASHE also has over 250 business and nonprofit members. At this conference, I attended two-and-a-half days of meetings and presentations about sustainability where I was able to focus my participation on those sessions connected to curriculum. AASHE is an excellent organization (the college joined in 2009). If you are interested in knowing more about curriculum and sustainability, AASHE has a great many useful resources on its website (<http://www.aashe.org>).

The second conference I attended was the Bioneers Conference, the largest sustainability conference in North America. Bioneers is an organization that pursues sustainability through a focus on solutions, by sharing innovations, as well as presenting inspiring stories and speakers. Its main location is in California, with numerous satellite locations around the country that also participate in its annual fall conference. Attending regional, as well as the national Bioneers Conference has been very helpful to me in learning about cutting-edge work on sustainability and accessing the top names in

the field such as David Orr, Bill McKibben, Michael Pollan, Andrew Cortest, Janine Benyus, and others.¹

As I progressed through my sabbatical, I became very aware of the depressing effects of much of the information on sustainability issues and the state of the world, particularly in regard to the amount of reading I was completing. Indeed, there were a few dark moments where I wondered if I had made the right decision in taking up this topic because of the weight of negative information. As I contemplated how I could go forward and engage students and other faculty in SE, I worried that all this negativity would be a terrible hindrance. Suddenly, I remembered back to my first conference on the topic at the University of Rochester and how upbeat it had been. That conference was modeled after the approach of Bioneers, focusing on solutions, innovation, and inspiration. I realized that I needed to find something positive, both for my own academic work, as well as to provide a foundation for SE. This realization prompted me to focus some of my sabbatical time on learning more about inspiration and awe, and how they might be used as part of sustainability education. As a result, since the end of my sabbatical in February, I have made presentations at Genesee Valley Center's Festival of Ideas on Optimism in Sustainability Education and at the All College Conference in March on Open Learning and Optimism in Sustainability Education.

One of the activities I completed after attending the AASHE and Bioneers conferences mentioned earlier (and being continually inspired by what I heard) was to summarize what I learned into a document for the college on suggested actions to promote sustainability and SE. This document has been shared with the college administration (as part of my sabbatical report) and with the college's Environmental Sustainability Committee. (This document also is available upon request.)

In terms of books on sustainability education methodology, the writings that exist and the presentations I attended at both conferences were mainly anecdotal and case study in nature, often particular to institutions and to the academic field

of the author or presenter. There was little theory in what I was seeing and hearing and several individuals with whom I spoke at the conferences also expressed concern over lack of theory in presentations. So, while faculty members are being urged to consider adding sustainability content to their studies, there is little available to guide them theoretically on how to do that. I realized that education theories and psychology theories could do much to inform SE, so I began at this point in my sabbatical to connect the fields of achievement motivation, self-directed learning, wisdom, transformational learning and critical thinking theories in various ways to what was being done and what I believe can be done in SE. I began to outline a book that would be a guide to sustainability education using conceptions of wisdom as a model for approaching education on the topic of sustainability.

One last piece of my sabbatical work was a survey administered to students. This survey asked questions about what students already know about sustainability, where they learned that information, and what they would like to know more about. I believe the results of this survey will be useful to faculty members and administrators in planning how to approach SE. (The results of this work were presented at the AASHE conference, fall 2011, and submitted for publication. A summary of results is available upon request.) The survey also investigated a hypothesis that "love of nature" was not required for sustainable behaviors. I included a predesigned set of questions to investigate love of nature and then asked respondents to indicate whether they engaged in a variety of sustainability behaviors from various types of recycling to volunteering for environmental groups to buying local foods.

Results of this survey suggest that students cluster into groups around certain types of sustainability issues both in their interests and in their behaviors. For example, those interested in recycling knowledge and engaging in recycling formed a different group of individuals from those interested in local food and social justice issues. Love of nature also was predictive of only certain types of sustainability behaviors, thus supporting my hypothesis. This is important information because many SE

programs are designed around developing a knowledge and love of nature as core to understanding and promoting sustainability. I believe that this approach alone, while it can be successful, will not be sufficient to reach all students or all teachers at the various levels of education where SE is now being promoted. I presented the results of this survey at the 2011 AASHE conference, where I also presented a paper on the connections between awe, inspiration and sustainability education.

At the end of my sabbatical, I reached out to the Environmental Sustainability Committee with a plan for a college Web page focused on SE. (Having this website was the first item in my suggestions and recommendations for sustainability education at the college.) I presented this plan to that group at their February meeting and worked with Sadie Ross to construct this site, which debuted in the fall of 2011.

The college's SE Web page serves multiple purposes. It provides a location for self-directed learning and education on the topic of sustainability with a rich and diverse repository of information. It also provides a portal where students, faculty and others can connect around the topic of sustainability. There is space for sample degree plans in this area, as well as information for students to connect with faculty at the college, based on sustainability topics that faculty members might teach or mentor. Sample learning activities and final student projects can be searched as a guide for others interested in those topics. There is space for blogs led by faculty or students with expertise, which can draw together those with common interests. We include connections with local communities, regional events, and allow for postings of statewide events that might be of interest to promote one of the hallmarks of SE, place-based education (students and faculty members engaged in local social, economic and environmental issues, often involving hands-on and problem-solving approaches). The annotated bibliography I started will be housed at this site and can be added to by others. This site will not only promote SE at the college, but will be available to outside audiences in accordance with the ideals of open learning resources.

The Web page also will have a space for materials and resources to guide faculty interested in learning more about how to incorporate sustainability into their content field. Some faculty members believe that sustainability has nothing to do with their academic field. Some would like to incorporate it, but do not know how. I believe sustainability can be connected to any topic and it is not difficult to incorporate into various academic content. Going forward, it is my hope that I can assist faculty at the college to incorporate sustainability into our curriculum in the same ways that we have come to include diversity, justice and other complex concepts into the spirit and substance of all of the work that we do.

A Small Amount of What I Learned

Historically, the concept of sustainability has two roots. One of those can be traced back to earlier environmental movements and often cites the inspiration of work such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which was published in 1962. In actuality, waxing and waning concerns about the environment and changes being precipitated by humans reach much further back, at least as far as the romantic movement of the late 1800s (Edwards, 2005).

The second root of sustainability can be traced to the work of the United Nations on sustainable development. This conception is broader and goes beyond the natural environment (notwithstanding the fact that the natural environment touches our lives in multiple and diverse ways). Particularly with the work of UNESCO (the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), sustainability and sustainable development is broadly conceived as encompassing not just concerns about the natural environment, but topics connected to business and economics. Social problems of various kinds also are linked to sustainable development, including topics as diverse as social inequities, health and safety of workers, and sustainable development in so-called Third World nations. In many ways, the three pillars of sustainability – environmental, economic, and social – hold wide appeal and assist us with thinking about the present, as well as long-term,

consequences of our planning and actions on the natural, financial and social world around us.

A fourth aspect of sustainability has been proposed, one that might be called the level of awareness or the spiritual. By spiritual, I do not mean religious, per se. One way to consider this type of sustainability is to think of sustainability as seeking a type of harmony for self and others in the natural world (environment), the financial world (economics), the social world, and finally internally, in living with ourselves, our place in the world, our accomplishments. Fields such as deep ecology, environmental psychology, ecopsychology, and others all look at various aspects of this deeper connection between humans and the spaces they inhabit. This conception of spiritual also may be relevant to research into the mind-body link in various ways. For example, our spiritual connections with the world around us can affect the energy or zest of living that we all possess. In fact, psychologists have begun to examine how a concept called life force can influence this type of energy and even immune system functioning (University of Rochester Medical Center, 2009).

Another concept I have explored in connection to what might be thought of as a type of internal sustainability is the idea of eudamonia or what can be called The Good Life. I believe this is a useful concept to explore in terms of thinking about what is really meaningful in our lives in order to be more sustainable to our inner selves. In researching the idea of The Good Life for a presentation a couple years ago, I was interested to find that this idea often includes having what is desired, but also encompasses aspects of care for others and guardianship. Our place in the world also can be further explored through consideration of ecological literacy – how each of us fits into the natural world and the systems around us. Asking questions such as those included in Tim Jackson's book *Prosperity Without Growth* (2009) helps us look at the real values we hold and how they guide our choices and the sustainability of those decisions, whether our goal is The Good Life, prosperity, or leaving the world a better place than when we entered.

As a broad concept, sustainability can be connected to any field of study, and I have attended presentations on how this has been done that range from inclusion in studies of Shakespeare to theater to history to physical education. Sustainability can be a topic, but can be included in course work in many other ways. For example, sustainability principles can become underlying guidelines for courses and studies. Sustainability can be incorporated through a faculty member taking the same content that has always been covered and asking different questions for discussion. It can be connected to a broad concept in an academic field. An illustration of this might be the consideration of nature and nurture in development studies. A sustainability-related discussion around this topic might look at things as diverse as how conceptions of the natural world are genetic versus learned, or might examine the roots of consumerism in terms of genetic versus learned behavior. Systems thinking is a fundamental aspect of many of the environments in which we find ourselves from the natural to the economic and social. And to extend this comparison further, there are systems within the body that connect our cognitive state, our emotional state, and our physical state, undoubtedly influencing what some might call the spiritual. Connecting sustainability to academic content also can include identifying an important system connected to a field of study and using sustainability principles to consider how that system functions, adapts and shows resilience in the face of challenges. In fact, there are myriad ways that projects and whole curricula can be developed and implemented around sustainability and the academic work we do in higher education.

Sustainability education also could be connected easily and productively with education for critical thinking, something that higher education has always valued. Given the many broad issues in various fields connected to sustainability, there are rich opportunities to engage in analysis, synthesis and evaluation in connection to understanding and planning solutions to a multitude of world problems. In addition, I feel, as we go forward with SE and with open learning, that the need for media literacy, particularly Internet literacy, has

become even more important. Sustainability education studies, discussions, issues and problem-solving can be used as a context for education around media and Internet literacy. Civic engagement and place-based learning also are important aspects of SE. This type of hands-on engagement in local and regional issues also is a rich area for SE, as well as, overall, the foundation for effective learning experiences.

Empire State College would seem to be an ideal place for sustainability education. Faculty at other institutions sometimes struggle with the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, yet as an institution we operate in more interdisciplinary ways than others in higher education. For example, we work more closely with faculty from other disciplines, particularly in regional centers and units. In addition, the primary mentoring role allows for better understanding of curriculum development. The extent of both the institutional and faculty-level understandings of interdisciplinarity and how to approach it in developing degree plans with our students would allow us to be better placed for more interdisciplinary work of all kinds, but especially for SE. In fact, I think the college has the potential to be a leader in interdisciplinary approaches to education and SE due to our deeper understanding of interdisciplinarity, flexibility in degree design, and our overall individualized approach to education.

You might be wondering how students fit into SE, particularly here at Empire State College, given the student-centeredness of our educational approach. At many colleges and universities it is the students who are pushing the faculty members and institutions on these issues, both in terms of “greening” campuses, but also in terms of “greening the curriculum.” Students of all ages realize that understanding sustainability in a variety of ways will be important for their professional, as well as their personal lives. Many would argue that higher education also has a responsibility to offer students opportunities to better understand the world and to be better prepared to handle the future and what it holds. As we continue to struggle with negative news about economics, energy, climate, problems

with the natural environment, hunger, lack of clean water and a host of other local, national and world difficulties, finding solutions, innovation and inspiration may be critical for determining what our world is like in the future.

In terms of going forward with SE, I'll continue to work on my idea for a book on wisdom and SE methodology. In addition to completing the work on the Web page on SE with Sadie Ross, I also am working with two other faculty members at the college, Wayne Ouderkerk and Karyn Pilgrim, on developing a workshop for faculty interested in learning more on how to educate about sustainability. Other opportunities for SE work will likely arise. In fact, even as I write this article, I have a few ideas in the development stage. As I reflect on my sabbatical, I have to whole heartedly say it was an amazing experience and a wonderful

The extent of both the institutional and faculty-level understandings of interdisciplinarity and how to approach it in developing degree plans with our students would allow us to be better placed for more interdisciplinary work of all kinds, but especially for SE.

opportunity. Having an uninterrupted span of time to read, reflect and create was invaluable to me for my professional development and I thank the college for providing this to me.

Note

- ¹ The References section below contains sample writings of these speakers. If you should like to watch some of the

Bioneers speakers' presentations, a select group of them are available on Bioneers Vimeo website at <http://vimeo.com/bioneers>. I highly recommend Gary Hirschberg's presentation from fall 2010 at <http://vimeo.com/15892392> for its inspirational content. There also are opportunities to watch some of these speakers at <http://www.ted.com>. I particularly recommend Janine Benyus, Paul Stamets and Tim Jackson's TED talks.

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Woodrow Wilson and the Princeton Preceptorial System

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Connections are often made between Empire State College’s mentoring model and the tutorial systems of Oxford, Cambridge and the British Open University. But there also is an American model that predates what Ernest L. Boyer originally called “the New University College.” Princeton University inaugurated what came to be known as the “preceptorial system” of education more than 100 years ago. It’s still a hallmark of a Princeton education today, although its creator, Woodrow Wilson, might not recognize the modern version.

Before he became the nation’s 28th president (and the only Ph.D. ever to hold the office) (Cooper, 2009), Wilson was a popular political science professor at Princeton (Grafton, 2006). In 1902, the trustees named him president, and he quickly set out to reform the former theological seminary, which had evolved from a tiny professional school to an elite liberal arts institution of 1,280 undergraduate sons of wealthy American industrialists (Grafton, 2006; Wilson, 1905e, p. 264). His first move was to organize the faculty of 50 into departments (Grafton, 2006). But in 1905, he announced a new mode of instruction, originally referred to as a “tutorial” system (Wilson, 1905b) but eventually named the “preceptorial” system (Daniels, 1905, p. 8) “for want of a better name” (Wilson, 1905d, p. 147), a term borrowed from the English Inns of Court (Grafton, 2006).

Until that point, Princeton students were subjected to two forms of instruction: 50-minute “sage-on-the-stage” lectures or “recitations,” in which professors called students at random to their feet and questioned them to see whether they had done the assigned reading. Under this system, faculty and students engaged as “enemies in guerilla warfare” (Grafton, 2006). Wilson saw this dual-headed dragon as one that did not deeply engage students in learning (“Press Club,” 1905, p. 62)

and separated students and their teachers (Wilson, 1905c, p. 146). “As a university grows in numbers professors and students draw apart, have hardly a speaking acquaintance with one another. Lectures bring them into the same room, but not into vital touch,” he wrote. The large university attracts top-drawer faculty, “but its disadvantage is that the student cannot get at these men; meets them only as a member of a large class to which they lecture; gets their influence diluted by the general mass of men in whose company he hears them; seldom feels any trace of their personal influence on him or has a chance to take their counsel direct from their own lips” (Wilson, 1905b, p. 6). The lecture system produced passive listeners who engaged in little independent thought but merely tried to regurgitate in examinations what they had heard from their professors (Thilly, 1908, p. 403). In recitations, “There is a stiffness about the intercourse, a formality, a restraint: [the professor] sits behind a desk upon a dais; [the students] sit in rows in front of him, and are prodded to expose their ignorance” (Wilson, 1905, p. 146-47).

Wilson wanted to create an “analytical elite” who took their learning seriously and would be prodded to think through and solve problems (Grafton, 2006). He would “prescribe stronger medicine to remedy the lack of intellectual seriousness” on campus (Cooper, 2009, p. 85).



Woodrow Wilson with Princeton University students, 1913

Wilson, too, looked to England’s Oxford for a new model, but he wanted to adapt it “to American conditions and to the traditions of American colleges” (Wilson, 1905d, p. 148). He would not eliminate lectures and examinations entirely but would place them secondary to “conferences with the preceptors, following no cut-and-dried routine, limited to no single textbook or view ...” (Wilson, 1905d, p. 149). This would simulate the intimacy of the small college and the personal relationships it engenders between faculty and students, making professors “guides, counsellors [sic] and friends” to those whom they teach, while retaining the stimulating atmosphere and “original and inspiring” faculty, fine library and other resources of the great university (Wilson, 1905b, p. 6; Wilson, 1905d, p. 147).

Under Wilson’s plan, each undergraduate would be assigned to a single preceptor, who would guide that student through all of the courses in his department (Wilson, 1905b, p. 84). This would allow students to see the connections between all studies in the discipline (Wilson, 1905c, p. 149). The preceptor would meet with his students

individually or in small groups (Wilson, 1905b, p. 84) and guide each student through assigned readings for all of his courses (Wilson, 1905b, p. 6), “showing him his weak points and training him to see the value in the things which he does not naturally like” (“Press Club” 1905, p. 62). “Preceptors” would be grouped “by their aptitudes, training, tastes and acquirements” (“News Report,” 1905, p. 141). “Dull men and very bright and ambitious men they will probably have to take singly” (Wilson, 1905c, p. 147). Students would be encouraged to do independent reading “in order to get a real first-hand command of the leading ideas, principles and processes of the subjects which they are studying.” They would be encouraged to learn and read great works for their own sake (Wilson, 1905c, p. 85). The conferences with preceptors would focus on “reading, comparing, reflecting; not cramming, but daily methodological study” (Wilson, 1905a, p. 108). There would still be examinations in courses, but the preceptors would not prepare them, nor would they devolve into mere coaches helping students pass the exams. Instead, they should be considered “fellow students, expositors, advisors to see that the right work is done by themselves taking part in it” (Wilson, 1905a, p. 109).

By necessity, the work would be greater, but students would be emancipated from the drudgery of dull tasks and challenged to “discover the world of thought” (Wilson, 1905c, p. 149). The preceptorial system was designed to “rouse even the most sluggish human beings received by our colleges to intellectual activity” (Thilly, 1908, p. 404). The work would be writing-intensive. Students would be required to submit frequent written reports to the preceptors. Comprehension of the subject matter and the facility in using language to express ideas was to be judged on a high plane (Wilson, 1905c, 85):

These reports will be incidentally judged as pieces of English, as well as with reference to their adequacy and accuracy. If they are incorrectly or inelegantly written, they will be given back to be rewritten; and if any man cannot express himself accurately and with some degree of propriety and elegance, he will be handed over to the

English department for fundamental drill The object of the use of language, the only legitimate object of the development of style, is the release of ideas, the clear statement of fact, the adequate embodiment in words of some image or conception of the mind. (Wilson, 1905c, p. 148)

This “direct, personal, intimate” approach would enhance learning (Wilson, 1905a, p. 107) and produce thoughtful statesmen, “for the life of a nation depends upon the thought and principle of its people,” Wilson argued, reflecting his own training in political science and his belief in civil engagement. “No man in these troublesome times can distinguish the right course of action unless he has a broad and intellectual mind” (“News Report,” 1905, p. 141). And harkening to his early life as the son of a preacher (Cooper, 2009), he prophesied that, to breed a love of learning might even allow a student to “discover his soul, and find its spiritual relations to the world of men and affairs” (Wilson, 1905d, p. 149).

To implement this bold transformation of the educational program at Princeton, Wilson proposed a bold infusion of capital. He needed \$2.5 million, he estimated (1905b, p. 7), and he embarked upon a fundraising campaign that took him around the country, seeking donations from alumni, the university’s first modern development campaign (Grafton, 2006). It was a tough sell “for philanthropists are not easily persuaded to invest their money in mere flesh and blood” (Thilly, 1908, p. 405). But Wilson’s charisma was winning. In March 1905, he concluded that he needed a new classroom building to house small meeting rooms for preceptors and students because the existing lecture halls were too large (Grafton, 2006). And he wanted to double the size of the faculty and carefully select the best preceptors who would be in sympathy with the new system – “companionable, clubable” gentlemen “whose personal qualities of association give them influence over the minds of younger men” (“Press Club,” 1905, p. 62). (There were, of course, no women at Princeton at the time.) The existing faculty also would become preceptors, and the new preceptors would do some lecturing (Wilson, 1905a, p. 109), but Wilson proposed adding another

50 preceptors to the faculty with the same standing and rank as existing professors (1905c, p. 147).

The Department of History, Politics and Economics estimated that preceptors would need to spend three hours per week per course with each of 12 students, totaling 83 hours of tutoring time. Sixteen of these hours would be logged by existing faculty, but new preceptors would need to devote 11-12 hours per week, plus correcting papers. (It was noted that Wilson himself was not expected to tutor students. [Daniels, 1905, p. 9]). The department chair also cautioned that the cost of books to meet the new system’s required reading might prove unaffordable for students and that it would be beyond the capacity of the library to loan enough books to meet the need (Daniels, 1905, p. 8).

On June 12, 1905, the university’s curriculum committee proposed to the board trustees “a reformation to University education in this country little less than revolution”: Wilson’s proposals for a departmental system and the preceptorial method of instruction (Jacobus, 1905a, pp. 128-29). It recommended the appointment of 45 preceptors – five in philosophy, eight in history and politics, one in art and archeology, 11 in classics, eight in English, eight in modern languages, three in mathematics and one in geology (Jacobus, 1905a, pp. 131-32). They were to have the rank of assistant professor and receive salaries ranging from \$1,400 to \$2,000 annually, with terms of one to five years but not permanent appointments (Jacobus, 1905a, pp. 130, 131-32). By October, two more mathematics preceptors were added, the committee noting “evidence which is already forthcoming of the admirable working of the system ... ” (Jacobus, 1905b, p. 198). No preceptors were appointed in departments with laboratories in which students were already thought to have direct contact with instructors; preceptors were appointed only in “what may be called the ‘reading’ departments” (Wilson, 1905d, p. 260).

By December, Wilson was already declaring the idea a success. The university was “seeing the manifest increase of willingness and interest with which undergraduates

now pursue their studies, he reported to the trustees. "The new system has been in operation but a little more than two months and yet it has affected the habits of the university almost as much as if it were an ancient institution" (Wilson, 1905d, p. 261). He declared, "We are all preceptors" (Wilson, 1905d, p. 260).

There was considerable enthusiasm for the new preceptorial program, and it raised intellectual standards at the university for years (Cooper, 2009, p. 86). It brought a tinge of diversity to the campus; the faculty had previously been comprised almost exclusively of Protestant, Princeton alums. The preceptorial system increased activity at the library, and students and faculty could be seen walking together on campus and eating together. Harvard soon initiated a preceptorial program, and there were other imitators (Grafton, 2006). Eventually, the excitement wore off (Cooper, 2009, p. 86), and the faculty soon found the burden of tutoring students in multiple courses crushing. They were forced to neglect their scholarship (Grafton, 2006). "[I]n the freshman and sophomore years where the work was required and the classes were very large, the limited number of preceptors rendered the full realization of the ideal impossible" (Thilly, 1908, p. 405).

Wilson was "a man of deep and wonderful ideas" but was not good at implementing them (Grafton, 2006). The preceptorial plan, as he had envisioned it, was never realized in an organizational sense (Thilly, 1908, p. 405).

In practice, here's how it worked in one department:

There were 300 students who took psychology in their sophomore year. They were divided into 21 sections based on their scholastic standing; the weaker students were placed in smaller sections. All had an hour of lecture per week by a professor in charge of the course. Five preceptors and two instructors were assigned to the course. They met with students in the smaller groups for two hours each week to review the textbook readings and engage

in discussions of the material. The greatest challenge was in keeping the weaker students engaged, but few failed in the end. The process worked better with upper classmen, for whom the preceptors' groups ranged from one to five students (Thilly, 1908, pp. 405-406).

In every case, however, the instruction was personal. The object was not to prepare the men for the exams; indeed every effort was made to avoid degrading the system to a mere coaching system, although the desire to make a good showing for their students in the examinations could not fail to tempt some preceptors. The ideal was to keep alive in the men an active interest in the subject, to help them understand what they were studying, to discuss with them their difficulties, to present to them new problems and new points of view, to encourage them to read not merely their textbooks, but the standard works in the lines pursued by them. They became members of a little social group pursuing common ends and stimulated by a sympathetic leader. (Thilly, 1908 p. 407)

The university still promotes the preceptorial system as a "defining component" of its education and touts its small lectures of 30 to 40 students and smaller discussion groups with preceptors (Princeton University Undergraduate Admission, 2011). But the system today is largely a "myth," according to one long-time faculty member, Anthony Grafton. Precepts are typically comprised of 12 to 14 students led by graduate students, not faculty members. And everyone complains about them; the students charge that the preceptors are not knowledgeable or inspiring, and the preceptors grouse that the students come unprepared. Woodrow Wilson would not recognize it as the system that he envisioned. But the preceptorial system did inculcate Princeton with a lasting value that student-to-teacher ratios should be kept low, that classes should be discussion-based and that teaching should be the core mission of the university (Grafton, 2006).

Note

The complete 68 volumes of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* are edited by A. S. Link and published by the Princeton University Press. Below are the particular texts referred to in this essay.

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“I have loved being a mentor at Empire State College, in part because of the wealth of experience this college permits: To have and be able to know students who themselves come with such bounty, students who give us their trust, their knowledge and their profound understandings of life and love, and hope we can help them shift and mold this, adding and subtracting, into something suitable to academic requirements. The gift of this time-taking and laborious process is moments like this when my student, even in death, teaches her teacher.”

– Marianne Arieux, “In Memoriam, Catherine Tracey,”
All About Mentoring, 30, 2006

The Neurobiological Impact of Trauma on the Developing Brain

Sandra Johnson, Niagara Frontier Center

Our brains are sculpted by our early experiences. Maltreatment is a chisel that shapes a brain to contend with strife, but at the cost of deep, enduring wounds. Childhood abuse isn't something you "get over." It is an evil that we must acknowledge and confront if we aim to do everything about the unchecked cycle of violence in this country. (Martin Teicher as cited in Stien & Kendall, 2004, p. 203)

According to national child abuse statistics, our nation is suffering from an epidemic of child abuse. In 2009, 3.3 million child abuse allegations were reported that involved six million children. According to Stien and Kendall (2004), "Child maltreatment is the single most costly public health problem in the United States today. It is a major contributor to scourges ranging from alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse, to mental illness, AIDS, and violent crime" (p. ix). In this essay, I will first discuss types of child maltreatment such as sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect, community violence and domestic violence. Next, I will describe the brain changes that occur in maltreated children, and the resulting consequences such as cognitive deficits and poor self-regulation and the importance of early intervention. Finally, I want to use this essay to begin to raise some issues about the relevance of this early trauma to our adult students.

Trauma Consequences

Trauma "produces feelings of terror and helplessness, which overwhelm normal psychological defenses" (Stien & Kendall, 2004, p. 74). The individual response to traumatic maltreatment varies with duration, nature, the pattern of traumatic stressors, and the child's constitutional characteristics such as presence of a support system, genetic predisposition, age, and history of previous stress exposure (Perry, 2002). The more intense and prolonged the

traumatic child abuse events, the more likely there will be changes in the neural systems that bring about persisting behavioral, emotional, cognitive and physiological symptoms that are directly related to the traumatic event(s) (Perry, 2001).

Just one traumatic event in a child's life can overwhelm the stress response and produce alterations in the structure and chemistry of the brain. According to van der Kolk (2006), when a child experiences consistent traumatic abuse, which is currently termed "complex trauma" (a term used by many trauma therapists and psychiatrists), these alterations can cause cognitive deficits, psychopathology such as post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociative disorders, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, attachment disorders, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, aggressive acting out and a lack of empathy toward others. As van der Kolk (2006) also states, there is a link between traumatic abuse and cardiovascular, metabolic and immunological disorders along with diabetes. According to Read, Perry, Moskowitz and Connolly (2001), studies have shown a link between traumatic childhood experiences and psychosis and schizophrenia. It is important to note that, according to DeAngelis (2007), in the American Psychiatric Association's new edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V) which is due out in 2012, complex trauma may be introduced as "developmental trauma disorder" because the DSM-IV-TR at the present time does not have a disorder for the symptoms and criteria involved with continuous traumatic maltreatment of children.

Prevalence of Child Abuse

It is estimated that "8 [percent] of children in the United States experience sexual abuse before age 18, while 17 [percent] experience physical abuse, and 18 [percent] experience physical neglect" (Fisher et al., Gorey &



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Lesle as cited in Slade & Wissow, 2007, p. 604). According to the Department of Health, Home Office, and Department for Education and Employment (2010), psychological abuse or emotional abuse is involved in and intrinsic to all types of child maltreatment. Domestic violence is the most common form of child maltreatment and, according to Straus (1992), approximately 10 million children live in households where domestic violence is present. Children may also be the victims of or watch community violence including beatings, robberies, stabbings, shootings and rapes (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, n.d.). A 1993 study by Richters & Martinez, as cited in Dulmus & Wodarski (2000), reported that in a violent neighborhood in Washington, D.C., 19 percent of the children stated that they had been victims of violence in the community and 61 percent reported witnessing violence in the community.

Brain Changes

According to Perry (2001), there are two primary and interactive defense systems that are activated when children believe that they are threatened. The first system is the dissociative defense system (where individuals detach, freeze, split off or compartmentalize the memory from awareness/the conscious mind). The neural systems involved in the dissociative defense system are co-localized with endogenous

opioids which are involved with perceptions of reality, place and time. Consistently using this defense system causes dissociative disorders. The child may feel helpless, withdrawn and appear “spaced out.” The second defense system is the hyperarousal system, which activates the release of cortisol, alters the hippocampus structure/volume, and negatively impacts memory and learning and causes cognitive deficits. When a child perceives threat, the amygdala is aroused, which sends signals of a danger to the behavioral systems of the brain. The problem is that when a child is regularly exposed to trauma, such as living in a consistently threatening environment, this hyperarousal system does not dissipate and keeps the child in a fear ridden state of hypervigilance. This hyperaroused state can be the antecedent to post-traumatic stress, conduct disorder, anxiety, and can cause consistent hyperactivity. According to Perry (2001), it is important to note that both defense systems create the hallmark systems of being traumatized: difficulty self-soothing (addictions play into this difficulty), and poor self-regulation of emotions, which can result in poor anger control and aggressive behaviors.

In extreme cases of child abuse/neglect, the child may display a lack of empathy toward others, antisocial symptoms and manipulative personality traits. Perry (1997) stated that a lack of empathy occurs because the part of the brain that would have allowed the child to feel connected to other human beings and feel remorse did not develop – literally. He calls this lack of connection and remorse “affective blindness” that can result in “emotional retardation” caused from a lack of critical nurturing experiences and consistent maltreatment.

Experiencing Memories of the Event

Traumatic memories are laid down differently in the brain than are normal memories, and this is why the child may not have the traumatic memories easily accessible to the conscious mind. The emotions or affect of the active traumatic memories are stored in the limbic system or primitive brain. Because the memories are still active, but not easily accessible to the conscious mind, three types of flashbacks

can be experienced with or without the knowledge of the traumatic event: (1) re-experiencing the feelings of the trauma in the body; (2) visually re-experiencing the trauma; and (3) affectively re-experiencing the trauma when exposed to triggers (Luxenberg, Spinazzola, & van der Kolb, 2001). Triggers are situations or actions that seem similar to the traumatic event (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006). For example, an abused child in a loving foster home acted out when introduced to the brother of her foster mother. The brother was wearing a red baseball hat. When the child was able to think rationally, the foster mother found out that when the child was abused by her stepfather, he wore a red baseball hat. Understanding these flashbacks is important to teachers of children of all ages because a child can switch emotional states when triggered, and it may seem as though there was no provocation.

Acting-Out Behaviors

Infants and Toddlers: The experiences of early childhood create the template or foundational organization of the neural systems that will be used for a lifetime. This happens because sensory-filled experiences of the infant/toddler are compared against previously experienced and stored memories, thus laying the relational foundation. Infants/toddlers remember maltreatment. The traumatic memories are noncognitive and preverbal. Therefore, the traumatic memories that are laid down are motor-vestibular, physiological and emotional memories. These memories can impact the infant/toddler throughout his or her life in the areas of attachment, self-regulation and intimacy (Perry, 2011). Infant/toddlers may have poor sleeping habits, fail to thrive, experience depression, nightmares, outbursts of anger and may act out the abuse in play. For self-soothing they might rock, scratch or bite themselves and bang their heads (Zero to Three, 2005).

Children and Adolescents: The executive function of the brain is impacted by trauma abuse. The executive function is responsible for self-awareness, meaningful social relationships, problem-solving strategies and developing understanding of another’s perspective. Deficits in self-regulation and self-soothing can lead to the promotion

of eating disorders, addictions, high-risk/self-harming behaviors. Children and adolescents may have aggressive behaviors and they may exhibit extreme behavioral responses (Cook, Blaustein, Spinazzola, & van der Kolk, 2005). According to Perry (1999), traumatization has serious cognitive consequences. He (2002) states that a traumatized child and a child who has not been traumatized can have very different experiences in the classroom learning situation.

The calm child may sit in the same classroom next to the child in an alarm state, both hearing the same lecture by the teacher. Even if they have identical cognitive abilities, the child that is calm can focus on the words of the teacher and using the neocortex, engage in abstract cognition. The child in an alarm state will be less efficient at processing and storing the verbal information the teacher is providing. (Perry, 2002)

It is interesting to note that Perry (2002) researched traumatized children taken away from their abusive environment and placed with loving families. He found that the children showed increases in IQ of more than 40 points. Perry found that the longer a child is in an abusive situation, the more pervasive and indelible will be the consequences. This research was done by other researchers with the same findings (Money & Annicillo as cited in Perry, 2002). Money and Annicillo did research with children who were labeled “failure to thrive.” They found that the longer the children were out of the neglectful home, the higher the IQ increase. In their study, some children were noted to have an increase in IQ of 55 points.

Disorganized Attachment

Traumatic attachment causes abnormal attachment templates. The most frequently seen attachment disorder in maltreated infants/toddlers and children (80 percent) is disorganized attachment, which is a direct result of brain changes caused by traumatic relationships with the child’s frightening and abusive caregiver(s) (Lyons-Ruth as cited in Moroz, 2005).

Infants/toddlers also may display disorganized attachment in the presence of their caregiver(s), suggestive of a temporary collapse of behavioral strategy. "For example, the infant may freeze with a trance-like expression, hands in the air; may rise at parent's entrance, then fall prone and huddled on the floor; or may cling while crying hard and learning away with gaze averted" (Hesse, 2008, p. 571).

Maltreated children and adolescents may have the following disorganized symptoms:

Disorganized attachment has been hypothesized to interfere with the development of neural connections in critical brain areas (e.g., the left and right hemispheres of the orbital prefrontal cortex and their connective pathways; Schore, 2001). This attachment style may result in impairment in affect regulation, stress management, empathy and prosocial concern for others, and the use of language to solve relational problems. (Cook et al., 2003, p. 9)

Yet, what is important to remember when recognizing that child abuse is an epidemic in the United States is that timely interventions can allow children to rebuild their lives (Stien and Kendall, 2004).

Treatment

Trauma fragments the brain by separating the cognitive and emotional systems as trauma memories are laid down. Trauma lessens the capacity of the left and right hemispheres and interferes in brain development (Stien & Kendall, 2004). Therefore, strengthening the working relationship among different parts of the brain is a goal of treatment. Stien & Kendall discuss a three-pronged approach: (a) psychological, (b) working with family/foster parents, and (c) psychopharmacological. It is not within the scope of this essay to give an account of psychotropic medications for traumatized children; my focus will be on psychological therapy for infants/toddlers and children, and finally, I will discuss working with family/foster parents.

According to Malchiodi (2008), creative interventions encourage externalization through one or more modalities (i.e.,

art, movement, poetry, music, sandtray) as a central part of therapy and trauma interventions. This is important to understand because cognition of the trauma memories is not always accessible, however; the sensory or emotional memories, stored in the limbic system are accessible. According to Steele (2007):

When memory cannot be linked linguistically in a contextual framework it remains at a symbolic level where there are no words to describe it. To retrieve that sensory memory so it can be encoded, given a language and then integrated into executive functioning and explicit process (neocortex), it must first be retrieved and externalized in its symbolic, perceptual (iconic) form, an implicit process. (p. 1)

Most therapists who use expressive therapies integrate their creative interventions with other therapies such as cognitive behavioral and psychodynamic therapies (Malchiodi, 2008). Stien and Kendall (2004) use cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, expressive therapies, psycho-education, cognitive restructuring and social skills training. The first step is safety, which involves making the child safe from perpetrating adults, and then stopping self-destructive/violent behaviors. The second step involves reducing affect, regulating emotion, introducing self-soothing strategies, and memory work. The third step involves developmental skills such as social skills and problem solving.

Therapeutic interventions are used in infant-parent psychotherapy, which aims at "protecting infant-toddler mental health by aligning the parents' perceptions and resulting caregiving behaviors more closely with the baby's developmental and individual needs within the cultural, socioeconomic, and interpersonal context of the family" (Frailberg as cited in Lieberman, Silverman & Pawl, 2005, p. 472). In infant-parent psychotherapy, the therapist works with the caregiver in order for the caregiver to understand how his or her own "current and past experiences are shaping perceptions, feelings, and behaviors toward the infant" (Frailberg as cited in Lieberman et al., 2005, p.472). Under the guidance of the therapist, the caregiver, with this

self-awareness, is able to try to repair the attachment disruptions, soothe the infant, and provide the attachment experiences necessary to "improve the parent-child relationship and the child's socio-emotional functioning" (p. 483).

The Trauma Center at the Justice Resources Institute devised a program (Kinniburgh & Blaustein, 2005) that is being used for foster parents, adoptive parents and child protective workers in order to promote secure attachment in insecurely attached, traumatized children and adolescents. There are three therapeutic components in this program that are geared toward the neurobiological symptoms of traumatization: attachment, self-regulation and competency. Attachment areas may include assisting the caregiver with his or her own management of affect and understanding the behaviors of the traumatized child, building attachment with the child, as well as assisting the caregiver with behavior management strategies. Self-regulation may include affect identification in terms of understanding triggers, affect modulation, and helping the child to identify feelings and emotional self-expression. Competency includes building the executive function of the brain (problem-solving skills), self-development (building a cohesive self), and building identity and developmental tasks.

Without doubt, maltreated children who have been exposed to one or more events of sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse, neglect, community violence and domestic violence need community interventions in order to reduce the symptoms of traumatization, repair neurological damage, and achieve their potential as human beings. These community interventions may be from such community services as: social services, community counseling centers, safe-houses, mental health centers, Head Start interventions, preschools with mental health clinicians, trauma-sensitive schools with counselors, agencies that work with at-risk children and child advocacy agencies. Community education is a must for community members to understand that child maltreatment is at epidemic proportions, and to learn what they can do to prevent and treat child abuse.

How Do These Realities Relate to our Adult Learners?

Empire State College mentors in the areas of Community and Human Service, Human Development and childhood studies are helping our students learn about the maltreatment of children. In this way, I believe, we are agents of positive social change. Information concerning the impact of trauma on the developing brain gives us an important way to understand behaviors of children and adolescents who have been abused. I have seen human service workers who work with children gain a new perspective on so-called “bad children” after they have read literature concerning how trauma impacts the brain. I have seen workers in social services, including child protective workers, gain new understandings of family violence and the importance of early intervention because they had engaged the literature of the neurobiology of abuse. I have seen preschool teachers and teachers of at-risk adolescents being able to teach abused children from a different “lens” because of new insights and knowledge about the traumas so many children have experienced. I have gone out into the community to preschool programs, schools, and agencies that work with at-risk families and adolescents to educate about child abuse, its consequences, and the need for early intervention. However, there is another way that we may not have thought about by which we are encouraging positive social change.

According to Perry (2006), nearly one-third of adults come back to school with trauma issues. These adult learners “bring to their classroom a history of abuse, neglect, developmental chaos, or violence that influences their capacity to learn” (p. 21). Included in this population are adults who, “in response to stress-including pedagogical methods, have acquired cumulative educational trauma leading to fear conditioning” (p.21). To serve struggling students, we have services available such as the Bridge Program, student services, and, at some locations, learning coaches. We also have disability services.

Reflection Changes the Brain

According to Perry (2006), a factor seen in many traumatized adults returning to school is the inability to internalize new verbal cognitive information, which depends on having portions of the frontal and related cortical areas active, which in turn requires a state of what he calls “attentive calm.” This state of calm requires the quieting of the primitive brain.

An interesting development in understanding the plasticity of the brain and how this applies to learning comes from Ross (2006). According to Ross, given the view of the brain afforded us by brain imaging, we now know that the psyche, or mind, can change the brain. In other words, the reflective process that leads to insight has been shown to affect – and ultimately change – patterns in the brain (Liggan and Kay as cited in Ross, 2006).

How can this information be applied to our adult students? When a student is able to develop reflective skills and reach into the frontal cortex, the regulating properties of higher level thought or reflection may start to develop. The student can then challenge belief systems, the self can develop, and according to Ross (2006), this activation of higher levels of thinking is reparative of the brain as evidenced in the brain scans of adults who acquired reflective skills in psycho-education.

Our colleague Robert Altobello (2007), among others in higher education, has written about contemplative meditation as helpful for adult students in learning reflection skills. Altobello presents a three-stage model commonly used in adult learning strategies that moves the adult educator into the role of assisting the adult learner in developing a critically reflective posture. It is interesting to note that in many elementary and high schools various kinds of calming, contemplative/ mindfulness practices have been instituted along with yoga and certain types of music in order to calm the primitive brain and assist the student in moving into the higher level thinking parts of the brain. Of course, according to Zull (2002), the reflective dialogue between mentor and student can

assist the student in understanding and acquiring reflective skills and move the student into higher order thinking.

What we might not have known is that by assisting adult students to gain experience in taking on a critically reflective posture, not only are we responding to the academic needs of our learners, but we are potentially reaching the traumatized adult learner too. We are, in different ways, bringing his or her level of learning from the primitive brain to the frontal cortex, thus producing better plasticity and the ability to reflect. Regurgitating information does not bring such restoration. Students need opportunities for reflection, which is what this nontraditional college strives to offer its students.

Note

This essay is adapted from:

Johnson, S. (2011). Child abuse: Traumatic influences and treatment. In B. J. Irby, & G. H. Brown (Eds.), *Gender and early learning environments*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

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Old Socrates on a New Beginning

Jim Wunsch, Metropolitan Center

“Rational(e)” by Alan Mandell (Editorial, All About Mentoring, 38, winter, 2010) is a dialogue between a mentor and a student. Why, the student asks, must one prepare a rationale essay to accompany a degree plan which itself is a fairly straightforward listing of studies and credits? In the ensuing dialogue, the mentor (possibly Alan Mandell) argues that the rationale essay affords Empire State College students a unique opportunity to become “reflective practioners”– those who can step back and articulate learning decisions on the basis of life and work. This dialogue has lately inspired Socrates, long thought dead, to enter the fray with some predictably acerbic comments on the current state of the college along with a plea for individualized study within what he calls the Ernest Boyer Program.

Mentor: Socrates?

Socrates: The same.

Mentor: My god, I thought you were dead ... the hemlock?

Socrates: Life is good.

Mentor: So you faked the deathbed scene?

Socrates: Took off for Corinth, kept in touch via the grapevine.

Mentor: And now?

Socrates: Distance learning, grapevine, online, whatever.

Mentor: Well it’s wonderful that you’re still mentoring after what, 2,500 years?

Socrates: Thank Zeus, there’s no mandatory retirement here. Lots of aged mentors. But it’s no easy job, especially being in Saratoga around mid-March. A long way from Athens. Say, I wanted to ask you about that kid – the one grousing like so many others – about the rationale. How did that work out?

Mentor: That student is a now a graduate, a reflective learner, a questioner like you, Socrates.

Socrates: Warms the heart. But let’s be honest, most students turn in rationales which are distinctly nonreflective. They are mere recitations of requirements.

Mentor: I understand that. We never expect that all students will do well on a particular assignment.

Socrates: But most students submit rationales which explain little or nothing. And that’s got you worried.

Mentor: I am concerned ...

Socrates: That Empire State College may be turning into just another extension school for adults? Would that be so bad?

Mentor: A special learning opportunity would be lost. These days, adults have many opportunities to earn credits leading to a college degree. What they don’t have is an opportunity to assume ownership for what they study nor are they responsible for explaining their course of action.

Socrates: Can I tell you a secret?

Mentor: Of course.

Socrates: Most students enter Empire State College not to plan an individualized course of study; nor are they much interested in reflecting on their life and learning.

Mentor: Then why do they come to Empire State College?

Socrates: Look, these are not rich Athenian boys hanging out in the agora with all the time in the world. These are hard-pressed working people seeking the essential credential: the college degree. They want it as quickly as possible.

Mentor: Then why bother with Empire State College, which promotes the idea of planning your own course of study?

Socrates: Because unlike many colleges, you earn 4 not 3 credits for each study, and for this you spend (at most) two rather than three hours per week in class. And doing distance learning means that there is no attendance requirement. Plus, we offer credit for work and life experience. And we are incredibly generous about allowing transfer credits. How many colleges allow you to transfer 96 prior learning credits? SUNY fees and tuition – relative to many schools – are cheap.

Mentor: And in exchange for all those Empire State College benefits we ask you to explain yourself – reflect on your life and learning. And the wonderful effect of that reflection is that it can change your life and how you learn.

Socrates: And how often does that happen?

Mentor: Not too often, but it does happen, and making such moments possible is what defines our college and distinguishes it from others. I mean we might fairly ask what happens to students after borrowing and spending a quarter of a million dollars to sit in a lecture hall in order to earn a conventional bachelor’s degree.

Socrates: Well, college has its limits, but all sorts of good things can happen even at traditional schools. Most mentors who attended such institutions can attest to that.

Mentor: True enough, but the process here – the one-to-one interaction between mentor and mentee – encourages reflection and nurtures independent thinking and study habits. This is rare in colleges today.

Socrates: And at Empire State College?

Mentor: It happens here because of a commitment to individualization – in crafting studies and in developing a self-designed learning program.

Socrates: Don’t you understand that even here there is very little real individualized learning or degree planning taking place?

Mentor: But I spend my days working with students one-to-one and so do other mentors. That is the best way to teach.

Socrates: You are the exception, not the rule. We have 18,000 students for fewer than 200 full-time mentors. That's one full-time mentor for every 90 students. The lowest faculty to student ratio in SUNY and this in an institution which prides itself on mentor-student collaboration!

Mentor: We have substantial numbers of part-time mentors and really devoted tutors and adjuncts working with students in individualized studies.

Socrates: But relatively few studies are individualized at Empire State College. Almost none at The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, at the Center for International Programs or at the Center for Distance Learning. There's half your enrollment right there. But even at centers committed to Empire State College "core values," most students want to know right at the outset what books to order for their "courses" and what the homework assignments will be. They do not want to discuss what should be covered in the course. They want to know what will be required of them. They want a learning contract; they do not want to design it. You can't blame them. They need a schedule, need to figure out what must be done to pass the course so that they can deal with what is more important – family and job.

Mentor: My students are asked at the outset to discuss their learning objectives with me. Then we sit down together or on the phone to plan readings and assignments. This is not so burdensome. In fact, it allows us to make a more workable course of study than might otherwise be the case where course requirements are imposed top down.

Socrates: But if most mentors and tutors took that approach – "let's talk about the books you might choose to read" – it would be a disaster. Students demand formatted courses, not independent studies.

Mentor: The job of educating students about the benefits of independent, individualized study is central to our work. That defines mentoring and is the approach envisioned by those who founded this college 40 years ago.

Socrates: Yes and no. Empire State College was founded to serve the underserved students who couldn't attend college campuses. There was no one kind of prescribed teaching approach. Great hopes were placed on "canned" TV courses.

Mentor: Indeed, but we were open to experiment. We wanted to break down the dreary conventions that made learning so impersonal, so cut and dried. Students then were in open rebellion against deadly dull authoritarian universities.

Socrates: Well today at Empire State College, we have reverted toward highly conventional forms and courses, except the large lectures. And this is what students want.

Mentor: Then we have lost our soul and abandoned our core values: individualization, mentor-mentee collaborative learning, the invitation to explore learning at your own pace and your own way.

Socrates: The irony is that those who come here seeking individualized interdisciplinary studies – maybe 10 percent of our undergraduates – are going to be disappointed because so few students or instructors are prepared either to teach or learn through individualized methods. Most students and most instructors are now quite ignorant of such goals. Your ideal student

is going to find himself or herself in cookie-cutter classrooms with mostly the instructor standing up and lecturing or increasingly online in a preformatted study.

Mentor: So what would you do for students seeking the true Empire State College experience?

Socrates: I would create what I call (after the founding chancellor) the Ernest Boyer Program of Empire State College. Within this new program, all studies would be individualized and students would, as in an honors program, assume responsibility for designing the method and content of their learning. Anyone at Empire State College might take a "Boyer study," but students would understand the rules of engagement at the outset. Boyer degree plans would be individualized too. Most other Empire State College degree plans would make provision for limited amounts of prior learning, but no rationale or approved degree plan would be required. Instead, the requirements for the degree would be made clear. Students would choose from a variety of preapproved degree plans. In contrast, the Ernest Boyer Program would invite inventive degrees, which would require degree plans and rationales.

Mentor: What you are saying is that Empire State College as established by the founders is dead.

Socrates: The founders envisioned an experimental college with various approaches to learning. They were committed to freely discussing what sort of pedagogical model would work. I am telling you that a school built around individualized study, if it ever existed, is now dead. As soon as we recognize that plain fact we can revive individualized instruction through the Ernest Boyer Program. And so, on our 40th anniversary, it is time for some serious rebuilding. Ouzo or hemlock, as you wish.

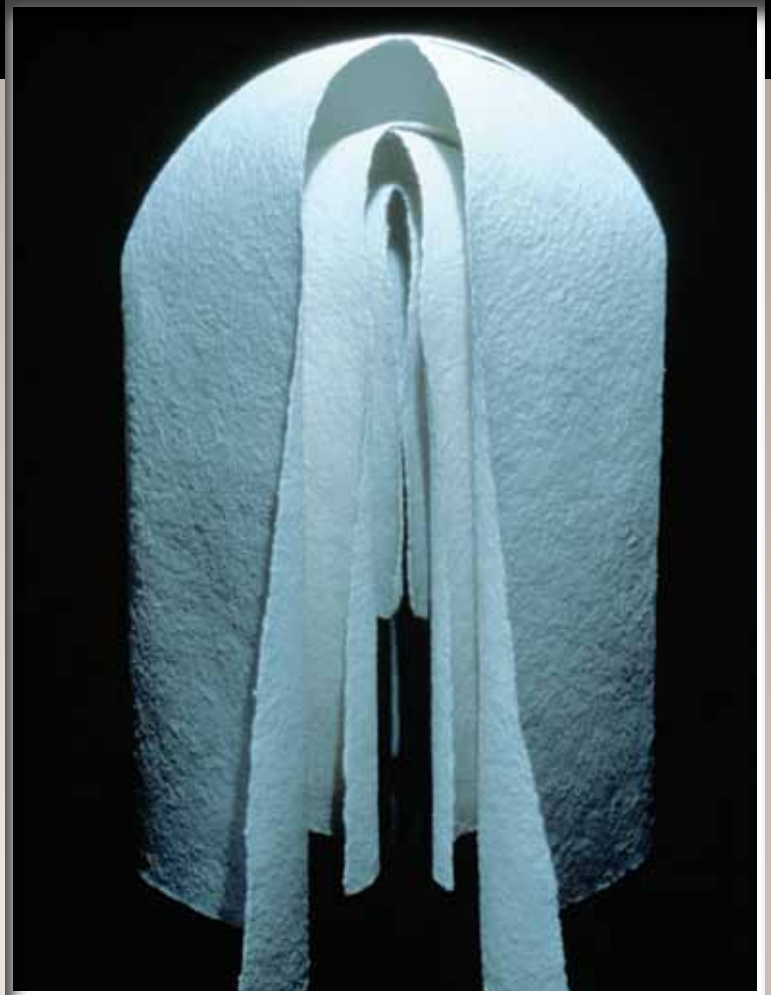
Sculpture

Barbarie Rothstein, Long Island Center

The traditional media of the sculptor – clay, stone, steel – drew me in at an early age. However, as my artistic vision developed, I began to search the uncharted territory of materials that were nontraditional or rarely used in sculpture. I found that my imagery could be expressed more fully through the use of materials such as polyurethane foam, paper pulp, wax, vines and branches. Each medium has opened up new possibilities for exploring my concerns pertaining



Furl II – 1983
42”h x 28”w x 14”d, paper pulp,
mixed media (wire mesh, pigment)



Passage – 1984
55”h x 36”w x 32”d, paper pulp, mixed media (wire mesh, wood,
masonite, gesso)



to the human form, nature and architecture. Whether it was the softness and pliability of foam or the infinite textural varieties of paper, the dynamic interchange between material and idea has

Altar Gate – 1983
36”h x 24”w x 14”d, paper pulp, mixed media
(wire mesh, wood, masonite, pigment)



Glacial Slide II – 1978
30”h x 29”w x 7 1/8”d, cast paper



Spirit Shelter – 1992
60”h x 40”w x 35”d, branches,
vines (sisal, wax)

always intrigued me. Abstraction has been my primary language because abstract form has the potential to evoke multiple layers of meaning through allusion and association. Much of my work is evocative of male and female forms, even those pieces that relate to the geological



Dark Sanctuary – 1991
39”h x 20”w x 22”d, wax, branches, mixed media (wire mesh, wood, sisal)



Sanctorum – 1996
31”h x 9 1/4”w x 7”d, pine

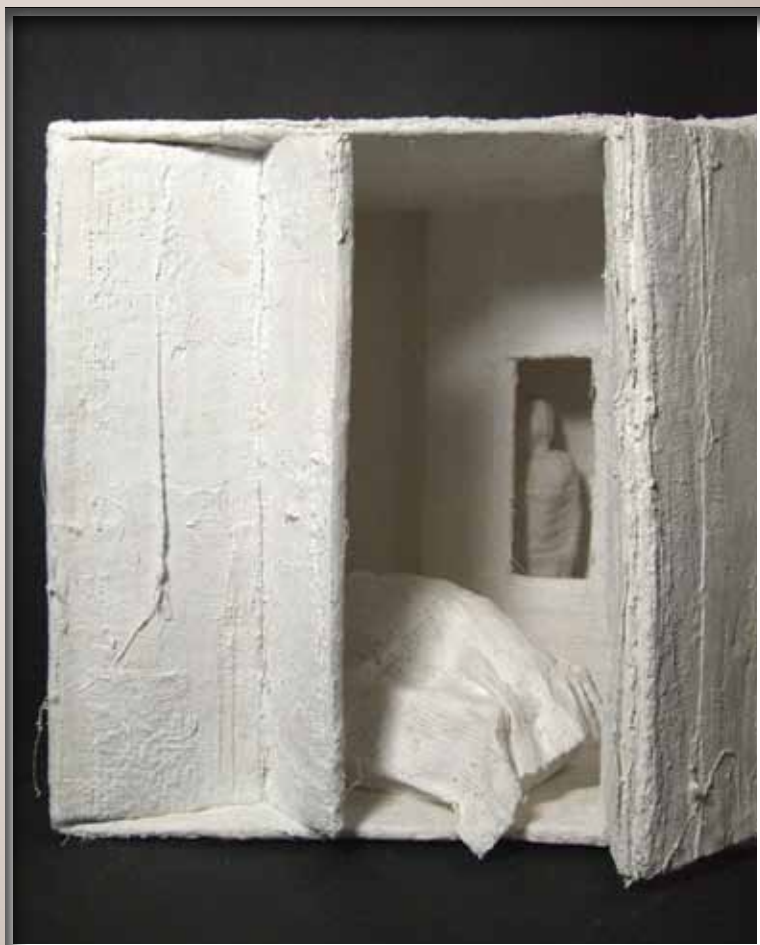
and architectural. But, beneath these more obvious references, there has always been for me a deeper interest in the mystery of internal spaces, whether hinted at through cracks and crevices or manifested in the interiors of shelters and other kinds of enclosures. The tension between enclosing forms and inner recesses has been a consistent theme in my work.



Bed Chamber – 2010
11 3/4" h x 6 1/2" w x 11" d, cardboard, plaster gauze, wire mesh, nuts and bolts



Interior with Figure on Bed – 2007
11" h x 8 1/4" w x 9 1/2" d, plaster gauze, cardboard



Interior with Hidden and Reclining Figures – 2008
12 1/2" h x 12 1/2" w x 12 1/2" d, plaster gauze, cardboard, mixed media (wood, styrofoam)



This push/pull of outside/inside may be seen as a metaphor for the dualities of body/soul, public/private or world/self. What is important is that my work not be read literally, but remains open to the possibility of varied interpretations. ■

Additional works by Barbarie Rothstein can be viewed at <http://www.barbarierothstein.com>.

Jerry's Piece – 1972
72”h x 36”w x 18”d, polyurethane foam (fabric dye)



Wound – 1974
27”h x 15”w x 3”d, canvas, mixed media
(graphite, latex rubber, acrylic paint)



Dangle – 1972
30”h x 36”w x 8”d, polyurethane foam (masonite, dacron)

Making Sense of Mexico: 1975-2010, Part II

Chris Rounds, Central New York Center

Introduction

In the first part of this essay, included in Issue 39 of All About Mentoring, I described my experience in returning to Mexico following a 35-year absence. I briefly explored three sets of interrelated changes involving population growth, the opening of the Mexican economy, and the demise of one-party rule and the democratization of the political system. In this second part, I explore an issue that I believe will be decisive as Mexico confronts the challenges arising in response to these and other changes: governmental capacity.

In one form or another, the issue of government's ability to simply get things done should be familiar to readers. In the European context, Greece has become the poster child. It can't seem to live within its budget, collect taxes owed, or repay its debtors. In Iraq, American leaders seemed to assume that by simply ridding the country of Saddam Hussein we would assure the creation of a competent, democratic government. In Afghanistan, we seemed to operate on the assumption that putting the "right man" in place would assure the creation of an effective national administration. Again and again, we've been disappointed. The Mexican case is worth exploring not because its government exhibits massive incompetence – it is not at risk of becoming a failed state – but, as I will argue, its level of governmental capacity compromises its ability to mobilize public support and create effective public policy. Governmental capacity can be explored at many levels. In what follows, I look at three key areas: the provision of social services, infrastructure and security.

Governmental Capacity in Contemporary Mexico

When I lived in Mexico in the 1970s, the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) was firmly entrenched in power. It was

among Latin America's most stable governments. But assessments of its capacity to govern were mixed. The federal government was clearly capable of wielding a mean stick, but its ability to provide for the basic needs of citizens was frequently in question, and its motivation (what, exactly, did it want to get done?) was in dispute. So had 35 years of population growth, economic transformation and political democratization left the government more or less capable, and was its motivation any easier to define? While I want to emphasize that I have a lot more questions than answers, let me explore three aspects of governmental capacity that may shed some light on Mexico's current situation: social welfare, infrastructure and security.

Governmental Capacity and the Provision of Social Welfare: Education and Health Care

Recent Mexican administrations have placed great emphasis on the improvement of public education, especially at the elementary level. Under the Zedillo administration (1994-2000), "Progresas" was introduced, and it was continued and expanded under President Fox (2000-2006) under a new name: "Oportunidades." The program offered poor Mexican families a deal: you send your kids to school, and we'll provide a monthly stipend, free checkups and nutritional advice. It was a great idea, long overdue, and it has had some concrete benefits. The problem is that the schools themselves are underfunded and in desperate need of reform. Teachers need better training and better pay. Curricula need to be brought into the 21st century. But doing those things requires money, and Mexico's government doesn't have it. Mexico ranks last among the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in terms of per capita expenditures on education. And it turns out that federal governments funded this entirely appropriate emphasis on early

education by reducing its commitment to higher education. So just when student access to elementary education was increasing, realistic access to college was at risk.

Health statistics over the period between 1970 and 2010 show dramatic improvement. Just in the past 20 years, life expectancy has increase from 67.7 years to 73.4, and infant mortality has dropped from 47.0 per 1,000 births to 28.2. Efforts to ensure universal access to health care have been underway since 2004 under the heading of "Seguro Popular" (popular insurance), although there's a long way to go. In Yauhtepec, this commitment has taken concrete form, in the opening of a women's hospital, where pregnant women can receive free and continuing care. Elizabeth Malkin (2011), in a *New York Times* article dateline "Yauhtepec," notes that the progress that has been realized in Morelos has yet to occur in many poorer states. This case illustrates the risks inherent in focusing on any single community. Social welfare, in whatever form, is not equitably distributed across Mexico. The northern states, less densely populated and closer to the U.S. border, tend to be better off. The southern states, (Campeche, Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz and Yucatan) are much less urbanized, much more Indian, and much poorer. The historical perspective is particularly noteworthy here. Between 1940 and 1985, when the Mexican state was more interventionist, regional inequalities shrank. Since 1985, as neo-liberal policies have taken hold, regional inequalities have grown. (See Moreno-Brid and Ros, 2009, pp. 212-213.)

It also should be noted that the drive to provide both universal education and universal health care is not universally shared. In this and every other instance, the real root of the problems rests in the inequitable distribution of income. The

wealthy don't rely on the public schools, don't visit public hospitals, and provide for their own security. Not surprisingly, they resist efforts to increase their taxes to address these concerns. In the last analysis, the levels of both health care and basic education available to Mexicans has improved over the past several decades, yet the gap between rich and poor has hardly disappeared. The lives of the poor have improved somewhat by some measures. The wealthy, on the other hand, have done extremely well.

Governmental Capacity and Infrastructure

Infrastructure is all of that stuff everybody needs, but that can't really be produced at a profit – things like roads, bridges, schools, electric power grids, water and sewage systems and public safety. The failure of that sewage dike I mentioned at the beginning of Part I of this essay hints at a problem with infrastructure, and I want to focus here on the larger aspect of infrastructure of which that dike was a small part: fresh water.

On the very day I was leaving Mexico in early 1975, I picked up a local newspaper bearing a headline about the possibility of sugar mills closing because of an expected decline in the availability of water. Since the sugar industry had been the primary employer in Yauatepec for several hundred years, this was important news. Yet no efforts that I could detect had been made to improve the efficiency of Yauatepec's irrigation system or to intensify cane production, and I had seen no moves on the government's part to diversify agriculture toward reliance on less water-intensive crops. Indeed, the government of 1975 supported the sugar industry and protected it from critics, as governments had for centuries.

Like everyone else, I also was acutely aware of the government's persistent inability to assure the safety of drinking water anywhere in the country. In Yauatepec, regular power outages meant that tap water, for those lucky enough to have taps, was frequently unavailable during the rainy season (the summer and early fall). Most homes had a tank on the roof, and ours had a huge cement trough in the yard ... both designed

to allow homeowners to fill up when water was available. And nowhere was tap water considered safe to drink. My landlord had a side-business selling what were called "garafones" – large glass jugs holding about five gallons of drinking water. Access to safe drinking water was assured for those who could afford it.

A recent study of fresh water and the environment in Mexico makes it clear that those problems have not been resolved. Indeed, Mexico's water problems have worsened since the 1970s (Carabias and Landa with Collado and Martinez, 2005). The culprits are easily identified. Growing populations require a growing water supply. Urbanization concentrates and reinforces those problems, and they are compounded when that growth occurs in a place like Mexico City, where the altitude, valley setting and seasonally dry climate add complications. Expansion of reliance on irrigation in agriculture both increases demand on the water supply and threatens water purity as a result of reliance on chemical inputs. Increasing reliance on aquifers – deep ground water made accessible through electric pumps – has led to sharp drops in water tables, especially in Mexico's dry northern states and in Mexico City.

Improving standards of living, especially among Mexico's middle and upper classes, also have contributed to increased demands on limited water supplies. All of the appurtenances of wealth involve water, in abundance. Being rich means never having to do without. Everything from flush toilets and showers to swimming pools and lawn sprinklers use water. Replicating the North American model involves vacation homes in places like Yauatepec, where the lawn is watered and the pool is kept clean year-round and the owners visit on an occasional weekend. Vacation spots, built by the government but reserved for the middle and upper classes by high user fees, like Oaxtepec, located within the municipality of Yauatepec, also impose high water demands. Multiple huge swimming pools and small pools integrated into cabana complexes, coupled with expanses of irrigated lawns and playing fields, all demand massive water supplies. Since I had left Mexico, one of the old haciendas in the municipality, Cocoyoc,

had been transformed into a high-end vacation resort, complete with a golf course. (If you want a look, go to <http://www.cocoyoc.com>.) All of this in a region where the agricultural future was threatened by a shortage of water.

So how does this relate to governmental capacity? Well, the book by Carabias and Landa on water in Mexico illustrates the case nicely. Every section ends with a list of needed changes. And every one of them assumes a relatively high level of governmental capacity:

- We need more well-trained hydrologists and engineers.
- We need to mobilize and educate people regarding the importance of conserving and protecting water supplies.
- We need to plan for the long haul at the level of the watershed, so that all users are engaged in the process and take ownership.
- We desperately need to play catch up in the construction and maintenance of water and sewage systems.

The list is much longer, and every element is dependent on a high level of governance capacity. Training and keeping experts requires long-range planning for schools and universities, the creation of professional organizations capable of licensing and assuring the continuing education of members, and the protection of these experts from political interference at all levels of government. In Mexico, it is very hard to see how any of those things will happen. Every organization is politicized. Virtually all government employees are both underpaid and subject to removal when political leadership changes. Low pay and perverse or absent oversight encourages and even compels corruption.

Beyond what government can do directly, there is the issue, also repeatedly emphasized in the text, of community involvement. The authors recognize that effective rule making and technical engagement can only go so far. In the end, users need to share government's commitment to saving and protecting water resources. Community members are the most effective watch dogs when it comes to the enforcement of

regulations. And, perhaps most important, the very best regulation is self-regulation. Effective government draws citizens into self-regulation through education and social marketing. Water is saved and pollution is avoided because citizens understand its value and want to preserve it. And so, the authors advocate for community education and mobilization. Yet these things presuppose at least a minimal level of trust in government. To be educated and mobilized, local people have to be reasonably confident that those in charge have the interests of the community at heart, and are both capable of and committed to changes that will benefit the majority. The Mexican government has never inspired that level of confidence and trust.

Let's take a moment to put the Mexican experience in a broader context. Transparency International's *Global Corruption Report 2008* included an extensive special report on "Water and Corruption." Its author, Janelle Plummer (2008), includes a straight forward definition: "Corruption – the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain ..." (p. 6), and goes into eye-opening detail about the ways in which the provision of fresh water lends itself to corruption.

- Those providing water tend to be in a monopolistic position, and often possess "special knowledge" that is not available to lay people.
- They deal with large amounts of money for complex projects, and there is often little transparency involved.
- They deal in a product that is crucial to everyone, rich or poor, urban or rural, powerful and powerless.
- Engagements around water are typically dispersed rather than centralized.
- And timeliness in the provision of this service is crucial.

She includes a chart that lays out the "value chain" of "corrupt interactions from policy-making to water delivery" (p. 7). Clearly, the challenges Mexico faces are familiar to many other countries.

If the experts see deeper community engagement as crucial to the creation of an effective response to Mexico's

water problems, actually achieving that engagement presents a substantial challenge in itself. The vast majority of Mexicans have little reason to trust their government. To the contrary, their experience has been that not just politicians, but members of the bureaucracy, down to the lowest level, are corrupt, out to line their own pockets and benefit family members. The payment of bribes is pervasive, essential to getting almost anything done, and the stories about corruption are notorious ... from the cop on the beat through the brother of the ex-president. Indeed, most of Mexico's ex-presidents have quickly left the country following their six-year terms. And their lives in retirement have been notoriously luxurious.

The deep-seated cynicism characteristic of Mexican society makes any kind of government-supported mobilization difficult. Both the motives and the competence of those seeking to mobilize people are immediately brought into question, and the wisdom of keeping your head down and your assets covered almost always prevails. Over the centuries, it has always been easier to mobilize people in opposition to government than in support of it. (For an engaging discussion of corruption in Mexico, see Jorge G. Castañeda's [2001] *Mañana Forever?: Mexico and the Mexicans*, pp. 181-205.)

Overcoming any of these ills would call for long-term and wise investments: in infrastructure, including education; in civil service reform, including radical improvements in pay, supervision and discipline; and in addressing the gross maldistribution of income that continues to plague Mexico as the economy grows and is integrated into the North American system. So each symptom has a treatment available, yet the treatments seem far out of reach.

In addition to the problems inherent in mobilizing public support, Mexico's challenges related to water specifically and infrastructure generally are compounded by very limited budgets. How can the government fund the massive changes that are clearly essential? This is where the "T word" – taxation – enters the picture. Mexico has one of the lowest levels of effective taxation in the Americas. In their

analysis of *Development and Growth in the Mexican Economy*, Juan Carlos Moreno-Brid and Jaime Ros (2009) note that Mexican tax revenues as a percentage of the gross domestic product are "extremely low by international standards. At 11 percent to 12 percent of GDP in the mid-2000s, tax revenues are well below those of OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, and even below those of Latin American countries with similar income per capita ..." (p. 203). Most taxes are collected through a value added mechanism that effectively places the burden on consumers. Capital gains and other contributors to the well-being of the wealthiest 10 percent are essentially beyond the reach of tax collectors. Mexico's governors, in the long-standing PRI and the currently governing PAN, have not seen fit to tax themselves. In this, as in other dimensions, Mexico is carrying out an experiment in "starving the beast." The result, rather than increased individual freedom, has been persistent inequality, corruption, and low levels of government investment in all aspects of infrastructure.

Foreign investors would seem to offer another promising source of tax revenue, yet Mexican governments are more than ever hesitant to tax their profits for fear of capital flight. Indeed, globalization has further weakened already weak governments in Mexico and every other "developing" country, as they find themselves competing to make their labor cheap and their laws and regulations "welcoming" to foreign investors who are, in their turn, constantly on the lookout for the next, even cheaper, even more sympathetic, even safer haven. So even if the national government was inclined to improve the welfare of the poor majority, it finds itself profoundly constrained both by the self interest of powerful elites that dominate in both economic and political spheres, and by an international investment community whose short-term interest lies in minimizing costs, maximizing profits and avoiding risk.

Governmental Capacity and Security: Mexico's Criminal Justice System

When I first visited Mexico in 1972, part of my orientation at Ivan Illich's *Centro Intercultural de Documentación* (CIDOC) was a lecture about dealing with public officials, in particular, the police and fire departments. We were given a couple of pieces of advice. First, if you should get into a car accident and your car still runs, leave the scene. If you stay, you and your car are likely to be impounded until the judicial system sorts things out. Second, if you should have a fire in your apartment or house, save everything you can before the "bomberos" show up. They're likely to steal everything that isn't nailed down. At another stage in that visit, I had the unique opportunity to visit a penitentiary in the state of Guerrero. It was home to the purest free-market economy I had ever encountered. Everything was for sale. Everything had a price. Drugs were safely and readily available, but only from the guards. Every bed in the place had a price. One gringo I met was bedded down comfortably in the infirmary. I asked him what was wrong, and he laughed, "I bought the bed!" Those who were unable to pay slept on the ground.

Things do not seem to have appreciably improved over the intervening decades. *Reforming the Administration of Justice in Mexico* edited by Wayne A. Cornelius and David A. Shirk (2007), explores the challenges faced by this system in detail. In an essay analyzing the Mexican prison system, authors Elena Azaola and Marcelo Bergman (1998) note dryly: "the prisons in our study do not house the most dangerous criminals, but rather those whose arrest posed less difficulty for the authorities" (p. 103). They go on to observe: "prisons are low on Mexico's political agenda and hence unimportant in the nation's resource-allocation policy. In other

words, prisons are not seen as deserving of investment; rather, they represent an area where officials always try to cut costs" (p. 106). Finally, regarding the forces of law and order more generally, they point out:

Corruption, abuse of power, and inappropriate use of force are widespread among the police, and efforts to stop these behaviors have not met with success. Systems of internal control are practically nonexistent, and both police and former police are frequently involved in organized crime, particularly drug trafficking and kidnapping. (p. 108)

Governmental capacity remains a pervasive problem in Mexico, and events during my stay there last spring and summer suggest that it remains so. Those events



Mt. Popocatepetl, active volcano, taken from the roof of my apartment in Cuernavaca

have, in particular, had to do with drugs and the regional cartels that control their production, shipment and sale. I got a forewarning of this just weeks before my sabbatical began. In December of 2009, the press carried a story about a "shoot-out" between cartel members and federal authorities in Cuernavaca, a city that had long had a reputation for relative tranquility. It was not near the frontier, and had seemed for years to float above the struggles characteristic of other state capitals. But this

story caught my eye not just because of the venue, but also because of the federal forces involved: the navy. What was the navy doing so far from the coast? Well, the answer quickly emerged. When those combating the cartels got wind of a party that was planned for a modern high-rise in Cuernavaca, they were reluctant to involve the army both because its bureaucracy made it notoriously slow to act and because of fear that word would get back to the cartel and the element of surprise would be lost. So the navy was brought in and the raid was successful. Marines were landed by helicopter on the roof of the multi-story condo-complex, a massive firefight ensued, and a rare success for the government was recorded.

Once I was settled in Cuernavaca, it became very clear that the battle between government and the cartels was far

from over. Indeed, many Mexicans were coming to question the wisdom of President Felipe Calderón, of the PAN party, who had determined, on taking office in 2006, to involve the military in the war against the traffickers. Since then, the level of violence had escalated, especially along the country's northern frontier. By January of 2010, more than 20,000 people had died. By the time I left Mexico, the toll was around 28,000. As of January 2011, *The New York Times* said the total was nearing 35,000, 15,273 of whom had died during 2010 (Archibold, 2011).

And the battleground has clearly expanded away from the frontier, to include much of the country. Even when the government succeeded in killing or capturing a drug "king pin," that capture itself led to intensified violence, and conflicts emerged among members of cartels over succession to the leadership role. Although it is clear that much of the violence has been confined within the "community" of drug dealers and their minions, lots of civilian lives have been lost, and the press has kept the public very well informed through what I came to think

of as “narco-porn,” the daily publication of front-page, full-color photographs of mutilated bodies, often bearing placards designed to “teach a lesson” or send a message either to the public at large or to members of opposing gangs.

All of this came to a head for me in April when, on a Friday morning, word spread through Cuernavaca that a “curfew” had been declared for that evening. People who were not in their houses by 8 p.m. risked being treated as “players” in the cartel war. This message was distributed through social networking sites on the Web, and I heard about it from neighbors. It’s important to appreciate that Cuernavaca is most alive on the weekends. It fills with folks from the capital looking for a good time and a swim, and some warmer weather. So closing down Cuernavaca on a Friday night is no small thing.

I went out to dinner early that evening with some American friends, and when we got our bill at 7 p.m., the headwaiter came over to express his formal regret for the behavior of his fellow-countrymen. He said he had been working in Cuernavaca for 17 years and this had never happened before. He regretted the inconvenience to us, and hoped that we would, nevertheless, enjoy our stay in his country. Then he encouraged us to go home quickly, and get off the streets. On the way home, we passed the Zocalo, and it was absolutely empty and stores were shuttered. The only people we saw on the streets were waiting for buses, and not making eye contact. The next morning, the national press carried pictures of the empty streets and plazas of Cuernavaca. It was noted that 1,000 federal troops had been transferred to Cuernavaca the day before and would stay to ensure that “tranquility” was restored.

A few months later, public confidence in government was not enhanced when it was revealed that prisoners jailed in the northern city of Gomez Palacio had been armed, provided with official vehicles, and released to carry out an attack on a rival gang. They were then readmitted to jail in time for bed. Mexican jails have, for years, been notoriously porous for cartel members, but this was the first news of a work-release program for them (Malkin, 2010).

The very first task of any government is to ensure public safety. And in the new global economy, governments strive to present their countries as havens of stability and security. Mexican governments, long heavily dependent on tourism and foreign direct investment, surely place the impression of tranquility high on their priority lists. The continuing war against the drug cartels raises doubts about the government’s capacity to do this. And yet it is easy to get caught up, as many Mexicans clearly are, in the drug war. I wonder to what extent these battles affect most people. On the morning after the “curfew,” life on the streets of Cuernavaca appeared to be back to normal. The night had been quiet, and people seemed happy to put the drama behind them and get on with their lives. Despite 2010 being the 200th anniversary of Mexico’s rebellion against Spanish rule and the 100th anniversary of the onset of the Mexican Revolution, rebellion was not on the menu. And throughout the spring and early summer, people seemed to be muddling through, fascinated by the flow of news about shoot-outs and deadly squabbles among cartels, but not directly affected by any of it. Indeed, while Mexico’s narco-violence has been dominant in the news, the homicide rate in the country remains significantly below that of several other Latin American countries (“Briefing,” 2010). Watching this drug war was not unlike watching the World Cup, which took center stage in June. Everybody was passionate about the Mexican national team. But nobody expected them to win.

How does one make sense of such things? The media is clearly obsessed with news from the cartel wars front. And the number of deaths, the spread of violence, and the seeming inability of the government to bring an end to it all is striking. Yet on the streets,



Celebrating a World Cup victory, Cuernavaca, Morelos, June 17, 2010

in the restaurants, and on the buses, life goes on essentially undisturbed. And I have no way of getting below the surface. I can only read the reports and watch the news, talk to the neighbors and try to make sense of it all.

Civil Society

Amidst the chaos of the drug war, diminished tourism, and a weak economy, there are hopeful signs. During a visit to the southern state of Oaxaca in June, the central square had been overtaken by an encampment of people protesting a broad range of governmental infringements on their rights. Banners and handouts declare opposition to killings and imprisonments, promises unkept and rights violated. In years past, and in more remote areas, protesters like these might well have been killed with impunity. Yet these people were out in force, asserting their rights and affirming their sense of community.

A few years ago, in the state of Morelos, a group that came to be known as “Los trece pueblos,” the 13 communities, organized to defend the water rights of their communities against government encroachment, even going so far as to block the interstate highway connecting the Federal District with Acapulco. Thanks to the presence of news media, that confrontation ended peacefully. In Cuernavaca, a group headed by Flora Guerrero Goff called “Amigos de los arboles,” or Friends of the Trees, organized against government threats to the forests



Municipal police in flack jackets observing the celebration, June 17, 2010

protecting the community's watershed and stood guard over the barrancas, or gullies, that bisect the community. While members of this group had been periodically threatened and sometimes arrested, their demonstrations continued and they even enjoyed an occasional victory. Insisting that society ought to be civil, they were both learning how such a society might function and teaching the authorities what their new roles might be like.

Meanwhile, in the state of Mexico, bordering Mexico City, a long-running struggle between a group of communities known as "los atencos" – because the names of all of the villages involved end with those letters – seemed to be drawing to a close. Community members had resisted President Vicente Fox's efforts to expand the national airport by taking over their land. In a long-running series of confrontations, arrests, beatings and convictions, the group's leaders had been jailed and some of the active women systematically raped by state police, yet the integrity of the communities had been preserved and the new runways had not been built. At the end of June 2010, the Mexican Supreme Court ordered that those leaders who remained in jail must be released. It is here, it seems to me, that hope resides. For generations, Mexicans experienced the terrible risks inherent in posing any resistance to central authority. Yet in recent years, following the earthquake and the rising of the Zapatistas

in the southern state of Chiapas, people were beginning to seize on civic involvement as an effective tool. And every episode that did not end in violence constituted a victory.

The Costs of Limited Governmental Capacity

Many authors, when dealing with Mexico and other non-Western countries, are apt to emphasize issues like corruption and marginal governmental competence. What

interests me more are the potential costs. Distrust of the agents of government is deeply embedded in the lives and behavior of many Mexicans. Massive tax avoidance is a given. The assumption that all politicians are thieves hardly needs to be repeated. No one really takes laws seriously. Regulations are easily passed but rarely enforced.

The pervasiveness of cynicism and rule avoidance also essentially compels coercive enforcement. Instead of winning popular support for regulation, government is left with compulsion. Taxes provide the classic illustrative case. Every Mexican sees tax avoidance as practically an obligation. The rich, in particular, take extraordinary measures to avoid taxation, both by controlling legislation and by hiding, exporting or simply denying the existence of their income. As a result, Mexico is heavily dependent on the value added tax (VAT), which is regressive and largely invisible. The VAT, in turn, drives people into the black market, or into simply paying cash for everything. It is understood in many stores and restaurants, that those who pay with credit cards get charged the VAT, while those who pay cash don't.

The long run cost that concerns me involves the multiple challenges Mexico will face in the next few decades. Mexico has a backlog of underfunded and undermaintained infrastructural costs. Roads, schools, water and sewage systems all were designed for

another era and are overwhelmed by new demands. Each is a disaster waiting to happen. Urban systems have long struggled to cope with rapid population growth. Mexico City is a miracle in the sense that it hasn't literally sunk into the ground, and that its people manage to make it to work every day and haven't risen in revolt.

Climate change, in the form of more intense patterns of weather, may provide the ultimate test of Mexico's resilience. The sewage canal collapse I described at the outset of this essay provides one example. It was raised above ground level because of earth subsidence, resulting from a long-term drop in the water table caused by heavy reliance on aquifer water. Its collapse followed a rare mid-winter rain storm that simply overwhelmed the city's drainage system. Unusually heavy tropical storms also have taken high human tolls from populations pushed onto marginal lands. Around every city, a similar pattern can be seen: poor people building illegally on unstable hillsides that are subject to catastrophic landslides when those unpredictable yet entirely predictable heavy rains hit.

Historically, Mexicans have managed to muddle through. Little is expected of government, and little is received. People rely on kinship networks, belt tightening and shipping their younger generation off to "El Norte," to supplement family income. So maybe the sky won't fall this time around. Yet it seems to me that we may, in fact, be in a new ball game. Civil society organizations across the country are making new demands on government, and raising expectations. Every new generation of young people is better educated than the last, and democratization has prompted them to expect more from their national leaders. U.S. efforts to close the border, a release valve for population pressures in Mexico for 100 years, only adds to levels of frustration at home. And the risk of water shortages – ever-present in the North and on the horizon in the Center, where aquifers are being systematically depleted – might transform an alienated population into a furious one.

At the same time, the war with the narco-traffickers drags on, and evidence of their corruption of government officials at every

level erupts as regularly as pictures of the decapitated. The U.S. urges the president on while doing nothing either to reduce the flow of drugs north or the flow of assault weapons south. Mexico may not be a failed state – the buses are running on time and the garbage gets collected – but it is increasingly evident that it is failing the majority of its people.

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Commencement Address

Robert Congemi, Northeast Center

Mentor Robert Congemi offered a version of these words at the Northeast Center's graduation celebration held at the Hart Theatre at the Egg on June 11, 2011.

Although over the past several years, I have been asked on occasion to write and deliver the faculty address at our annual graduation celebration, I must say that being asked to do so for today took me back a bit. This is after all the 40th Anniversary Commencement Ceremony, as well as an occasion to speak to one of the most impressive recent assembly of graduates. But of course after only a few moments of hesitation, a new feeling replaced my concern – the feeling of how honored I am to have the chance to comment upon the college, its history and accomplishments, and its outstanding class of 2011.

I also must say that I have been exceedingly fortunate to spend most of my professional life at Empire State College, for it has *indeed* been a meaningful and substantial experience. I remember the early, heady days of the college. Talk about change. Thoughts of change were nearly everywhere. And they were not concretized by the serviceable words of a political figure, utilizing an effective slogan, however credible. It seemed a significant part of the entire culture – perhaps somewhat like today's Arab world – had decided to dedicate itself to epoch-making transformation. In those days a cultural war had been declared in the name of civil rights, women's rights, individual rights, intellectual rights, spiritual rights – cultural war of which I believe the creation of Empire State College was an authentic part.

Yes, to my mind, our inception was the direct result of the very *zeitgeist* that was sweeping America in the 1960s and early 1970s. The educational theorists and teachers who gave birth to the college

studied or themselves created – and advanced – the bold and avant garde ideas at the time of individualized education, innovative curricula, independent study, the validity of experiential learning, a more resolute commitment to community and to a widening spectrum of peoples, and the creative fusing of classical and emerging knowledge. To our good fortune, they fought very hard and effectively for these ideas, and Empire State College went forward into the future to grow and to flourish. Learning centers and their units came into being, policies and procedures were put in place from originating ideas, learning contracts were invented, as was assessment, and mentoring, too, was conceived, matured and nuanced. To one degree or another, conventional colleges continued on in their habitual way, other alternative colleges for the most part faltered, while Empire State College grew in size and was studied and praised by educators throughout the country and abroad. I am told that now our college has graduated more than 60,000 students, is the largest liberal arts and sciences college in the state university, and invariably leads all SUNY in surveys of student satisfaction.

And further, it goes without saying that the students who were attracted and came to the college added *their* understandings and abilities to these new ideas. These were students who consciously or intuitively thought as Empire State College did and concurred with its character; students *also*



Robert Congemi with student speaker Patrick Elliott

who were remarkable for their *sacrifices* and *fortitude*, it must be said, as well as possessing this prescience regarding these fresh and developing pedagogical ideas. Students much like yourselves. Students much like yourselves, who over the past 40 years have often given up convention and familiarity and comfort to achieve their choice of higher education. Students *also* who often were in fact living several lives *simultaneously*, as parents, workers, providers, community members, in addition to achieving their associate or bachelor's or master's degree. Symbols and representatives of such students come to my mind – so many working single mothers, fathers with two jobs and night time study, grandparents finally realizing their educational dreams long postponed.

However, this familiar and historic story is not over. There is now a new world, with *contemporary* circumstances and issues confronting our society, our college and its students. 2011 is of course not 1971 or 1981 or 1991. Change is our fate – a historic worldwide technological revolution, 9/11, global warming, alarming economics realities, seemingly ubiquitous

terrorism – a new world order to which Empire State College has not been oblivious. One surely necessitating some degree of new strategies and solutions, one to which Empire State College must be responsive through a thoughtful reconsideration of its nature and mission. Indeed at this very moment a plethora of energy and ideas – for instance, shall we transform ourselves into a great public university? – engages this question of just how we will serve our society and best respond to our current and future students. Without question, Empire State College will continue to express its signature characteristics – a commitment to mentoring, individualization, social and cultural sensitivity. But now it also will commit to a measure of even broader public

service and a wise, bounty-giving use of the epoch-making marvels of technology, marvels that will not soon leave us, for there is a world out there of young people forthcoming who have never known life without technology and will not soon turn from it. And in these new activities Empire State College will have its prize possession: to help its *students* with their independence, their freshness of mind and their ongoing contributions to their families, their work, and their communities.

You know, I try to imagine in my proverbial mind's eye the choices, sacrifices, labors of you, our students, and I find myself, in Shakespeare's phrase, "a poor player" in this endeavor. A child of the mid-20th century,

I needed only to tend to my classes and my studies. How proud of yourselves you must be. I intuit that you enjoy a private, silent sense of triumph and even transcendence. I certainly hope you do, class of 2011. For your particular success only *strengthens* my assertion that Empire State College students, past, current, future or alumni, have helped and will *continue to help* in facing these challenges of what is happening to us and of what is to come. Thus, for my valedictory on this day of commencement, I congratulate and thank you with joy and wish you abundant, unremitting successes. I comfort myself that Empire State College and its ways have served your fondest wishes and will persist in making a mark on your lives and through you on our society.

“Empire State College’s reputation is based on mentoring. Mentoring is what distinguishes us from others in the educational marketplace; it is our unique ‘differential advantage.’ Other colleges may promise the recognition of prior learning and flexible scheduling, but they can’t match the extraordinary and invaluable record that we have accumulated at Empire State College – more than 20 years of experience with mentor-mediated learning for adults, all kinds of adults, women, men, older, younger, part time, full time, singly and in groups, studying the full spectrum of the liberal arts and sciences, across the desk or across the country, more than 100,000 of them – who else can come close to making that claim?”

*– Jay Gilbert and Chris Rounds, “Editorial,”
All About Mentoring, 5, 1995*

What I did on my Summer Vacation

A. Tom Grunfeld, Metropolitan Center

I had a very simple and uncomplicated plan for the August “reading period”: stay home and catch up on the multiple scholarly projects that were in various stages of completion. I was looking forward to coming back for the fall term with a clean slate.

Then, in the middle of July, I got a phone call asking if I had the time and inclination to attend an academic conference in Lhasa, Tibet a few weeks hence. Of course, I would have to write a paper which the organizers expected me to deliver in a mere fortnight to give them time to translate it.

My first reaction was to decline: too much of a hassle; I can’t even think of a paper topic let alone find the time to write it; I am inundated with students trying to finish their work before the break, etc. There also was the issue of attending a conference organized by a group affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party – was this going to be a serious academic gathering?

I began making phone calls to consult with friends and colleagues both in the U.S. and China about the pluses and minuses of accepting this invitation. They unanimously thought I should go, regardless of the nature of the conference: it’s very difficult for me to get a permit to visit Tibet (Tibet is the only place in China where foreigners need a permit beyond the visa to enter the country and my first visit in 1988 only came after 12 years of trying); I hadn’t been there in some 10 years, and meeting people who actually live in Tibet provides a unique and vital source of information.

So I said yes.

Beijing

It had been four years since I last visited China – the longest gap since I first crossed the border in 1977. In the course of that time (in some 15-20 trips since), I have seen

the most astonishing changes in the cities of China, indeed, in the villages as well, but about them I am less familiar.

One example: In the 1970s, foreigners could visit China only by traveling to Hong Kong, taking the railroad to the Chinese border, walking across a bridge, which was the effective border, and waiting in the farming and fishing village of Shenzhen for the train to take one further into China. The population of the entire area around the village was about 15,000. The scenery evoked countless paintings and photographs of classic China: water buffalos, rice fields, mud huts. That began to change in the early 1980s and today – only 25 years later – Shenzhen is a metropolis of some 15 million people with skyscrapers, a subway and a look that would be familiar to any New Yorker.

Imagine if you will the original European settlement at the tip of Manhattan in the 17th century, and then conjure up an image of New York City today. Now, imagine that progression in a mere quarter of a century and you will understand what is happening in China.

Beijing also has gone through an extraordinary transformation since the 1980s, although the changes were not that great over my four-year absence. The infrastructure that was built to accommodate the Olympic Games was the most notable change, particularly the subway which I recall as very limited (one or two lines), dreary and difficult to maneuver. Today, there are 15 lines with four more being built. There is hardly a corner of Beijing where it doesn’t go, and the cars and stations can only make a New Yorker green with envy. All but the first two lines have been built in the last 10-12 years. Moreover, it only costs 30 cents a ride.

But I don’t go to China for the architecture and urban development. My interest is history, and to a lesser degree, what’s going

on at the moment. All of us who engage in China-watching do our due diligence to keep up with our fields by reading books, academic journals, newspapers and magazines from China, attending scholarly conferences and seminars. When it comes to most subjects, that works well enough. But in China, there are some issues that are taboo: independence of Tibet and Taiwan; Falung Gong; corruption among the highest officials and their offspring (“princelings” they are called); and rule by the CCP. These, and a few others, are not openly discussed in publications or on the Internet in China. Nevertheless, one of the most admirable changes in recent decades has been the enormous amount of personal freedom Chinese now enjoy. One aspect of that freedom is their ability – and their willingness – to speak privately to people they trust about any topic at all, even those topics officially frowned upon.

What that means for people like me is that being in China, making contacts and friends, is vital to a better understanding of what is happening. In the end, that was the principal reason I decided to attend the conference in Lhasa: to have an opportunity to talk to resident Tibetans to find out more about what was really going on. I went to Beijing eight days before I left for Lhasa precisely for the same reason: to see friends, colleagues and acquaintances and sit around endless dishes of Chinese food (most, but not all, prodigious and delicious) and talk about China. It becomes an obsession.

I cannot relate everything I learned without putting some people into jeopardy, but two items stand out: 1. The ability of the CCP to reinvent itself to meet social and political problems in order to maintain power; and 2. The stark contrast between the almost unimaginable growth and the speed of modernization, and the deeply felt insecurity of the government.

When communism ended in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, pundits were in full throat about “the coming collapse of China,” as a popular book from 2001 was titled. One could fill a library with publications that foretold of the almost certain imminent demise of communist rule in China. The Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, based some political decisions on this hoped-for outcome, only to discover that his erroneous judgment had significant negative consequences for his cause.

There is no ideology left in China apart from lip service to Marxism or Mao Zedong. The CCP rules on a social contract that promises the Chinese a better material life in return for acceptance of CCP rule. This is deeply Chinese; as Confucius taught more than 2,000 years ago, the single most important task for a ruler was improving the material life of his subjects. In addition, the unique form of government that evolved out of Confucian beliefs prescribed that an emperor could remain in power only so long as he fulfilled the wishes of his subjects. Indeed, the Chinese were taught that if a ruler did not act properly, he lost his authority (the Mandate of Heaven) and he needed to be overthrown. So staying in power in China has always meant making life better for the people.

But maintaining economic growth in the 21st century is not that easy. Moreover, additional problems such as corruption, environmental degradation and authoritarian officials create social unrest. There are some 100,000 “mass incidents” (strikes, demonstrations, petitionings, etc.) in China every year, and while they are all about local issues, the fear that they may come together into some nationwide movement is palpable. Add to that the examples of the “color revolutions” of a decade ago, the Arab Spring, the power of social media (despite herculean efforts to monitor it), and they all lead to the sleepless nights that Chinese officials are apparently enduring. Their gross overreactions to small incidents are the most obvious example of their nervousness.

How these contradictory forces will play out is anyone’s guess. Will continued economic growth and infrastructure expansion overcome social problems,

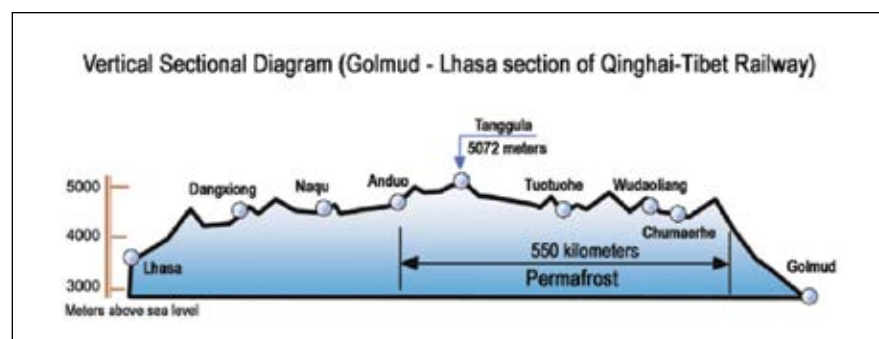
or will the social problems put a brake on economic growth and, in a worst case scenario, will China implode? I have no idea, nor does anyone else, although it is a major topic of discussion over those countless plates of food.

Getting to Tibet¹

There are two ways to get to Tibet from Beijing. The easiest is a four-hour direct flight to Lhasa. The slowest (and cheapest) way is the 48-hour train ride. Our sponsors decided that we would fly about halfway to Xining in western China, and then take the train from there (a trip of 1,200 miles) cutting the voyage to a mere 26 hours. A plane from Xining would have been two to three hours, as the distance is only 750 miles as the crow flies.

The train itself was a disappointment. All the publicity had shown a sleek, ultra-modern train that had sealed windows and doors and oxygen pumped in because the train went as high as almost 17,000 feet above sea level (80 percent of the journey from Xining is over 13,000 feet). Sadly, the train we boarded was a normal Chinese train in which we, indeed, could not open the windows. But like so many of these trains, few things actually worked including most of the oxygen nozzles. It was probably for the best because it began the process of acclimatization to the thin air.

It’s not the train that is a marvel but the tracks that created this “Sky Train.” Finished in 2006 at the cost of tens of billions of dollars, it is an impressive engineering feat since much of it is built on permafrost and at elevations never before attempted, which made the engineering extremely difficult (see diagram).



Source: Wikipedia

Lhasa

I hadn’t been in Lhasa in 10 years and the most striking first impression was how Chinese the city has become. The Tibetan part around the main Jokhang Cathedral and the Dalai Lama’s palace, the Potala, are still there, but they have been surrounded by an ever-enlarging Chinese city, which is indistinguishable from any other Chinese city. The juxtaposition of the traditional Tibetan section and the new Chinese area was, for me at least, quite jarring.

Lhasa means “Place of the Gods” and sits in a valley just shy of 12,000 feet above sea level. The population of the city is about 250,000 people who have official permission to live there (all Chinese citizens need a household registration, *hukou*, for the place they live), of which 90 percent are Tibetan. But, during tourist season, another 250,000 to 300,000 or so Chinese come even though they are not officially allowed to live there. Since the 1980s, the Chinese government has given its citizens more freedom to travel and the *hukou* system is only selectively enforced. These non-Tibetans are sojourners but stay long enough and in enough numbers to radically alter the nature of the city. Estimates are that some 70 to 75 percent of these Chinese go back home during the winter months.

Ethnic tension is very high and the authorities appear to be scared. At each entrance to the Tibetan section, there are armed soldiers; anywhere from two to six depending on the size of the street. They wear battle helmets, bulletproof vests, shin guards that stretch from the top of their boots and cover their knees, and carry assault rifles in front of them at the ready. Periodically, groups of five to six soldiers,



Soldiers from the People's Armed Police standing in front of the mosque in Lhasa



Students learning traditional Tibetan Buddhist religious (*thangka*) painting at the University of Tibet, Lhasa



The Potala, the traditional winter home of the Dalai Lamas, Lhasa

identically dressed, march through the quarter. They also can be seen on rooftops where, I assume, they could practice their expertise as sharpshooters. Then there are numerous uniformed police and also plain-clothed security of some kind identifiable by the side arms they are wearing. And there

are cameras and cameras and cameras; enough to even make the head of the New York Police Department envious.

There has been tension between Tibetans and Chinese from the first arrival of Chinese troops in Lhasa in late 1950. These feelings were exacerbated by multiple events such as a guerilla war against Chinese rule that lasted from 1956 to the early 1970s. Chinese policies in the years immediately after an abortive uprising in Tibet in 1959 (when the Dalai Lama fled into Indian exile) and during the early years (1966-1969) of the Cultural Revolution further exacerbated ethnic rifts that, if they ever heal, could take generations. The years 1987-1993 also saw demonstrations, predominately by Buddhist monks, some of which were brutally suppressed. In 2008, there were ethnic riots which saw Tibetans, for the first time, resort to violence, attacking and killing (18 by Beijing's count) Chinese, along with some Tibetans who were innocently caught up in the events. Then in the run-up to the Olympics in 2010, Tibetan exiles made concerted, and in several cases successful, efforts to thwart the worldwide parade of the Olympic flag. Add to that toxic mix the possible precedents set by the color revolutions and the Arab Spring, and it's not hard to see why officials in Tibet are very, very nervous.

Beijing's policies in Tibet have changed repeatedly and dramatically over the years. During the 1950s and the 1980s, the policies were meant to guarantee the integrity of Tibetan

culture (religion, language, etc.) before there was any economic development. Since the early 1990s, the policy has been reversed and cultural security is seen as secondary to economic development. Beijing believes that dramatically improving the material well-

being of Tibetans will lead to diminishing feelings of ethnic nationalism. Billions upon billions of dollars have been spent to this end and it is obvious. Tibetans live longer than they ever have, their child mortality rates are the lowest they have ever been, and there are more radio and TV programs and publications in the Tibetan language than ever before. A nascent middle class has emerged, and the number and variety of goods available to people in the urban areas is comparable to what could be found in any American small city.

Some of this money from the central government is being used to train hundreds of Tibetan scholars who are conducting a wide range of research, collecting books and manuscripts, helping preserve traditional crafts, etc. All is allowed as long as they don't venture too closely to any political third rails.

For example, I visited a Tibetan-run NGO (Nongovernmental Organization) that is going around Tibet and uncovering religious manuscripts in monasteries. No, they were not all destroyed. This NGO is then scanning and photographing these texts in order to digitalize the manuscripts so that even if the original gets damaged or lost, there will always be a copy. They already have several thousand, with more than that to go.

Nevertheless, not surprisingly, the material betterment of Tibetan life hasn't diminished Tibetan nationalism. Tibetans in Lhasa don't like the Chinese and nothing makes this more evident than the grossly excessive security in the Tibetan city. Publically, Chinese and Tibetan officials (more than 80 percent of government officials in Tibet at all levels are Tibetan, although ultimate power rests with Chinese) don't acknowledge this problem, repeating endlessly that all the problems stem from the economic situation and when Tibet is prosperous enough, Tibetan nationalism will fade away. But what we universally hear from Tibetans privately is the opposite.

I seriously doubt this policy of economic development will achieve the results the government expects, although it will certainly materially enhance the lives of the Tibetans. But, Lhasa is not Tibet. Eighty percent of the population in Tibet lives in

rural areas where no one speaks Chinese and few, if any Chinese, ever venture. Here too, money is being pumped in. Every Tibetan family is getting a state subsidy to build a new house, new roads mean being able to get goods to a broader market more quickly, and schools (with classes taught in Tibetan) are flourishing (one Western scholar with experience in the rural areas told me that nine years of education has become universal). Here there is little, if any, ethnic tension since everyone is Tibetan. The compulsory Chinese flags and pictures of the current leadership are not going to generate anything like the tenseness caused by all those Chinese in Lhasa. So while I am fairly certain about how the situation will play out in the cities, how this largeness will change Tibetan life in the rural areas and whether it will diminish Tibetan nationalism in the absence of ethnic strain remains an unanswerable question.

We know almost nothing about Tibet outside of Lhasa. Less than five Western scholars have been given permission to work in the rural areas, almost no Chinese scholars work there and non-Chinese journalists cannot visit any part of Tibet except in a tightly monitored government-

organized group. Moreover, I cannot recall a single journalist who has visited a rural area more than a few miles outside the cities. Consequently, we get a very distorted view when it comes to “Tibet” because we project the situation in Lhasa onto the entire region, which is in markedly different circumstances.

As to the conference, it followed the normal Chinese formula of formal speeches, formal paper presentations and several banquets. There is rarely a period for discussion – and never any dissent – in the conference schedule. Not everyone had time to present their papers, including me. However, all the papers were printed in English and Chinese and distributed in the conference packet.

Next time, if there is a next time, I will try to get permission to spend time in the rural areas. Hopefully, given my age, I won’t have to wait another 10 to 12 years.

So, in the end, I am glad that I decided to go. Those projects I have not completed continue to sit on my desk and generate considerable guilt, but I got a rare opportunity to better understand a place I am deeply interested in.

It was a short visit, “catching glimpses from a fleeting horse,” as one old Chinese proverb has it, but I have a better sense of the situation, and now have better questions to ask and more relevant subjects to explore.

Note

- ¹ There are two Tibets. One is designated as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) that roughly corresponds to the area over which the Dalai Lama had political control prior to 1950 and today is equivalent to a province of China. The population here is about three million, more than 90 percent being Tibetans. However, Tibetans live in a much larger area, the second area, where another three million or so Tibetans live outside the TAR in locations that have been historically ruled by the Chinese state or local warlords, fiefdoms, and monasteries. When the Tibetan exiles and the Dalai Lama speak of “Tibet,” they usually refer to a place that encompasses both areas. Conditions in these two localities are markedly different. When I speak of “Tibet” in this article, I am referring only to the TAR.

“ ... I don’t want to claim that I always make the best decisions, or even that I was always aware of when I was in the midst of a potentially important decision-making moment. But it would take further years of my actually trying it out with students, and conversing about it with other faculty who also were trying it out with students, before I could feel like I was in a position to significantly rethink and revise ... ”

*– Eric Ball, “A Tale of Freedom and Temptation, Part 1 of 2,”
All About Mentoring, 36, 2009*

As Strong as the Weakest Link: Organizational Development Models and Supporting Blended Learning

Suzanne Hayes, Academic Technologies in the Office of Integrated Technologies; Katherine Jelly, Center for Mentoring and Learning; Christopher Whann, Metropolitan Center

This essay is the outgrowth of a collaboration among three colleagues at Empire State College.

We are faculty members and administrators in different parts of the college. Since 2009, Kathy and Suzanne had been working on a series of workshops to support faculty members involved in blended learning across the college. In summer 2010, they invited Chris to discuss his experiences using blended learning and teaching technology at a workshop at the Metropolitan Center.

What follows is a recounting, first, of some of the challenges and context that led to this collaboration; second, of the ongoing development of the workshop; and third, of looking at these efforts in relation to organizational development theory and presenting this experience and analysis at the Sloan-C Blended Learning Conference and Workshop, March 2011.

Organizational Challenges in Supporting Blended Learning Models

For several years now, the former Center for Learning and Technology and the new Academic Technologies organizations have been involved in efforts to encourage the use of blended learning among the college's centers and programs with limited success. Some programs and centers established goals requiring faculty to develop blended studies, with workshops and technical assistance provided by AT and CLT. Another more organic effort has been to "seed" faculty instructional technologists (FITs) at each of the regional centers to work with mentors to explore and support the use of ANGEL, and other Web-based tools to support student learning. The integration of specialized staff with advanced degrees and faculty development experience in

educational technology has been successful at some centers and less so at others. A new approach was needed.

Rather than attempt this alone, Academic Technologies sought out the Center for Mentoring and Learning as a partner with credibility in the area of faculty development. The two groups met on a regular basis to explore our understandings of blended learning both within and beyond the college. One outcome was the realization that technology used in blended learning should be viewed as more than just an "add on" to the mentor's existing practice. With this goal in mind, we set out to develop a series of workshops and activities that attempted to reframe blended learning within the context of each mentor's personal pedagogical values, objectives and approach and to offer technology tool choices that would support individualized faculty learning outcomes for the workshop.

By focusing on individual mentor needs and objectives and encouraging other mentors who had successfully developed a wide range of blended learning resources, we hoped to gradually build a community of practice among center faculty who were willing to help each other, and the FITs who were available for consultation and guidance both at the workshops and at each center. We hoped this approach might support faculty in accomplishing a variety of authentic, achievable goals, and in developing more of a relationship with and getting more support from their faculty instructional technologist.

Context, Goals and Blended Learning Models Workshop Development

Faculty at Empire State College are working during a period of rapid, extraordinary change – both internal and external to our institution. As the number of students grows, as faculty are called upon more to work with students at a distance, as advances in technology provide ever more opportunity to do that, many faculty are interested in learning more about mentoring and teaching online, thinking about new ways of sharing resources, of connecting with their students, and of supporting students in connecting with one another, whether across the state or across the globe. While Center for Distance Learning faculty work mainly online with students, and faculty in the regional centers often work face-to-face or by phone or email with their students, many faculty have become interested in employing more blended approaches to mentoring, teaching and learning.

Blended learning can refer to a number of dimensions, but for our purposes in this project we have defined it as a combination of online and face-to-face modes of mentoring, teaching and learning, encompassing a wide range of possibilities in both degree and kind; that is, how much time is spent face to face and how much online and what means, modes and technology tools are used can vary widely. So there are many models of blended learning.

When AT and CML came together to develop a workshop for faculty in the regional centers, they hoped to bring together their respective areas of knowledge and people (including FITs) to support and

deepen faculty's understanding of blended models for mentoring and teaching. Their goals for this workshop, which itself would provide a blended learning experience, were to help participants to:

- develop a conceptual definition and concrete understanding of blended learning that is grounded in pedagogy first and technology second;
- gain appreciation for the potential of blended learning to enhance mentoring, teaching and learning;
- understand key pedagogical issues and strategies connected with blended learning;
- gain familiarity with practical methods and skills for integrating technology tools in developing blended learning studies;
- learn ways that blended learning can be used to build community, support collaboration and reduce isolation among students;
- know where to go for assistance, support and resources related to blended learning.

Key, however, to working toward these ends would be to learn faculty's goals for such an experience – to build each offering of the workshop around these particular faculty members' needs and interests. And along with specific goals for the workshop and for faculty's learning, a central goal of CML has been that this geographically dispersed and pedagogically diverse organization be a real learning community. In such a community, our learning agenda, our professional development and growth need to spring from and toward faculty's learning goals. And here we use the term faculty inclusively to include our full community.

In this context, Peter Senge's *Fifth Discipline* (2006) has provided a framework for what we are trying to do. In his schema, five disciplines that he names are:

- supporting personal mastery
- examining mental models
- identifying common elements of vision
- supporting teamwork

- recognizing that all disciplines are part of a whole system

In regard to Senge's first discipline, supporting development of personal mastery, CML and AT have wanted to help faculty gain skill and knowledge, to work from their own vision of mentoring, teaching, and learning, while gaining the particular proficiencies they seek. We hoped as well, in relation to his second discipline, to help faculty identify and examine some of their assumptions, which could get in the way of learning new approaches and trying new modes. Regarding his third discipline, our aim was to help workshop participants identify shared elements of their vision and shared values in working with students. We first intended to model Senge's fourth discipline, teamwork, through CML and AT collaborating on the creation of this learning experience and through the support for faculty's sharing with and learning from one another, as a result of faculty presentations. We also intended to provide experience of such teamwork as we worked to support faculty's searching together for the most adequate ways to support student learning. Lastly, recognizing that each of Senge's disciplines is necessary to the whole, through the dialogue of these workshops, we hoped to surface institutional gaps, whether in supporting faculty's development and trying out new approaches or in supporting students' learning and use of technology in their studies. We wanted to consider ways of addressing such gaps, and, in doing, to support our entire organization's learning.

With these challenges and goals informing our work, we started with a pilot workshop at the Metropolitan Center for faculty in the four southern New York centers. The design was simple: We began and ended the seven-week workshop with two five-hour face-to-face sessions, and included in the interim three presentations on Elluminate (a Web conferencing program), as well as online discussion of readings about blended learning in theory and practice. In addition, workshop participants developed an individual project for which they got input from others in the workshop and their local FIT. Throughout, whether face-to-face or through Elluminate, faculty presenters were sharing their work. And throughout the workshop we were looking critically

at both the potential and the limitations of the various models and tools we were considering. It was in this pilot workshop at the Metropolitan Center that Chris presented his work and became interested in the workshop model in the context of our organization.

Key to these workshops has been faculty's sharing of their practices – and challenges – with one another. Bringing in faculty more experienced in uses of technology to share their work with their less experienced colleagues has allowed us to gather effective, creative models as we go, building with each iteration of the workshop this repository of strategies and materials to share across the college.

Through the pilot at the southern centers, we also learned about beginning with more attention to our shared vision, about emphasizing more the ways in which pedagogy precedes technology, and about spending more time surfacing and examining assumptions, all of which we attempted in our next offering of the workshop at the Central New York Center. From participants, several of whom had struggled to find time to do the readings and join the online discussion, we also learned to make clearer at the outset the expectations regarding the time needed for productive involvement in the workshop. Both our own reflection and participants' feedback on the workshop confirmed our direction in: learning and working with faculty's goals for their learning; supporting their development of an individual project; modeling and supporting teamwork and collaboration, including faculty sharing their work; and gathering strategies, approaches, models with each offering of the workshop.

Encouraged by these participants to continue to offer this workshop, at Central New York, we worked to incorporate what we had learned: We made expectations regarding time involved more clear; we cut back from three online discussions to two; and we allocated more time and support for conceiving and moving individual projects forward.

Again, from this offering of the workshop we learned a great deal. From participants' feedback, we learned that, given the enormity of the topic, we should not at this

stage of our work attempt to meet the needs of both more and less experienced faculty in the same workshop. In addition, our own reflection on the workshop suggested to us that we spend even more time at the outset (i.e., in the first face-to-face session) looking together at our pedagogical principles, our values, in relation to mentoring, teaching and learning. And – a key learning – we realized that, along with looking at the dimension concerning face-to-face and online teaching and learning and the many possibilities along that spectrum, we should be looking as well at the dimension concerning individual and group study and the possibilities along that continuum. In addition, reflecting on the workshop design, we saw the need to provide still more structured support for faculty's individual projects. To support allocation of time to online discussion (among faculty with so many demands competing for their time), we also should build in group work and tasks yielding outcomes to be shared with the broader group. We are excited to continue to learn, tweak and strengthen the workshop with each iteration.

Organizational Development and Sloan Presentation

Not long afterward, Chris was at the Sloan-C Emerging Technologies for Online Learning Symposium, hearing faculty members and administrators discuss their own experiences with technology. He heard many attendees discussing the difficulties in supporting faculty in incorporating blended models into their practice, and reporting that projects involving many offices did not take root at their institutions because some key element would fall through the cracks, or because some important player would consciously or unconsciously delay or halt an initiative.

Chris thinks and writes about people's behavior in organizations, and how systems and processes can be designed to minimize obstacles and promote success. He believed that Suzanne and Kathy's efforts were very helpful, but he also saw that there were potential pitfalls that should be avoided. So, to help us think about this further, Chris proposed a conference presentation to describe the Empire State College initiative and how Kathy and Suzanne were working

to support faculty development in the uses of technology and blended models in mentoring, teaching and learning. Among the important issues we discussed were: understanding the theoretical context in which these issues arise in organizations; offering strategies for engaging interest and for supporting faculty learning that would be of direct and lasting use in their practice; and sharing resources on blended learning that have been helpful to faculty and academic professionals in the Empire State College context.

So, in an effort to share their experiences and ways of thinking about this to a broader audience, Chris, Kathy and Suzanne proposed a workshop on this topic for the 2011 Sloan-C Blended Learning Conference and Workshop. They were delighted when the Sloan-C conference leadership selected their work for a 2011 Effective Practice Award.

Along with Kathy's and Suzanne's use of Senge's analysis of the learning organization, Chris introduced the work of Allison (1971), Allison and Zelikow (1999), Morgan (1998), and Kotter and Whitehead (2010). In 1971, Graham Allison published *Essence of Decision*, a study of decision-making processes in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Allison and Philip Zelikow updated the work in 1999 using additional materials from the archives of the former Soviet Union and other declassified materials. In sum, Allison used three conceptual models – the rational actor model, the organizational behavior model and the governmental (i.e., bureaucratic) politics model – to explain how one might understand decisions and use this enhanced understanding. Morgan's (1998) discussion related to how organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics models reflect patterns of interests, conflict and power.

Allison's (1971) rational or unitary actor model assumes that one can imagine a large entity – a big organization or a government – as a black box, with a single set of objectives, goals and interests. For the sake of simplicity, the organization's internal discussions, debates, disagreements, fights, etc., are not that important, so long as there is some consistency or outcomes that one can easily see and measure.

Allison's organizational behavior model assumes that there are significant internal structures and processes that shape the way things happen. Every organization, for example, has standard operating procedures (SOPs) that operate (more or less) consistently. People in organizations are aware of this, and do not always have to spend a lot of time obsessing about them unless there is a crisis brewing and those SOPs have the potential to lead to catastrophe.

The governmental or bureaucratic politics model assumes that power balances, control over decision processes, access to resources or access to leadership are central to understanding outcomes. "Turf wars" are an essential element of analysis in this model. No decision happens without ongoing fights over the allocation of resources, or some group being better off while another one might lose power or control.

Allison's ideas apply not only to the Cuban Missile Crisis but to any large scale decision process. Organizational processes and bureaucratic politics influence organizational change such as adopting blended learning models. Allison and Zelikow's approaches are valuable tools to enhance the understanding of weak links, pitfalls and risks that can slow or halt organizational change.

This set of analytical lenses shapes Chris' thinking about many subjects, and it defines the title he gave to our Sloan presentation and suggested for this article. Every organization has "weak links." There are always individuals and groups who try to move decisions forward, as well as individuals and groups who can control the flow of decisions about or resources for a project or task. Organizations can in fact learn from their past errors and can move to avoid many of those pitfalls or mistakes and support both individual and organizational development.

As noted earlier, this is exactly what Peter Senge describes as a "learning organization." Senge's *Fifth Discipline* (2006) offers a framework for what we have sought to do in our workshops on blended learning. Senge advocates supporting "personal mastery"; in our case, this includes increased skill, not just in the use of technology, but

also in relation to the use of online and blended learning while staying attuned to one's own vision in doing so. Related to a second discipline of Senge's, the workshops also aim to help faculty examine their mental models and assumptions, to look expansively and creatively at pedagogy – whether face-to-face, online or blended, whether individual or group. The workshops also help faculty across different modes of teaching and learning identify common elements of their vision, so they can join a common search for effective pedagogy. Regarding Senge's discipline related to teamwork, the workshop leaders support faculty's sharing of ideas and engaging in dialogue to identify effective ways to support students' learning and using available technologies to support a shared vision. The leaders envision the possibilities for incorporating technology to meet specific learning objectives. This approach also has value for the instructional technologists who attend these sessions. They are exposed to the concerns and conflicts that many faculty encounter, and as a result are better prepared to work with them, in support of a shared vision. New institution-specific but systemic questions arise all the time, but learning organization approaches help the workshop leaders to develop solutions to move past obstacles and support forward movement.

Access to improved educational offerings, like blended learning, is critical for faculty and students. This simple framework can aid faculty as they develop strategies for expanding their blended offerings. Our understanding of the organizational change literature (a la Allison) and our experience at Empire State College suggest that collaboration among instructional technologists, teaching, mentoring and learning centers, and faculty can effectively support faculty engagement and learning.

So, along with continuing to strengthen the Blended Learning Models workshops and gathering and sharing more strategies and models for blended learning, we also are envisioning development of additional offerings, including more specifically-focused sessions (probably through Elluminate or video conferencing) on topics such as strategies for building community online, collaborative learning activities, supporting academic skill development online, facilitating effective discussion online, and integrating face-to-face and online learning so that each supports and enhances the other. We intend in our next offering to build in more structure supporting faculty and FITs working together to support faculty's learning and to develop their individual projects. We look forward as well to supporting our learning organization as

a whole through relaying to the appropriate offices and groups any systemic gaps we discover or suggestions that arise.

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“I do not see professional development simply in terms of adding discrete blocks of knowledge to a wall that has already been partially built along a predetermined foundation. Instead, I see the possibility of playing with these new blocks and putting them together in novel, creative ways – ways that we really did not contemplate when we started out. I would call this creative engagement in education and areas of knowledge, although I would not be unhappy if some saw it as serendipitous.”

*– David Starr-Glass, “Learning for Life,”
All About Mentoring, 24, 2002*

Dancing With “Everyone” Watching

Himaneer Gupta-Carlson, Center for Distance Learning

Dance is free-flowing, rhythmic, innovative, daring, creative and risky. When one steps onto a dance floor, one might feel hesitant until the body unites with the rhythm and releases whatever self-conscious inhibitions might exist.

Dance has been acting as a metaphor for my mentoring of adult learners through Empire State College’s Center for Distance Learning (CDL). I like to think that dance characterizes me as someone who is creative, willing to take risks, and open to going with the flow. But I think dance also characterizes me as someone who sometimes feels vulnerable, and when so, retreats from those positions in favor of playing it safe.

My work with mentees is like this double-sided dance. I invite mentees enrolled in my Educational Planning Workshop to complete a goal search and to imagine a dream degree, and then I work with them through a process of trying to partner their dream degrees with an appropriate area of study and the realities of what Empire State College requires for a bachelor’s degree. As I work with them, though, I often feel uncertain about what I am doing: Will my words offend them? Will they think my soul-searching exercises are “New Age-y” and not academically rigorous? Will I recommend something about their degree plans or rationale essays that will cause others to see me as foolish?

Avoiding Scrutiny

I usually like to dance alone. That is, without a partner but in a shared space where others also are dancing, individually in community – in a Zumba class, at weddings, at music festivals, or at events like last March’s Empire State College All College Conference 40th anniversary “disco night.” I am not good at partner dancing; in fact, when someone tries to grab my waist or my hand and engage me in partner

dancing, I usually shirk – even if that person happens to be my spouse. I do not know dance steps, proper procedures, or how to stay in sync with a beat. Mostly, my dancing is free-form and ever-changing, with the only rule being a willingness to laugh.

Before I became an Empire State College mentor, I taught humanities at a four-year arts college in Seattle and political science at a community college in Tacoma. In those positions, I also liked to dance alone. I liked to do things in the classroom without outside interference. Having a dean or a peer observe me in the classroom was among the more nerve-wracking experiences of my work – not because I doubted my abilities or did not value their feedback, but more because I did not like to be under scrutiny.

As a mentor, however, one cannot dance alone. One must be willing to partner dance and learn some proper steps because mentoring is by nature a partnership. I would not be a mentor if I did not have mentees. And mentees would not understand me to be their mentor if I did not take the first steps in leading them through the mentoring process: showing them how to assess the credits they have earned; guiding them through a reflection of past learning experiences that might earn college credit; and explaining how a degree plan needs to put personal interests into a partnership with basic requirements of a college degree.

Mentoring also does not allow one to avoid scrutiny. The degree plans and rationale essays that CDL students produce in partnership with their mentors are not end products. Even after evaluation of specific components of a student’s prior learning has taken place, these documents must go before a panel of assessors for review; this panel’s understanding of the mentee’s interests and desires is by necessity more distant and less subjective than that of the mentor and mentee. Although assessment committees



PHOTO: JIM GUPTA-CARLSON

Himaneer Gupta-Carlson

generally are fair-minded and collegial, a fear persists: What if the committee rejects the plan? Will the mentor have failed?

Learning How to Partner Dance

This past summer, I danced with my nieces, ages 8 and 14. We started out dancing alone, making up playful, boisterous moves as we sang a made-up song. Then, the 8-year-old grabbed my hand. On a whim, I said, “I’ll lead; you follow.” I taught her some newly acquired partner steps – to the cha-cha, the swing, and the waltz (I credit Zumba for helping me learn these steps). I found leading to be awkward, but I did it. Later, she led. I also found following to be awkward, but I did it.

When I am asked to perform work I have not done before, I find myself reaching for instructions – a step-by-step procedure, a how-to guide.

I received my first mentees in May 2010, about three weeks after I joined the Center for Distance Learning, and was grateful for the step-by-step instructions on how to mentor that I received from my colleagues,

many of whom had been mentoring for years. One senior colleague spent a morning with me reading through the files of the first six mentees to whom I had been assigned, helping me use the Degree Program Planner and offering suggestions for what new studies to recommend. She shared the template of an introductory letter she sends to her new mentees and invited me to use it to craft my own. She suggested that I email my welcome letter to each new mentee and try and set up an initial telephone appointment with them. She even gave me a recommended plan for new mentees: enrolling in a writing class such as College Reading and Writing or Effective Academic Writing to refresh their college writing skills and to get them comfortable with the online environment; one or two classes that would help fulfill any unmet SUNY general education requirements; and a “fun” class. Another colleague explained “liberal” and “nonliberal” credits and “gen. ed.,” and took me through several exercises on prior learning assessment so I could explain at least the basics to my new mentees.

With these colleagues’ help, I managed to get five of the six mentees registered. But soon I learned that mentoring is not a step-by-step procedure. It is more like dance – free-form and ever-changing. And the partnership is not always comfortable.

My first mentee from that initial group completed her Bachelor of Arts requirements this summer while raising a child as a single mother with a second baby on the way, working part time, and caring for her mother. She hopes to enroll next year in the Master or Arts in Social Policy program through Empire State College’s School for Graduate Studies and eventually go to law school. Her final requirement for her B.A. was to complete a capstone paper with me as the instructor. The first draft had significant research gaps and organizational flaws. I told her to rewrite it. She did. It still had flaws. This time, I outlined more explicitly what she needed to do and told her more directly why attentiveness to detail, care in citation, and thoroughness of argument would be crucial to her success in graduate school. I also noted that while I was sympathetic to all of her other life responsibilities, she had to give her schoolwork more priority if she is

going to survive law school. My tone was supportive but not exactly soft, and I was afraid that she would not speak to me again. She responded that she was frustrated but thanked me for the feedback, and submitted a much stronger third draft, with a note that jokingly stated that she was looking forward to the next round of revisions. She plans to attend the CDL graduation celebration in June 2012.

In teaching as in dance, one cannot lead and always expect the other to follow. One young man – returning to school with 98 credits but virtually no advanced-level work – registered in fall 2010 and then withdrew after his finances fell short. He tried to reregister in fall 2011 but had to withdraw again. Another talked at length about his interests in post-Colonial theory, enrolled in his first term with 16 credits, found the online atmosphere alienating, and transferred to a more conventional university in the town where he was living. A third mentee has a clear degree plan in mind for studying holistic medicine after completing her bachelor’s degree, but has not been able to take the time to write the rationale essay that will get her the B.A.

Creating Safe Space

Over the summer, I ran across a reference to *Burris Studies: Unified Activities*, a book published in 1935 about the experiential learning taking place at the Burris Laboratory School in Muncie, Indiana – my hometown. The authors of those landmark studies concluded their report with this insight: “The teacher must be willing to do one of the hardest things in the world – keep himself [sic] in the background, an adviser and helper when needed – but never a dictator” (p. 120).

That thought took me to mid-March 2011 and an International CARE Conference I attended in Washington, D.C., in the company of two Girl Scouts from the Saratoga area with whom I had been working and one of their mothers, a local troop leader. The Girl Scouts’ regional branch sent us to the conference so the girls could learn about CARE’s work with women around the world and lobby Washington lawmakers on women’s issues.

I was invited to accompany them at the conference and attend an International Women’s Day celebration with them.

While the trip to D.C. excited me, my duties felt unclear. Both of the scouts were high school freshmen. During the International Women’s Day celebration, one of them, dressed in her Girl Scouts uniform, sat with her mother, watching musicians performing on a large stage and approaching the performers afterward to get their autographs. The other girl was circulating the room, making friends and sending text messages from her cell phone. Neither seemed to need me, but I could not simply relax and socialize. Questions filled my mind, questions that were similar to those that had surfaced in my mentoring. What did accompanying the girls and attending the conference require me to do? Was I supposed to instruct? Discipline? Chaperone? Force them to learn something? If so, what? And how?

Then, the music changed.

Michael Franti, a Los Angeles-based hip-hop artist, took the stage. The beat propelled me out of the shadows of the room and toward the dance space right below the stage.

Hip-hop, in its community-based form, is participatory. Musicians like Franti who advocate for political causes also are known informally as rappers and more formally as emcees: speakers and/or storytellers who convey a message through a “call and response.” The emcee also is like a teacher and mentor; the audience like learners, like mentees.

Franti initiated the call. He explained that he had come to the International CARE Conference a few years earlier, and had been taught during the intensive training sessions that would take place the next day how to go to Washington lawmakers and lobby for a policy that would make a difference in the lives of hundreds around the world. “Your brains are going to go into overload tomorrow,” he told us. “But you’ll learn a lot and you’ll never regret the experience.” The crowd cheered, generating the response. Franti spoke again. “Now, have some fun tonight, and approach tomorrow with an open mind.”

Dance in hip-hop also builds its power through call and response. An organizing component is the cipher, a circle of human bodies that surrounds a performer creating a safe space for the person in the middle to speak, either with voice or body. The space is safe, but it also is vulnerable because it is there that the performer drops all inhibitions and expresses a truth. As Franti began playing, those of us beneath the stage and in widening circles behind us started dancing – alone but in community, unwatched yet watched. I caught a glimpse of one of the Girl Scouts I was accompanying, dancing in the crowd. She initiated the call – flashing me a thumbs up and pulling out her phone to send another text to her friends. I issued a response: I grinned, waved back, pulled out my phone, and posted a status update to Facebook.

We responded further to Franti's call by attending training sessions on the first of the two days that followed and traveling en masse to Capitol Hill on the second day. Conference organizers put us in groups on the basis of where we lived. They drilled us on the three main issues for which CARE wished to advocate: education for girls, foreign aid for development, and micro-

financing programs. We practiced making one-minute pitches to lawmakers and their aides. Then it was time to strategize.

We were scheduled to meet with Representatives Nan Hayworth, Nita Lowey, Carolyn Maloney, Chris Gibson and Paul Tonko, and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Our group included a dozen people: 10 adults and the two Girl Scouts. CARE's trainers suggested that one person who lived in the representative's district take three minutes to introduce the entire group and offer an overview of CARE, that three people each take one minute to advocate for the three issues on the agenda, and that one person deliver a closing thought. A woman in our group who had lobbied before recommended that the Girl Scouts introduce us to Gibson and Tonko since the girls lived in those districts, and make the pitch for education. She spoke to the girls about the need to personalize what they said so that it would be believable – to them as well as to the lawmakers.

We went to Capitol Hill, excited but nervous. The CARE organizers told us we would do fine. We told each other we couldn't go wrong – we had the Girl Scouts in our midst.

Both girls did well. They spoke on behalf of the educational issues, and took turns introducing our group to staffers for Tonko and Gibson. They helped us navigate the Capitol Building's maze, and one of them proved more successful than me at hailing a cab in the rain. It began to seem as if I needed them more than they needed me. But, as with mentoring, this did not seem entirely true. What the girls needed – what perhaps mentees at Empire State College need – is a cipher: a space created by a mentor to step in and show what they are capable of doing, an opportunity to dance alone in a shared space, as individuals in community with others.

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“Is waiting always the best thing to do? Of course not. But at what other school and in what other approach to learning can we so usefully discover that there is not a necessary connection between intelligence and constricted time and that by ‘waiting,’ in slow time, we – both students and mentors – can learn so far beyond the beliefs we started from?”

*– Lee Herman and Frances Mercer, “Central New York Stories,”
All About Mentoring, 26, 2003*

Forum Theatre in Education: Teaching Students to Deal with Oppression and Diversity Effectively

Jase Teoh, Long Island Center

“Theatre is the art of looking at ourselves.”
– Augusto Boal

*“If you are going to tell people the truth,
you better make them laugh or they
will kill you.”*
– Oscar Wilde

Introduction

Prior to the start of my career as a faculty instructional technologist at the Long Island Center, I wore many hats (literally speaking) in my professional and educational career. One experience in particular that remains etched close to my heart is my use of the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques developed by Augusto Boal. I became involved in theatre during my graduate studies in Minnesota. One of my colleagues invited me to a meeting hosted by a nonprofit organization, Action Theatre. She attempted to explain the mission of the troupe, but I was rather skeptical. Having been to numerous diversity talks and presentations, the last thing I wanted to do was to sit passively and listen to a “diversity” session. Needless to say, I was wrong. For the next one hour or so, I was immersed in a warm-up/ice-breaker session designed to loosen one’s inhibitions, followed by a real-life depicted scenario that took place on a literal stage known as the forum theatre with audience intervention. And lastly, the moderator/joker debriefed the entire forum and got us thinking – thinking about the “what if” and the “how to,” but most of all, left me walking out of the room thinking, learning, processing. From that day on, I knew that I wanted to be involved in forum theatre to help students deal with oppression and diversity effectively.

About Forum Theatre

The introduction to Wessels’s (1991) book, *Drama*, begins with a quote from an old Chinese proverb: “I hear and I forget, I listen and I remember, I do and I understand” (p. 237). In these few lines lies a succinct truth: that action, the act of doing, is the key to genuine understanding. And indeed, drama is action. It is this direct, hands-on experience that imbues rich meaning to learning. Acting is one means of facilitating this learning task, for through acting, the student is required to feel, think and do as a given role dictates; he or she must become the character in that set situation. Thus drama, the art of acting, is an efficient and effective means to help students achieve a deeper level of insight (Chamot & Michael, 1994).

Several terms have been used to define drama. In this paper, I take it as a theoretical integration of methods that incorporates components of real-life oppressive situations (e.g., racism, heterosexism, sexism, ageism and classism) into a controlled atmosphere where learning can most effectively take place (Boal, 2001a). As a more specific form of drama method, the term “forum theatre” (Boal, 2001a) is sometimes thought of as a public meeting or an assembly for public discussion where performances or plays can be presented. In this paper, the idea of drama is based on Boal’s (2001a) forum theatre of improvisation that originated in Brazil. Forum theatre is a dynamic process with adaptations and improvements (Larkin, 2001) that closely resemble the internationally recognized Theatre of the Oppressed.

Forum theatre consists of a moderator known as the joker – someone who facilitates audience intervention with at least three to seven actors and a character who

creates conflict, known as the antagonist. At the end of the forum theatre, the joker requests the actors to run the skit once or several times, during which an audience is free to intervene by saying “Freeze” or “Stop.” The audience then replaces one of the characters in an attempt to change the situation. Often after the third scene, audience members directly confront characters on their behaviors and attitudes. Bear in mind that the audience can replace any characters except the antagonist role because, as is often the case in real life, there will be one person or a group of people we cannot change. The goal is to change the way we think about, approach or deal with the issue rather than try to change the antagonist (Boal, 2001a).

Although Theatre of the Oppressed was created for Brazilian political activism, Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1994) argued that the possibilities for this type of theatre were virtually infinite because Boal’s improvisational dramatic technique attempts to foster working with any real-life environment while disregarding a scripted text. Numerous studies have been conducted on the use of forum theatre in education and some of these studies have provided the reasons and explanations for the benefits of forum theatre. There is, however, much less discussion on how best to explain and justify the use of forum theatre in higher education. Justification goes beyond giving reasons for the use of forum theatre in such contexts. It requires coming to grips with providing answers to questions of why or why not (Rhodes, 1995). In effect, we need to provide empirical evidence as to why forum theatre is beneficial and that teachers/mentors have no obligation to act in any particular way (Rhodes, 1995). There is no single answer or solution.



Augusto Boal and Jase Teoh, Winona, Minnesota, 2001

Benefits of Forum Theatre

Teacher/Mentor

On the part of the teacher, this kind of drama project allows for a breakaway from a strictly conventional learning situation where the instructor is primarily responsible for providing all the resources and stimuli for the learning. The students are on stage, quite literally, and the teacher is in the background, acting as a coach, guide and encourager – as a mentor – anything but the center of attention. Thus, the responsibility for the drama rests more with the student (Commack, 1975). The drama project thus allows – or rather *requires* – that students become agents of their own learning process; indeed, it is when learners can take responsibility for learning that issues of oppression and diversity can be dealt with most effectively.

Forum theatre is a marvelously flexible technique that can fit into any area of a student's work. It requires no major adjustments on the part of the teacher. It does not even demand that teachers change the materials they are presenting. But it does help to bring the materials to life by infusing a more conventional teaching/learning approach with the feelings, imaginations and thoughts of the learners, who become participants in the learning process (Wessels, 1991). The liberated atmosphere of such an atypical learning

situation can function to diminish the stereotypical and hence, segregated role of the teacher as authority figure.

An example of forum theatre usage was employed by a teacher who belonged to Action Theatre. He utilized forum theatre techniques in his class that focused on ageism. He invited several members of the troupe to enact a real-life scene on "Children sending their parents to the retirement home." The seven-minute forum took place in a classroom setting of approximately 30 students where in the spirit of Boal, participants "intervened." An evaluation form was distributed and collected toward the end of the class. Ninety-five percent of the students commented that the forum encouraged them to deal with the issue before them in an immediate, hands-on way, and that it taught them ways to deal with the problems they confronted about age and the realities of ageism in new ways.

At Empire State College, forum theatre could be used in study groups dealing with various social justice issues where students come together and share their experiences with oppression of all kinds. By empowering students to tell their own stories, mentors can guide them in loosening their inhibitions through a series of warm ups and introducing forum theatre through an infusion of Boal's concept taken from his books, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (2001b) and *Rainbow of Desire* (2003). The mentor-as-facilitator also might act as the moderator/joker and thus help students process the scenario after witnessing various intervention strategies used by students.

Student

Drama almost always addresses various value issues – problems and questions that are drawn from student experiences and are used in dramatizations that portray actual experiences and incidents. Students are responsible for developing the scenarios and presenting them to the group. They are engaged intellectually and socially; they are learning through the people, through the issues and as a result of the situations they encounter in face-to-face communication and through varied media: their curiosity is the key (Krajewski, 1999). They bring all of this to the work.

Day (2002) investigated the experiences and interactions between participants of a forum theatre workshop that addressed issues of a refugee child at school. Findings revealed that the workshop was highly relevant to the students and enabled them to put themselves in other people's shoes. The homeless and refugee histories of the actors themselves intensified the reality of the workshop experience. Students claimed repeatedly that the forum theatre workshop altered their perceptions of refugees and homeless people.

McCaslin (1990) asserted that "conceptual thinking and the cognitive aspect of language are encouraged when words are put into practical use" (p. 16). Development of the imagination is one of the goals in forum theatre (Cranston, 1991). Greene (1995) pointed out that: "of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities" (p. 3). According to Johnson (1998), "forum theatre enables students to step inside a story or to interact with a concept, character or idea" (p. 3). This gives students a greater understanding of the issue. When students act out an issue, the words are no longer just symbols, but a real part of their world (George, 2000).

At Empire State College, students, especially the adult learners, come to us with real-life experiences that have altered their self-perception and their worldviews. In some cases, forum theatre might be a safe "stage" for them to share and quite literally to enact their previous oppressive experiences. Indeed, one of forum theatre's many strengths is its ability to help students identify and work with these experiences, because through audience intervention, different solutions or ways of dealing with a particular problem are discovered.

As an advocate for and participant in Action Theatre in Minnesota, I witnessed students' interventions in many case scenarios. For instance, we performed at Saint Mary's University with a class of freshmen on "Homosexual Roommates in the Dorm," and the responses from students – their imagination, improvisation and ways of altering the scene (e.g., changing the space, language or tone of voice) – was unanticipated.

Undeniably, too, forum theatre also can improve a student's physical abilities. According to McCaslin (1990), students can express themselves through physical activity, thereby creating their own styles of movement, gaining confidence in their bodies and developing spatial awareness. When a scene is acted out, movement of the character is animated. Movement is therefore involved in order to portray a character's ideas or feelings. Participating in forum theatre includes the body or kinesthetic intelligence as well as a physical aspect of learning. The use of various sign systems for communication, construction of meaning and thought allows learners to weave together many different interpretations and understandings (Leland & Harste, 1994). Perhaps this particular kinesthetic dimension applies more to the ongoing experiences of professional actors; nonetheless, warm ups before the forum theatre are crucial for students to loosen their inhibitions and to begin to see and understand the situation in new ways.

No doubt, the benefits of forum theatre include establishing a safe and creative way to address conflict and improve relations, giving students opportunities to explore value issues, allowing students to develop leadership skills, encouraging the intervention of different types of audiences and styles, and giving students a chance to discover themselves and to learn their own value system better (Krajewski, 1999). This learning model of persons and process provides students with a unique, comfortable, trusting and positive growth experience. Forum theatre can meet many of our educational goals because it brings to light differing views, and highlights the abilities of students to overcome obstacles and/or brainstorm solutions to deal with multiple and timely issues relevant to their lives (O'Sullivan, 1997).

Audience

Forum theatre also involves audience intervention played out during each scene. It allows an audience member to identify himself or herself, distinguish himself or herself from others, and imagine how he or she would like to be (Martin, 1999). In this way, behavior is transformed by the critical cues of others as well as by those practicing

those cues (Sloan & Mizes, 1999). Audience members shape the performance by relating to the characters, engaging each other and with the actors. Thus, the audience becomes involved and excited and gains its own ownership in the process of dealing with the particular conflict at hand. The audience/character intervention also can lead to better understanding, help define problems or behavior, generate better solutions, and form a rich context for discussion and critical reflection (Krajewski, 1999).

One particular forum theatre piece I remember was performed at the Women's Resource Center in Winona, Minnesota. I started by narrating feelings of marginalization I encountered in Iowa when I first came to the United States. Then, forum theatre on "Fishing by the Lake" was performed by our crew members. The scene depicted conversations of whites making racist comments about the Hispanics moving into town while they were fishing. The audience that evening consisted of white people (middle-aged and older) who had lived in Winona their entire lives. The forum opened their eyes to some of the ignorance of the community; the interventions from the audience were phenomenal, generating some very thought-provoking questions and discussions.

Disadvantages of Forum Theatre

Teacher/Mentor

Despite the above listed merits of the use of forum theatre in various educational settings, it still remains true that many teachers, especially the unassertive and the conservative, are reluctant to adopt this innovative method. Some are reluctant because they have never studied drama as part of their formal education. Moreover, forum theatre takes time, and the very thought of incorporating drama into everyday teaching and learning situations triggers many visions of disorganization and the loss of valuable instruction time. (Though it may appear frivolous to the more conventionally minded, such a drama project is, in actuality, a serious task, requiring much planning, care and significant effort [Yafte, 1998].) But there are other reasons, too: The educator, having

transferred the full responsibility to others, especially to students, may fear the loss of autonomy, control and, above all, power.

Student

As for the students, getting out of their comfort zone and kinesthetically moving might be uncomfortable, especially if they are limited in their physical movements and/or are used to a more conventional style of learning. In addition, sharing real-life (and sometimes quite difficult and even oppressive) experiences might be daunting if not embarrassing for some students, especially if they have been the antagonist or bystander in the past. Moreover, it also is difficult to sustain a group of students who have bonded over a period of time. In order for forum theatre to be truly effective, consistency, familiarity and understanding of characters on stage is vital in conveying ways to combat oppression to the audience. Students often have to take on difficult roles and work with uncomfortable situations. Establishing trust is immensely important.

Audience

Audience/spectators can sometimes walk away from a forum theatre scene feeling as if they had not experienced closure. Even though the moderator/joker "debriefs" after the forum, often there is not enough time to cover the myriad dimensions of a scene or to obtain feedback from every audience member. Also, audience/spectators might take so much time to warm up to the idea of intervening in a forum theatre (for many, it is a truly new experience) that by the time they are ready, the forum might have already ended, leaving audience/spectators dissatisfied or confused. Furthermore, there is sometimes no formative evaluation or longitudinal study to gauge if an audience's thinking has actually shifted, for example, to being more cognizant of the feeling of being oppressed or of being an oppressor.

Justification and Concerns

As I hope is clear from the descriptions above, forum theatre places actors and audiences in situations in which they are able to participate in true-to-life interactions that overtly and covertly display racism, heterosexism, sexism, ageism and/or classism. Members are challenged

to openly raise questions and express reactions to the characters. Forum theatre is a powerful medium that goes beyond the reach of many formal educational settings. The performances are designed to reach a variety of particular audiences: children, paraprofessionals, professionals, students at any educational level and entire communities, and the performances depict issues that are immediate and relevant; that is, context- and community-based (Tromski & Doston, 2003). Forum theater techniques allow for the spontaneity of each character's behavior and emotions to emerge through the story lines. Griffin (1980) defined forum theatre as a form of unplanned acting. Although the basic structure of each piece is preconceived, no two performances are ever alike. The actors are always creating their own characters and scenes, and always seeking to draw on real-life experiences, either their own or the experiences of someone else they knew.

Forum theatre changed my life and the way I look at issues of oppression and diversity. I used to attend workshops and presentations on diversity, but I found that Action Theatre promotes new attention to issues of oppression through kinesthetic and practical involvement. The direct, hands-on approach and the immediacy and reality of the forum theatre bring issues of oppression closer to home. It is by visualization, acting, words, images and movement that issues of oppression come to life. And certainly, forum theatre can be used not only in dealing with issues of oppression; it also is applicable across all situations as long as tensions and conflicts exist that can be unpacked, experienced and reunderstood from new vantage points. It offers opportunities for the study of an oppressive situation in a nonthreatening context, gives students an opportunity to change the scene or think about the issue more deeply, and it promotes students' understanding of diversity (O'Sullivan, 1997).

Above all, this work can be a significant starting point to increase students' "coming to know" (Rhodes, 1995) about the many problematic aspects of the world within which we live. Justifying a particular educational practice and value requires answers beyond a catalogue of reasons and explanations. Grounds for justifying the

use of forum theatre can be derived from utilitarian theory. Such a theory asserts that if an action, practice or procedure produces the greatest good for the greatest number of people over any other available action, then that action is right, desirable or valuable. In this case, forum theatre fulfills these utilitarian expectations by reaching a large group of students in a positive manner and enhancing their meta-thinking on how to deal effectively with oppression and diversity.

Conversely, because there appears to be no definitive model of Theatre of the Oppressed, it is potentially open to abuse. For example, it is sometimes difficult to identify the oppressed or the oppressor; there is always the danger of the oppressed becoming an oppressor; there is a lack of responsibility assumed by the joker (moderator) for uncovering uncomfortable material; it is often irresponsible and even dangerous to leave people emotionally exposed; the situation can possibly be manipulated in order to achieve the particular reaction you desire from the audience; and there is the lingering problem of creating a hierarchy of oppressions.

This inconsistency of success stems from the fact that each learner, each educator and each learning context is necessarily unique and that human dynamics are unpredictable. What has made it possible for theories that were recently widely popular to be so easily questioned and/or simply dismissed – either through the passage of time or as a result of subsequent research – is that in drama, the human element, in all its unpredictability and inconsistency, is so pivotal and pervasive on both sides of the learning table. Unlike in scientific experimentation where most variables can be controlled, each experiment and situation in drama is necessarily novel as a result of the interpersonal synergy created by inconstant and erratic human variables (O'Sullivan, 1997). And the power of forum theatre depends on exactly such immediacy, novelty and very human engagement.

As a performer with the Action Theatre troupe and as a participant of the Theatre of the Oppressed workshop conducted by Boal (2001a), I have witnessed how the dynamics of action have profoundly impacted

students' lives at the college level. The effect is probably even more readily apparent in situations in which the participants are homogenous. But, without doubt, such a model of using drama in teaching of all kinds helps students to come to know in new ways, think at a deeper level and confront oppressions of all kinds that they may never have even known to exist.

Recommendations: Some Initial Thoughts

Real human interactions in a dramatic space are not always possible given specific circumstances, especially in a college as unique as Empire State College that offers a blend of learning approaches (independent studies, study groups and online learning) to accommodate our adult learners. In such cases, technology could offer new possibilities, allowing room for adaptations as teachers/mentors find creative ways to help students deal with oppression and diversity more effectively. The use of technology can encourage students to connect to online communities that already exist in the open software movement with tools such as games and simulations. Experimenting with a wide range of online tools can push beyond the boundaries of the dramatic space into the virtual and imaginary worlds.

Nonetheless, much needs to be done to simulate drama in virtual environments and current empirical research is rather limited in this area. Moreover, such simulation would require technical capabilities and definite skill sets of both teacher/mentors and students. Previously, I experimented with the incorporation of drama into Second Life with a group of international educators who shared a similar passion. Undoubtedly, we encountered challenges that were both technical and geographical in nature (time zones and HUDs [heads-up-display of scripted texts]). Even so, the seamless integration of drama and technology is an area that is worthy of investigation. It will provide opportunities for students to benefit from the techniques and overall spirit of forum theatre even when the settings of traditional dramatic space may not be possible.

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“The fifth educational principle was to place the relationship between student and faculty at the center of an educational process which involved joint planning, evaluation and inquiry. We were confident that once both experienced that interaction, they would be so enriched and nourished, stimulated and satisfied, that the program would hold, that the rest of the principles would be honored.”

*– Arthur Chickering, “Innovations in Education,”
All About Mentoring, 2, 1993*

Oral History and a Small Community in Argentina: A Sabbatical Report

Silvia Chelala, Long Island Center and the Center for International Programs

From August 2010 to January 2011, I had a sabbatical that I spent in Argentina. The following report is a result of my work there. A version of this writing was included in the March 2011 issue of the University of New York in Prague Chronicle.

In the last few decades, the way history has been taught and researched has shifted from the top-down lecture format to the incorporation of oral history in defining historical fact. According to Yow (2005), “oral history is the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form” (p. 3). As such, using oral history techniques empower members of communities to engage more fully in the gathering and preserving of their histories. The method presents different perspectives and allows community members to gain a better understanding of historical record? (Crothers, 2002). Learning and recording “history from below” also has the advantage of giving a voice to those members who [are the main recipients] experience the greatest – often negative – effects of social and economic changes in the community, but who may not very often be tapped for their experiences and opinions.

It was with these assumptions in mind that I first met 20 men and women in General Galarza, a town 284 km northeast of the capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires. The group consisted of retired teachers, housewives, librarians and administrators. They had expressed an interest in collecting the history of the town in preparation for its forthcoming first centenary. General Galarza is a very interesting, small community composed of a rich mixture of people from

different historical and cultural backgrounds with approximately 3,500 inhabitants. The town started as a small outpost to provide rural workers in the area with much needed goods and services. The population in the area was in the past and continues to be today a mixture of European immigrants and “criollos” (native-born Argentines). The train connecting it to the main cities and to Buenos Aires started running during the first decade of the 20th century. The town had been called originally San Guillermo, the name of a nearby “estancia” (large agricultural and cattle ranch) owned by a British firm. The name was changed to General Galarza when it officially became a town in 1913.

The community has seen many changes in population, size and characteristics. It had immigrant groups from Europe such as Italians, Spaniards and Basques, as well as a sizable number of German immigrants

Aires. Aside from having different countries of origin, the inhabitants of the town brought with them their different cultures and religions – in just this small village, there are seven different places of worship. The diversity of religion was mirrored by diverse customs, languages and food from different regions of Europe.

Community-based oral history projects are valuable because they allow participants to take advantage of rich cultural and historical data, and place them in a better perspective to understand and learn about the past of a specific community. Population shifts, changing economic realities and the variety of immigrant groups coming to General Galarza in different historical periods would become clearer. However, there are significant hurdles to be overcome in such a community-based project. The idea of delegating the responsibility of decision-making to community participants was



Students in the elementary school in Galarza, Argentina



from the Volga region displaced after Russia returned this region to Germany. Immigrants have been there since the beginning of the town. The Jewish population was sizable until World War II when Nazi sympathizers became notorious in the area. This fact, coupled with a serious economic downturn in the 1930s, became the catalyst for a significant population migration to Buenos

encouraged and implemented by groups working in public health. Therefore, I tried to read as much as I could in order to understand this approach. Bru Martin and Basagoiti (n.d.) discuss the advantages and obstacles of citizen participation in research projects. Taking into consideration their recommendations, I let the community group in Galarza know that I would provide

support, sample questionnaires, and analyze protocols to gather information through oral histories, but that they had to decide when, where and what would be documented, stored and used. Authorship is an important issue in the use of oral histories, particularly in such a culturally diverse community. This was not something that I wanted to decide for anyone.

To promote a sense of ownership and enthusiasm in the project, I conducted a series of weekly meetings to discuss oral history methodology and its uses with community volunteers. We collectively explored the resources and material they had already collected with the goal of documenting the history of the town. We identified areas that needed more information or that could be further explored. A historian had already written the history of town organizations until 1965. There also had been informal requests to older people in Galarza to write down their memories of the town school during its first 50 years. Once we had time to discuss possibilities, the members became enthusiastic about all the other subjects that had not initially been raised. They suggested pursuing musicians from the area, so-called “eccentric” members of the community, important organizations that had been allowed to die, among other topics, as well as old rituals and activities that had been eliminated with the introduction of running water or electricity. One of the important questions they had was about who was qualified to be interviewed and who might be of interest to the community; that is, who are the “bearers of tradition?” According to Marjorie Hunt (2003), “a tradition-bearer can be anyone – young or old – who has knowledge, skills, and experience to share: for example a third-grader who

knows the hand-clapping games shared by schoolchildren on the playground; a family member who knows about the special foods that are always prepared for holiday celebrations; or a neighbor who has lived in [the] community for many years and can tell about local history and ways of life” (“Bearers,” para. 1).

Thus, oral histories as a way of documenting the history of General Galarza would involve the members of the community collecting data and making decisions about its use. The president of the cultural association, in whose library we met, committed herself to organizing a committee to work on the project. The participants’ enthusiasm needed to be kept alive. I will continue to work with the community group at a distance through feedback on the material collected as well as by disseminating protocols of different stages of research. My meetings with the community members reminded me of the definition of “tradition bearers” as stated by folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, as cited in Hunt (2003). They are “living links in the historical chain, eye witness to history, shapers of a vital and indigenous way of life. They are unparalleled in the vividness and authenticity they can bring to the study of local history and culture” (Hunt, 2003, para. 2).

During the summer of 2011, I visited General Galarza again to see what the group had done. One of the members, Claudia Leiva de Druetta, had decided to reorganize material culled from interviews with older residents about the school and publish them in a book commemorating the first 80 years of the town school. The book was published with support from the provincial government. Two influential members of the group had resigned for

personal reasons and change of address. However, the original interest still lives. My plans now include another visit next summer during the reading period to see how the project continues.

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Metaphor and Meaning in Educational Planning

Cathy A. Davison, Northeast Center

“In educational planning, you will create your own individualized degree plan that meets your educational goals, as well as satisfies Empire State College’s policies and guidelines for the particular degree you are seeking.”

How many times have we, as mentors, found ourselves saying some version of the above to a student, only to be met with a quizzical, blank or fearful look? How do we help our students understand and embrace the process of educational planning? How do we understand and embrace it ourselves?

I have used metaphor as a strategy to help me and my students make meaning of the educational planning process.

met-a-phor

– noun

a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance, for example *he is a lion in battle* (*Collins English Dictionary*, 2009)

Decidedly, we have different types of students who seek to complete degrees at Empire State College. We have students who want to study many different things, we have students who don’t know what they want to study, and we have students who seemingly have their educational path already planned. Regardless of the place each student begins, I believe the educational planning process has the potential of being transformational for the student. And it is this transformational power of educational planning that seems to be most difficult to articulate, hence, the use of metaphor and why transformation figures prominently in the metaphors I use.



Cathy Davison

The Compost Metaphor

I’m not sure when or where this came to me. I do some of my best thinking in the shower or on my commute to the office, so perhaps it was one of those times. But I must admit that when this metaphor came to me, it was a eureka moment.

Think about it: Isn’t educational planning a lot like starting a compost pile?

There’s the starting material. For compost, it’s vegetable peels, egg shells, coffee grounds, leaves ... plant material. For educational planning, it’s the learning experiences the student brings with



her to the college. Transcript credit. Experiential learning on the job. Volunteer work. Hobbies.

Can any type of organic material be added to a compost pile? No; animal products like meat and fat do not make for good compost because they become rancid. Animal products do not break down in the same manner as plants. Are all forms of prior learning going to be useful for a degree? No; the prior learning must be college level, and it must fit into the overall design of the degree. As with compost, in educational planning, one must be selective.

Once the organic material is heaped into the compost bin or pile, it doesn’t turn into compost immediately. Time is key. Not only time, but watering and aeration are important, too. One must turn the compost over, or use worms to aerate the compost materials. The compost must be kept moist. And one waits. What happens during the waiting, the turning and the watering? A transformation. The carrot peels, coffee grounds and grass clippings seemingly disappear (in fact, they decompose), and in their place, the rich mixture that we call compost emerges.

As with compost, transformation also occurs in the educational planning process. Ideally, the student realizes that truly her degree plan is greater than the sum of its parts – the 128 credits that make up the degree. She realizes that the discrete bits of learning are barely discernable when



viewed at the level of the entirety of the degree. She appreciates how the different learning components complement each other. And this process takes time: time to reflect, ponder, research. What may not be evident at the outset is evident later.

The Baking Metaphor

The mixing of flour, eggs, baking soda, butter and sugar into batter, and the transformation of that batter into a cake, is another metaphor for educational planning. As with compost, one begins with discrete ingredients. When those ingredients are mixed and baked, they yield a finished product that bears little resemblance to the starting materials. And as with compost, the right starting materials in the right proportions are critical for success.

For a cake, spending the right amount of time in an oven at the right temperature is important. One cannot rush baking, just as one cannot rush educational planning.

I also might argue that faith is another element of this metaphor. When making a cake, one has faith that mixing the ingredients in the right proportions and baking for the proper amount of time at the correct temperature will yield a delicious result. Is this blind faith? No; faith is based on the fact that the recipe has been made by many others in the past and has resulted in a delectable creation. So it is with

educational planning. It may seem as though one goes through the process in isolation, but in fact many students and mentors have successfully baked cakes before.

One element of the cake metaphor that perhaps doesn't fit with educational planning is the notion of a recipe. When one bakes with a recipe, it usually involves following a precise list of ingredients in specified amounts. At our institution, we don't typically have recipes for degrees, unless one thinks of a recipe as one that might have been handed down from one's grandmother, in which precise proportions, and even ingredients, are left to the baker. "A pinch of this, a dash of that ...," and depending on the specific ingredients used, a variety of cakes, from sponge cake to spice cake to pineapple upside-down cake, can be made. Perhaps it's useful to think of the area of study guidelines as a loosely-structured recipe that provide lots of room to make different types of cakes.

The Construction Metaphor

Lastly, the metaphor of building a house is one that I use to explain to students the concept of progression within the degree – the evolution from introductory- to advanced-level learning. This metaphor is a bit different than the compost and baking metaphors, in that transformation is not an important feature. Rather, it's the stepwise

building and scaffolding of knowledge in the degree plan that is communicated with this metaphor.

In order to build a house that is structurally sound, one must begin with a foundation. The house is then framed upon the foundation. A bachelor's degree must begin with introductory-level learning. It is upon this base of learning that the advanced-level learning is added. If one builds a house that has no foundation, or if the foundation is weak, the house will fall. So it is with the degree plan. The learning planned in advanced-level studies must have a foundation in introductory-level learning.

An Invitation

In summary, I invite readers to think about using metaphors as they work with students in educational planning. Undoubtedly, the metaphors I present here are only a few of the possibilities that can help students make meaning of the educational planning process. Perhaps inviting students to think of their own metaphors will aid them in personalizing and deepening their understanding of this unique educational endeavor.

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“I always thought that faculty development at Empire State College is an essential ingredient. Faculty serve a very special role. You are not born a mentor. You may have some proclivities and some analogous experiences, but most people who are going through Ph.D. programs don't find out very much about teaching in classrooms, let alone teaching one-on-one. So how can we expect faculty to mentor unless we teach them how to do it? How do we expect them to be excellent in what they do? Too often, colleges like Rockland and Empire State, which are very different, sort of throw faculty in and say, ‘Well, look around and talk to somebody. Model some behaviors. You're smart; you'll pick it up; just do it!’ I think it's both very unfair and often lowers productivity and morale.”

*– Tom Clark, “Reflecting on Origins III: The Experience of an Experiment”
[an interview with Richard Bonnabeau], All About Mentoring, 20, 2000*

Implementation of Computer-Assisted Feedback Strategies in Instructional Design for Student-Centered Online Learning

Ruifang Hope Adams, School for Graduate Studies

Introduction

Widespread expansion of the Internet has played a major role in learning. However, learners participating in computer-based learning environments (CBLE) might not always successfully contribute to their own learning absent the implementation of effective performance feedback strategies. Providing meaningful feedback to students is a vital and necessary component of online study and also proves to be a significant factor in improving student learning outcomes. Also, the effect of feedback in a CBLE enhances the overall quality of interaction between students and instructors by minimizing the requirement that instructors spend precious time on rather trivial learning matters already addressed within the CBLE. As much research has shown, providing feedback to students – in addition to on-going instruction – has proven to be a more effective and productive instructional strategy than instruction lacking such a feedback loop (Clariana, 2003; Denton, Madden, Roberts, & Rowe, 2008).

The advantages of CBLE include their ability to provide significant interaction between the learner and the instructional program, with teacher input also playing a critical role in an automated environment. However, unfortunately, a great deal of scholarly research fails to address the importance of computer-assisted feedback strategies in computer-based learning environments (Lee, Lim, & Grabowski, 2010).

Economides (2009) proposed that providing ongoing feedback to students promotes greater student-centered learning opportunities, and that repeated student attempts at problem solving tend to reinforce overall learning. The general conclusion from much of the research

proposes that an effective CBLE paired with active computer-assisted feedback tools increases the probability of authentic student learning.

This essay will first take a look at some of the basic research taking place in the CBLE arena. A consideration of a simple instructional assessment system with examples will then be provided.

Part 1: Feedback Research Considerations

Feedback strategies have been widely studied in educational literature and have been categorized in several forms. Commonly used terms include:

- (a) “Knowledge of Response feedback” (KOR, representing right or wrong response to student answers);
- (b) “Knowledge of Correct Responses feedback” (KCR, providing the correct response) (Murphy, 2010);
- (c) “Answer Until Correct” (AUC, repeated tries until student gets correct response) (Clariana & Lee, 2001, p. 25);
- (d) “Elaboration feedback” (providing further explanation to student about the reasons for their incorrect response) (Chase & Houmanfar, 2009; Lee et al., 2010);
- (e) “Adapted feedback” (customizing more than one feedbacks based on learner’s need.) (Lunt & Curran, 2010); and
- (f) “Adaptive feedback” (shaping response according to student learning/discovering) (Buscemi, 2004).

Research on Computer-Assisted Feedback

Feedback integration in CBLE provides an effective environment for meaningful learning. The advantage of CBLE with



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feedback strategies is that they provide interaction mechanisms between the learner and the instructional program, as well as mental models of learning or cognitive process facilitated by repetition and by the practice process. As a result, changes in learning can be observed through several feedback loops with adequate elaborations and appropriate assessment tools (Lee et al., 2010).

Mason and Bruning (2005) summarized the advantages of computer-assisted feedback in multimedia instruction. As they show, the main advantage of such a model is the ability to present immediate feedback to learners’ responses. Unlike feedback in a classroom setting from an instructor, a “tireless” computer is unbiased, accurate and nonjudgmental, no matter what the learners’ characteristics are or the nature of the learners’ questions. In addition, the interactivity of computer-assisted feedback can enhance the quality of the message and provide learners with information that reinforces the correctness of their responses.

Furthermore, technology-enhanced learning environments can provide individualized attention and feedback on particular learners' performances.

Other researchers believe that a technology-enhanced learning environment must incorporate evaluation mechanisms that allow timely intervention as needed. Thus, Murphy (2010) reported that using feedback in online instruction could improve teaching and learning in such contexts.

Formative vs. Summative Feedback

Feedback can be formative or summative. Formative evaluation has been shown to be best suited to multimedia instructional situations because it allows quick learning intervention (Murphy, 2010; Vrasidas, 2002). Summative feedback functions can help students identify errors aligned with the instructional questions.

Mason and Bruning (2005) suggested that errors are expected in and integral to the learning process and thus regular feedback facilitates learning, checks a student's degree of understanding and enhances a student's overall learning performance. In effect, such feedback mechanisms provide learners with a method to pinpoint their incorrect responses and confirm their successful responses.

Computer-Assisted Feedback Strategies

Feedback as a process of learning conventionally occurs between the instructor and the learner. Adequate feedback is often difficult to provide because instructors are constrained by instructor-student ratios and by time limitations found in most face-to-face learning settings. However, with the use of computer-assisted Web-based instruction, immediate feedback provides one-to-one interaction in an automated environment, which quickly lets the students know if his or her answers are correct or not. Computer-assisted instruction contributes to learning, is relatively inexpensive, is a less time-constrained method as compared to the hiring of more instructors and, as argued here, offers systematic feedback to a student that is difficult to attain in other settings.

Feedback Design

In relation to a sequenced learning event, Gagne's "task analysis" idea promotes the notion that learners can solve problems better when they receive timely feedback on the learning task (Gagne, Briggs, & Wager, 1992). The behavioral objective approach found in instructional design or instructional system design emphasizes that learning objectives can be understood as specific, observable and measurable target behaviors.

Educators can recognize that improvement of behavior – evidenced by successful completion of learning tasks – demonstrates that learning has indeed taken place (Lee et al., 2010). For example, after having successfully completed an instructional unit (guided by a statement of the behaviors the learner will be able to complete by the end of the unit), the learner will be able to correctly answer a certain percentage of the post-test questions.

Educators also are realizing that technology-enhanced instructional methods are quickly becoming the mainstream of today's teaching environment. The employment of automated instructional and assessment methods is thus not just about the transfer of instructional content from printed format to the computer screen (Lee et al., 2010). A well-designed CBLE enhanced by various computer-assisted feedback methods will deliver content more effectively and can serve as part of an instructional strategy designed to improve student achievement. Lee's (2010) study provides insight into learning outcomes in relation to computer-assisted feedback in instructional practice exercises. Such studies offer educational researchers awareness of the importance of computer-assisted feedback strategies in a technology-enhanced learning environment. This is particularly the case because the traditional ratio of one instructor to a group of learners, or the delayed paper and pencil feedback often utilized, cannot provide the timely corrective feedback students need – feedback that directly contributes to their learning.

Part 2: Feedback Design Considerations

In designing a student-centered online instructional system with computer-assisted feedback, one might want to explore the following:

1. Design Consideration

The following simple instructional system demonstrates the importance of instructional flow among the units along a logical pathway.

1.1 The Grid System

A simple grid layout organizes different pages for exercises with feedback as a universal design. Although the questions and answers would be different for each test item, the color scheme, navigation flow and grid layout should be identical for all practice test pages.

1.2 Typography

Sans serif fonts can be chosen in instructional pages for the purposes of legibility.

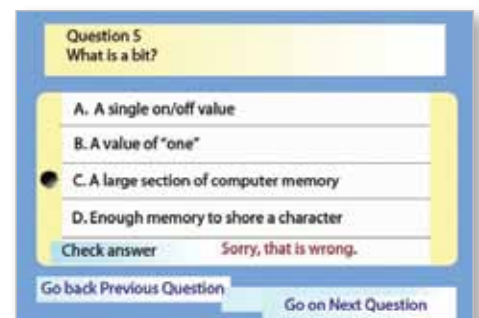
1.3 Color Schemes and Effects

Simple color schemes should be unified throughout instructional units. Similar sets of color schemes are used for practice exercises.

2. Development Consideration

2.1. Content Preparing

The instructional content of the interface can be adapted in light of instructional course requirements. The following examples from an introductory computer science course that includes feedback strategies can be mocked in any Web-based course:



Example 2.1: KOR Wrong Answer Feedback

Question 5
What is a bit?

A. A single on/off value

B. A value of "one"

C. A large section of computer memory

D. Enough memory to store a character

Check answer That is correct.

Go back Previous Question Go on Next Question

Example 2.2: KOR Correct Answer Feedback

Question 5
What is a bit?

A. A single on/off value

B. A value of "one"

C. A large section of computer memory

D. Enough memory to store a character

Check answer Sorry, that is wrong.

Go back Previous Question Go on Next Question

Example 2.3: KCR Wrong Answer Feedback

Question 2
The _____ was originally developed for government researchers.

A. Internet

B. Mainframe computer

C. Electronic mail

D. World Wide Web

Check answer Correct! It is World Wide Web

Go back Previous Question Go on Next Question

Example 2.4: KCR Correct Answer Feedback

3. Testing and Evaluation Considerations

A means to improve performance of the system also is an important component of the design/development process. Instructional System Expert Evaluation also should be sought to improve an instructional system. Below is a proposed format that might be useful in providing constructive formative evaluation on the efficacy of the system.

Conclusion

There are many ways in which CBLE tools will be used in the future to help educators and students support their combined

Expert Evaluation Form			
Reviewer: _____	Title _____	Date _____	
ITEM	ACCEPTABLE	NEEDS WORK	COMMENTS
Subject Matter			
Content organization			
Sufficient depth			
Content accuracy			
Readability			
Interface			
Text quality			
Images quality			
Control button			
Layout unity			
Navigation consistency			
Pedagogy			
Practice questions match objectives			
Testing question relevant to the topic			

learning objectives. Effective CBLE must include functions that keep track of the number of tries and the error rate. In this way, error rate can be used for evaluating the effect of computer-assisted feedback on student learning.

Computer-based learning environments are also unmatched in their ability to produce useful data – data that can be employed, analyzed and enriched for meaningful student learning. As methods are designed, developed, tested, evaluated and improved, automated learning systems will surely find their firm place in student-centered educational environments.

In the future, educators will be able to integrate CBLE's advantages within traditional taxonomies in order to deliver thorough and systematic programmatic educational activities. The five categories of Gagne's taxonomy of learning (verbal information, intellectual skill, cognitive strategy, attitude and motor skill) can be used to examine whether appropriate student feedback concerns have been taken into careful consideration.

Instructors also will be able to advance student learning by including automated preassessment CBLE activities, which are able to discover the current state of knowledge held by learners. These systems

also could serve as advanced organizers, so learners can be introduced to the general flow of course content within the preassessment phase of their work.

Learning outcomes can be used as an indicator of learning but should not be seen as the absolute measure of learning. Future researchers may be involved in measuring data collected from broad groups of student participants and categorizing levels

of prior knowledge possessed by dividing students into higher-level and lower-level skill groups. Thus, based on learners' proficiency levels, explicit feedback (both adapted and adaptive) can be used to support weaker students and a variety of feedback methods can be used for stronger learners as well.

Subject matter content may become more complex with additional instruction. The control of CBLE should be designed as a computer control in combination with instructor and learner control. Thus, for example, participants could have access only to specific questions until a certain number of tries are achieved and they are then permitted to advance to the next question (a model of branching).

In summary, as Mason and Bruning (2005) argued, "There is no clear-cut 'best' type of feedback in computer-based instruction for all learners and learning outcomes" (p. 9). The effectiveness of the type of feedback depends on an adequate instructional system design process created for specific educational content and settings (Chase & Housmanfar, 2009).

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The Trouble With Themed Collections – or, How am I Ever Going to Write Another Book?

Yvonne C. Murphy, Central New York Center

One of the biggest issues I faced in the process leading up to my first book publication was how to put the whole thing together in a way that made sense and was compelling to outside audiences. Only one “ordering the book” study, which placed too much emphasis on the thematically-sectioned manuscript, was offered in my Ph.D. program. I should have taken it.

When I was a burgeoning poet in the late 1980s to the late 1990s, the idea of organizing a poetry manuscript transformed from the previous “traditional” practices of collecting a group of 50 to 75 of the poet’s best or newest poems, toward crafting a more unified sense of placing poems into sections, often titled but almost always in thematic groupings. This was how I learned, autodidactically through reading, to put together a poetry manuscript in order to submit it for book publication. From the very late 1990s until the present, there has been another shift toward organizing a poetry manuscript, begging a more sophisticated “arc” governed by tone, style, plot, geography and/or some other nuance wrapped inside another technical, artistic or intellectual concern. I’ve even had an editor tell me she looks for temperature: the textual interplay of “hot,” “warm” and “cool” poems in a manuscript. That formula still eludes me. I had a difficult time transitioning my own manuscript from a categorized, thematic organization – bird poems, city poems, poems about buildings, feminist poems – to a more integrated and nuanced collection of poems organized by through-lines, temperature or arcs. In fact, when I worked closely on my manuscript with the poet/mentor Molly Peacock in the summer of 2006, she still suggested that I organize my manuscript in thematic sections. I later decided that this aspect of her advice was outdated.

Another by-product of the past 15 years or so in the poetry publishing world is the emergence of entirely thematic collections. Instead of a collection being broken up into thematic sections, the overall collection is now based around a theme, often dramatic monologues interspersed with historical and/or intellectual and experiential accounts and reimaginings. One well-received and particularly curious example of this is my friend Kevin Young’s (2001) second book, *To Repel Ghosts*, a massive book of poems (350 pages) entirely devoted to the works and life of the late artist, Jean Michel Basquiat. *Art in America* magazine called it “not only compelling, innovative contemporary poetry, it may be the best interpretive study yet of Basquiat’s art” (Rubinstein, 2002, para. 9). This book organizes 117 poems about Basquiat, his art and his times, into five sections or “sides” of an album on two discs of a CD (the through-line or arc). On “Disc 1: Zydeco,” the reader learns of Basquiat’s “prehistory” or precursors. This first disc is then divided into “Side 1-3,” with each “side” named for the type of cut or music (i.e., poems) produced on it: “bootlegs, hits, takes.” The second disc or section of his book is divided into two sides of “b-sides” and “solos.” Here, Young is attempting an overlay of jazz, African-American, African and Afro-Caribbean culture and street culture to help investigate and parse out the dense intertwining aesthetics of Basquiat’s artwork, biography, relationships and sexual and racial experience/politics. The book also organizes poems with dates after most titles, chronicling Basquiat’s life from his early success in New York in 1981 until his untimely death in 1987. I am certainly selling this book short by only spending a quick paragraph discussing its sophisticated and ambitious organizational framework. I love it and I especially love its wild swings, grandiosity, messiness and total *abraco* with eccentricity: both the subject’s and the poet’s. Still, I use *To Repel Ghosts* as an example

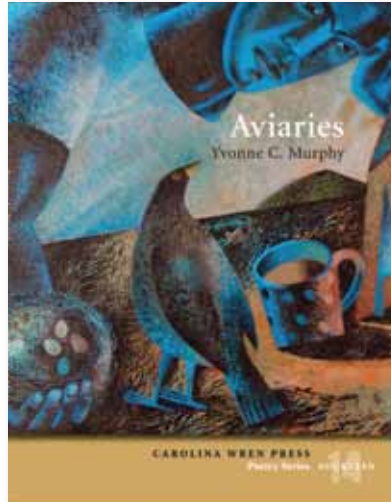
of a thematic and complex collection that has served as one of several new millennial models of how to put together a thematic poetry collection in book form. It is telling, though, to note that Alfred A. Knopf did publish an altered, shorter “remix” version of this book in 2005; the much smaller, streamlined one that still remains in print.

Which helps me fast-forward to the spring/summer of 2008 (or, to use my new favorite transition phrase courtesy of my toddler and the Blackeyed Peas, *Switch-up!*): over my entire half-year sabbatical, I began questioning myself about whether the overall thematic collection is itself now played out, become gimmicky. I’m pretty sure I’m seeing it that way these days. It’s like the literary equivalent of the Macarena – another reference I should have long expelled from my repertoire. I honestly don’t want to read another poetry book or manuscript told from the auto or biographical point of view of some obscure inventor, historical figure, activist, naturalist, trilobite or minor literary character. However, an excellent book is an excellent book, right? Recently, another established poet-friend of mine told me that an even more famous poet judging a first book contest at his press turned down what he thought was the finer all-around manuscript for publication over a less consistently well-crafted manuscript because the first was “over-thematic” and seemed overwrought or “gimmicky.”

Maybe we’re just trying too hard? Kevin Young has gone on to write five more award-winning and highly praised books in this style with the most recent being *Ardency: A Chronicle of the Amistad Rebels* (2011). *Publisher’s Weekly* reviewed it in January 2011, stating: “As with Young’s previous ambitious book-length projects (such as a verse life of Jean-Michel Basquiat), the book taken as a whole is more powerful than some of the individual poems. That whole is impressive indeed” (para. 1). Something about this compliment

is beginning to feel back-handed. Maybe the poetry “project” as scholarship, of which I have made my own focus for the past several years, could easily or rather automatically result in an overarchingly themed manuscript that will eventually mark it as being steeped in early-millennial style, I’m certain. Which may not, of course, be such a bad thing. Some of this is the direct result of so many younger (you’re a young poet until your third or fourth book is published, regardless of age) practicing poets, not unlike myself, arriving on the 21st century scene from established, academic creative writing M.F.A. and Ph.D. programs. Is the poetry that germinates and breeds in academia resulting in a clever hybrid of emotion and intellect or are we, again, just trying too hard to fit in, find our place – not unlike the court poets whose subjects were defined for them? I’m sure some ornery poet at that time was saying “If I have to hear or compose another poem about King X and his xyz, I’ll just flip!” Truly, I find myself wanting, aching to find ways to write something fresh, less expected or perhaps unexpected. Turns out, it’s not so easy.

Meanwhile, Carolina Wren Press in Durham, N.C., has generously and beautifully published my first print book and e-book, *Aviaries* (2011) – organized around a general thematic concern of birds-as-people and people-as-birds attempting various modes of flight: taking off, soaring, hovering, landing, perching, surveying, staying put. The kismet cover art features



Cover image: *Paper Garden* ©2010
Clive Hicks-Jenkins

various myths and legends, much as I am. This painting, among a series of numerous others, results from his obsession with the original Celtic legend of St. Kevin and Seamus Heaney’s wonderful eponymous poem. St. Kevin, sequestered by himself in a tiny desert hut for Lent, places his arm out to the heavens to give praise and a blackbird lands in his hand – too kind to shoo the bird away, Kevin ends up for months with his arm and hand painfully outstretched while the bird lays an egg and creates a nest, an erstwhile home. The legend and the poem are about many things, among them patience and kindness and the useful strength found in unrewarded, disciplined work and suffering for another’s experience, which begins to sound a bit like the part of the artist.

Whenever I read from *Aviaries*, I get terrific responses from audiences, so I know the individual poems resonate with people, which is frankly the most important aspect of writing poetry for me: to reach and affect people. Still, the overall ordering issue is impacting and somewhat stultifying my attempts as I

move forward with my second manuscript, *Bibliomancy*. I am still thinking about how to organize a book in a different way that won’t seem overwrought, trite or silly. There are several contentious camps in the contemporary poetry world, and

my work straddles many of them. While this has never stopped me from writing, I can’t help but wonder if it has made book publication difficult; that, combined with the fact that writing and publishing poetry is just outright excruciatingly difficult. Maddeningly difficult. Have I said this before? It is challenging not to become swept up in trends of writing; however, from personal experience, I also can say it is hard to have a strong group of individually published poems people respond well to that is not being published. Regardless, it is a juicy problem to explore and solve and I am confident that, as I frequently suggest to my students about their own work, I will probably write my way into the answer.

Empire State College has placed so much faith, time, money, attention and good feeling into my work and I am profoundly grateful. As I stated earlier, during my sabbatical I did complete a significant number of new poems and drafts of poems toward the new manuscript. I wrote five sections for a longer – yikes, thematic – series about the *Book of Kells*, as well as poems about various aspects of book history and culture. Four of those poems have been published in literary magazines in the past two years, and so it begins again.

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Saint Kevin and the Blackbird ©2010
Clive Hicks-Jenkins

both a portion and entire painting (on the back cover) of Welsh painter Clive Hicks-Jenkins’ *Saint Kevin and the Blackbird*. A renowned set designer for the London stage, Clive is obsessed with animals, birds and the way they interact or school humans in

The following poems are from the collection, *Aviaries* (2011) published by Carolina Wren Press. Yvonne Murphy is the winner of the 2010 Carolina Wren Press Poetry Series Competition and received the 2010-2011 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.

The Mangrove*

*With a debt to Elizabeth Bishop's "The Man-Moth."

We cannot tell the rate at which we travel backwards,
underground the subways have stopped running –
global warming, storm surge, something
about squandering, rupture of sense. The planet
submerged, relics of architecture skirted by currents,
bloated structures, swimming out-of-place.

The mangroves grow through holes in drainpipes,
manholes steaming green from underneath the streets.
On subway platforms, piles of calcified trash make reefs,
congeries of vents and grates, ceramic tiles mossed underneath.
A grime cathedral – oxidized steel bedizened by barnacles,
coral accumulations, eccentric minnows darting over rails.

No echoes of the subway cars' throttle and scrape,
hurling from Delancey to East Broadway, no pedestrians
holding coffee in decaled cups. Even the violinists
have escaped, their cases scattered like coins.
The discarded cardboard of breakdancing boys flips
and spins, adrift now in stagnant water, obscured by waste.

Each tunnel curves into darkness. Dissipating
wave energy, mangroves climb toward the moonlight.
Ultra-filtrating, excluding metals and sodium,
their stalks coated with salt crystals that shimmer at night.
Dispersing viviparous seeds, propagules stay dormant
for years.

Humans extinct but for this spindrift of DNA, a propagule
floating, looking to take root. Estuarial assemblages
of lenticels, "breathing-tubes." The mangal perpetuates,
propping itself above watery trenches of the subway.
Impermeable sediments collect in protected areas, the world
could begin again, filtered, *pure enough to drink*.

Foucault's Dream

The page of a book is not to be trusted – when opened, a flock
of language gathers to unfold and circle around itself.
We don't think that the words will take off, get lost,
disappear without any pattern or discernible trace.
No "missing" or "reward" posters linger in shopping malls

advertising the loss of a phrase, the general collapse of meaning.
Discourse is not life after all – or is it?
In his dream, he can't pin down the text,
letters become blurry birds rising from a field.
He tries to pretend that he can read them, mouths

their migrations, but the words disperse
into squiggles coasting off the page – the book is empty now,
a used-up box thrown in dumpsters at the supermarket,
*its boundaries have collapsed and its calm universe has entered into
fusion,*
letters commingle in ways only alphabets can understand.
This was Foucault's constant nightmare: a scattering so final
it deconstructs the dream.

Bridge, Circle

The Eiffel Tower was not an innovation, *a dead thing, lifeless*, Ferris
knew better,
to take a bridge and twist it on its center, a circle hung on an axle,
revolving,
chief sensation of The Chicago World's Fair. They thought he was
crazy, a genius –
drawn from a chophouse napkin, his mighty bicycle wheel,
calculated to support,
riders wondered if prairie wind would blow it all down.

Climbing steadily upwards, passengers cheered the possible danger,
growing accustomed to its novelty, the slow throb of pinions,
popinjays
gasping at the panorama. His mystery saved the fair from
bankruptcy, pleased
expectancy, model of efficiency, horizontal whirligig, the incredible
charm
possessed by a vast body in motion – people surrounded it,
perpetual, transfixed.

Ferris's wife sipped champagne on her maiden voyage, toasted her
clever
husband, her gold-trimmed gown grown flush with flickers of color.
He couldn't have predicted it would be blown up later, left in pieces
under
the Mississippi River – alone in a Pittsburgh hotel room, his
oversized invention
could not save him, he became another bridge suspended, turned in
on itself.

Jefferson's Parrots

In his semi-circle of a room, half-moon off the parlor, Jefferson sits writing letters to friends. It is late, the candles have dripped over and dribbled beyond themselves, his reading wheel, strapped-new with four books, rocks anxious in the breeze that trembles through the door. Behind his desk, the daybed is rumpled. Hours of reading, writing, the moon gets full waiting for his muse to come inside. Wedged between windows and bookcases, the door looks like it could be a window, that's the genius of the design brought back from France, along with wine and countless *objets*: the hand-colored engravings and china plates with painted parrots that line his walls. *Les Perroquets*, their scarlet and indigo wings, so exotic. He fumbles with a quill, frustrated: *Will she ever come?* and looks out to his gardens. The night is encrusted with stars, fragrant lavender drifting up the hill through his curtains. He wants to will her to come, but logic overrides feeling. He must occupy his mind – control desire, coil it up, packed tight in a snuffbox for reserve. His head falls exhausted on the desk. The country's policies and progress weave themselves into sleep. And the parrots bear witness while he dreams.

The Cyclone

Marianne was fond of roller coasters; a fearless rider, she preferred to sit in the front seat. – Elizabeth Bishop, “Efforts of Affection”

Nautilus of wood and steel – tracks twisted into an exoskeleton of spirals. World famous, “Faster than Ever,” the Cyclone drops and turns, speeds reaching sixty miles per hour. Charles Lindbergh said it was “scarier than flying the Atlantic solo,” but Miss Moore, our poet-hero, prefers the front seat. Her hands grip the safety bar, waiting for the first drop *as if they knew love is the only fortress strong enough to trust to ...* The sailors in the car behind her punch and jab each other, tug brass buttons in anticipation. “Surf 's up,” seagulls cry between dives for hot dog scraps scattered under benches. Marianne isn't looking back, the loop-di-loops fling her forward, catapulting gusto. The Dreamland flea market glitters with sun, circus freaks dangle charms to gawkers, screams from the coaster weave in and out through tight layers of day. Deliberate structure supporting chaos, thrills engineered to appear spontaneous. Marianne is in her element – the sailors gasp as her hair-clips pop out into their laps. The celebrated braid swings wild in the air. On the ground, Kewpie dolls pucker while boys throw balls at bottles arranged in towers. Marianne's hair dances its own miracle. *This is mortality, she sighs, this is eternity ...*

Found Things: The Prince Street Dialogues I-IV by George Drury (1981)

In All About Mentoring, 39, we included a small tribute to our colleague, George Drury, who died last year. We continue this recognition here.

In 1981, the college published Drury's The Prince Street Dialogues. As Hugh Hammett, then acting dean of the center, wrote in his "preamble": "By unanimous agreement of the faculty of the Genesee Valley Learning Center, meeting at 8 Prince Street on July 21, 1981, these Prince Street Dialogues are published in honor of Empire State College's tenth anniversary in Rochester. Composed by our friend and colleague George Drury between 1972 and 1976, the Dialogues represent a loving nurturing of the idea of a new college; and they hold before us educational issues that will remain contemporary as long as Empire State College exists."

Drury's Dialogues I-IV (of 39) are reproduced here. The four "all approach the notion of 'prior experience' which was our most descried (and decried) characteristic - 'ESC gives credit for prior experience!'" All offer a glimpse of what colleague Lee Herman describes as George's "joyful word play." (Is "academcy" a word or a typo?)

**The Prince Street
Dialogues
I-IV
by
George Drury**

The Prince Street Dialogues began appearing in 1972, soon after the Genesee Valley Learning Center opened. They have run to XXXIX, at this writing, and have dealt with the topics: "prior experience," "the non-cognitive objectives," the ESC student, Degree Program, the mentor, the nature of ESC as a college, and mentor-student interaction as an art.

Their purpose was to help me locate our work, and I shared most of them with immediate colleagues at GVLC to help in establishing our sense of common place.

They are rhetorical dialogues, which is to say that they are concerned more with invention than with fusion, resolution, or presentation.

In P(rince) and S(treet) I hope present readers will recognize my long preoccupation with "S" and "P" as initials (Social and Philosophical; Subject and Predicate [especially the reversal which rhetoric effects in considering these]; Student and Prospective [Student]; Society and Person; and, lately, in relation to the Variance, Senator Pierce).

Dialogues I - IV all approach the notion of "prior experience" which was our most descried (and decried) characteristic - "ESC gives credit for prior experience!"

PSD I appeared in JANUS, Vol. I, No. 1, Spring 1972.

Argument: The learning from prior experience which we evaluate should be made present. Poetry seems to make prior experience present; we have to achieve a comparable and appropriate revivifying of the presented learning.

I

What is stranger than to speak
of my memory?
Paul Valery

Look at that! By the calendar it's spring, and yet outside the snow is falling.

Perhaps that is what happens in Rochester.

Maybe so. But recall Villon's line, made English by Rossetti, "Where are the snows of yesteryear?"

Why should I do that? Doesn't everybody, though usually without the Villon-Rossetti tag? Think of it in relation to our somewhat strange notion, "learning from prior experience." Why strange? And what relation?

Is there not something somewhat unpleasant about both "the snows of yesteryear" and "prior experience"?

Nothing of which I've been aware, O Sokrates. I suppose that even if you could get the snows back, they'd melt all over again.

And prior experience is apt to show up dead unless –

Unless what?

Unless we reconceive what we are after here.

How so?

"Experience" is a funny notion. It sometimes means the past and sometimes, the present. But I think I can fix it up.

How? I ask patiently – but with expectation.

We must bring about rebirth. It must become "the experience of prior learning."

And you think Villon's poem from which the line "Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?" does not do that?

The second PSD was occasioned by the report of an early – and apparently persisting – worry that credit would be awarded for "unprocessed learning." PSD II voices a different worry.

Argument: Evaluated learning must maintain active connection with experience and existence.

II

Caress becomes gesture.
Randall Reid,
Detritus

One of our Princes is worried that we shall be crediting "unprocessed experiences."

How say the MITS and the WITS?

The who?

The main in the Street and the woman in the Street – I picked that up from a sprightly little book I encountered long ago.

What old fashioned expressions!

It was an old fashioned book. But what do they say?

That experience and existence have the priority, with suspicion for the rest.

Come to think of it, that little book was called MITS, WITS AND LOGIC, and I guess that title is a fair statement of the problem.

The Street is not alone in that. The Academy also finds that "the subject-matter and arts of philosophy today are both fixed by common words ... like, 'experience,' 'existence,' 'language,' and 'communication'" as Richard McKeon has said.

What shall we do in Prince Street?

Where the only road to learning is royal –

And leads from, and back to, the Street of experience and existence – “E Z OFF; E Z ON,” as they say along thruways.

We will maintain that the learning has taken place royally (“really?” asks Finnegans Wake) if, and only if, there has been experience of the processing.

PSD III grew out of a series of early experiences of serving on the Assessment Committee. At that time the “Assessment Committee” was made up of our entire Center faculty, viz. Denis Cowan, Bob Barylski, Allen DeLoach, and myself – minus, of course, whoever had a student up for consideration.

Argument: If the connection with experience and existence is to be maintained, the mentor-evaluator has to meet the student in terms of his/her prior learning.

III

Objective knowledge must be
'psychoanalyzed' in order to
restore the freedom of experience.

Gaston Bachelard

What can ail thee, Bright-at-Forms, alone and palely loitering?

It's an "Evaluation Day."

But you're a Mentor.

That's just it. Called in ten minutes to an evaluation of prior experience!

Look. Each walk of life has its special obligations. If you didn't want to have to evaluate a student's prior experiences, why did you sign on?

It's not so much the student's prior experience as the evaluation of my own which terrifies me.

O, come on! "This hurts me more than it hurts you?"

No, no, no. Evaluation isn't like grading papers or totting up credits.

It isn't?

No. It's really what a friend of mine calls "an enactment of the College."

Tell me more.

What takes place is really socialization. We strive to reach a place of meeting, from which our association in learning can go forward.

You must exercise your prior learning experience to join the student's prior learning experience.

Yes, and I might, through old Academy habit just bomb his experience from twenty thousand feet up and never join him at all.

The reflection embodied in PSD IV is that we would never appropriately do what we were attempting in ESC, in assessment and the rest, by means of logic alone. It seems to me that we are often still engaged in making this (excluding) approach to taking in prior learning and to furthering contract learning – but then sometimes we don't and do better.

Argument: As the Trobriand Islanders' action of exchange in the Kula required explanation in a system other than economic, so our educational interaction requires interpretation in a system other than logic.

IV

I am convinced that the orientation of our times – in theory, practice, and art – is to the study of concrete facts of existence and experience, and I see no reason why the ontological study of principles and the epistemological study of methods should not find their propaedeutic in the study of concrete facts and values.

Richard McKeon

The Future of Metaphysics

I'm all at sea. But I see you're reading.

Did you know that "argonauts" means "lazy sailors"? And that's maybe why Malinowski calls the non-economic Trobrianders with their kula ring "the argonauts of the Western Pacific"?

No, but that's kind of to the point.

How so, camerado?

Well, Empire students bring in all their prior experience and we grant credit but really their stuff is like those kula beads and bracelets – no cash value.

That's because, like those kula things, experience really gets valued in another 'system'

What other system? What's it like in that land?

I can give you a brief account from Chaim Perelman.

Okeh.

In a logical system you have non-contradiction, right?

Yep.

In rhetoric this becomes a requirement of non-incompatibility.

More.

A logician tries to escape reduction to absurdity.

Indeed, he does.

A rhetorician strives to avoid the ridiculous.

Hear, hear.

The work's all done in logic when validity is achieved.

Who can doubt it?

But rhetoric aims at effectiveness.

True for you!

(To be continued)

A Nation at Risk?

Alan Mandell, Metropolitan Center and Xenia Coulter, Center for International Programs

A Review of:

Harnessing America's Wasted Talent: A New Ecology of Learning

By Peter Smith

Peter Smith has written a stimulating book – and a book that is important because it raises questions about the goals and purposes of higher education today, the nature of what students should learn, and the changing structure of academic institutions. In effect, Smith wants to identify and elaborate upon what he calls “a new ecology of learning” that puts education in socioeconomic context and imagines it (or at least some of it) anew.

Smith's rich experience in education lends weight to his critique and to his recommendations. He now works for a for-profit institution (Kaplan Higher Education), he has significant experience in international education (UNESCO), and was the founding president of two important progressive institutions (The Community College of Vermont and California State University at Monterey Bay). Smith's time in public service (he was the lieutenant governor of Vermont and became Vermont's U.S. House representative) offers him a macro-angle of attention that most of us just don't have.

In a snapshot, here is Smith's (2010) basic argument: Today's colleges offer curricula that are just not appropriate to meet the needs of contemporary students and the nation as a whole. Moreover, these institutions rely on models of teaching and learning that “bear no resemblance to how learning actually happens in daily life” (p. 65), and they are unable to change or, as he puts it, “maxed out” (pp. 21-34). It is clear to Smith that the real victims are adults who are “crushed” (p. xiii) by an educational system that fails to appreciate their massive reservoir of “untapped knowledge” (p. 49) – that is, “unrecognized

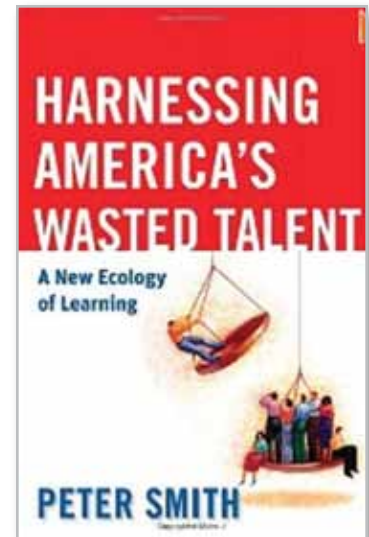
learning” (p. 69) at least within the academy. As a nation, we face a significant problem, a crisis that has moved from a “largely moral issue to becoming a national security issue” (p. 4) because, he explains, “America needs a civic force and workforce for the 21st century” (p. 99). As it is, we are systematically wasting talent.

What should we do?

What Smith envisions is a second system of higher education that can “harness” this talent – a model of individualized learning that is remarkably similar to the original conception of Empire State College, but brought up to date with 21st century technologies. Very much as in the brave new world of education described by Kamenetz in *DIY U* (2010), Smith (2010) emphasizes “customization” (p. 137), “academic portability” (p. 88) and access to open education resources. Thus, he offers us a compelling portrait of a “talent-friendly college for the 21st century ... organized around the needs of the learner, not the habits of the institution” (p. 138). Very crucially for Smith, this new system demands the development of significant new mechanisms of evaluation within a “large regulatory environment” (p. 117) that will enable our colleges to separate assessment from instruction and learning from the stranglehold of tradition.

Smith's enthusiastic description of the adult student accurately depicts the learners we all know well at Empire State College, and it is exhilarating to read a book about higher education in which the adult becomes the hero rather than an afterthought. On the other hand, the book leaves unanswered a number of hugely important questions.

First, Smith clearly believes the traditional brick and mortar university does not effectively address the very real needs of 21st century America. However, rather than trying to fix this problem, he argues that we should instead simply



institutionalize what is, in essence, educational segregation. On the one side, Smith would let the rich and powerful first-tier universities continue to go their own way as they force-feed our youngest students with seemingly irrelevant and impractical disciplinary knowledge (while, of course, also providing them with extensive and expensive opportunities for recreation as they become adults). On the other side, he would have us create another kind of school to meet the instrumental needs of busy, already knowledgeable adults who, with the vast resources of the Internet at their fingertips, can discover for themselves what else they need to learn.

This proposal raises many concerns. Do we really want to stereotype younger students, many of whom have the same instrumental needs as adults (although not always the rich experience that is at the heart of the “talents” Smith so admiringly describes)? Do we really want to give our youth to an educational system that we know, in theory (see Bereiter, 2002) and as practicing adult educators, is so deeply flawed? And, for our older students, do we really want to abandon the educational ideals of the liberal arts and succumb solely to societal

demands for economic growth? Do we also really want to put our research institutions beyond their reach even though adult learners, if given the opportunity, might have much to contribute to the creation of new knowledge? Logic, research and our core values tell us that segregation diminishes the educational experience for all. Smith, however, seems oblivious to these potential losses and uninterested in preserving educational principles that transcend the differences his proposal accentuates.

A second question arises here – one that also is germane to other books describing new ecologies of learning like Kamenetz (2010) and Thomas and Brown (2011), or to any institution that takes seriously the assessment of prior learning. Do we seriously believe that the experiences and the needs of any single individual are acceptably important or sufficiently coherent to serve as the totality of an undergraduate education? Without doubt, adults come to us knowing a great deal. When we analyze what they have learned from their personal and work experience, we often see that some adults have readily acquired the equivalent of four years of college-level knowledge. But does that knowledge – on its own – constitute what we envision as a “higher learning”? At Empire State College we’ve been spared that question since, from the start, we’ve had to reserve a quarter of a student’s program for knowledge acquired with our guidance. Moreover, our area of study guidelines, as uneven as they are and however much they have been reviled, have served to rein in and structure the range and substance of program content. The idea of future adult students creating individualized college programs made up mostly from their personal and professional experience, significantly shaped by socio-economic demands with occasional dips into the Internet where they are free to pick out what they do and do not want to learn is potentially disquieting.

Should a college education be only what one wants or happens to learn, or is forced to learn by the immediate exigencies of the marketplace? Or is there still some value in the old-fashioned idea of education as

a composite of what a body of scholars believes is worth knowing? Asked in another way, will the new vogue for “personal learning environments,” the contemporary nod to the individualized curriculum, produce something less than we want our students to achieve if faculty lose their authority as mentor and guide? Clearly there is a conflict between the supposed freedom of the individual to choose and the power of the academy to impose, but a millennium of scholarship on this debate points out that it is not a resolution of this conflict, but the dialectic itself (which, we would argue, is at the heart of degree program planning at its best) which is so important to student development and growth.

Despite Smith’s overall friendly tone and steadfast refusal to criticize the traditional university, his argument – at its very core – is quite radical and, in fact, implicitly undercuts the academy itself. In essence, he is advocating that a college education should no longer be defined by academics, but by the apparent needs of society. Thus, Smith disregards an educational tradition that stretches back more than 3,000 years that, at least in its ideal, has sought to expose students to ideas, problems and questions intended to provoke a critical examination of what is taken for granted in everyday life – that is, to critique the “needs” of society itself. And he does so without explicitly acknowledging it. It seems a little incredible to us that Smith so good-naturedly accepts the legitimacy of today’s economic and political realities (reflected in the ubiquitous phrase, “workforce development”) to shape the purpose and nature of a college education – all under the guise of doing good, of claiming to give due credit to what adults learn on their own, or as he puts it, “harnessing their otherwise wasted talent.”

It is difficult to believe that Smith doesn’t appreciate the importance of critically examining and defending his apparent willingness to accept at face value that what any dominant group believes society needs, the university should provide. Of course, as a senior officer of a profit-making institution for adult students, he is making an argument in this book that is clearly in

his own best interest. We happen to believe that the relationship between education and society is incredibly complicated and not reducible to any simple calculus. Particularly in today’s world, Smith does us a disservice by making it seem as if it is a simple, worthy and commendable move to split the educational world in two, ignore the problems of the traditional university, and promote a nontraditional educational system that bypasses the many (and we would add, profound) issues about which so many contemporary faculty agonize.

Yes, we need to think more clearly about the role of the university in attending to the career needs of our students (no matter what their age); and yes, we need to better articulate how this can be done without sacrificing the efforts of the university to stand above the fray and to help students do the same. Ultimately, it is not in the best interests of our students to be encouraged to blindly follow whatever new trend is thrust upon them without learning to engage in deep critical reflection and to evaluate the consequences. It is not in the best interest of our society to promote a special kind of education that champions the credentialing of existing knowledge. Adult learners deserve much more, and privileged educators such as Smith should be at the forefront in demanding it.

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Remembering Lou Wood

Our colleague Lou Wood died on 10 May 2011. An Empire State College mentor in Science, Mathematics and Technology at the Niagara Frontier Center for 35 years, Lou was a patient teacher, trusted guide and abiding spirit for many at the Lockport Unit, at NFC and across the college.

Tina Wagle **School for Graduate Studies**

When I first came to the college, the Master of Arts in Teaching program was still a piece of paper, so in the meantime, I was teaching Spanish at the Niagara Frontier Center. At that time, Lou Wood was faculty chair and it was incumbent upon him to review the contract evaluations (CEs) that came through his queue.

I wrote my first ever CE, and Lou returned it to me for revisions. His feedback was written gently and encouragingly, but I could still read between the lines meaning, “This CE sucks and needs to be completely rewritten.” Coming from a high school teaching background, I was used to writing comments about teenage students. His feedback was taken, understood and appreciated. I continue to miss his smile and his cheerful “Hi, Tina,” every time he passed by my door.

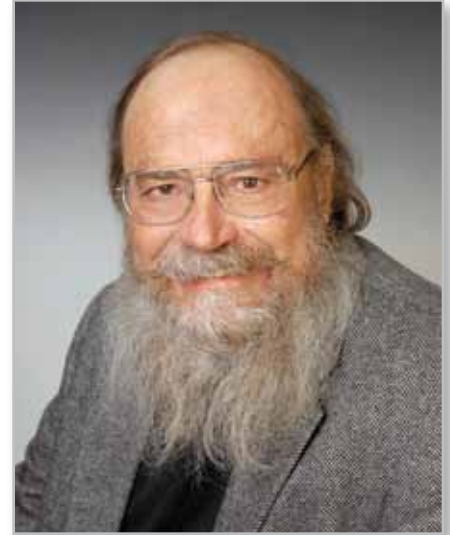
Fernand Brunschwig **School for Graduate Studies**

Lou’s death is a great loss. He was a wonderful man and an extraordinary mentor and colleague. I worked with him as a colleague and friend from the first moment that he joined the college. He was the lone scientist on the Niagara Frontier, as I was initially on Long Island and as Vic Montana was at Genesee Valley, and as others were at other fledgling centers. Lou was the generous, intelligent, hard-working spirit who made it fun to work together. We will miss him sorely. Safely rest.

Tom Rocco, former dean **Niagara Frontier Center**

Lou Wood was not given to hyperbole, so I will try to be measured in my remarks about him. Every community and organization needs models, champions, ideals, and in some cases, saints. My long association with Lou Wood convinces me that he is a model for mentoring. He was a very well-educated scientist, a devoted teacher, a guide for students, an inspiration for new faculty members, a cherished colleague for administrators and support staff. He would be a saint if we needed that role in the college. He was a model mentor for sure. He was the kind of person about whom histories should be written but rarely are. He didn’t start the college or the center, so he is not likely to be given a place of particular honor in whatever histories are written; but he exemplified the most important values of Empire State College. He was truly student-centered in his work, which means what? He did not start from the point of view of his discipline or even of the generic perspective of science or expertise. He started his work as mentor with students from their understanding of their own needs as new or returning scholars, using the standards of the academy as guidelines to assist them in learning what they wanted or needed to know. He knew how not only to assess outcomes but to help students see what outcomes were in their interest. He was truly cross-disciplinary in his perspectives. He favored student research. He was very good at what he did, which was mentoring people who wanted to learn at the university level.

I did not know how much I missed him until I was stunned to learn that Lou had died. I will miss him more. I am sure that many of us who knew him will miss him greatly.



Lou Wood

Meredith Brown **School for Graduate Studies**

For what it’s worth ...

I think that those of us who were lucky enough to work alongside Lou on a daily basis recognize the instructional and advisory litany of his mentoring. Perhaps litany is not the right word, as Lou was probably the most secular colleague I’ve ever known. But he constantly used “stock” phrases. His constant repetitions, like his incessant “triangulation,” did not petition a god and were without ceremony or liturgical trappings. But they were part of a petition of faith in human learning. And they were always expressed with humility and respect. Rather than apparently going through the motions on a rote basis, each “repetition” appeared to the particular student (or colleague) as a unique, sincere, and individualized response to the particular task or needs at hand. The person in the office next door might recognize the mantra and even the metric of its delivery. But Lou was mentoring each individual, perhaps through the simple mechanism of the invocation by name:

For what it is worth, Tom, I think ...

For what it is worth, Cathy, I think ...

For what it is worth, Meredith, I think ...

Marilyn Grapin Metropolitan Center

It is so very sad to hear about the passing of Lou Wood.

He was a brilliant man with great generosity of spirit. It was my great pleasure to work with him on a number of SMAT [Science, Mathematics and Technology] committees and Empire State College projects. I will miss him.

Jay Gilbert, mentor emeritus Hudson Valley Center

Lou and I met each other during the early years of the college. Although we worked at nearly opposite ends of the state, we both realized that our similar and complementary backgrounds would provide us with the opportunity to work with each other's students. Long before electronics, we used the mail, the fax, and scheduled telephone appointments to support unique and often advanced study for students from Buffalo and the Hudson Valley. Lou gave me the opportunity to provide excellent support for advanced study in physics for some of my students, and I provided advanced study in areas around metallurgical engineering and material science for a number of his students. We continued this mutual support for as long as I was at the college.

Lou also was one of the clearest thinkers I knew, a character trait that showed to advantage when the SMAT group worked to make clear what constituted liberal studies in SMAT areas, and what differentiated advanced from introductory knowledge. Most of what we developed was built on a base of clear and understandable principles that Lou originated and refined.

It was my good fortune to have had Lou as a good colleague and friend for so many years; I miss him greatly.

Anne R. Bertholf, former associate dean and dean Niagara Frontier Center

During the lean years when each center of the college had but one administrator, the position of faculty chair was created to provide quarter-time reduction for a faculty member who would assume responsibility, in partnership with the dean, for academic administration. Lofty goals and high expectations! Lou Wood was the first faculty member to take on those responsibilities at the Niagara Frontier Center, and he served in that role for many years. The quarter-time "reduction" in his teaching load, however, was on paper only: he always taught at or over target. Though academic administration was not a chosen field, he fulfilled the faculty chair role with grace and wisdom, supported fully by grateful colleagues.

Greater than the heroism, skill and dedication demonstrated by Lou's leap into administration, however, were his countless contributions as a mentor. Physics was his preferred area of expertise, but he extended himself astonishingly to meet students' broad needs in Science, Mathematics and Technology, particularly after the imposition of the "general education" requirements. Very early in my career as associate dean, I was surprised and delighted to read one of Lou's evaluations of a math student wherein he commented on the student's writing skills – in a study of mathematics! It was beyond my wildest "writing teacher" dream of the goal of "writing across the curriculum" to have a colleague whose math students were required to write clearly. I would learn, of course, that Lou's contracts always required that students describe the procedures and results of their problem solving.

I asked him once to develop a contract in the Physics of Music. He responded that this was an area of scant expertise, but he agreed to meet with my student, a bright, largely self-taught musician – pretty successful as a jazz/rock bass player – who did lots of recording from his home studio. After just one session, my student went home and rearranged his sound equipment, to noticeable advantage. Just weeks ago, I ran into this student, now a graduate, in a

Buffalo grocery store, and he repeated that story, still counting what he learned from Lou as a significant landmark.

Hundreds of students were shaped and changed by their work with Lou Wood. Many struggled with mathematics studies and were astonished that they could succeed, supported by his quiet encouragement. Students with learning goals in synch with Lou's areas of expertise were excited and challenged by the contracts he tailored for them. It is probably the case that Empire State College was the ideal institutional partner for Lou's eclectic competence. It is absolutely certain that Empire State College benefitted enormously from the range of his contributions.

Jacke Rose Niagara Frontier Center

Lou Wood was the rock of the Niagara Frontier. It wasn't just that he had been here for so long, that he was a senior faculty member, but that he was always the calm head, the patient, thorough and thoughtful advisor to all of us. Many times over the years, when I would be either confused by or annoyed at some issue, Lou would be the person I would seek out. He would always somehow manage to help me either understand the byzantine issue or at least come to grips with the silliness of it. His patience and humor were always there for you. Just hearing his snort of laughter at some event was enough to defuse a grievance. He is sorely missed.

Sarah McAllister Center for Distance Learning

I'm not a person who does well with memorials. I even have difficulty sometimes in using the past tense to refer to a dear friend or a loved one who has passed. However, I do feel compelled to try to overcome my usual disinclination in order to offer a few reflections in honor of Lou. My time knowing Lou was too brief, but he affected me in a meaningful way, as I am sure he did so many others, whether they were his students, colleagues, family, friends or random citizens.

Since I joined Empire State College nearly three years ago, I have always looked forward to collegewide meetings as an

opportunity to spend time getting to know Lou and Frieda. In addition to friendship and interesting conversation, Lou's presence offered a wealth of humble wisdom about teaching and mentoring that was a treasure for me. In the true spirit of mentorship, he was never imposing in his philosophies, but was always able to engage in animated conversation that led to further reflection and ideas.

To borrow a metaphor from physics, it is often stated in plain terms that energy is neither created nor destroyed – it merely changes form. I hope that a small portion of Lou's friendly, patient, wise, humble energy continues to live with us in the form of the humanity (and mentorship) of the people whose lives were touched by him. He is loved by many and truly missed.

In October 2008, Alan Mandell interviewed Lou Wood for an issue of the *Exchange*. He asked Lou about the significance of the choice he had made, then over 20 years ago, about spending most of his Empire State College time in a small unit of the Niagara Frontier Center. He wondered how it had changed the nature of his work.

And Lou replied:

“I started what was then called the Niagara County Unit, now Lockport, in 1979. The unit has its own challenges. You do work with people all across the board – anyone who walked in the door. And there were times when I was the only one there so I got everyone, so that I have done degree programs with people in literally every area of study. I do find that interesting, though; I met really interesting people and learned a lot of things that I would have never known. This is the case for all of us at the college but even more so for people working in a unit. I’ve worked with artists, historians and business managers. When I came to Empire State College, I made a conscious decision that I was going to be a mentor first who did some physics and math, as opposed to being a physicist who did some mentoring. If I hadn’t made that decision I would either have gone crazy or left a long time ago. But that was my focus. That is how I thought of myself, and think of myself now, as a professional.”

Core Values of Empire State College (2005)

The core values of SUNY Empire State College reflect the commitments of a dynamic, participatory and experimenting institution accessible and dedicated to the needs of a richly diverse adult student body. These values are woven into the decisions we make about what we choose to do, how we carry out our work in all parts of the institution, and how we judge the outcome of our individual and collective efforts. More than a claim about what we have already attained, the core values support our continuing inquiry about what learning means and how it occurs.

We value learning-mentoring goals that:

- respond to the academic, professional and personal needs of each student;
- identify and build upon students' existing knowledge and skills;
- sustain lifelong curiosity and critical inquiry;
- provide students with skills, insights and competencies that support successful college study.

We value learning-mentoring processes that:

- emphasize dialogue and collaborative approaches to study;
- support critical exploration of knowledge and experience;
- provide opportunities for active, reflective and creative academic engagement.

We value learning-mentoring modes that:

- respond to a wide array of student styles, levels, interests and circumstances;
- foster self-direction, independence and reflective inquiry;
- provide opportunities for ongoing questioning and revising;
- reflect innovation and research.

We value a learning-mentoring community that:

- defines each member as a learner, encouraging and appreciating his/her distinctive contributions;

- recognizes that learning occurs in multiple communities, environments and relationships as well as in formal academic settings;
- attracts, respects and is enriched by a wide range of people, ideas, perspectives and experiences.

We value a learning-mentoring organization and culture that:

- invites collaboration in the multiple contexts of our work;
- fosters innovation and experimentation;
- develops structures and policies that encourage active participation of all constituents in decision-making processes;
- advocates for the interests of adult learners in a variety of academic and civic forums.

Submissions to *All About Mentoring*

If you have a scholarly paper-in-progress or a talk that you have presented, *All About Mentoring* would welcome it. If you developed materials for your students that may be of good use to others, or have a comment on any part of this issue, or on topics/concerns relevant to our mentoring community, please send them along.

If you have a short story, poem, drawings, or photographs, or have reports on your reassignments and sabbaticals, *All About Mentoring* would like to include them in an upcoming issue.

Send submissions to Alan Mandell (SUNY Empire State College, Metropolitan Center, 325 Hudson St., New York, NY 10013-1005) or via email at Alan.Mandell@esc.edu.

Submissions to *All About Mentoring* can be of varied length and take many forms. (Typically, materials are no longer than 7,500 words.) It is easiest if materials are sent via email to Mandell as WORD attachments. In terms of references and style, *All About Mentoring* uses APA rules (please see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. (Washington: APA, 2010) or http://image.mail.bfwpub.com/lib/feed1c737d6c03/m/1/BSM_APA_update_2010.pdf).

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