ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

"Our lives today bear the continuities of the past, but our futures reflect the problems facing the next generations. We go on making and remaking ourselves each day as history unfolds and society changes. What conflicts do you experience between your values and goals and the institutions and environment you anticipate in the future? What expectations do you have for yourselves and your children? How might your children's values differ from your own? How can you help to bring about a world that will provide them with a high quality of life?"

– Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology* (2005)

Table of Contents

Our Legacy in the Face of Crisis

Alan Mandell

Empire State College was a child of its time. Like other experimenting institutions of the late 1960s and early 1970s, it emerged out of a deeply felt skepticism about social institutions of all kinds (whether the family, the military, the media, the government, or the church). Schooling, from pre-K through university, was seen as intimately implicated in the production of distorted lives at the most personal and societal levels. As the critic Ivan Illich put it in his provocative bible of anti-schooling, *Deschooling Society* (1971):

"The hidden curriculum of family life, draft, health care, so-called professionalism, or of the media play an important part in the institutional manipulation of man's *[sic]* world – vision, language and demands. But school enslaves more profoundly and more systematically, since only school is credited with the principal function of forming critical judgment, and paradoxically, tries to do so by making learning about oneself, about others, and about nature depend on a prepackaged process" (68).

The ideas and the feelings that nourished this critique were immensely powerful. "School enslaves:" it reproduces the assembly line, institutionalizes new forms of control, legitimates impostors who claim to be authorities, and twists us into actually believing that learning and seat-time are one in the same. All of this was a million miles away from the steps to human liberation that education was meant to offer. You didn't have to be R.D. Laing, Stokely Carmichael, Myles Horton, Kate Millett or Herbert Marcuse to make this point and go searching. There had to be something else.

The so-called open school movement was one alternative. Whether Walter Perry at the Open University UK, or Herb Kohl in his "open classroom" (where he famously worked with 36 12-year olds in Harlem) or Ernie Boyer, Art Chickering, Jim Hall and others at Empire State College, there was an urgent call to change. It was possible, they all thought, to "disestablish school" (Illich) by re-establishing learning on new grounds.

At the heart of what became a worldwide pedagogical movement was a belief that active, thoughtful, interested individuals could take the power to craft their own learning. "[O]nly we have the power to do it," Illich wrote. "No one can be excused if he fails to liberate himself *[sic]* from schooling." Indeed, people like Alan Tough in Canada who insisted that adults were already engaged in institutionally unrecognized "learning projects" and Morris Keeton, who reminded us of Dewey's insistence on the "experiential" (whether *prior* to matriculation or at the core of any *new* learning) inspired myriad educational experiments that (again turning to Illich) could "support personal growth rather than addiction" and contribute to the creation of "convivial" and not "manipulative institutions."

There is a direct connection between Illich's critique of the "prepackaged process" (the "very idea of publicly prescribed learning"), the "open school" movement, and Empire State College's insistence that the individual learner's academic needs, interests, background, and personal and professional goals had to be at the center of any university curriculum. In this important way, the call for individualized degree programs was not the whim of a few off-beat academics who loved to play with the knots of the day. It was a precise response to what was understood as an educational system in deep crisis. Individual autonomy and personal voice – the basic goals of human liberation – could only be rescued from what Marcuse described as a "false system" if students had power and if, as co-learners, students and mentors could collaborate on what was to be learned and how. Illich may have been disappointed that a place like Empire State College (and many others) hadn't "deschooled society," but we had certainly picked at its irrationalities and offered new forms, new "learning webs," that, if not sufficient, were certainly necessary for self determination.

Thus, almost 40 years ago, the open school movement linked the dreams of freedom, equality and justice with student choice. Students and mentors could respond to the crisis at hand by breaking the strangle hold of the curriculum (hidden and not so hidden). What were seen as the major sources of personal and social domination – totalizing institutions that had shut out, silenced, or just paralyzed too many into submission – could be replaced. More could participate; more could gain confidence making important decisions; more could grab control of their lives. Individualized education was practice in democracy, practice in freedom.

*

But what if we are, right now, confronted with a new and even more profound crisis? Or what if our understanding of an abiding crisis has changed? What if instead of seeing that we have to deschool society by empowering students, some have come to see that institutions have to reframe their questions, recalibrate their priorities, and teach students what is *absolutely necessary* for them to know? That is, what if the ecological crisis we face is so threatening – literally world and life threatening – that it shouldn't be left to the vagaries of student choice as to whether they should learn about its complex presence in our common lives? Maybe it's not about "unpackaging" any more, but about "repackaging" the curriculum based on the goals of *sustainability*.

What do students and teachers absolutely need to know? Should we all learn about the causes and repercussions of deforestation, about the biology and politics of water,

about natural gas wells, about the final destination of our garbage? Should every college student be expected to understand what the "omnivore's dilemma" really is, or whether we can really afford "cheap food," or about grazing and overgrazing, or why climate change occurs, or about the physics of nuclear power and how electricity is generated and distributed? And how about biotechnology and the human engineering of micro-organisms, or the definition of "organic," or the reasons for population shifts, or why some have argued that "small is beautiful," or why hunger persists, or what the debates about environmental justice actually are about: should these areas of knowledge be a part of *every* student's curriculum?

And, of course, the list gets longer and longer. This is especially the case if we see that our contemporary ecological crisis includes cultural, sociological, political, gender, economic, architectural and artistic components, let alone all of the ethical and policy dimensions that confront us

as ecological citizens every single day. So instead of Laing, Carmichael, Horton, Millett and Marcuse, do we now have to be informed by David Orr, Chellis Glendinning, James Lovelock, Bill McKibben, Vandana Shiva, Fritjof Capra, Joanna Macy, and our colleagues, Eric – Ball and Zencey?

The experiments in open and individualized learning were linked to a particular understanding of the crisis at hand and to a key premise and promise: if given the opportunity and offered careful and informed guidance from a new group of professionals – from mentors – students would make reasonable choices: they would learn both what they *wanted* and what they *needed* to learn.

The new calls for curricula attuned to the ecological crisis are based on another premise: if nature is to thrive, if civilization is to remain, and if the university is to continue as a viable, relevant and responsible social institution, professors need to teach and students need to learn

exactly what humans need to live. Put aside Illich's fears about "manipulative institutions" and his probable naiveté about deschooling, some would argue, education for sustainability is practice in survival.

Like our own and others from the early 1970s, experimenting institutions have tried to respond to their understanding of the crises of their times. Probably David Orr would agree with Ivan Illich's argument that "[s]chool is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need the society as it is." Both recognized those "ads" for what they really were/are: calls to reproduce limiting and even destructive values and institutions. The question for us today is whether and in what specific ways the legacy of deschooling and deinstitutionalization, and thus the most deeply held core values of an Empire State College, can remain robust, flexible and necessary in the face of what many understand to be *the* most profound crisis we'll ever know.

Alan Mandell

> *"Do you believe that our culture will undergo a voluntary transformation to a sane and sustainable way of living?"*
>
> – Derrick Jensen, *Endgame* (2006)

A Sustainable Model for Mentoring

Chris Rounds, Central New York Center

Okay, sustainability is an over-used word. Yet it seems particularly apt as we think about Empire State College in 2015 and beyond. We will, in the next five years, confront or celebrate – depending on one's perspective – the retirement of a significant percentage of our faculty, administrators and staff. We also are likely to experience some transformational changes regarding the uses of technology, the nature of our regional centers, the ways in which we deliver "educational services" to our students, and the size of our student body. To preserve what we value most about the college and to position ourselves to welcome and thrive in the midst of these changes, we need to think carefully about what mentoring has been and what it needs to become.

What would constitute a sustainable model for mentoring? At its most basic level, I should think this model would assure prospective members of our mentoring community that they could thrive here; they could continue to grow and change throughout a career … if they wished. But they also would know that joining our community was not an option-constricting decision. They ought to be confident that, should they choose to move on before or after receiving continuing appointment, their combination of experience and scholarship would prepare them for a range of alternative career options.

Current Mentoring Models

Currently, the college hosts a rather bewildering array of approaches to mentoring. The oldest form, involving face-to-face interactions between individual students and their mentors, continues to thrive in some of the more remote corners of the state. In other precincts, this model is coupled with distance learning and the occasional study group to create a blended model. In some of our larger regional centers, group studies play a more important

role, coupled with independent studies. In these situations, the mentor begins to take on the coloration of an academic specialist, while retaining the charge of being primary mentor for students who may or may not be seeking degrees within the mentor's field. Finally, there are the programs that flaunt a term that used to be forbidden: "course." The Center for Distance Learning (CDL), The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies and the Center for International Programs all exhibit an array of characteristics that place them, at least in the minds of the "silverbacks," somewhere on the fringe of mentoring.

A closer look, however, highlights the commonalities in mentoring across these work environments. We all work with the same student audience: adult learners. All of us struggle to understand their academic needs, to develop learning opportunities that are responsive to those needs, to help them design degree programs that address their academic and professional interests while reflecting the expectations of the academic community, and to support them through the rough spots in their journey toward a degree. We're all mentors.

Given this broad diversity of mentoring models, it would be foolhardy to generalize. So here goes. None of these models could be characterized as sustainable. While individuals inhabiting each of these roles have found ways to thrive as scholars and to grow and change within their mentoring roles, they do not represent the norm. Too many among us are "stuck," working very hard to keep up with the demands of students, governance and family responsibilities and finding precious little time to sustain our scholarly interests, however broadly defined.

In the early years of the college, this "abandon all hope" – approach to mentoring worked surprisingly well. We were a pioneering institution, and

Chris Rounds

we attracted a faculty alienated from traditional institutions and looking to make a passionate commitment to a new and exciting venture. We were all in – happy to make a life-long commitment to the college.

We're not there any more. We continue to innovate, of course, and we are determined to attract candidates interested in engaging deeply with our programs and students. But we are a bit long in the tooth for pioneers. The territory is settled and the infrastructure is in place. New settlements are, no doubt, being established, but the frontier is, as they say, closed. We need to attract settlers as well as pioneers.

And, of course, we're confronted with a new generation (or even two) of job applicants. We still attract, and value, career changers with diverse backgrounds. But we also need to attract a new generation of people who have just completed Ph.D. programs, who have "hot" research agendas they are unwilling to abandon, and who come to us with family and community obligations in hand. These are the people for whom a sustainable model for mentoring must be

created. If we fail, they will either not come or they will not stay.

A Sustainable Model: The Challenge

Why has it proven so difficult for us to create a more sustainable model? Without going into great detail, it seems to me there are several contributing factors. First among them is the 12-month workload. None of us would mind getting paid for 12 months, if two months worth of professional development were included in the package.

A second challenge relates to the very nature of our institution. When a newly minted Ph.D. lands a job in a traditional college, the setting is pretty familiar. There are new players on the field, but the rules of the game are similar to those of the institution from which they have graduated, and in which they clearly thrived. At Empire State College, virtually every new mentor faces a steep learning curve. The department has disappeared and the set curriculum is either nonexistent or seems to be in constant flux. Even the word "teaching" has taken on an entirely new meaning. And then there is the new language that needs acquiring. We're full of odd terms and acronyms like LC, CE, TIS and DP Planner. No matter what else changes, as long as the college remains true to its values, these challenges will remain for every new mentor.

Another challenge is inherent in mentoring. Most of us, most of the time, are not working within narrowly defined academic boundaries. The work we do with students rarely contributes to the research agendas we had in mind as graduate students. As an institution we celebrate interdisciplinarity and breadth. And these characteristics are part of our attraction to new faculty. But they can get in the way of narrowly defined disciplinary research agendas. And for many of us, the job doesn't change very much as we advance in our careers. Where an assistant professor in a traditional institution might find herself teaching the introductory courses and looking forward to working with graduate students should she achieve seniority, a mentor approaching retirement is doing pretty much what she was doing when she joined the college 30 years ago. It's a good thing we love our jobs!

We should not fall into the trap of idealizing the experience of new faculty in traditional colleges. Those institutions haven't solved this problem either. Too many of their promising neophytes are chewed up and spat out without tenure, and too many of those who achieve tenure do so by producing sterile research that nobody reads and that makes no discernable contribution to society. So nobody has done this very well, and perhaps that's why we continue to attract such wonderful new faculty. But we should not take that success as evidence that we've done all that we need to do.

Elements of a Sustainable Model

What are the constituent parts of a truly sustainable model?

Most fundamentally, we must create an environment in which newly hired faculty can learn and grow. While much of their early attention will inevitably be devoted to learning about us, our students and our systems, each of them also must be able to preserve the time essential to continue the pursuit of their self-defined research agendas. For many, this time must be preserved within both the work week, or month, and the working year. It is the dean who should be insisting that mentors make time for scholarship, not the mentor who finds herself pleading for the space required to meet this basic need. Annual meetings between mentors and deans should begin by addressing issues of growth and vitality, and end with an agreement concerning how student and governance workloads will be met within that framework. To begin with, assuming the college remains wedded to the five-term model, new faculty and their deans ought to make it their job to meet mentoring obligations in the equivalent of three terms, assuring that every one of us remains the vital adult learners we are.

Those of us who have made careers for ourselves within the college have addressed this issue in one way or another. We've adjusted our research agendas, or abandoned them, or negotiated a "separate peace" with the powers that be. We have found ways to adapt and survive. But that is not good enough. We can't say to new faculty: "Don't worry! You'll be able to

find time for your research once you have tenure." It's not conscionable.

So, at the outset, the institution needs to find ways to enable every new mentor to find the space to pursue her own revitalizing agenda. But I think we as a faculty have to revisit the expectations we create for our students and ourselves as well. At one point in my career with the college, I served as the associate dean in a center composed of units. This obliged me to travel around the midsection of the state, getting to know mentors in each of our units. This led to a useful discovery: individual mentors defined "good mentoring" very differently. Some adopted a model that reminded me of what I imagined a psychiatrist might do: You meet with every

> *Most fundamentally, we must create an environment in which newly hired faculty can learn and grow.*

student for an hour every two weeks, and you support that student from the first day they appeared on your doorstep until well after they graduated. And at graduation those students said: "I could not have done it without my mentor." How great!

Other mentors defined their roles somewhat differently. While they attended carefully to the needs of their new students, frequently completing individual studies with them in their first enrollments, they were careful to manage their students' expectations and to nudge them in the direction of becoming fully independent learners. Thus, for example, early study groups and independent studies with the mentor or a mentor colleague gave way to more fully independent studies and studies cross registered through CDL. By the time these students graduated, they said: "I couldn't have done it without the support of my family." The mentor no longer played such a crucial role. And that was good, because those students were ready to move on.

Creating Independent Learners: A Key to Sustainable Mentoring

So I would argue that a key element in creating space for personal and professional development involves thinking about our students as learning resources as well as "customers" we need to serve. This conception fits nicely with our commitment to creating and supporting life-long independent learners. If we think of every student as coming to us situated somewhere along a continuum from being an entirely dependent learner to being an authentically autonomous learner, then our jobs and theirs begin to come into focus. Our question becomes: What is the set of skills, competencies and habits involved, and can we, both mentors and professionals, encourage them to move along that continuum, acquiring the skills and competencies they'll need as they free themselves of dependency? Defining these things is really not the focus of this essay, but I would briefly summarize them as follows:

A student has the potential to be an independent learner when:

- she is aware of herself as a learner;

- she is able to organize in time and space in order to facilitate learning;

- she is conscious of the importance others play in either supporting or interfering with her learning and is positioned to encourage her supporters and isolate her detractors;

- she is a skilled active reader, capable of understanding, evaluating and integrating information from multiple sources;

- she is an effective writer, capable of integrating information from multiple sources in essays that are well organized, clearly written and appropriately documented;

- she is an accomplished researcher, comfortable in the design and implementation of research projects that rely on a range of online and library-based resources;

- she has achieved mastery of the numeracy skills essential to working in her field of interest.

This is, admittedly, a tall order. And it is clear that no isolated action on a mentor's part will transform a student from being perfectly incompetent in any of these areas to achieving perfect mastery. But to the extent that we don't acknowledge and address these challenges, and to the extent that we don't share them with students, we make all of our lives more difficult than they need to be. And, in relation to the specific topic of this essay, to the extent that

> *What is the set of skills, competencies and habits involved, and can we, both mentors and professionals, encourage them to move along that continuum, acquiring the skills and competencies they'll need as they free themselves of dependency?*

mentors and professionals help students to move along this continuum, we increase the likelihood of student success, contribute to reduced attrition, and make our own lives easier. The students who absorb most of our time are those who have not mastered one or another of these competencies. Those who have moved furthest along the continuum toward authentic autonomy as learners are both most likely to succeed and least burdensome in terms of mentor and professional time and energy.

Beyond making it easier to work with students individually, strengthening their independent learning skills also effectively broadens the array of learning resources available to students. A highly dependent student is most likely to survive in a study with a very attentive mentor or tutor, or in

a study group. Students who are located further along the path to independence are able to work effectively in an environment requiring greater independence and autonomy. The array of learning resources available to them has been effectively expanded.

As an individual student moves toward greater independence, the relationship with the mentor evolves. Students who benefitted from close attention and frequent feedback early on in the relationship need less of each as they grow in the role of independent learner. Early mentor investment pays off both in the retention of students and in a relationship that is increasingly attenuated, freeing the mentor to focus on a new group of students as those who are continuing their studies actually benefit from less engagement with the mentor.

Specialization and Sustainability

Increasing specialization might contribute another dimension to the sustainable mentoring model. In the unit model, where I find myself, prospects for this option may seem somewhat limited, but as we become closer to "one college," it might be more open to all of us. I think of specialization as involving a number of elements. First, it recognizes that each of us is better at some things than at others. And to the extent that we can focus our energies on those things we're really good at, we will both do a better job and find the job more rewarding. Let's begin by observing that if you are the only history or business mentor in a location, you should think of yourself and be thought of by colleagues not as the "History (or Business) Department," but as the "department chair." Instead of attempting to master and deliver the entire curriculum, you should see it as your job to coordinate efforts to make the full array of studies within your field available to students. Whether you help to recruit and train adjuncts, to strengthen ties with local colleges, or to prepare your students to take advantage of CDL courses, your job is not to teach every course yourself. Thus, when a colleague calls to ask you to work with a student, you're in a position to say: "I can't take that on, but I can give you the name of an excellent tutor." You are left to work with and hone those studies you

most enjoy and are best equipped to provide to students. You may even find yourself developing blended studies available across the college or engaging with CDL to develop online courses.

The concept of specialization inevitably leads to a discussion of Educational Planning. John Jacobson, an early vice president of academic affairs at Empire State College, said: "Every mentor is an Educational Planning mentor." This reminds me of my son's experience in the Marine Corps, where "Every Marine is a rifleman." In my experience, all of us are aware that some mentors are better than others at Educational Planning. Some of us love doing it while others simply don't. And that means, predictably, that some students are better served than others. So it may be time for us to revisit Educational Planning and ask:

- Who should be completing this study with students?

- When, in the student's career, should it be done?

- How can we bring the full resources of the college to bear on its successful and timely completion?

In answering these questions, we might begin by asking some of those rarely asked questions:

- How is Educational Planning being done now across the college?

- How might we assess what's working and what's not?

- Can we learn from that experience?

Celebrating Diversity and Complexity

Sustainability, in natural environments, is deeply intertwined with diversity and complexity. Systems that are more complex and diversified are more resilient, more responsive to change, and more likely to survive adverse changes in the environment. Surely that is as true of Empire State College as it is of any other habitat. And it is, I suspect, as true of individuals as it is of systems. So a sustainable model for mentoring must allow for and encourage a diversity of approaches. The questions are not simple, and the answers we arrive at cannot be simple. Every mentor will need to approach this challenge as an effective independent learner, eager to learn from the experience of others, but aware that his or her response will need to reflect

the individual strengths and weaknesses, passions and expertise we bring to the project. And they will need to be aware that what excites them in their first year may appall them in their tenth. So they will need to be prepared for change and the institution will need to be ready and eager to support that change.

New faculty are formally supervised and evaluated by administrators, but they are also coached and evaluated by colleagues. Senior colleagues are in a position of power. If the message new mentors receive from us is: "Hey, I sacrificed myself for my students and I expect as much from you!" they are likely to heed that message, and you'll find them in the office six days a week. And they will gradually begin to look quite a bit like us. If, on the other hand, we keep in mind that they are not at all "brand new" when they join us, that they come with experiences and interests we need to celebrate and nurture, maybe, if we let them, they will allow us to help them create sustainable roles for themselves within the college. And when a new prospect comes for an interview, we'll be able to introduce them to folks who have been here just a few years, and who remain excited both by the work they do and by the scholarship they pursue.

"We need lifelong education to give us choice. But we need it even more to salvage the conditions that make choice available and within our power."
– Zygmunt Bauman, *Does Ethics have a Chance in a World of Consumers?* (2008)

Mentoring Old Red

Gary Goss, Professor Emeritus, Long Island Center

I n 1972, when Empire State set out to determine what it meant to be a mentor, we decided that one major attribute was that mentors set examples.

1.

On our retirement in 2000, Susan and I settled in Healdsburg, a country village at the confluence of three of America's finest wine appellations (the Russian River, Dry Creek and Alexander valleys), about 23 miles from the Napa Valley and 65 miles north of San Francisco. If you have seen the movie "Bottle Shock," that's us. Most of the grapes used to make the wine that won two blind-tasting competitions in France came from the Healdsburg region. Those wins (California 2, France 0) opened the world to the idea that fine grapes can grow in places ranging from Chile to Australia to New York.

Healdsburg was laid out by Harmon Heald in the 1850s around his idea of a Mexican plaza. For a century it remained a dusty farm village (hops, prunes, apples). Pistol shots rang out on Saturday nights. The plaza, overgrown with redwoods and palms, was ringed with bars. The development of zinfandel (the finest zins in the world are grown in the Dry Creek Valley) led to Healdsburg becoming a modern destination. Today the streets around the plaza buzz with the French and Italian of wine tourists, and couples ride up from San Francisco in stretch limos, through the vineyards, to buy silk neckerchiefs for their cats. Polite undocumented workers sit in the plaza under the shade of old trees and look not at bars but at boutiques.

If you want to drive 30 miles, you can visit The French Laundry, reputedly the best restaurant in America. Take $600 each if you want lunch, and call just after midnight for a reservation 90 days in advance.

In February you can watch Tour de France teams, including Astana with Lance Armstrong, train on local roads.

Gary Goss (center) holding protest sign

2.

Healdsburg Avenue was once part of a chain of two lane roads that formed the Redwood Highway from San Francisco to Oregon, now linked by 101. The locals call the main street Old Red.

Old Red is where Susan and I found ourselves one afternoon, about three months before the second war against Iraq. We were standing in the street along the plaza because a woman at the farmer's market, known for her fresh garlic, had called some friends, and one of them had phoned us. About a hundred antiwar protesters showed up, not bad for an isolated town of 12,000. I held a black anarchist flag with "TOLSTOY" written on it that Susan had sewed for me in 1969.

On that first day we were invited to join the Peace Project steering committee. We met once a week, cooked a meal together, and made plans. We brought Cindy Sheehan and other speakers to the high school gym. We started a local public access talk show. We marched in the town's yearly parade. We showed a free political movie once a month at the Senior Center.

In time we set out, successfully, to elect Democrats and Progressives to the town's city council because the Republican city council had supported the Patriot Act.

The Peace Project resembled groups in 1969, except that there were few students, just ordinary California street activists grown too old to be doctrinaire.

3.

We understood from the start that nothing we did in a small rural town would stop President Walking Eagle from launching his war (some of us had served in the army and understood the chain of command). It was clear before the fighting started that the rationale for the war (that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction) was false. UN reports clearing Iraq were public knowledge before the invasion. The war with Iraq would be arbitrary, but we couldn't stop it. Facts wouldn't stop it. When we first stood along Old Red, it wasn't clear what good this gesture might do. We felt old, futile and foolish as we stood there.

None of us wanted to lead the Peace Project – or maybe each of us was the leader. It eventually occurred to us, old people standing on Old Red, that our mission was educational. Standing silently in the street we mentored by example. We hoped the young would join us.

4.

It's been six years now, and we are still standing. We have not missed a Thursday. We stand on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day. Young people have joined us. Bus drivers make peace signs. The mayor stops by.

We might almost be a town asset in the sense that tourists from San Francisco spot us and decide that this is their kind of place. They walk across the street from the hotel to chat. Of course a few wine tourists from Montana have asked hotel clerks why we haven't been arrested. The clerks throw us peace signs. Local thugs tried four or five times to run us down with pickups, but the town police jumped them, not us.

The Healdsburg Peace Project banner was marched through the streets of NYC during the 2004 Republican convention.

We aren't leaders. We don't teach. We don't run for office. We stand for something.

A Web of Interconnected Stories:
The Power of Developmental Learning

Julia Penn Shaw, Center for Distance Learning

Getting Started

I was asked to be the mentor for an individual study with Joanne Smith (a fictitious name), a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (M.A.L.S.) program. Joanne wanted to use narratives to help the elderly people she cared for at a senior center. She was directed to me by colleague, Rae Rohfield, who knew of my background in developmental learning and the developmental structure of narrative thought. Joanne and I collaborated on a study titled "Developmental Learning: Narratives Across the Lifespan," which we planned to engage in through e-mails and scheduled phone conversations. The outline moved from a general discussion about learning to a more specific analysis of developmental learning, with further modules about the personal development of narrative over a lifetime. Joanne was my first graduate student at Empire State College, and I was looking forward to working with her on a topic of great interest to us both.

Our first real engagement with the material was on a Saturday morning. Through a brief phone chat earlier, we discovered that Joanne needed to reread the material to become more comfortable with it. Having done that, she was now better prepared. We talked about "learning," focusing on general learning perspectives that made the most sense to her as she interpreted them through her own learning experience, and the learning experiences of those with whom she worked.

Then she asked me, "Julie, what is 'developmental learning'?"

"Joanne, you are getting to the center of this study. Developmental learning," I explained (following Werner and Kaplan, 1963), "is learning which is developmentally primed and which leads to a simultaneous increase in integration and differentiation of the structure of knowledge."

Julia Penn Shaw

"Oh," Joanne said. Obviously, the definition had its usual effect, which was to induce somnolence. I could see that more explanation was needed.

Cassie at Age One: An Introduction to a Developmental Learning Cusp

So, as an example of developmental learning in action, I told Joanne about my experience with Cassie, my granddaughter, just as she was turning one. Cassie and I spent a few hours together alone on an afternoon when her mom and dad were at work. This was great for both of us. We enjoyed playing together. We "read" some books that she selected from the low shelf, played with various toys, and I talked to her dolly on her behalf. Then we honed in on playing "in and out." I put something away and she watched closely. She tried to put a smaller square box into a larger square box. Although she was not able to complete the task, her goal appeared clear to me. Taking her lead, I put her new stuffed squirrel in its box and took it out again. She tried to put it in. I completed the task for her, as she watched intently.

Her play area was loaded with objects that could contain or be contained. She watched closely and followed along as I created many combinations of container and contained, some with multiple containers (one container inside another container). She listened carefully as I used the words "in" and "out" for different tasks. She tried containing objects herself, although her limited fine motor skills prevented her from successfully completing most of her attempts. We played these games for about an hour and 40 minutes. Then she stood up and went to a small stuffed chair that was just her size (which I learned later from her parents that she had made no former attempt to sit in). She twirled around (twirling was something she had recently learned), seeming to see the back of herself. Then she twirled the other way looking at her back from the other direction. She looked at the chair, turning to face it. Then she turned with her back to the chair, twisting to see the back of herself. It appeared to me that she wanted to put the back of herself into the chair (the container for her body), so I helped her locate her body into the chair. Cassie bounced on the chair a few times with an intense look on her face, which I interpreted as recognition that her back, which she had just twisted to see, was in the chair. Now, the chair was the container and Cassie was the object inside. Twice Cassie got in and out of the chair, which tired her. She was ready for her nap.

The in-and-out experience was compelling for both Cassie and me. It was a biologically-based, socially-constructed mutual interaction. I scaffolded her developmental learning in the fundamental concept of "container and contained," as an integrated set of physical activities with associated mental constructs (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Although Cassie's motor skills were not mature enough for her to execute the in-and-out experiences by herself (these were to mature about

six months later), she was determined to experience container/contained with help. Because I was experienced in developmental learning (finding knowledge of Piaget [1967], Vygotsky [1980], and Montessori [1995] quite useful), I knew the advantage of working through her interests. With my assistance, she constructed knowledge of in-and-out, differentiating and integrating both physical and mental constructs with which in-and-out is associated.

Developmental Learning

"That," I told Joanne, "is developmental learning." In effect, Cassie was developmentally ready to learn a basic concept: that many objects, including herself, have the properties of being containable and containing. Our motor actions of in-and-out linked social support to biological readiness and led to the integration of body and mental processes in the learner (Cassie) and a sense of success and generativity in the helper (me). I recognized her readiness and provided stimulus from the environment to help her practice it. What I had done with Cassie is similar in intent to teaching in a Montessori school. The premise in Montessori training is **to recognize** a child at a developmental cusp and provide the right stimulation to encourage accurate connections between body actions and mental structures. As was the case with Cassie, the child is ready to absorb experiences beyond his/her ability to complete them. Ideally, the child selects a task, but the teacher (or parent or caregiver) completes the task if the child cannot, so that the child has the satisfaction of seeing it done.

Joanne asked: "How does Cassie's experience meet the definition of developmental learning as 'simultaneous … integration and differentiation'?" I explained that Cassie was simultaneously able to integrate the mental concept of "container and contained" (as shown by her intent) through our in-and-out actions and the associated words of "in" and "out," executing physical tasks, including placing her own body in a chair. The differentiation was evidenced by applying the mental structure of in-and-out to a variety of particular instances, using elements

available in the environment. Cassie's deep engagement in our "play" showed that she was primed to learn the concept of "container and contained" by playing the in-and-out game – and I was there to teach it.

Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

Joanne and I discussed another aspect of developmental learning called the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). This is the most widely-used and deeply appreciated concept from Vygotsky's work (1978). The scaffolding I provided for Cassie was within her zone of proximal development. "I remember reading about that in the chapter on developmental learning," Joanne said, and then asked: "How does that apply here?" I then explained that the concept of ZPD highlights the developmental readiness of a learner for a potential learner/instructor interaction – whether conscious, as was my interaction with Cassie, or unconscious, as is true of many collaborative experiences. The ZPD is the realm just beyond what the learner knows, but within the realm of what she can next learn. Cassie was developmentally ready to learn in-and-out, and I was able to provide the social support for her learning, which was mutually satisfying to us both.

Scaffolding is a term which is associated strongly with Vygotsky's ZPD concept (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). Cassie was ready to learn (attentive, participative and intently involved) prior to her being able to complete the task herself; she was ready to be scaffolded with the in-and-out concept. At a later date when Cassie had the motor skills, she would play in-and-out on her own, no longer needing the scaffolding. Joanne asked: "Were there advantages to her experiencing in-and-out as primarily executed by another before she is able to physically complete the tasks?" I explained that, yes, in fact, scaffolding is a most appropriate use of learning environments. Scaffolding supports new learning, directing it constructively. When Cassie later learned to use prepositions in phrases such as "in the box" or "under the table," she spoke with confidence because she had a grounded understanding of the physical basis for such phrases.

The Learning Environment

Another point that Joanne and I discussed was the difference between "learning environment" and "environment." Toys, boxes and myriad other containers were present in Cassie's environment. The learning environment that we created, however, was nested in our social interaction. As Cassie's grandmother, I felt strong emotional ties and a desire to satisfy her needs. As a developmentalist, I was sensitive to, and looking for, concepts that Cassie was interested in learning. A rich environment of blocks, Little Einstein books and toys enables a child to engage in developmental play when they are physically capable of doing so, and may help parents prompt this behavior. But responding to a learner's ZPD precedes the learner's ability to interact effectively with environmental supports such as toys. The social and emotional support that I provided for Cassie's ZPD for in-and-out learning was beyond the physical environment and, at least in part, based on my prior professional experience as a developmentalist. A "learning environment" is needed for a developmental learning experience to occur.

Learning Readiness and a Learning Foundation

A window of opportunity must be present to scaffold developmental learning within a learner's ZPD. If Cassie had already acquired the skills to implement in-and-out on her own, she would not have been interested in watching and working with me as she did. It would have been boring for her, and boring for me, too. Her ZPD range would be more advanced. Prior to her developmental readiness, on the other hand, we would not have engaged in in-and-out exercises because her attention and interest would not be sustained. Sustained interest in a task is a sign of effective integration of developmental readiness, social support and a supportive environment. There is always an element of "play" in developmental learning – it will be fun for the learner in a deeply satisfying way – even if it looks like hard work to an observer.

Another important factor to consider in developmental learning is the foundation for

learning within the ZPD. Developmentally, children are typically ready for learning about relationships between container and contained at about the age of one, but readiness developmentally does not necessarily mean that the learning would happen as smoothly as it did. Did Cassie have the social, emotional and cognitive developmental readiness for this particular interaction with me? Had she developed trust in adults as outlined by Eric Erikson (1980)? Could she sustain her attention for a long period of time? Did she have prior experience with constructing clear concepts? Did the strength of our relationship sustain the extended time needed to learn the new concept? These are all factors of the learner's foundation, and influence how successful the scaffolding at the level of the ZPD will be for the learner.

Joanne's Client, Joe, at Age 76: Another Developmental Experience?

At this point, Joanne said, "Yes, I think I see what you mean. But I am interested in helping older people create narratives. How does the developmental learning of a one-year old have anything to do with that? Of course, I can see how developmental learning applies to small children, but how does it applies to older people?" At this point, Joanne and I were both in new territory. I was familiar with developmental theories across the lifespan – having created one of my own – but had not applied this knowledge to a particular situation in-depth with an older person. Joanne was new to this, too, and was asking the right questions.

Now she talked in greater detail about the situation that led her to this study in "Developmental Learning: Narratives Across the Lifespan." We had established a basis for "developmental learning," and it was time to move on to the "narratives across the lifespan" part of the study. Joanne said that she was very interested in helping older people develop narratives about their lives. There was one elderly gentleman with whom she worked, Joe, whom she felt benefited from sharing his story with others of his own age, and also with people of different ages. He had been telling aspects of his life story to a number of people in his living group, and the listeners seemed

to give him some comfort with his regret about lost opportunities and guilt about ruined relationships. To support him and others, Joanne had set up a weekly meeting time called "the story group." The group participants established a set of simple rules about taking turns while supporting and respecting the stories of others. Joanne said her group was working very well. The seniors who chose to participate were sharing their lives in retrospect – both the positive and negative aspects. There was increased trust in sharing the difficult as well as the light memories, and there was the appearance of increased comfort among them. Some participants appeared to be less stressed and more at ease in all aspects of their lives since the story group had begun. Joanne felt that the popularity of the group was a sign of something deeper happening in some of the participants.

As Joanne spoke, I could hear the same enthusiasm in her voice that I had felt when I talked about Cassie. It wasn't just the seniors who were excited about this program; Joanne was, too! She sensed that the "story group" helped the seniors that she cared for – and cared about – in a very meaningful way, but couldn't quite identify its importance to them.

At that point, I asked Joanne if she had done the reading on Erikson, which she said she had. "Well," I said, "let's take a look at how Erikson's theory might apply to the situation you described." According to Erikson, the compelling psychosocial dichotomy of people in old age is "integration versus despair." As elders look back over their lives, they must see coherence in the playing out of their identities. There must be acceptance of both the bad and the good, bringing all elements of their past into coherent stories reflecting their current identities. This process is called integration. If people cannot reach acceptance and integration, they face despair – the sense that their lives had not played out well. Remorse prevents acceptance of the reality of their lives.

"Can you see any way that psychosocial concern is being played out with your seniors? Can you identify a role that the 'story group' has in addressing it?" I asked.

"Yes," said Joanne, getting excited. She could see that the story group appeared to be "scaffolding" the seniors to a greater level of acceptance of their lives. The support from others was helping individuals cope with remorse and reconstruct it as regret. In creating the "story group," it appeared that Joanne had discovered a way to provide support for seniors in their ZPD. She could see how Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development related to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development across the lifespan, and how her actions were scaffolding their distinctive "developmental learning."

Wow! We were both quite excited. It was a wonderful learning experience for us both to pull the concepts of developmental learning, lifespan development, learning environment, learning readiness, ZPD and scaffolding together in a constructive way for elders. Although I knew that they would fit, based on prior experience with developmental phenomena, I had never done the specific work required to bring them together. For both Joanne and me, the experience had a quality of magic about it. In fact, applying the theoretical constructs to a particular situation was helping our developmental learning about developmental learning! The delight we felt in this was a clue to me that this mutual learning experience between Joanne and me was tapping into our own ZPDs. We were scaffolding each other's learning.

> *As elders look back over their lives, they must see coherence in the playing out of their identities. There must be acceptance of both the bad and the good, bringing all elements of their past into coherent stories reflecting their current identities.*

Joanne's Story:
Cross-generational Stories as a ZPD for her Developmental Learning

At this point, I mentioned to Joanne my response to our excitement – that we were probably scaffolding each other to address our own deeper developmental learning. I asked her to tell me about any experiences that came to mind about herself that might be related to what we were doing. Did she know why helping seniors develop peace in their lives was important to her? What was driving her belief that narratives for seniors were so important, and her belief that cross-generational stories were particularly important?

Joanne spoke slowly and haltingly, at first, apologizing for jumping around. This, to me, was a sign that she was tapping into something important to her. After a period of time, she pieced together her thoughts.

Her story was that she regretted that her mother had not died peacefully. Joanne was an only child, responsible for her elderly mother's care. Her mother was sad and bitter, telling Joanne that she had stories she would take to her grave. The secrets brought her mother remorse and established a barrier between them. If her mother had trusted her, Joanne felt that she could have bridged the distance between them, easing her mother's burden and helping her to die in peace. That this had not happened, Joanne saw, was probably a motivation for her to work with older people, to help them tell their stories, and to encourage the exchange of personal narratives across generations – just as she wished that her mother had shared her own personal narrative.

I asked Joanne how old she was, and she responded that she was 51. "Well," I said, "that is the age that Erikson identifies with 'generativity versus stagnation.'" Does that seem to fit your situation, I asked her? I could almost hear her smile on the other end of the line. "Yes," she said. "I can see how working to help seniors share their stories fits with my own developmental learning." The aspects of developmental learning were all there: developmental readiness, learning foundations, and the creation of learning environments. Joanne was developmentally ready to learn why she cared about narratives for seniors (Erikson's theory seemed to apply), and she had created a learning environment for her developmental growth in the senior center, and also in seeking out courses such as the one in which we were engaged. The signs were all there that she was at a cusp in her developmental learning. Our experience together was helping her become conscious of – and therefore get beyond – that developmental cusp.

Julie's Story:
Application of Developmental Theory to Personal Narratives as a ZPD for her Developmental Learning

"Well," said Joanne, "what about you?" "You said that this experience we are having of uncovering ZPD and scaffolding at different points in the lifecycle is a point of developmental learning for you, too." I, of course, just laughed. The way that so many pieces of the puzzle of lifelong learning could emerge from one long dialogue with a student was so beautiful. It also was so unexpected, so simple, and yet so remarkable. In sharing our experiences over the course of about two hours on the phone together, we managed to uncover five different points of ZPD that we had personal knowledge of and personal attachment to: Cassie, Joanne's client; Joanne's mother, Joanne, and now, myself.

Now it was my turn to fumble with words, spitting out pieces of a larger thing which couldn't emerge whole, needing reconstruction as a reflection. My story was this: My dialogue with Joanne is part of my longer personal narrative. More than 20 years ago, I had the first glimmering that I had to construct a model of developmental learning. It led me to enroll in the doctoral program at Harvard in developmental psychology, a program I thought would (and which did) provide both the freedom to develop a significantly new approach to developmental change and the constraint to enable me to do it. I did develop a model for perspective-making for my dissertation and even sought a patent on the ideas. Many times over the years, I've made presentations about it. Something, however, has prevented me from writing papers on the topic.

Why would I hold back on sharing something that I think could make a significant contribution to the epistemological foundations of human understanding? Although all of the information was there, the approach to communicating it with a larger audience was not. Neither a clear description of the mathematical properties of the theory, evidence of statistically significant developmental paths, applications to business and educational groups, nor even potential applications in artificial intelligence have been sufficient to get me to write. Somehow, I needed, at least initially, to couch my academic writing within an interpersonal frame, which is where my meaning always starts – in caring about and sharing with one other human being. That is where my developmental cusp is. My research has been gathered by tapping into the structure of narratives of others, gathered, for the most part, from one individual at a time. My dialogue with Joanne enabled me to bring some of my understanding about developmental learning to the "just enough larger" sphere of the course we created (just enough larger = ZPD). The dialogues between Joanne and me about her developmental stories and my developmental stories scaffolded my ability to write about developmental learning to a broader audience. This story about Joanne and me learning about learning together will be my first (and long overdue) publication about developmental learning.

In Conclusion: The Power of Developmental Learning

What are conclusions we can draw from this story about scaffolding in life narratives? One, I think, is that, at any age, we seek learning readiness and are drawn to learning environments of our personal ZPDs. Cassie's initial attempts at playing in-and-out with her grandma; Joanne's client telling his story, hoping for a forgiving response; Joanne's mother telling Joanne that she had secrets, perhaps hoping that they could be shared; Joanne setting up opportunities for seniors to share their life narratives; and my own lifelong search to develop and share a model of development – all of these are examples of people on developmental paths

creating learning readiness and learning environments. We are attracted to spots where that next step can be supported.

Another conclusion is that "the next step" beyond our current ZPD is supported by grace from our environments (grace is that which we need but do not know how to ask for). The gift of the "next step" within our ZPD cannot be reached without meaningful relationships with others. We are, indeed, all part of a web of interconnected stories. Joanne's insight into the importance of cross-generational stories was correct. It is also true that our stories became more meaningful when seen through the developmental lens of Vygotsky and Erikson, which focused our attention on how cross-generational stories relate to each other.

There are many ways to look at learning, and they all are useful in different contexts. None, however, to my mind, replaces the developmental approach. Theories are particularly useful when they point to paths for change in real human beings in ways that matter to them and to those around them. The value of Vygotsky's concepts of Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding (developed after Vygotsky's death), in conjunction with Erikson's theory of lifespan psychosocial development, lifted my conversations with Joanne from the ordinary to something more powerful for us both. My knowledge of Vygotsky, Piaget and Montessori elevated the meaning of a time with my granddaughter from fun to significant. That can be the power of developmental learning for students and mentors across the lifespan.

References

Erikson, E. H., (1980). *Identity and the lifecycle*. New York: W. W. Norton Press.

Lakoff, G, Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Montessori, M. *The absorbent mind*. Reprint edition (Oct. 15, 1995). New York: Owl Books. Henry Holt Company.

Shaw, J. P. (2002). A model for reflective processing using narrative symbols: Time and space coordinates in adult reflection. Unpublished dissertation. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. (Edited by Michael Cole, Cera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, Ellen Souberman). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Werner, H., Kaplan, B. (1963). *Symbol formation*. New York: John Wiley and Son.

Wood, D. J., Bruner, J. S., and Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology, 17*(2), 89-100.

"I've come to think that one of the most romantic and loving things you can say to another person is, 'Look.'"

– Kathleen Dean Moore (2008)

Goddard Legacies

Arthur Chickering

Arthur Chickering was Empire State College's founding academic vice president. His work at Goddard College in the 1960s and his many writings (including his seminal work, Education and Identity *[1969] mentioned below) were central to the core values and structure of Empire State College as an experimenting institution. Chickering gave this talk in October 2008 at the Progressive Education Symposium 2008: Developing a Shared Vision for the Future of Progressive Education held at Goddard. Thanks to Art Chickering for his willingness to let us use this text and to our colleague Xenia Coulter who alerted us to the importance of these "legacies."*

It's a treat to be with you all. I have been a progressive ed. devotee since I first ran into Dewey's thinking at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1950. But I must start with a disclaimer. I am billed to be talking about "Progressive Education Legacies." I am no scholar of progressive education. When I last heard from Maggie [Margo MacLeod], early this summer, she asked me to talk about Goddard's legacies for about 20 minutes and I am prepared to do that. I do so not as an historian of higher education nor on the basis of scholarly research, but simply from the perspective of my own professional experiences since 1959, when I first came here.

I need to start by noting that although Tim [Pitkin] was a strong and challenging leader, Goddard's policies and practices, at least as I experienced them, were enriched and supported by some other strong and loyal progressive educators. Evelyn Bates, George Beecher, Forest Davis, Wil Hamlin, Robert and Corinne Mattuck, with their own particular talents and perspectives, were key to making the Goddard of the '60s the most educationally – and developmentally – powerful environment I have ever experienced. I also need to say that I was hired to be coordinator of evaluation for a six year Ford Foundation project on college curriculum development. That evaluation involved me in very broad based and detailed four-year studies of Goddard students and their educational experiences, through achievement tests, personality surveys, interviews and student diaries, as well as specific projects undertaken by faculty members.

I think we also need to note that legacies are carried by people who learned from and were influenced by Goddard and Tim Pitkin. One of those was Ernest Boyer, who was chancellor of the SUNY system, U.S. commissioner of education, and head of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Tim first met Ernie in the 1950s when he was dean of now defunct Upland College and they were on the Commission for Innovation of the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges (now the Council for Independent Colleges). Anyone who followed Ernie's work as SUNY chancellor and as commissioner will see Goddard's educational orientation always there. And it is strongly reflected in the books for which he was responsible as head of the Carnegie Foundation.

I also have been a "carrier," for better or worse. So as I share some of my own activities, if some of my comments sound self-serving, I apologize. I am sure there are other "carriers," past and current, and I hope we can recognize them.

I want to touch on just three areas: learner-centered, individualized programs for adults; experiential learning; and "student

Arthur Chickering (left) and James Hall circa early 1970s.

development." Because my time is brief, I can only skim the surface of these, but perhaps they can provide a starting point for our conversation.

According to my 1965 appointment book, on Feb. 26, 27 and 28, 11 other college presidents, and a few of us Goddard folks, joined Tim for meetings in front of the fireplace in Kilpatrick Lounge. They came from Antioch, Bard, Bennington, Florida International, Montieth at Wayne State University, Reed, Sarah Lawrence, Shimer, and three others I cannot recall. Those conversations generated the Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education, whose purpose was to collaborate in fundraising for innovation, something that was very difficult for these small institutions to do alone. Jim Dickson, president of Antioch, volunteered Sam Baskin, director of research there, as executive director. Within a year Sam, with help from Goodwin Watson, a well known sociologist from Columbia University, had secured a $300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Back then

$300,000 was pretty good money. Within three years or so, Union membership had grown to about 35 institutions and the "University Without Walls" movement was underway. Participating institutions, with varying degrees of similarity, created what we now call low residency, learner-centered programs for adults. These were based on Goddard's program, for which Evelyn Bates was mainly responsible, that started in 1964.

In 1970, Ernie Boyer, then SUNY chancellor, hired me as academic vice president, to create what came to be called Empire State College. The charge was to create an institution "that would serve the educational needs of diverse adults throughout New York state." We were to offer Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Professional Studies degrees. The British Open University had just hit the streets with its correspondence and television mediated courses and was highly successful in Great Britain. But given the diverse adults across the state, in my judgment that batch-processing approach would not work for New York. So we created a program where each person had an individualized degree program pursued with individual learning contracts, created with help from a mentor. Almost all our students were helped to assess their prior learning, not only from educational studies but also from work and life experiences. They could get up to three years credit toward their degrees depending on the fit between their prior learning and their degree plans. Learning contracts made heavy use of their ongoing experiences at work and in their communities as well as courses at other institutions and independent readings. We became fully accredited in our fourth year.

Obviously, that educational approach grew directly out of my experiences with Goddard's progressive education, with its emphasis on experiential learning, independent studies, individualized programs designed by each person who applied to the Senior Division, and Senior Studies.

During those early 1970s, similar programs were getting underway across the country. The Union Institute doctoral program began in the early '70s. Bud Hodgkinson, academic vice president at Bard when the Union was created, started Walden. The man who started the Fielding Institute in 1974 told me that he explicitly adapted Empire State's program. Peter Smith was leading the creation of the Community College of Vermont. Since then, of course, we have seen a proliferation of adaptations. I believe all those institutions, and their current counterparts, are directly traceable to Tim Pitkin's initiative in creating the Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education and to Goddard's educational programs and practices.

> *The charge was to create an institution "that would serve the educational needs of diverse adults throughout New York state."*

Now let me turn to experiential learning. Here the legacy is less direct but still significant. As Empire State College's academic vice president, I wrote a grant request to the Carnegie Foundation for help in learning how to assess prior experiential learning. Alden Dunham, the higher education program officer there, had been receiving some other similar requests, and with the flood of adults coming into higher education saw this as a significant national challenge. He invited representatives from about 25 institutions to come to Educational Testing Service (ETS) for a couple of days to discuss how they might tackle this issue. After that meeting, he identified 12 of those present to form the Council for the Assessment of Experiential Learning – CAEL – and gave $1,000,000 to ETS as the fiscal agent and project manager. The institutions included Empire State College, Antioch, Community College of Vermont, University of San Francisco, Framingham State, El Paso Community College, Minnesota Metropolitan and Florida International.

At our first organizational meeting at ETS we chose Morris Keeton, professor and interim president of Antioch to chair our steering committee. After our three-year grant, CAEL became a nonprofit organization and Morris became our president. Morris, a philosopher, was one of the most articulate advocates for progressive education in the country.

Most of us on the steering committee and on the implementation committee – persons appointed from each institution to do the actual work of the project – saw CAEL as a movement that would change higher education to become more learner centered, more responsive to individual differences and experience-based. We emphasized the importance of "sponsored experiential learning" – internships, co-op programs, volunteer activities, and what has now become service learning – in addition to assessing prior learning. We collaborated extensively with two other professional associations, the National Society for Internships and Education, and the National Society for Experiential Education, that had been working this territory for some years.

Major grants from the Kellogg Foundation helped us with an Institutional Development program that created a network of regional managers blanketing the country. By the end of our fourth year, a national "state of the art" survey found that assessing prior learning was underway at some 2,000 institutions. In the early 1980s, David Kolb's "experiential learning theory" and his Learning Style Inventory, enriched and strengthened CAEL's conceptual backbone. How many of you are familiar with Kolb's work? One of his earliest publications was a chapter on "Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences in my Modern American College," which came out in 1981. In his book *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development,* that came out in 1984, he is very explicit about how his work is anchored in Dewey's thinking.

CAEL was a national expression of some of the basic principles of progressive education and some of its key leaders had been associated with, and influenced by, Goddard.

Now let me turn to "student development." In 1963, Tim and Ernie Boyer got a National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) grant to create a project called "Student Development in Small Colleges."

Ernie was going to lead this, but he got tapped to become a vice chancellor of the SUNY system, so I ended up with the job. It involved 13 very diverse small colleges across the country. At the conservative end were Bryan College in Dayton, Tenn., – founded to honor William Jennings Bryan of the Scopes trial there – Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., Westmont in Santa Barbara. On the far liberal end were Goddard and Shimer in Mt. Carroll, Ill. In the middle were Earlham, Western New England, Nasson, Malone, Monteith at Wayne State, and some others. None had enrollments larger than 1,000 students.

The project aimed at two basic purposes: (1) to look at the differences in educational programs and student outcomes across this diversity, and (2) to encourage institutional change at each institution, based on the research findings. This was the first attempt in the U.S. to use local institutional research findings as a basis for change to improve performance. As such it precedes the whole emphasis on assessment and outcomes oriented studies that hit higher education in the late 80s and has become mainstream since then. It testifies to how forward looking Tim and Ernie were.

The research dimension of the project was very successful and turned up powerful evidence concerning the relative impact of varied educational practices and institutional cultures. But the efforts to use the within institution findings to stimulate change fell flat. I, with other project staff, including Robert Mattuck who worked with us for a year or so, did annual weekend workshops at each institution to explore the implications of the data for particular initiatives that might be taken. But nothing happened. We were totally naïve about the complexities of institutional change. The NIMH funded a four-year follow-up project called Strategies for Change, directed by Jack Lindquist, who later became a Goddard president. In that project, significant initiatives occurred at some of

the participating institutions. One of the most significant was University 101 at the University of South Carolina that aimed to help freshmen make the transition into the institution and to improve freshman to sophomore year retention. That has become the Freshman Year Experience programs that, under the capable leadership of John Gardner, have become mainstream throughout higher education. Jack wrote a ground-breaking book called *Strategies for Change* based on what we learned. We had a contract with Jossey-Bass but they did not want to include three excellent case studies. So Jack took it to a friend, Bill Bergquist, who had started Pacific Soundings Press. Bill published it but did not have any real resources for promotion, so it has never received the recognition it deserves.

The most significant product from the Project on Student Development in Small Colleges was a book called *Education and Identity.* In that book, I pulled together the results from my detailed studies at Goddard and the data from the project. It got the ACE Book of the Year award in 1959, which gave it good visibility. It was enthusiastically picked up by student personnel services professionals and I was invited to speak at the annual meetings of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the American College Personnel Association and got awards from both organizations. The "seven vectors" of student development – competence, managing emotions, autonomy, identity, interpersonal relationships, purpose and integrity – provided a conceptual framework that helped them think about developmental outcomes that their work might encourage. Before long the language and orientation they used to describe their programs began to shift from "student services" to "student development" and that change is well embedded now. I was totally surprised because, having only worked at Goddard and only been associated with very small colleges, I did not know such

a profession existed. I was way over my head when large universities with graduate programs for such professionals – Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and such – asked me to come and talk with them about the implications of this work.

Another outcome from the project was a chapter I wrote for a book, *The New Colleges,* edited by Paul Dressel, an institutional research guru back then. I called it *Research for Action.* It was picked up by regional accrediting associations as an additional dimension to their usual reports and site visits and helped in a small way to shift their emphasis toward outcomes and evidence and away from total reliance simply on resources and inputs.

Those seven vectors, those developmental outcomes, that the student services folks found helpful were very much the areas of impact Goddard espoused and tried to encourage. And they were very much part of the struggles among the Goddard students who were in my classes and were my advisees, and that had showed up in my Goddard evaluation research. So that is another lasting Goddard legacy.

So, from my perspective there are three major areas where Goddard had a more or less direct impact on higher education: learner-centered, individualized education for adults; experiential learning; and increased focus on student development. And there is the additional area of civic engagement where Goddard might have provided some leadership if higher education was more ready.

I want to close by recognizing my own indebtedness to Goddard the institution, and to Tim and his wise and helpful colleagues. Those experiences launched me on what has been a wonderfully satisfying career. I have made a living for the last 50 years on what I learned here. Now I look forward to your contributions to progressive education's legacies.

Two Poems

Mindy Kronenberg, Long Island Center

Terrible Embrace
for the earthquake victims of Peru

The distance between life and death
might only be the footsteps
to open ground. They didn't make it:
the boy slumped in the back of night class,
a girl selling candy outside a bank,
a dancer standing in a room of mirrors,
head like a swan's between bowed arms.

It was only two minutes – the city held its breath
as brick and adobe collapsed into fists.
Hotels tumbled onto guests;
billiard hall players sank into tables.
Church ceilings fell upon the faithful,
blood-stained mosaics
of timber, stone, and dust.

When a prison wall shook and crumbled,
hundreds of prisoners ran into the streets.
Fishing boats clustered like a catch
on the buckled pavement of San Andres.
The photo in the paper is a shock of color
on ashen text. It happens as you see it:
a mother and child in an improvised camp,

tethered by a linkage of hands – one from above
on the woman's head, her own clutching
a toddler's sleeve, one tiny arm leaning back,
another grasping the woman's jacket,
their terrible embrace against a blue blanket
spilled with bright red appliqués.
The woman's face is fallen in grief,

the child's face reaches toward heaven,
the ground beneath them about to reawaken.

(Long Island Sounds, 2008)

Paper Doll

My mother would make me paper dolls
on our pink laminate table
in our tiny Brooklyn kitchen.

Her sure hand would
trace the pleasing oval face,
the ringlets of hair,

the politely curved body
with its arms and legs bared
for elegant dresses we could never afford.

She would draw these ageless women
for me, a girl whose hand dug
into paper puncturing the dots on i's,

tearing my signature across the page
in deep blue ruts that ran like rivers
to the sharpened edges.

My mother, whose voice could cut
the air like a knife through silk,
glided her pencil as if

she were afraid to tear the seam
of shoulder, thigh, high-heeled shoe.
I think of her in that small dark kitchen,

how she appears like a visage
from a dream: bent over paper,
guiding each line

as I do now.

The Eco-Academy: Empire State College Regional Centers as Sustainable Ecosystems

Deborah Holler, Julie Gedro, Heidi Nightengale, Nikki Shrimpton, Central New York Center

The November 2008 All Areas of Study Meeting's topic of "sustainability" encouraged us to examine that topic as it relates to the work we do at Empire State College. We began with the questions: "What makes us sustainable as a learning community?" and "How is sustainability practiced across the disciplines?" We conceived of our panel as an interactive session, hoping to engage faculty and professionals across the college in this discussion. The enthusiasm generated inspired us to repeat the session at our April 2009 Central New York Center meeting in order to collect additional data, which we have incorporated here.

Our session began with the initial premise that a regional center functions as an ecosystem, and we presented models showing how we support sustainability from our different disciplinary perspectives. Much like the regional centers, an ecosystem includes all the organisms that live in an area and the physical environment with which those species interact. Ecosystems are often delineated artificially by humans, so we might define the regional center as an ecosystem, just as we would define the ecosystem of a lake or a forest.

Ecosystem scientists often develop models to represent their particular ecosystem. An ecosystem model is a simplified representation that can be useful in thinking about the actions of a "real" ecosystem. To create such a model, one must identify an ecosystem's components and define the processes that connect them, including major inputs and outputs. What might an ecosystem model of an Empire State College regional center look like? And, considering the elements of this model, how sustainable is it? How might it become more sustainable?

Defining Sustainability

"Sustainability" is a word that is defined and used in many ways. Some use the word "sustainable" to mean "environmentally friendly," but sustainability means much more than that. When a resource is consumed at sustainable levels, people can continue to consume the same amount of that resource year in and year out, from one generation to the next. When a resource is used at unsustainable levels, sooner or later that resource will run out.

In 1987, the report of the Brundtland Commission defined "sustainable development" as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainable development policies encompass three general policy areas: economic, social and environmental. In support of this, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, one of several United Nations reports on the subject, identifies the "interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars" of sustainable development as economic development, social development and environmental protection.

Economic development of natural resources on a global scale has caused dislocation and severe cultural disruptions to millions of indigenous peoples on several continents. In response, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has called for redefining economic development policies in a way that is equitable and "culturally appropriate" for the indigenous peoples whose lives they affect. Indeed, public policy planners – such as Australian Jon Hawkes, author of *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning* (2001) – have promoted a model for sustainability with four interconnected dimensions: environmental responsibility, economic health, social equity and cultural vitality. This model has been widely adopted by public planning in Great Britain and Europe. But how does this model of interlinking elements work to support sustainability? Why, for example, should we consider culture in addition to the social elements of sustainability?

The Role of Culture in Sustainability

Culture may be seen as the social production of meaning and the products of culture (arts, narrative and material culture) as the reproduction of meaning. Through cultural actions, we make sense of our existence and our environment, find common expression of values and needs, and meet the challenges of life on earth. Within any geographic location, social groups are formed around common interests and needs, and are bound together by common values. It is these core values that inform human endeavors. The creativity and imagination engaged in producing culture are complementary to the rationality and logic of the sciences, driving the discovery of meaning in unpredictable ways that enhance human endeavors. For these reasons, "cultural vitality" is essential to a healthy, sustainable community.

The core values of a community can be seen as the fixative among diverse social groups, and as vital supports for sustainable communities at large. At Empire State College, we often discuss and reiterate our core values and make efforts to practice them in the work we do. There can be no doubt that these values inform our work. In effect, the ways in which our core values intersect with the diverse social groups in our geographic communities is what supports the sustainability of our community and environment at large. That is, through our interactions with various social groups in our regional environment, and through the products of our internal culture (learning), we seek to promote and

practice sustainability across the disciplines. But exactly how does this work?

Business, the Three E's and Sustainability

Researchers in business have used the biological ecosystem as a useful analogy. Business ecosystems share some fundamental properties with biological ecosystems, such as interaction, interconnectedness and system-level behavior. In this sense, a degree in Business, Management and Economics from Empire State College should help to foster critical thinkers, savvy business planners and ethical leaders. Business curricula clearly have a focus on the corporation, and the corporation is characterized by the profit motive. However, especially in recent years, we have witnessed the emergence of a broader consciousness about the purposes of the corporation, a view beyond the ideal of profit maximization. Many have come to realize that corporations operate not just in the commercial marketplace, but also in social, political and natural environments, resulting in a "triple bottom line" rather than the commonly expressed single profit motive. Such a triple bottom line "requires companies to not only consider financial profit and losses but also their effect on social and environmental concerns" (Lee, 2007, p. 67). Another way to think of the triple bottom line is to think of the three *E's:* economics, ecology and equity.

From such a view, corporate social responsibility needs to encompass a *stake*holder rather than a *stock*holder model. This perspective has been contested by some conservative thinkers, who have argued that a corporation is not a person or a single entity and does not have a mind or a conscience. Any deviation from that path-of-profit would be not only sub-optimal, but also unethical. Conversely, those arguing from the triple bottom line orientation have recognized that corporations operate in an open-system environment from which they extract resources to create products (or services) to market, sell, distribute and service. Thus, corporations, like parts of any ecosystem, create by-products as a result of conducting their business – impacts on the system (on our "ecology") that need to be

recognized and for which we need to take responsibility.

Attention to "equity" means that an organization must take another kind of responsibility; the responsibility to create an infrastructure (a system of pay, staffing, development, training and leadership) that includes all who are willing to work hard. It's in this spirit that theorists in human resources have established that equity means the support of workers regardless of social class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion.

Equity also includes a component of what might be thought of as "individual sustainability," which manifests itself in the overall quality of work life. This suggests that people must be given some choice and voice in their work environments. It means that workers' jobs include attention to the autonomy of the person, to task variety, to appropriate training, and to opportunities to make contributions of all kinds. And, of course, it means employer attention to ergonomics and workplace health and safety.

Given this understanding of sustainability in business, our degree programs (our efforts to encourage sustainable business curricula) need to foster awareness of the triple bottom line among mentors and students. In the Central New York Center, for example, we have been looking for evidence in business-oriented degree programs of studies that take up ethics, diversity and leadership. Granted, we hold fast to the Empire State College tradition of individualization, but we also attend to what is a new ecological landscape of business and our responsibility to help educate leaders and managers. From the lens of sustainability, the corporation – long the bastion of exclusivity, profit, privilege and power – is getting an overhaul, and our learning must reflect that.

Sustainability in the Human Services

As mentors in the Community and Human Services, it is critical for us to assess our role in interacting with our students, as we work to create an imaginative and responsible set of degree programs, specific studies and experiences. Such learning opportunities are not only immediately significant to our students, but are key to the creation of a

sustainable loop encouraged by the interplay of roles between mentor and learner.

Mentors can provide structure for such sustainability that will support students who are ready and able to enter the community and human service field by creating learning opportunities that provide all students with the four basic components: (1) the attainment of field-specific knowledge; (2) the acquisition of a value set which prepares the student for responsible and ethical work in the field; (3) the provision of practical experiences within the area of study; and (4) the development of field-related knowledge that will directly benefit learners in their post-graduation career pursuits. Commitment to this quadruple

> *… people must be given some choice and voice in their work environments. It means that workers' jobs include attention to the autonomy of the person, to task variety, to appropriate training, and to opportunities to make contributions of all kinds.*

human services bottom line demands that mentors must consistently address these four tenets of sustainability and conscientiously provide students with opportunities to think about and address them.

The mentor plays a critical role by acclimating herself to the community at large (to the entire social ecosystem in which we live), to the opportunities available to participate and work within it, and by collaborating with students to develop learning contracts that emphasize the interconnections between learning, doing and knowing more about people and place. Such learning activities might include interviewing professionals in the field and shadowing their experiences, followed by the student's critical analysis of

lessons learned around values, polices and knowledge-development.

The students' role in sustaining the loop is to actively collaborate with the mentor in the educational planning process in order to identify and explore relevant experiential learning components for their studies. Many Community and Human Services students are already aware of area services, or may have worked in entry-level positions, or have gained rich experience that can be incorporated into their learning contracts. This is an experiential base upon which to build. The sustainable loop continues when the mentor systematically maintains contact with alumni to develop a list of graduates who can provide guidance, internships, shadowing and field interviews to our new students. This work would, in fact, create a long-term sustainable loop of learning, communication, degree planning, and of prior learning assessment evaluators – of sustainable resource development.

Are We at Empire State College Currently Sustainable?

The previous examples of what sustainable academic activity might mean in terms of two areas, Business, Management and Economics, and Community and Human Services, also must be seen in a larger ecosystem-context. Thus, given Hawke's "four pillars" of sustainability: environmental responsibility, economic health, social equity and cultural vitality, we need to be aware of a number of Empire State College principles and practices:

In terms of environmental responsibility, we can point to the following:

- lower energy costs than most classroom and residential-based educational models;

- many regional locations that are on Ê public transportation routes; Ê

- unit locations across regions and the Ê state that can reduce student travel; Ê

- use of less paper with online enrollment and extensive e-mail communication;

- online library and online student resources/services as further reducing travel.

In terms of economic health, the following are important:

- comparatively lower SUNY tuition and fees;

- availability of state and federal financial aid and Empire State College-specific scholarships;

- the use and importance of prior learning assessment, which, in addition to serving important academic goals, reduces overall costs for students;

- the ability of students to maintain regular employment while continuing their studies and earning their degrees.

In the domain of social equity, we might emphasize:

- the flexibility of time and place that allow students to remain engaged with their families and active in their communities even as they continue their formal studies;

- students' ability to maintain regular employment and to be recognized in the academic world for the skills, knowledge and status they have gained in the work world;

- recognition of community involvement through prior learning assessment and other efforts to link study, work and everyday life activities of all kinds;

- overall efforts to provide academic access to those who have been denied opportunities to earn a degree.

And in the fourth pillar of cultural vitality, we can be attentive to:

- our college core values that become the shared values of a community across disciplinary and geographic regions;

- the fostering of partnerships and interest groups within geographic communities that can promote sustainability of the whole;

- regenerative mentoring that fosters a cycle of teaching and learning in which students become tutors to others and mentors learn from their students;

- place-based studies across the disciplines that support community building;

- the call for interdisciplinarity and cultural work of all kinds that can encourage and reinforce creativity and imagination for students and mentors.

Our Next Steps

How can we continue to expand and refine our practices to support sustainability? At each of the sessions we conducted, we asked audience members to brainstorm ways we could become more sustainable in each of Hawke's four pillars. As expected, many of the suggestions point to the important interlinking of the four categories (as in any ecosystem, nothing stands alone). Here are some of the results:

Environmental Responsibility

- reduce travel (effective video-conferencing, four-day work week, home offices, carpooling);

- reduce consumption and waste (ban plastic, ban bottled water, provide travel mugs, reduce printing, foster recycling);

- create green buildings (use of solar and wind energy, demonstrate best practices in sustainability in any space for which the college is responsible);

- create studies of all kinds in all areas of study that foster environmental literacy.

Economic Health

- investigate rich, useful, technological means of communication to save gas and commuting time;

- reduce costs at geographic centers e-mailing paper documents and examining energy costs related to buildings;

- seek more scholarship monies for our students and provide opportunities for paid internships;

- investigate grant writing initiatives and other external sources of funding;

- carry out environmental scans and monitor market trends so as to adjust our areas of study to meet future needs and growing workplace trends.

Social Equity

- recruit alums as tutors and as co-instructors with faculty;

- set achievable targets for employee diversity and increase outreach to underrepresented groups;

- improve retention of employees and emphasize professional development for all employees in the college;

- encourage systemic connections among individual employees, use meeting times to create and sustain social values; move meetings among the units of larger centers in order to encourage interaction and true sharing of ideas and practices;

- introduce students to programs mentors/resources related to their passion;

- include more experiential learning in contracts and encourage place-based learning to create a more informed citizenry;

- offer social networks for students both in person and via technology.

Cultural Vitality

- promote social equity and cultural vitality by offering a wide range of worldviews and ideas in everything that we do;

- encourage reflection on consumption and commercialism's influence on our values and our everyday activities;

- encourage innovation, change and experimentation to test our ideas and our ideals;

- share values of sustainability with external community formally through seminars and informally through partnerships of all kinds.

Our Empire State College Ecosystem

The biological ecosystem model provides a good analogy for Empire State College's regional centers and allowed us to examine the current and future sustainability of our systems and processes. Our explorations of the meaning of sustainability from our various disciplinary perspectives confirmed that the four pillars of sustainability (environmental responsibility, economic health, social equity and cultural vitality) are integral to all our disciplines.

When we examined our current systems and practices, we concluded that in many respects we are more sustainable than most traditional colleges. But our brainstorming activity revealed many areas in which we could significantly improve our sustainability with relatively minor changes to current practices. The activity also highlighted the interconnections between the four pillars, as we saw similar suggestions made in each of the four "pillar" groups.

Finally, our work on this project left us with some further questions about the risks of focusing on one pillar without considering the others. For example, if meeting times are important to "create and sustain social values" (improving social equity), how can that be balanced with increased videoconferencing (improving environmental responsibility and economic health)? Tensions like these emerged at every turn and demand our ongoing attention.

No doubt, through our work as an interdisciplinary team, we engaged in a collaborative learning activity that enhanced and supported our work in our individual area of studies group and in this way, participated in and continued our sustainable cycle of teaching and learning together.

References

Gibson, K. (2006). *Business ethics: People, profits and the planet.* Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Hartman, L. and Desjardins, J. (2008). *Business ethics: Decision making for personal integrity and social responsibility.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hawken, P. (1994). *The ecology of commerce.* New York: Collins Press.

Hawkes, J. (2001). *The fourth pillar of sustainability: Culture's essential role in public planning.* Victoria, Australia: Common Ground Publishing.

Lee, K.M. (2007). So what is the 'triple bottom line?' *International Journal of Diversity,* 6(6), 67-72.

Shaw, W. and Barry, V. (2009). *Moral issues in business.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Press.

United Nations (2002). *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, Aug. 26 - Sept. 4, 2002.* New York: United Nations.

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). *Our common future.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Poem from a Scientist

Chansak Suwanchaichinda, Long Island Center

As a medical entomologist, a public health scientist and a researcher, I have been involved in the fight against malaria since I was a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Millions of people are affected by the disease, with 90 percent of the fatalities occurring in Africa, particularly among young children. Malaria is an infectious disease caused by Plasmodium parasites and transmitted via mosquito bites. The parasites require both human and mosquito hosts for growth and development. A few strains of the mosquito species that normally transmit malaria have been found to be resistant, i.e., the parasites are killed within the mosquitoes. Researchers are extensively investigating the resistance mechanisms in the mosquitoes at both the cellular and molecular levels, hoping that a new way to control the disease will be plausible in the near future.

I would like to share this poem with the Empire State College community as a way of communicating my passion for eradicating malaria, and to raise awareness of the importance of science in public health.

Man Malaria Mosquito

Sub-Saharan Africa,
dusty dirt road – remote village,
huts rested on earthen ground,
walled with pieces of wood,
roof of dry exotic leaves

A new dawn's horizon,
beams of sunshine through the window,
a young child warm in mother's arms,
befriended the little birds,
gliding along soft wind's whispers

Eve of a darkest night,
orchestrated with sounds of creatures,
mosquito – uninvited to the hut,
a hungry invisible thief,
robbing nothing but red blood

Laid helpless the child,
fever and chill from malaria,
the young soul weakened,
like the moon being consumed –
by the monstrous dark cloud

Twinkled stars, fallen tears,
so quiet now, the night world,
the dimming light of life,
no more power to hold on,
fading away … lost in the cold air

Revision of the original published online at http://poetswearprada.blogspot.com, as part of a poem series, Anthology: Bugs.

Beyond the Sardine Hedge: International Mentoring and Metaphor Theory

David Starr-Glass, Center for International Programs

… it is better to make a mistake that can be exposed than to do nothing, better to have any account of how metaphor works (or thought goes on) than to have none. Provided always that we do not suppose that our account really tells us what happens – provided, that is, we, do not mistake our theories for our skill, or our descriptive apparatus for what it describes.

Richards (1936, p.115)

For many of us, to move beyond our ambient cultures and to engage in new experiences can be exhilarating, confusing, disorientating and profoundly enriching. It is not only that we encounter new perspectives or witness novel performances; rather, we are presented with the opportunity to reflect on what we are doing, who we are, and what we might become.

This essay stems from such a cultural cross border crossing: a trip to the southeast of Turkey in the summer of 2008. The initial objective was to gain insight into regional economic and marketing issues; however, being with Turkish friends in their local communities – exploring their thoughts, experiencing their culture and their sharing dreams – provided a rich and inescapable opportunity not only for reflection on Turkey but on the process and dynamics of the educational process in international contexts.[1] This essay examines intercultural learning experiences and the use of metaphor in organizational theory and suggests that ways of understanding metaphor provide valuable opportunities for enriching and deepening international learning.[2]

Of Fish and Flowers

We had driven from the bustling city of Adana overland to the busy port of Mersin, which lies on Turkey's southeastern coastline. We continued along the coastal road with Mediterranean on our left –

darkblue rather than the Homeric wine-dark – and sun-baked pine forests on our right. It was a pleasant and relaxed journey with a number of stops to eat freshly cooked corn from roadside vendors and to buy groceries and supplies for the beach house. Occasionally, but unnecessarily, we all checked the position of the sun above the horizon. It was Friday afternoon and everyone knew that I had to reach the destination before sunset and the beginning of *Shabbat*. But the sun was still high and we had ample time to relax and enjoy the beauty of the journey.

We passed a cave where weary warriors had slept a magical sleep for centuries and woken to find their fame forgotten and their money worthless. We passed a castle on an island where a princess had lived in isolation, placed there by her father fearful of a prophecy that she would die from the bite of a venomous snake. (The snake unfortunately made it to the island at the bottom of a basket of fruit that was served at her wedding.) It was a beautiful journey through unfamiliar landscapes drenched in strong sunlight and redolent with the residue of thousands of years of living.

We left the cliff-hugging road, looped inland into a forest of fragrant pines, turned a corner and saw below us the bay where Sinan's family have their beach house. It's a perfect location: a deep bay shielded on all sides by the pine-covered mountains with the glittering sea stretching out to the horizon. At the head of the bay there is a community of glistening white houses: the spacious summer homes of 90 families. Interestingly, this is a collegiate venture. Faculty members at either the university of Çukurova or Ankara own all of the houses.

We started to unpack but Sinan made sure that I, as a guest, was quickly seated on the shaded patio looking out towards the sea with a glass of freshly brewed tea. As he hosed down the hot marble flagstones

and watered the garden, he told me that he was happy that the sardines had survived. The neighbor had watered them in his absence and he was sure that before long the sardines would form a beautiful hedge.

I thought I had misheard, but the word had been repeated several times: sardines. For me, sardines are little fish neatly and impossibly packed in olive oil. I looked out towards the sea and the boundary of his garden and noted a line of pale objects in the ground, each at the center of a small depression that had obviously been filled with water. There was a moment of incredulity – a strange jarring sensation that I was either missing something important, or incapable of comprehending the obvious albeit the improbable. My mind for some reason latched onto stories of indigenous North Americans showing the beleaguered Pilgrim Fathers how to plant kernels of maize together with a little rotting fish. Perhaps in Turkey it is the fish that grows and not the corn?

"Sinan, what are *sardines?*"

He looked perplexed, then pointed to a large earthenware pot that stood at the edge of the patio. Growing in it were bright scarlet geraniums; those ubiquitous window-box flowers that botanists pedantically insist are really pelargoniums (true geraniums have symmetrical flowers; those of pelargoniums are asymmetrical). Slowly, I undid the old connections and started to make new ones. The island of Sardinia has, or rather once had, shoals of little silvery fish swimming in its coastal waters and it was these fish that I knew as *sardines*. The island also is considered by Turks to be the place of origin of these beautiful scarlet flowers and they call them *sardines*.

I then saw with a clarity that had earlier escaped me, that the pale objects rising up out of their shallow mud-lined craters were indeed anemic cuttings of pelargoniums. In a year or two, with lots of water and a

little luck, these tenacious little plants would undoubtedly form a beautiful hedge of fragrant leaves and scarlet flowers. We sat in the setting sun comparing floral maps. His *sardines* were my pelargoniums. His Wedding Gown Vine was my Bougainvillea (Ottoman brides, particularly of the sultan's family, favored red or magenta gowns and veils). Jasmine, which was by then scenting the evening air, had a shared name.

Tea in Tulip-shaped Glasses, Oil in Tumblers

The point is *not* that plants, or fish for that matter, have different names. It is rather that what constitutes a name is embedded in social, historical and linguistic contexts and that these are not only unique to one culture but are not apparent to another. And if plants and fish are perceived and expressed in different ways it is obvious that abstract concepts, social behavior and accepted norms are even more deeply embedded and, from that perspective, rendered invisible and easily misunderstood by those standing outside this cultural matrix.

This was my first visit to Turkey and to render the invisible more visible, and to avoid possible misunderstanding, I had tried to prepare myself for the experiences that lay ahead. Fortunately, in Sinan, I had a keen and sensitive guide who advised me on suitable areas to examine prior to my visit. Sinan is a doctoral student at Çukurova University completing a degree in marketing. We met virtually. I was his peer mentor when he taught his first online course with the University of Maryland (UMUC). That mentoring relationship had been strong, invigorating and very satisfying for both of us and after it ended we decided to continue our growing friendship.

We decided that I should examine Ottoman history, looking at the rise and the fall of this dynamic and spectacular world stage player (Kinross, 1979). Interestingly, because I teach and mentor students from Central and Southeastern Europe, I had studied the complex and fragmented history of the Balkans (Glenny, 2001), where the Ottomans were always "on the other side" of the cultural and national divide. It was interesting to reinterpret the historical *denouement* in the region though Ottoman

eyes. It also was exciting to re-examine the vestigial remnants of Ottoman society in my own city, Jerusalem, which was an outpost of the Ottoman Empire for more than 400 years until its fall to the British in 1917. I also examined the ebbs and flows of recent and contemporary Turkish history (Zurcher, 1997), including a study of the powerful and charismatic Mustafa Kamel Ataturk (Mango, 2002), whose image and enduring influence were constantly present during my visit. I also learned a little functional Turkish.

But such application only starts to take shape – or to take on a more vital shape and significance – when you sit in the warmth of the evening on a veranda overlooking a shimmering lake, drink tea from tulip-shaped glasses, and talk with erudite and insightful people who are themselves embedded in their social and cultural matrix yet able to reflect on it and allow a stranger to gain entry. Sinan's father, Nijat, is departmental chair of economics with extensive consulting and research experience. He also is a member of the European University Association team advising on quality issues in the implementation of the Bologna Process in European higher education. We talked about perceptions of reform and quality assurance in higher education. We talked about economics and transformative economies in particular. We spoke about politics, Turkish history, nationalism, the secular constitution and the present Islamic government. It was in these long, often animated, evening discussions that I sensed a growing appreciation of this country, its people, its history, and perhaps its future.

It was in Turkey – not in the Israel where I have lived for 25 years – that I went to a mosque for the first time. It was the incredibly beautiful *Sabancı Merkez Camii,* built in 1998 on the banks of the Seyhan River. The mosque is faced with glittering white marble: inside is a blend of stillness, color and an incredible sense of inclusive spaciousness – it was designed to accommodate 30,000 worshipers and is the largest mosque in Turkey. In traditional Ottoman style, it has an expansive central dome that seems to float on an intricate raft of intersecting smaller domes and arches. The exterior and interior of the building is

breathtakingly beautiful and it was deeply moving to stand in its cool vastness with my friend.

But, like the thoughtful and enthusiastic guides that they were, my hosts were as interested in my culture as in their own. We searched for old synagogues in Adana and in the ancient city of Antakya, which was known as Antioch to the Early Church Fathers. In Antakya we found a solid iron door with a telltale *Magen David,* or Star of David, chiseled into the keystone of the archway. Beside the door, a notice told us that the keys could be had from Mustafa, who had a tailor's shop 50 meters down the street. But Mustafa did not have the keys. When there had been a synagogue bombing in Istanbul, it was felt that he might find himself in a compromised situation if he held the keys. Mustafa phoned around to various members of the synagogue but it was the summer and most of them were out of town, living in Istanbul or in cooler summer homes.

Eventually, Mustafa tracked down Aaron and – after a number of adventures – we met him at his bother's shop in the covered marketplace. Aaron's brother also was a tailor. When I entered his shop we spoke in Hebrew. He had spent six years in Tel Aviv before deciding to return to Turkey. Keys were produced and we went off to admire a 300 year-old synagogue that looked identical to the richly carpeted and heavily cushioned Sephardic synagogues that you find throughout the working-class districts of Jerusalem. Aaron was delighted at this comparison. He set out four tumblers of olive oil with floating wicks and asked us each to light a flame and make our personal prayers. Sinan and his parents lit and so did I, praying aloud in Hebrew for the well-being and continuation of this little Turkish community. Aaron was moved, more so when I prayed *mincha,* the afternoon prayer.

These are the experiences that you probably can only have when you have guides who help you explore and understand the different assumptions and norms of your own society. But what do they have to do with international education, apart from a rather superficial excursion into a different country and a different culture? Before examining the possibilities that exist within

international education, I would like to examine some theoretical issues regarding metaphor because if international education is about a displacement of culture and social context, metaphor is about displacement and subsequent realignment of images and semantic domains of reference.

Metaphoric Sense: The Celibate Groom and his Virginal Brides

The use of metaphor has a long history in many areas of study. Certainly, in my own area of study – management and organizational theory – the conceptual metaphor, which operates at the level of abstraction and idea, has been used to suggest new characteristics and properties of organizations that are, in a sense, latent until made visible by the metaphoric comparison. The metaphor is not a stylistic flourish, but rather presents a profoundly new way of grasping relationships and properties. Conceptual metaphors work by contrasting a source domain, which "consists of a set of literal entities, attributes, processes and relationships, linked semantically and apparently stored together in the mind"[3] with a distinct and separate target domain. Particularly powerful metaphors result when the source domain is rich in concrete attributes and associations, while the target is abstract, conceptual and difficult to map. This grounding of the ephemeral undoubtedly explains why metaphor has secured such a stimulating place in the theories of organizational analysts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Morgan, 1997).

In other areas of study, for example, the spiritual quest or metaphysical exploration, the grounding of the ephemeral can clearly be seen to cause new and striking fracture lines that provide complex and exciting insights. For early Christian mystics, for example, the metaphor of Christ as a celibate groom encountering his virginal brides produced new, deeper insight into what it might mean to sustain a union with the Devine (Clark, 2008).

Conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) considers the general process of metaphor use and stresses the breadth of the conceptual domains that are brought together, rather than narrower lexical or literary ones. Currently, other theoretical

approaches use conceptual metaphor theory as a ground while stressing unique differences such as the domain inclusion of thought, emotion and culture; the intensity or strength of conceptual contrast; and the interconnectedness and dynamic process of metaphor recognition and interpretation. In examining the potential and the power of organizational metaphor, Joep Cornelissen (2005) suggests that organization theorists have often neglected the ways in which metaphors work and have failed to ground their work in a broader cognitive theory.

From his examination, Cornelissen suggests that two models can be used to understand metaphor: comparison and interaction. The older comparison model stresses the

The metaphor is not a stylistic flourish, but rather presents a profoundly new way of grasping relationships and properties.

similarities that exist between the co-joined metaphoric source (say, "machine") with the target ("organization"). The elements present in source and target are assumed to be significant and pre-existing. The process of comparison stresses the similarity and connectedness of the co-joined domains. Elements lying outside the domains being compared are considered extraneous and not contributing to the effectiveness of the metaphor, indeed may tend to compromise it. The comparison model does not account for much cognitive research that suggests that the associated elements of the source and target domain are often not pre-defined and could not readily be predicted prior to the metaphoric association. It also neglects research showing that domain features, previously considered extraneous, often become relevant. It leaves unconsidered evidence that "salience imbalance" and the ability of metaphor to "rearrange the furniture of our minds" (Kittay, 1987) constitutes a dynamic system that forces new interpretations (Cornelissen, 2005).

In the interaction model, metaphor is represented as an ongoing dynamic process in which the difference and similarity between source and target are irreducible to a literal meaning or pre-existing variation of that meaning. Metaphor processing begins with an examination of the generic structures associated with source and target. It continues with the selection, elaboration and blending of elements taken from both source and target domains. Dynamic blending, reappraisal of the underlying conceptual structures (particularly of the target), and efforts to make sense of the possibilities produced by the metaphoric tension all lead to hitherto unconsidered "emergent meaning." Emergent meaning, in the form of new ideas and conjectures, is then used to further explore and interrogate the target. In the interactive model, there is a dynamic interaction between source and target, sustained by the tension of the metaphoric juxtaposition. Metaphor is truly "beyond compare" because it sustains the salience imbalance, cognitive tension and "interpretive viability" that are reduced, or resolved, in figures of speech such as comparison, simile and analogy.

Three Paradigms of International Learning

International education comes into being for multiple reasons; however, these reasons should not be used to obscure the potential of the educational experience. In recent history, and particularly of America, international education was often suggested as a way of introducing students to difference, although the standard models (Leach, 1969) seemed fixated by the notion of location change; that is, defining international education in terms of changed geography rather than changed social or cultural exposure. Indeed, many American programs have created, and often retain, "cultural bubbles" (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004) preserving home culture and ignoring what is going on outside the window. More recently, driven partly by thoughts of diversity and more resolutely by marketing and financial imperatives, international education has not only meant American students coming to Europe, or European students going to home American programs, but America's institutions

providing education for, say, European students in Europe.

International education brings together not only different cultures but also different actors and institutions. There is undoubted merit in preserving "bubbles" when they come to educational philosophy, curriculum design, standards of excellence, administrative detail, and a host of other defining characteristics of the home institution. However, international education is not only about institutions. It also is about students and faculty, enriched learning experiences, exposure to otherness, and about pedagogic opportunities that were impossible and inconceivable in the home country.

Curriculum and subject matter also have an impact. The learning potentials presented in an international setting of chemistry might not be as remarkable as the opportunities for sociology, economics or business studies. I am interested in the educational potential raised by international settings from faculty and student perspectives. I am specifically interested in ways in which experience abroad can be used productively and creatively for my own business students. I suggest three paradigms that can be used to describe, and perhaps to redefine, the educational and pedagogic paradigms in international programs, and more specifically international programs that operate abroad. These paradigms can be represented as nonmetaphoric, comparison and domains-interaction.

The Nonmetaphoric Paradigm

The nonmetaphoric paradigm, or locational model, rests firmly on older understandings of international education which were fixated on displacement and location. These models see international education arising when students cross borders: UK students spending a year in an institution of higher learning in Madrid; Spanish students spending a semester in London. More recently, it also has meant Greek students studying an American curriculum at an American college in Athens. The student's cross-border experience is often seen as simply the move from the Athenian street into the American bubble. In such a model,

life goes on largely unaffected within the bubble. The journey was to get inside, not through alien territory.

The nonmetaphoric paradigm also is a conservative one, retaining the original and defining culture of the institution. Nonmetaphoric models are institutionally dominated models, not lending themselves to student or faculty perspectives or experiences. These models not only conserve valuable academic and national identities, they preclude formal exploration of otherness. Student's experiences are effectively left unvoiced; contextual exposure is ignored. Cultural bubbles provide the best, and the worst, of home values. Concern about a cultural imperialism, or educational hegemony, is assuaged by the notion that the locals seem to have voted with their pocketbooks for that model and that that is what they will receive. It seems a validation of the glory and simplicity of educational capitalism.

Nonmetaphoric paradigms are literal and do not lend themselves to metaphor. Metaphor is unimaginable because it forces two domains into proximity, and here there is only one. Dramaturgically, this model gives the script with all of its nuances to the instructor: there is no room for extemporization, only for the adoption of that script. Likewise, power and authority are asymmetrically divided with little empowerment, or chance of empowerment, for the student. The locational model lends itself very much to the "sage on stage" pedagogical approach, where knowledge is privileged and students are reduced – sometimes with consideration, sometimes with expressions of benign concern – to empty vessels eager to be filled. Such a pedagogic stance seems to stem directly from the unquestioned locational aspect of the program. Knowledge, in a sense, is embedded within the institution and faculty often see themselves as agents of dissemination and replication of that conserved knowledge. While this is most apparent in the locational model, and its nonmetaphoric paradigm, it may well be that the conservative pedagogic approach is simply an unquestioned traditional response.

Comparison Paradigm

Both this and the later to be discussed domains-interaction paradigm, embrace the duality of mismatched institution, student, location and culture. In that duality there is a suggestion, perhaps even more, of metaphor. The understanding of that metaphoric potential is guided by the selection of underpinning metaphor theory.

International education is seen not in terms of national borders crossed but in terms of possibilities and potentials for education within different cultural, social and economic settings. All learning is deeply

> *International education is seen not in terms of national borders crossed but in terms of possibilities and potentials for education within different cultural, social and economic settings.*

embedded within culture. It is often useful to tease out strands of that cultural matrix and appreciate how they have contributed to the creation, shaping and selection of knowledge. One way of appreciating this is to examine what might be considered an equivalent body of knowledge in another culture. Such an experience allows for not only the acquiring of new knowledge but affords a reflective glance at prior knowledge and how it has been embedded. In this pedagogic model the operating words are "compare and contrast."

The comparison paradigm looks for a presentation of local and home views of the subject under examination. Local perspectives and positions can be drawn from students and adjunct faculty. Accordingly, there may be more reliance on local adjunct faculty, who possess an awareness of the locality. Interestingly, in many international programs local adjuncts are drawn to the program because of its

connection with institution nationality: many, for instance, may be expatriates or have earned their degrees in the institution's home country. Local student and faculty experiences and narratives are nevertheless taken from familiar social, cultural and historical contexts, and are recognized and used to inform the subject. Visiting faculty, from the home institution, have to have the flexibility to hear these voices and to draw out these experiences. They also have to be aware of the national context in which instruction is taking place.

Power and authority are more symmetrically shared in this model, with students recognized as having valid input. The resulting learning is constructed jointly. From a dramaturgical perspective, both instructor and students have scripts that differ and lead to revised roles and extemporization as attempts to reconcile lead to different emphasizes and new meaning: different performances are understood to co-exist. The pedagogical role model in this model is the "guide on the side," in which instructor views learning as a construction and encourages and supports student participation in that construction. The shift is from instruction to teaching. The comparison model rests on an assumed metaphoric connection in which learning strategies and the pedagogic goals are the target while metaphor interpretation is the source domain. The task is to more fully appreciate local and home conceptual domains within a discipline, looking for ways of comparing and contrasting.

Domains-interactive Paradigm

In this model the central conceptual shift in institutional and pedagogic thinking is that local and home understanding are both incomplete and not perfectly understood. Both home and local understandings of subject matter and curriculum have validity, but they also have different histories and specific evolutions. Yet by constantly looking for elements in one conceptual domain that might be suggested by the other domain, a sustained tension and dynamic of conceptual rearrangement and reconsideration comes into place. Both domains are seen as partial, at best, and their co-joining suggests new and more expanded consideration.

Just as source and target domains are not considered static or predetermined, so in this paradigm we assume that the elements of knowledge that have been selected are themselves products of cultural embeddedness. The attempt is not to compare and contrast bundles of known elements but rather to use the tension between the two bodies of knowledge to suggest possible connections and uncover elements that were originally dormant or unrecognized. This model requires faculty, whether guides or mentors, to have a much greater understanding of both local and home domains of knowledge. This enriched appreciation of the subject matter results from faculty exploring the metaphoric territory through working with local guides, such as students and academics, and reflecting on the maps that are produced.

In the domains-interactive model, inclusion of student and adjunct faculty experience is required. There is a more symmetrical distribution of power and authority, and a pedagogic awareness of the required co-creation of knowledge. The instructional model is the "guide by the side;" however, the shift is perhaps more from teaching to mentoring with a growing respect for the inclusion and participation of all parties in the educational engagement. This model does not compare and contrast rigid knowledge sets; rather, it sees all knowledge sets as being the imperfect product of systems in which knowledge is socially and culturally embedded. The knowledge produced is dynamic, ever changing, and subject to paradigm revision. Essentially, the metaphoric juxtaposition of knowledge domains has emergent heuristic value. Obviously, the degree to which the domains-interaction model can operate is limited by the prior knowledge, intellectual curiosity, and extent to which those engaged in the process consider novel knowledge and ways of understanding as evolving and emergent.

Dramaturgically, the scripts and roles are variable, interchangeable, and subject to constant revision and extemporization. There is no definitive, authoritative performance and each enactment potentially results in novelty, changing consensus and growing fluidity.

When the Sardine Hedge Blossoms

Sardine hedges continue to surprise and obscure the view for us in international education contexts, particularly when we cannot move beyond the literal and embedded meanings within our own cultures and societies. The challenge, opportunity and excitement of international education is that it allows not simply a changed location but a different social and cultural *milieu*. Foreign and international programs face a decision whether to duplicate the home model abroad or adapt to the reality of the context abroad – the so-called "cookie-cutter or adaptation" decision (Mathews, Rivera & Pineda, 2001). This may affect the form and the structure of the institution; it also may affect the curriculum and the educational context of the program. Administration and educational delivery are entwined and each influences and impacts multiple stakeholders. International education offers the possibility of engaging constructively with students to mutually enrich our learning and understanding. This opportunity, or challenge, is nowhere stronger when mentors engage across cultural divides, especially in international programs and contexts.

Sardine hedges need not necessarily astonish or block us from broader educational horizons: they are illusionary, the product of unshared communication. They blossom and fade as we become familiar with different perspectives and experiences of culture, society and economics. Perhaps, international education is about the co-creation of new landscapes and horizons for faculty, students and institutions; if so, the dynamics of the mentoring process seem acutely focused on such transformative ventures. Metaphors have no meaning unless we can choose to consider more than a single domain. Visions cannot emerge unless there is a deliberate, informed and respectful exploration of what makes us different, what makes us the same, and of what we never really understood about ourselves in the first place. International education – certainly when conducted by, for example, an American institution abroad – presents exciting challenges to move beyond our accepted landscapes of education and to explore new territory. International education is not a statement

about changed location; rather, it is an opportunity to engage with otherness. In that engagement, considered perhaps through the process of metaphor, we potentially develop new understandings and new visions that undoubtedly enrich not only our international students but also the whole collegiate enterprise.

Endnotes

[1] I am grateful for the award made by the Empire State College Committee for Faculty Development that in part made it possible for me in to explore the changing patterns of economics and marketing in southern Turkey. I also would like to express my respect, appreciation, and gratitude to Sinan Fikret Erk, who suggested the visit and to Professor and Mrs. Nijat Erk for their generosity and gracious hospitality. I would also like to thank the International Office of Çukurova University for their kindness, assistance and enthusiasm for all aspects of international education and institutional cooperation.

[2] I also thank Alan Mandell for his close and insightful reading of an earlier draft of this essay. As always, his comments were invaluable in revising the piece and any errors are my own. Once again, *All About Mentoring* provided me with a productive forum for the initial exploration of an immerging concern. A longer, scholarly review of the use of the dynamics of metaphor in the teaching of international business ("Teaching International Business Abroad: Paradigms suggested by metaphor theory") will appear in the fall 2009 edition of *The Journal of Teaching International Business.*

[3] Metaphor Analysis Project site of the Centre for Research in Education and Educational Technology (CREET), of the Open University, UK. Retrieved May 10, 2009, http://creet.open.ac.uk/projects/metaphor-analysis/index.cfm

References

Abel, C.F. and Sementelli, A.J. (2005). Evolutionary critical theory, metaphor, and organizational change. *The Journal of Management Development (24) 5/6*, 443-459.

Cambridge, J. and Thompson, J. (2004). Internationalism and globalization as contexts for international education. *Compare 34* (2), 161-175.

Clark, E.A. (2008). The celibate bridegroom and his virginal brides: metaphor and the marriage of Jesus in early Christian ascetic exegesis. *Church History* (March, first article). Retrieved Jan. 5, 2009. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb050/is_/ai_n29434171?tag=artBody;col1.

Cornelissen, J.P. (2005). Beyond compare: Metaphor in organization theory. *Academy of Management Review (30)* 4, 751-764.

Glenny, M. (2001). *The Balkans: Nationalism, war and the great powers: 1804 - 1999.* London: Penguin (Nonclassics).

Kinross, Lord (1979). *Ottoman Centuries.* London: Harper Perennial.

Kittay, E.F. (1987). 'Reference and Truth in Metaphor' in *Metaphor, its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure.* London: Clarenden Press.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Leach, R. (1969). *International schools and their role in the field of international education.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Mango, A. (2002). *Ataturk: The biography of the founder of modern Turkey.* London: Overlook TP.

Mathews, V.E., Rivera, J.B. and Pineda, R.C. (2001). Management education abroad: Adaptation versus a cookie-cutter approach. *Journal of Teaching in International Business, 12* (4), 1-14.

Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of organization.* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Richards, I.A. (1936). *The philosophy of rhetoric.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zurcher, E.J. (1997). *Turkey: A modern history.* London: I.B. Tauris.

The Day Daddy Went Out To Buy Furniture

Robert Congemi, Northeast Center

I was 16 then, I remember, the day, or rather the night that Daddy went out to buy some furniture. Things had finally gotten better for Daddy. Suddenly, after a number of years of being a school teacher in a small town, where it turned out I and my sister Rosie grew up, and after years of writing poems, Daddy finally got discovered – at least, a bit. His poems started appearing in magazines – he even won a prize for writing poems – and then one day a man wrote Daddy a letter and asked him if he'd like to teach at a junior college in upstate New York. At first, he wasn't sure he did. He had grown so attached to all his students at the high school where he taught, but Mother told Daddy it was okay, there'd be other students who would need him, too, at the college.

"And, besides, Brian, isn't this what you have wanted? Isn't this what you have worked for? Isn't this where your career should be going?"

Daddy scratched his beard, which he always did when he needed a few moments to think. "But I … I sort of … love my students here. And even this town … "

"Of course, darling," Mother said, putting her hand on his cheek and kissing him.

Well, anyway, the night Daddy went out to buy some furniture, a Friday night, we had moved to the little city where the college was. Our new home was on the second-floor of a two family house in the middle of the city, where it was cheaper to live, across the street from a supermarket and a church. Daddy had rented our new home from another man who taught at the college, a small quiet man named Professor Squibb who smoked a pipe and taught Latin and Greek. Professor Squibb lived with his mother, who was very old, and was a little bit on the fussy side about noise, we later learned, because he was always trying to think about what had happened two thousand years ago.

After working at the college his first week and feeling very good about it, Daddy got it into his head that we should have some new furniture.

"I want to celebrate. At last. I want to *buy* something," he told us, after coming home from work, my little sister Rosie in his arms, where she always liked to be when Daddy first came home. My little sister was really very tiny – we weren't sure why – and being in Daddy's arms was where she would have *always* liked to be.

"But, Brian, do we have the money? Can we really afford furniture just now? Shouldn't we save up first?"

"We have waited long enough," Daddy replied to her, looking at the few things we had that we had gotten from my grandparents, Mother's father and mother. "We have waited long enough. Now's the time for us to do something, something dramatic. Don't you think so?"

We went to the mall, which actually was something new in those days. Mother had read about it in the newspapers and seen their ads. The ads said you could get everything you wanted at malls, and Mother, innocently, told Daddy about it.

"These malls are probably something we should know about anyway," Daddy said. "If they are something new, that's going to be important."

"All right," Mother said. "And maybe someday you could write a poem about them, Brian."

"Maybe," Daddy said.

We drove to the mall in our Cadillac car. It was probably the biggest car ever made – I mean, the longest. It took up about two parking spots, from the front, where the big headlights were, all the way to where the tail fenders of the car ended. Mother's Uncle Tony, who was an auto mechanic and had lots of used cars, gave it to us, after the first car he gave us didn't run anymore. The car was also a convertible, which we all loved, because when the weather was good we could put the top down and go for a ride on a highway and feel almost like we weren't ourselves anymore, but like birds or something flying along the ground.

Being that it was a Friday night, early evening, there were lots of other cars on the road, but Daddy drove really okay and didn't once start thinking about something and forget that he was driving. He didn't go near other cars or get mad at them from driving too close to us. Daddy said he felt really good.

"Now this is the way things should be," he announced, behind the wheel, leaning back, driving a little stiffly, but not that badly, because he was getting to be a better driver all the time. "A man should be able to drive his family on a Friday night to a mall, to buy something. Don't you think so, girls?"

"Oh, yes, Daddy," I said.

"Uh-huh," Rosie said.

At the mall, we parked our Cadillac car, which didn't stick out too far into the space between the rows, where other cars had to drive, raised and buttoned down the hood, and walked into the mall. It was very crowded. Everyone seemed happy to be bustling along, shopping. Rosie, who was holding Mother's hand, rather than being carried by Daddy now that we were inside the mall, squealed with delight at all the pretty stores and bright lighting. I could see that Mother, too, was smiling, though she looked a little nervous, not sure just what Daddy had in mind. For his part, Daddy walked along with us, his arms wide out, saying, "This is the future. Anybody can see that. Boy, I feel like doing something. I feel like spending something. Don't you guys?"

Rosie and I nodded our heads, dutifully. I thought Mother bit her lip, watching Daddy

carefully, as she always did when she tried to read him. But Daddy just hurried along. Of course, to me, he stood out. I have always thought my father the handsomest of men, so tall and slender, delicate almost, his black beard somewhat white now that he was a little older, making him look distinguished.

"Mother's the good-looking one in the family, Tara," he would say. "A movie star. I know what I must look like to other people."

Mother would have none of it. "Brian, what are you talking about? You look like an intellectual, or an artist. A movie star in your own right."

When we finally found our way to the third floor of a huge department store, where the furniture was, Daddy could hardly contain himself, though he wasn't sure why the furniture had to be on the top floor. There was simply furniture all around us – in front of us, to the sides, behind us. Tables and chairs and sofas and cabinets, beds and headboards and ottomans and stands of all kinds, collections of furniture, styles of all kinds, wood and plastic and metal – it made our heads dizzy.

Daddy took a step backwards, intimidated, I think. "Whoa," he said.

"Dear me," Mother said. "I've never seen so much furniture, Brian. I had no idea."

"Why do they have to have so much," he said, taking her hand. "How is a person supposed to know what to get?"

"I think that's America, Daddy," I said.

"Well, it's a lot to take in, don't you think?"

"I guess," I said.

Daddy scratched on his beard. "But we're here now," he pointed out to my mother, looking at her. "See anything you like, Jane?"

My mother looked overwhelmed. Movie star or not, especially to my father, for the moment she looked like a little girl, a tired, little girl, whose long hair hung down past her shoulders.

"Do I see anything I like?"

" … Yes, of course, I do, Brian."

"Well, pick something out then?"

Mother was also confused. "But what? What do you have in mind?"

"Buying furniture. Pick out what you'd like."

"But … but, Brian … a chair? A table? You really should be more specific."

Daddy thought about this. "I don't know. How about something for the living room? We don't really have anything. How about a living room?"

"What do you mean?" Mother asked him. "A whole living room set?"

"Sure, why not," Daddy said, manfully. "That would be a good start, wouldn't it?"

Mother was alarmed. "Brian, do you know what you are doing? Do we have the money?"

"Of course I know what I'm doing," Daddy said, a little huffy. "I'm a college professor, aren't I?"

"But are you sure we have the money? I don't see how we have the money."

"Don't worry about it, darling," Daddy said. "Choose something."

Mother got kittenish. "I don't know. I never had a choice before, you know, Brian."

"I know," Daddy said. "But you do now."

"I … don't … know," Mother said, still not convinced. "Maybe a salesman could help me?" She looked around. "Tara, do you see a salesman?"

"Oh, perhaps we shouldn't do that," Daddy said. "You have to be very careful of salesmen, Jane. That's my sense of it. They're very tricky."

Almost immediately, as if out of nowhere, a salesman appeared. He was a big, beefy man, mostly balding, but he had the friendliest smile.

"Hi, folks, I'm Al," he said, brightly. "Al McMann. Anything I can do for you?" Al spread his arms in front of him. "People say I know everything there is to know about furniture."

Daddy backed up a little, again. "I see," he said.

"I'd give you my card, but the telephone number's changed," he explained.

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. McMann," Mother said.

Rubbing his hands together, to show he was ready to help us in any way, I suppose, Al looked at us up and down. I had the funny feeling that we looked as strange to him as he looked to us. He looked Daddy over with a long flick of his eyes, and, when it was my mother's turn, with a look I couldn't quite figure out.

"Would you be in the market for bedroom furniture?" Al offered. "I have several lovely sets of bedroom furniture just right now. And some of them are even on sale."

"I don't think so," Daddy said.

"Perhaps something for the dining room? We have lovely things there, too. And of course on sale. Until tomorrow, that is."

"We were thinking about living room furniture, Mr. McCann," Mother said. "Weren't we, Brian?"

Daddy seemed growing quiet, protective. "Yes. Living room furniture."

"A sofa? Some chairs? What did you folks have in mind?"

"Everything," my sister Rosie piped in.

"Everything?" Mr. McCann repeated, obviously quite pleased.

"Yes, everything," Daddy said.

" Brian … " Mother started to say.

"Yes, everything," Daddy said again. "We want a whole roomful."

"Oh, my," Mr. McCann said. "Well, that will be just fine. Just fine, indeed."

"Yes," Daddy explained. "We want to get the whole thing over with. Right away. We've waited a long time."

Daddy started to lecture. Mr. McCann listened. "Why should we wait any longer? I have a pretty good job now, and I'm publishing some poems. That's encouraging, isn't it? I mean, it isn't as if I weren't getting anywhere. Lord knows, for the longest time it didn't seem like I was getting anywhere. That's for sure. But that's all over now. Don't you think so, Jane?"

I don't think Mother knew what to say.

Daddy turned back to Al. "You see, when I was just starting out, it was a different story, but now … "

"Brian, dear," Mother did manage to implore. "I don't think Mr. McCann wants to know all about our personal history. I think he just wants to show us some furniture."

"Yes," Al said, a little bewildered. "That's what I want to do, folks. Show you some furniture."

"Living room sets," Mother said.

"Living room sets," Al repeated.

"Oh," Daddy said, looking chastened for a moment. "Oh. Well, then … let's do it."

So Al did just that. He showed my parents American sets, plenty of those, a French set, and some from England.

"All the way from England," Al said.

He showed them plain colored sets, flowered sets, brocaded sets, inexpensive sets, mid-priced sets, expensive sets. It went on and on.

"Gosh," Daddy said, after a while. "Phewwww."

"I know what you mean," Mother said.

"I guess I just never thought much about furniture," Daddy observed, starting to explain again something to his new acquaintance, Al McCann. "I've always thought more about things like … nature. Mother nature."

"Oh," Al said.

Daddy just couldn't resist. Passing along information was just part of his own nature. It was simply one of the things he did, including when he was a little nervous. "Which, by the way, is a good thing to think about," he asserted. He was on his way. "Indeed, more people should think about nature than they do. You know, lakes and streams and mountains and hills."

"Sure," Al said, not sure at all, suspended in his presentation.

"Sky, trees, birds … " Daddy was heating up, intellectually speaking. Off to another world. "Yes, particularly birds – they're

so lovely. Indeed, almost all the English Romantic poets wrote about birds. Did you know that, Al?"

"No, no, I didn't, sir."

"Oh, yes. Especially Keats and Shelley. *Ode To A Nightingale. Ode To A Skylark.*" Daddy's face got particularly dreamy, the way it usually did when he lectured.

"Because, you see, Al, for Keats and Shelley birds were poetry. A nightingale and a skylark were for them *nature's* poets, the embodiment of beauty, music, imagination." Daddy grew judicious. "For Keats and Shelly, birds represented creativity itself. Everyone pretty much agrees with that. No big deal."

"Yeah, no big deal," Al agreed, nodding his head, looking around at us.

"Though, it is important to say, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Byron for the most part focused on other things. Remember, there was all that nonfiction that Coleridge wrote – the *Biographia Literaria,* and those essays on Shakespeare. And Byron did all those lyrics about love, as well as the political satires, which people sometimes forget. Indeed, if you want to be *thorough* about it, Byron was probably as much a neo-classicist as he was a romantic. It all depends on which part of his career you're talking about."

"Oh, yeah, sure," Al said.

"Brian, Brian," Mother said, starting to tug on Daddy's arm, but he was really into it now.

"Of course with Wordsworth you have to talk about *everything,* simply everything. A colleague of mine thinks Wordsworth is the matrix of it all."

"Brian." Mother kept tugging.

" … which is fair enough. But if you want my opinion, I think the man simply lived much too long and wrote too much, and that's his big problem."

I slid my glance over at Al.

"By the way, Al, have you ever read Shelley?" Daddy asked him.

"Huh? Who?" Al replied.

"Shelley," Daddy repeated. "Percy Bysshe Shelley. You know."

"I do?" Al asked.

"Well, don't you?" Daddy asked.

"I know a Shelly Epstein," Al tried.

"Shelly Epstein? Shelly Epstein?"

Now it was Daddy who was confused. He was sure he didn't know any poet named Shelly Epstein.

"Yeah, Shelly Epstein," Al explained. "He works downstairs on the main floor. He sells shoes. I've known him three or four years."

Daddy turned to my mother. "Jane, why don't people know these things? Why don't they ever know these things? Poets and poems are important, too, aren't they?"

"Everyone's different, Brian, you know that."

Daddy wanted to stick to his guns. "Yes, but really, Jane. Some things *should* be common knowledge. Surely. If we don't have any common knowledge any more, what do we have?"

"I don't know, Brian, dear," Mother said, a little outmanned.

"I think I want to go home," Daddy said. "I really don't think I ask that much."

At this point, I guessed Al was starting to have second thoughts about waiting on us. He kept looking at Daddy, as if perhaps we weren't worth the commission after all, however large it might be. I thought Al was starting to back up a little.

But Mother tried to keep everyone to the task at hand. "I think I see the furniture I like," she said, quietly. "It's over there." And with a long, very lady-like finger, she pointed to a nice flowery couch and armchairs to one side of us. They were green and pink, and I liked them, too.

"Aren't they pretty?" Mother asked. "I could like them. How much would they cost, Mr. McCann?"

Al turned away from looking at Daddy and stared towards where Mother was pointing. "Oh, that's the Remington set," he said, relaxing a little, now back on his home turf. "That's a very good set."

"And is it very expensive?" Mother asked him, looking like she didn't really want to know how much it cost.

"Not that expensive," Al told her. "And I could give it to you on sale, too."

"Why?" Daddy asked. "Is it really on sale?"

"Please, Brian," Mother said.

"I could give it to you for ten percent off," Al said, making a benevolent gesture, and then quoting her a price.

"Oh." Mother said, hearing what he wanted for the three pieces. "Oh, no, that wouldn't do. We can't afford that."

"Oh, yes, we can," Daddy said. "We can."

"Maybe we could buy just the sofa, Brian?" Mother asked, starting to worry again.

"We can buy all three pieces," Daddy announced. "And we can throw in a table and a lamp, too. How can you have a sofa and chairs, if you don't have a table and lamp as well?"

I thought Mother, in her quiet way, would soon be beside herself. "No, no, we can't, Brian."

"Madam, the set is quite lovely, "Al said. "And you can have it for a lifetime, if you choose."

"We really should save up for it all," Mother told him. "Piece by piece."

"We'll buy it," Daddy announced. "I am a little bit of a successful man, now. Wrap it up."

Mr. McMann looked at Mother.

"Wrap it up right now, Al, and we'll take it home."

Al was confused. "Wrap it up, and you'll take it home. How?"

"In our car," Daddy explained.

"In our car?" Mother asked.

"Sure. In our car."

"But we can't possibly fit all this furniture in our car, Brian. To say nothing about ourselves."

"Yes, we can, Jane, you'll see," Daddy assured Mother. "I'll do it, and hold things together. While you drive."

"But, Brian, I can't drive. You know I don't drive that well. How can we possibly do it?"

''Jane, be calm. Of course we can do it." Daddy turned one last time to Al. "Wrap it up."

So that's what we did. With the help of Al, who was really quite eager to help, however confused he was, Daddy filled out all the papers for buying the furniture. Then we all shook hands with Al, and carefully listened to his directions on where to go to pick up the sofa, two chairs, end table and lamp, which was of course the customer loading dock. Holding hands, we found our way out of the mall and to our awaiting Cadillac. Daddy put the top down, loaded us all in the car, and drove around behind the mall to where the dock was. We gave our purchase slip to the men, who after a time found all our furniture in various boxes, and gave them to us. Daddy stood the sofa on end in the middle of the back seat of the Cadillac. He squeezed the chair up against the sofa on its left side, and he stuck the end table on the other side of the sofa. Then he gave mother the keys to the car, and told Rosie and I to sit beside her, up front, giving me the table lamp to hold beside me while Rosie rode in my lap. Daddy himself stayed in the

back seat, facing the furniture and holding on to all of it the best he could. When he was ready, he told Mother to start the car, which she did, and to drive it away from the loading dock, as slowly as she could, so Daddy could see how things were going. When we got out of the parking lot of the mall, at about five miles an hour, Mother turned the Cadillac, with us and all the furniture, out onto the highway. Continuing down the highway at about ten miles an hour, she drove towards home, as nervous as could be. I held on to Rosie and the lamp. Daddy held onto the sofa, armchair and end table, standing up and facing them, his arms stretched out wide.

About three miles from home, the traffic behind us had gotten pretty heavy because of how slowly we were going. One by one, people drove their cars passed us and either beeped their horn and hollered at us or beeped their horn and cheered us on. Once a police car came up alongside us. There were two policemen in the car. The one sitting in the passenger seat looked at us for a few moments, then just shook his head in disbelief, smiling, and apparently told his partner to drive on ahead. Mother kept driving as slowly and as carefully as she could, leaning forward, her hands gripping the steering wheel tightly. I turned back a few times to see how my father was doing and asked him how he was.

"I'm just fine, Tara," he told me. "We're just fine. Pretty soon Mother will have us home, and we'll have a brand new set of living room furniture. Just like I said. It's about time. It's about time. I know I'm right about this."

Which, I suppose, he was.

God, how I loved him then. God, how I loved us then.

Theses on Sustainability

Eric Zencey, Center for International Programs, Center for Graduate Programs

1. The term has become so widely used that it is in danger of meaning nothing. It has been applied to all manner of activities in an effort to give those activities the gloss of moral imperative, the cachet of environmental enlightenment. "Sustainable" has been used variously to mean "politically feasible," "economically feasible," "not part of a pyramid or bubble," "socially enlightened," "consistent with neoconservative small-government dogma," "consistent with liberal principles of justice and fairness," "morally desirable," and, at its most diffuse, "sensibly far-sighted."

2. This broadness of usage isn't, in itself, a bad thing; if use of the term has in some cases been little more than an unthinking nod, a catechism offered by rote, the fundamental principle that lies behind those uses remains immutable and unaffected by them, just as a deity remains unchanged even as He or She is worshiped by congregants of widely varying degrees of spiritual enlightenment. Nature will decide what is sustainable; it always has and always will. The reflexive invocation of the term as cover for all manner of human acts and wants shows that sustainability has gained wide acceptance as a longed-for, if imperfectly understood, state of being. Gradually, gradually, we are becoming monotheistic.

3. Nature is malleable, and enormously resilient, a resilience that gives healthy ecosystems a dynamic equilibrium (much like politics within a Constitutional democratic republic, a system specifically chosen by the American founders for its promise of longevity): always changing, and yet with overall, or systemic, continuity. But as we are discovering, the resiliency of nature has limits, and to transgress them is to act unsustainably. Thus, the most diffuse usage, "sensibly far-sighted," is the usage that contains and properly reflects the strict ecological definition of the term: a thing is ecologically sustainable if it doesn't destroy the environmental preconditions

for its own existence. A thing is sustainable if it maintains healthy ecosystems in their dynamic equilibrium.

4. W. M. Adams, writing for The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, distinguishes three distinct uses of the term "sustainable."[1] An act, process or state of affairs can be said to be economically sustainable; ecologically sustainable; or socially sustainable. To this formulation some would add a fourth: cultural sustainability. Economic sustainability came into use a few decades ago in development theory, where it is used to describe the point at which a less-developed economy no longer needs infusions of capital or aid in order to generate wealth. This definition is fuzzy: for many of those who use it (including traditional economists and many economic aid agencies) "economic sustainability" means "sustainable within the general industrial program of using fossil fuels to generate wealth and produce economic growth." That program is, of course, not sustainable.

5. "Social sustainability" describes a state in which a society does not contain any dynamics or forces that would pull it apart; such a society has sufficient cohesion to bridge the intra-social animosities that arise from (for instance) differences of race, gender, income, wealth, ethnicity, access to education, or to opportunity, or to public goods: parks, schools, the non-partisan administration of justice. Social sustainability can be achieved through strengthening social cohesion (war is a favorite device), through indoctrination in an ideology that supports the disparities that strain that cohesion, or through diminishing the disparities themselves (or all three). Cultural sustainability asks that we attend to the need to preserve the opportunity for non-industrial cultures to maintain themselves and to pass their culture undiminished to their offspring.

Eric Zencey

6. The Brundtland Report (a 1987 U.N. report named for the chairman of the commission that produced it) offered one widely accepted definition of what sustainability means: "meet[ing] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[2]

7. The report notes that this definition contains within it two key concepts. One is the presumption of a distinction between needs and wants, a distinction that comes into sharp relief when we compare the consumption patterns of people in rich and in poor nations: rich nations satisfy many of their members' wants – indeed, billions of dollars are spent to stimulate those wants – even as poor nations struggle to satisfy human needs. Two: the report explicitly acknowledges that at any given moment we face "limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs."

8. That a distinction can usefully be drawn between wants and needs seems obvious. Any child who has been effectively parented knows that these two categories, however blurry at their edge when they meet in theory and in practice, are yet clearly distinct – both analytically, and in practical, parentally enforced fact. Mainstream economics, however, refuses to countenance such a distinction. (Marxist economics

does, which, from the viewpoint of an ecologically enlightened economics, is one of the few ways in which it is distinguishable from its neoclassical alternative.) The work of Wilfred Pareto was crucial to this development. His contribution to economic theory here marks a crucial moment in the evolution (some would say degeneration) of 19th century political economy into the scientistic, excessively arithmomorphic discipline of economics as we know it today.[3] Pareto, influenced by Benthamite utilitarianism, accepted human pleasure (or the absence of human pain, or the satisfaction of human desires as those desires are articulated in the market) as the *summum bonum* of political and economic life. His novel idea: because satisfactions and pleasures are subjective – because no one among us can say with the authority of certainty "I like ice cream more than you do" – there is no rational way to compare the degree of pleasure that different people will gain by satisfying desires. All we can do is assert that if an economic arrangement satisfies *more* human wants, it is objectively better than an arrangement that satisfies *fewer* human wants. This seems commonsensical until we unpack that caveat "all we can do." An economic arrangement achieves Pareto Optimality if, within it, no one can be made better off (in their own estimation) without making someone else worse off (in their own estimation). Economic science, in its struggle to provide objective principles, thus concludes that were we to take a dollar from a billionaire and give it to a starving man to buy food, we can't know for certain that we have improved the sum total of human satisfaction in the world. For all we can know, the billionaire might derive as much pleasure from the expenditure of his billionth dollar as would a starving man spending a dollar on food. Pareto Optimality forbids us from making the transfer. All we can do – all! – is promote the growth of income; and if we care about that starving man, we must work to produce $2 worth of goods where before there was only one, so that both the billionaire and the starving man can satisfy their wants. Thus did the discipline of economics rule out-of-order as unscientific and irrational any practical use of a distinction between wants and needs.

9. And thus was neoclassical economic theory, putatively value-free and scientific, made structurally dependent on a commitment to infinite economic growth, a value-laden, unscientific, demonstrably unsustainable commitment if ever there was one. If we are to have an ecologically sustainable society, we need a post-Pareto economics.

10. The Brundtland assertion that we face "limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs" can be read as both acknowledging ecological limits to human activity and as sidestepping the major issue that those ecological limits have brought to the fore. If the state of technology and social organization were different, would we still face limits on "the environment's ability to meet present and future (human) needs"? (And oughtn't we to move this issue out of the passive voice and acknowledge that humans are active agents, meeting their needs by drawing resources from their environment?) Can humans, through technological development, solve any problem brought on by resource scarcity and the limited capacity of ecosystems to absorb our acts and works? When all is said and done, can we forever enlarge the economy's ecological footprint in order to create wealth? Gradually, gradually, we are coming to recognize that the answer is "no."

11. The term "ecological footprint" has gained increasing usage, becoming nearly as ubiquitous as the term "sustainability," though it is more precise and less susceptible to misuse. An economy is bipedal: its footprint is analytically distinguishable into two aspects. Following Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen[4] and the ecological economists he helped to inspire,[5] an economy can be modeled as an open thermodynamic system, one that exchanges matter and energy across its border (that mostly conceptual, sometimes physically apparent line that separates culture from its home in nature). An economy sucks up valuable low-entropy matter and energy from its environment, uses these to produce products and services, and emits degraded matter and energy back into the environment in the form of a high-entropy wake. (Waste heat. Waste matter. Dissipated and degraded matter. Toxic

byproducts, pollution, trash: yesterday's newspaper, last year's running shoes, last decade's dilapidated automobile.) An economy has ecological impact on both the uptake and emission side. The laws of thermodynamics dictate that this be so. "You can't make something from nothing; nor can you make nothing from something," the first law (the law of conservation of matter and energy) tells us. With enough energy we could recycle all the matter that enters our economy – even the molecules that wear off the coins in your pocket. But energy is scarce: "You can't recycle energy" says the second (the law of entropy). Or, in a colloquial analogy: Accounts must balance; bills must be paid. To operate our economic machine we pay an energy bill; we must ever take in energy anew.

12. Establishing an ecologically sustainable economy requires that humans accept a limit on the amount of scarce low entropy that we take up from the planet (which will also, necessarily, limit the amount of degraded matter and energy that we emit). Those limits need not be enforced by law or regulation; a more effective approach would be to use market mechanisms, such would occur if we had an economy-wide tax on low-entropy uptake. Such a tax could be set at a level to make sure uptake is limited to a sustainable level. Producers and consumers would have micro freedom under the macro cap brought about by the tax. With such a tax, the tax on worker's income could be abandoned. (As the slogan says, we should "tax 'bads,' not 'goods.'" Work is good. Uptake of scarce resources is a bad. Wise policy would encourage one, minimize the other.)

13. To many environmentalists, the notion of using market mechanisms to steer human behavior, in aggregate, toward a sustainable state smacks of heresy. "You would let people *pay* in order to be allowed to pollute?!" For decades environmentalism has been a *moral* vision, with principles susceptible to being reduced to fundamentalist absolutes. Pollution is wrong; it is profanation; it simply must not be allowed, let alone be given the imprimatur of public license-for-fee. ("But, but," the law of entropy insists. "Discharge of degraded matter and energy is the *sine qua non* of life.") We have no right,

environmentalism has said: to cause species extinction, to destroy habitat, to expand the dominion of culture across the face of nature. True enough, and so granted. But even Dick Cheney agreed with the premise that environmentalism is essentially, merely, a moral vision. ("Energy conservation," he said, on his way to giving oil companies everything they wanted, "is a personal moral preference.") The time has long since passed for the achievement of sustainability to be left to simple moral admonition, to finger wagging in its various forms. It's time to use the power of the market – the power of self interest, regulated and channeled by wise policy – to do good.

14. Accepting a limit on the economy's uptake of matter and energy from the planet does not mean that we have to accept that history is over, that civilization will stagnate, or that we cannot make continual improvements in the human condition. This point was made early and well by John Stuart Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy,* published in 1848. "It is scarcely necessary to remark that a stationary condition of capital … implies no stationary state of human improvement. There would be as much scope as ever for all kinds of mental culture, and moral and social progress; as much room for improving the art of living, and much more likelihood of its being improved, when minds ceased to be engrossed by the art of getting on."[6] Daly and Farley, in their text *Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications,* offer a useful distinction: economic growth results from increasing the material and energetic throughput of the economy. Economic development consists of using a constant flow of throughput, sized to be sustainable, to improve human living standards. A no-growth economy is not a no-development economy; there would still be invention, innovation, even fads and fashions. An economy operating within ecological limits will be in dynamic equilibrium (like nature, its model): just as ecosystems evolve, so would the economy. The quality of life as it is lived (and as it is measured by the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare, an ecologically minded replacement for GDP[7]) would still improve.

If a sustainable economy dedicated to development rather than growth is achieved through market mechanisms, consumers would still "reign supreme" over economic decision making, free to pursue satisfactions – and fads and fashions – as they choose.

15. As William Vitek has pointed out, human civilization has been built on the exploitation of the stored solar energy found in four distinct carbon pools: soil; wood; coal; petroleum.[8] The latter two pools represent antique, stored solar energy. Since agriculture and forestry exploit current solar income, civilizations built on the first two pools – soil and wood – have the opportunity to be sustainable. Many were not.[9]

16. We humans who are alive today face a world-historic moment. Our challenge is to create something unprecedented in the quarter-of-a-million-year history of humans on the planet: an ecologically sustainable civilization that offers a high standard of living widely shared among its citizens, a civilization that does not maintain itself through more-or-less hidden subsidies from antique solar income or the unsustainable exploitation of ecosystems and peoples held in slavery or penury, domestically or in remote regions of the globe. The world has never known such a civilization. Thanks in no small measure to the soil-nutrient replenishment offered by the Nile's annual flood, Pharoanic Egypt had a sustainable agricultural base and showed remarkable longevity, but it certainly wasn't a broadly egalitarian society. Hunting and gathering tribes in many parts of the globe achieved an ecologically sustainable balance with their environments, living off current solar income in many of its forms (including game and fish) rather than on the draw-down of irreplaceable stocks, but we can't say that any of them achieved a high standard of material well-being. According to Edward Hyams (in his underreappreciated classic, *Soil and Civilization* published in 1952), Medieval western Europe lived in balance with its soil community, achieving a form of sustainable agriculture that lasted until the invention of petroleum-fed agriculture a century ago; but few of us would trade the comforts and freedoms we enjoy today for

life as a serf on a baronial estate, or even for the pre-electricity, pre-petroleum life of a mid-19th century farmer.

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

Notes

[1] Adams, W.M. (May 22, 2006). *The Future of Sustainability: Re-thinking Environment and Development in the 21st Century.* Report of the IUCN Renowned Thinkers Meeting, Jan. 29-31, 2006. Retrieved on: Feb. 16, 2009.

[2] The World Commission on Environment and Development, Gro Harlem Brundtland, convener; report published as *Our Common Future* by Oxford University Press in 1987.

[3] The term "arithmomorphism" was coined and applied to neoclassical economic practice by Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, whose *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* stands as the paradigm-defining text of Ecological Economics.

[4] See *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process.* Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

[5] Daly, H., Farley, J., Costanza, R. among them. See Daly, H., *Steady State Economics.* Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1991; Daly with the theologian John Cobb, *The Common Good.* Boston, Ma.: Beacon Press, 1994; *and,* with Farley, J. *Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications.* Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2004.

[6] Mill, J.S., in "Of the Stationary State," Chapter VI of Book IV of *Principles of Political Economy.*

[7] See the entry "Indicators of Sustainable Development" in the online *Encyclopedia of Earth* at http://www.eoearth.org/article/Indicators_of_sustainable_development.

[8] Vitek, W. "These Revolutionary Times," North Country Public Radio Essay, published at http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/newsfacts/fact080722.html.

[9] Diamond, J. (2005.) *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed.* New York, N.Y.: Viking.

Living History

Photography by Barbara Kantz, Long Island Center

Four Shore Road is a historic property that sits on Dyer's Neck on the Long Island Sound. Dyer's Neck played integral roles in the history of Long Island, as part of the George Washington spy ring in the 18th century, the underground railroad in the mid-19th century and the shipbuilding industry in the later 19th century. The house was erected in 1770 by David Cleaves, a shipwright who also built seven whaling vessels during his lifetime. His daughter, Nancy Cleaves, founded the public library and was the first school teacher in the Three Village School District.

It is a privilege for me to live in and care for this historic home. For the past 20 years, I have tried to capture the beauty of the property in a single winter photograph – one bird, a snowfall, the water – and create a holiday card from it. I am deeply touched that friends and neighbors have saved these cards and place them on display at holiday time.
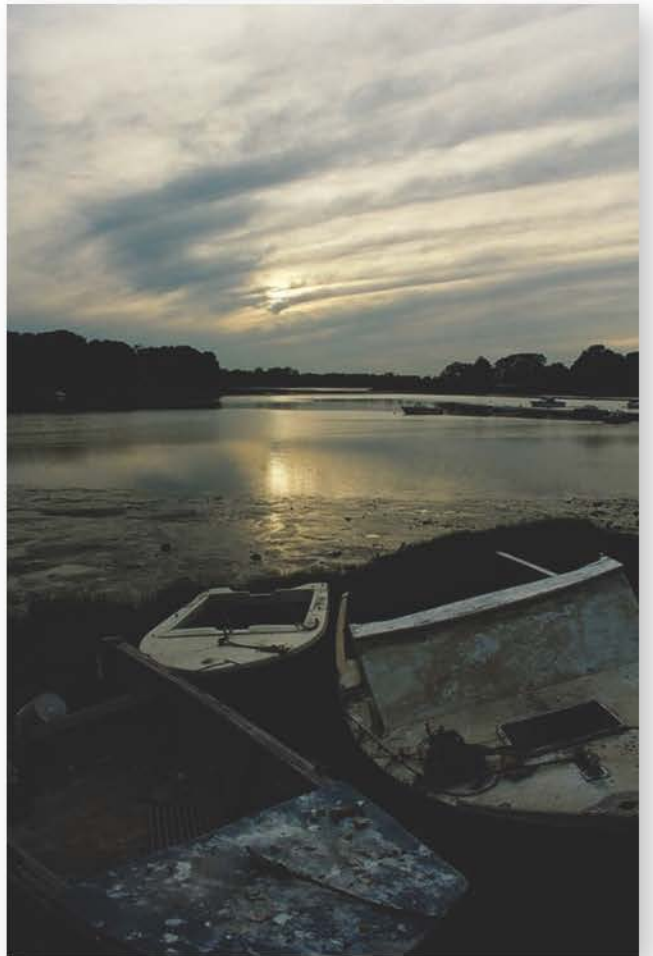
A Tale of Freedom and Temptation, Part 1 of 2

Eric L. Ball, Center for Distance Learning

What follows is the first in a two-part series about the development of the Center for Distance Learning course, Food and Drink in Cultural Context. *In this part, Eric Ball discusses the creation of the first version of this course in 2003. In a future installment, he will discuss the development of a revised version of this course in 2008 - 2009. This paper thus elaborates on yet another angle of his interest in food and culture that he wasn't able to address at the 2009 All College Conference in his 2008 Susan H. Turben Award Faculty Lecture on "Food and Drink at Work and Home."*

When I became an academic area coordinator in 2003, I was charged with facilitating the creation of new online courses, and with creating new online courses myself, for the Center for Distance Learning (CDL). Happily, there were but a few constraints immediately added to this charge: such courses ought to have something to do with culture, and not duplicate those which already exist. Each one should eventually attract at least one full section of about 20 students per year. (Implicit in this was the idea that it should be approvable as fulfilling at least one of the SUNY general education areas, such as Humanities.) A course should be such that different instructors could teach it, not just its author. And, of course, it ought to be such that most adult students taking it would be likely to succeed. (At the very least, implicit in this demand was a concern for customer service, and a thankfully weak accountability to the bureaucracy of GEAR [General Education Assessment Review] and other institutional studies ostensibly related to academic quality.) Finally, a proposal demonstrating that some good thought had been put into the substance and value of the proposed course would need to be approved by the center's Curriculum Committee. That was about it.

In contrast to how it works in many colleges and universities, here my hands were left mostly untied. I was largely free to make more sound or less sound pedagogical decisions, to serve this or that set of academic and nonacademic interests. I was relatively free to succumb to one temptation after another, or to work through the temptations as I tried to make the most of my freedom.

Choosing Appropriate "Subject Matter"

As a new faculty who had just completed his Ph.D., who had a rather limited range of teaching experiences in the humanities per se, and even less with teaching online, the biggest temptation I faced at the outset had to do with choosing an appropriate topic or theme for the first new course I would author. It was reasonable to assume that I should choose a topic with which I had at least some familiarity and comfort, but even more tempting to select a topic about which I had the *most* academic familiarity, training, interest, and expertise – something on Modern Greek literature, say, or on cultural theory; or perhaps something on "literature and place," like I imagined I would teach back when I was in graduate school. Perhaps a course for which I had already collected syllabi. Or maybe the first in a cutting-edge sequence of courses on culture that would eventually comprise a comprehensive curriculum or program on the subject from the particular academic orientations that I was fond of.

As I was brainstorming ideas, I also tried to keep in mind something about the students who might be taking this course of mine. I found that it took some effort to think of them as more than anything but an

Eric Ball

anonymous group of passive "recipients" who – for their own good and for the greater good – would learn whatever subject matter I, the ostensible expert, ultimately settled on, albeit "creatively" and "flexibly." In making this effort, I found that it helped me that I had never in my life been much of a believer in the top-down imposition of learning goals in any kind of formal humanities education. (I was the kid in high school who taught himself three programming languages and wrote poetry, but always read *Cliff's Notes* instead of the assigned novels in English class.) It also helped that I had been made aware that I was in an institution that claimed to take "student-centeredness" a little more seriously than others, to the point of having an unusually long and rich tradition of individualized studies and degrees. I also held in mind my own days as an undergraduate at an institution focused primarily on science, engineering and technology, where the humanities classes and professors I judged to be the most thought-provoking and memorable were often the very ones which students around me found uninteresting and unhelpful. I remembered the dizzying range of students I taught in my Greek language classes at Ohio State – from the one who went on to graduate school in

comparative literature to the one who said she would never take another course that required her to use the library, from the continuing education students in their 40s, 50s and 60s, to the 19-year old who was studying Greek because she had a Greek boyfriend.

I didn't know anything about the actual students who would be taking my course, but it was a pretty safe bet that, for most of them, the academic subjects that I had been primarily interested in – at least in the ways that I was interested in them – were not at the top of *their* lists of interests. And, given what I knew already about the diversity of students that Empire State College seemed to attract, I had a hunch that most of their immediate interests differed significantly not only from my own, but from one another's. Guided by the idea that "[c]uriosity and thus learning thrive when connected to, and/or emergent from, contexts which are familiar and meaningful to the learner" (Herman & Mandell, 2004, p. 27), I started crossing some of my favorite ideas for courses off the list. Even if I was pretty confident that as long as those courses were approved as fulfilling a SUNY general education requirement, students would take them and get through them, I decided they were best left for other places and times. Those courses were probably not the best I could hope to do through CDL for Empire State College students.

The topic of "food and culture," on the other hand, started rising to the top of my list. Food had long been an everyday, nonacademic interest of mine which, in graduate school, also evolved into an academic side-project as well, resulting in my publishing a paper with a critical analysis of Modern Greek cookbooks in relation to nationalism, regionalism and discourses on human health and the environment (Ball, 2003). I was already familiar with some of the critical scholarship on foodways and food representation in cultural anthropology, folklore studies and sociology. I had recently spent a summer reading food novels and food memoirs, watching television's food network, observing food ads, informally assessing supermarket employees' food knowledge as I'd wait in line, and watching just about every film about food that was ever put on

video. Aware that "food" was a growing phenomenon in popular culture (in the U.S. and elsewhere) and that food-related issues were gaining prominence in the media, it occurred to me that "food and culture" could be a topic that was general enough and popular enough to interest students of diverse backgrounds and with diverse goals. And, aware of the explosion of academic interest in food and culture – from a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary orientations – I was aware that this subject had a lot of potential – in terms of breadth and depth – for academic inquiry.

I was by no means a critical food studies scholar, but felt that I had enough familiarity with the topic to begin working on an undergraduate-level humanities course. Indeed, this topic would give *me* an excuse to spend a little more time thinking and learning about food, which was something that I found attractive. I also had a hunch that this was a good topic for me to work with because my interests in it were not only academic. That is, I was broadly interested in the subject, including as a "layperson" who cooks, shops, produces food and feeds people at home. Intuitively, I gathered that my lay interest in food would serve as another check on any dogmatic impulses or tendencies that I might have (owing to my academic experiences and training) to allow in my course only those ways of dealing with food and culture that were already considered legitimate and acceptable by my more conventional academic colleagues.

Figuring Out an Approach

I had my topic. I just had to figure out how to put together a course on it. Since the topic was quite large, I spent time thinking about the scope and focus. I knew other colleagues around the country were teaching more and more courses on food and culture, so I talked to them at professional meetings and sniffed around online for inspiration and ideas. I found that such courses usually follow a traditional seminar format. Using well-chosen selections of readings, they typically sought to address relatively specific questions or themes that the instructor has already determined ahead of time to be important, and perhaps beneficial for students to investigate. Examples of these included studying "the way national

cultures and personal identities are described and defined through narratives of the preparation, consumption and appreciation of food in 20th century Chinese and Chinese-American literature and film" (Feng, 2003), "the role of food consumption and preparation in defining gender roles throughout the history of Western societies" (Knobler, 2003), or "food as a 'lens' for the examination of political, economic and social issues" (Watson, 2009).

It wasn't difficult to ascertain the particular research interests of the faculty who taught these seminars, and how these related to a consensus among many humanities professionals and organizations about what is important to study in college these days, so I was tempted to follow suit and ponder how I could design a course close to some of the particular academic interests in food and culture that I had already begun working on. I was especially interested in food and cultural politics. I was interested, for example, in the ways that discursive practices involving food intersected with such socio-historical processes as nationalism, regionalism and global capitalism. Although my scholarly research

> *I was interested, for example, in the ways that discursive practices involving food intersected with such socio-historical processes as nationalism, regionalism and global capitalism.*

in this area had thus far dealt specifically with Modern Greece and Modern Greek-related materials, my interest was more wide-ranging. I was just as fascinated by recent developments in gourmet coffee and the local rhetorical uses to which U.S.-based fast foods were put in other countries. I was curious to interrogate the ideological uses of "family" in Olive Garden television commercials, and the connections among

gender, ethnicity, nationality and home-cooking in American cultural phenomena like Jamie Oliver, Emeril Lagasse and (the voiced-over Japanese show) *Iron Chef*. Everywhere that I looked I found interesting cultural phenomena related to food and drink.

At the same time, though, I remained concerned that all the food and culture courses that I had seen were too heavy-handed in terms of what they intended undergraduate students to learn, and how they intended them to learn them – at least when it came to the context of student-is-always-at-the-center at Empire State College. It seemed to me that at many colleges and universities, it was conventional practice to use attractive general titles and descriptions for elective courses to help bring in the students, but then to spring a much more *specific* syllabus reflecting the professor's particular interests on students once they had signed up. I felt that this wasn't especially student-centered. If I were going to play that game, why did I bother in the first place to work as hard as I did to settle upon food and culture as a topic instead of some other subject areas in which I had greater expertise, and which I could probably spin to look just as attractive in a course catalog?

I also was tempted to say to myself: "Since I am at Empire State College, as long as I describe honestly and precisely the particular scope and approach of my course in the catalog description, each student will discuss it with the mentor, and decide whether it really is something in her or his interest to pursue." In this way, irrespective of the extent to which I would design the course to reflect *my* interests, I could nevertheless presume that students who signed up really were interested in specifically what I was offering, and their curiosity would likely feed and sustain their efforts for 15 weeks.

However, I knew that it would have been disingenuous to act upon such an assumption. First of all, even if such mentor-student discussions were happening, it was possible that a student and a mentor could agree that this course was a "less irrelevant" humanities option than others. Students would be settling for it, not jumping at the opportunity. A student and mentor might

chat about a student's particular interest in food, and even though my particular course wouldn't much address the specifics of that interest, it would be deemed "close enough" compared with other available options.

Secondly, I also knew that – for reasons sometimes in, and sometimes beyond, the control of us mentors – such discussions did not always happen, especially with the imposition of SUNY general education requirements. In my relatively short time at the college, I already noticed that students were showing up in humanities courses left and right just to "get a requirement out of the way," often selecting something based on a vague interest in the title, so they could hurry up and register upon acceptance. Knowing that this was the case, I realized I would have been exploiting many students' vague interest in food and culture in order to teach something very specific to my own interests.

Either way, I was convinced that many of the enrollments that I likely would have gotten would not have been a reflection of those students' genuine interest in the material. And, since I still wanted individual students' curiosities and interests to carry them not only to the course (because they found the general topic of food and drink attractive), but also through the course (because they remained interested in what they were actually studying and learning throughout the term), either I was going to have to discover a miraculous question or theme that would likely interest most or all the different students who would land in this course, or I would simply have to consider a different approach altogether. I was quite certain that I would not be able to determine such a question or theme, and I concluded that including a range of topics and readings would be better – something on food and gender here, something on drink and national identity there, and so on. Students would at least be exposed to a variety of interpretations and approaches, and perhaps different students' interests would be piqued by different selections.

This meant, logically, that I also needed to avoid the temptation of encouraging *all* students to master a fixed range of materials and topics that I included. As much as I wished students would grapple with the

carefully selected readings in discussions and assignments, I had to acknowledge the fact that not every student would be interested in everything I included and therefore that pushing them too hard to do so would likely backfire in some cases. (Besides, at the end of the day and in the grander scheme of things, it probably wouldn't make that much difference to them or the rest of the world if some of them didn't engage with the particular things I chose, as tempting as it was for me as a faculty member to believe otherwise.) In short, I pressed myself to think of the predetermined content of the course primarily as a matter of exposure and potential inspiration and motivation, and only secondarily as something to be learned – if and when it was deemed appropriate in any given student's particular situation.

But inspiration for what? If no particular reading or food and culture topic or sub-topic could be assumed to matter universally to prospective students, was there anything at all which I deemed ahead of time to be important for all students to learn by taking this course? Of course there was, even if making this explicit to myself remained a challenge. After all, by the time one has gone through an entire Ph.D. program, published, and otherwise inhabited one or more fields and disciplines, one risks being "too close" to it all. Certain habits of valuation – especially regarding what is important for people to learn – become so habitual as to remain unarticulated, unexamined and unproblematized.

Vaguely speaking, I knew that I wanted all students to learn to think and understand cultural phenomena more "rigorously" (or, in the jargon of my academic world, more "critically"). Actually, perhaps a more precise way to describe my overall intention was that I wanted all students to gain some practice with and some insight into thinking less unrigorously (or "less uncritically") about socio-cultural phenomena. Note that since it was my belief that not even the greatest scholar of culture in the world could be said to have achieved a perfectly rigorous and complete understanding of socio-cultural phenomena, this was a goal that made sense to me as applicable to all students – indeed to all people (including me).

In a way, then, I think I held some version of the same overall goal as many or most of my critical humanities faculty colleagues teaching around the country. Unlike some of these colleagues, though, I also had been doing some reading of the work of scholars who look critically at educational discourse and practice itself. In particular, I had recently read Seitz's (2002) review of several different attempts to put critical pedagogy into practice in composition classes, and I agreed that the question of "persuasive authority" was indeed important for critical humanities educators to consider, since "most students do not see cultural criticism as a positive end in itself" (506). Indeed, even when the most well-intentioned educator teaches cultural criticism in order to equip marginalized students (e.g., marginalized in terms of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, geography) with knowledge and perspectives intended to help them make the world less oppressive, such students will reject (or even misconstrue) the educator's intentions because their own immediate concern is to achieve individual professional success within the world as it is given – the only option they see truly available to them for improving their lives or reducing their oppression. This seems especially true of working-class, first-generation middle-class, and socially conservative middle-class students (510), a profile which likely described some of the students who would be taking my course.

I thus had to make sure that the course's design would encourage me, and anyone else whom I'd enlist to teach it, to "be more fully attentive to the moment of interaction with students" than to striving to cultivate resistance outright (507). In short, I had to avoid the pitfall of designing the course as a site for trying to convert students away from accepting the status quo – especially many of its so-called "common sense" categories and conventional habits of thought for thinking about socio-cultural phenomena – and into resisters of the dominant culture – even if I vaguely trusted that less unrigorous, less uncritical understanding of our worlds might ultimately contribute to such a transformation. (If I didn't trust this, I probably wouldn't have gone into the academic humanities business in the first place!) In a sense, then, I needed to remind

myself to be wary of much of the "common sense" of critical humanities teaching and pedagogy. In my reading, I happened upon a description of a "cultural studies of critical pedagogy" which, to my mind, articulated the spirit of what it was I sought to do:

[A] cultural studies of critical pedagogy initiates the teaching and learning process through dialogue, the democratization of authority, and a critique of established power. Briefly, dialogue is generated between the teacher and the student so that experience and the contexts that it implies become part of the teaching/learning process. By creating the environment for dialogue to take place, the teacher/student and student/teacher are no longer situated outside of the learning process, but rather are directly implicated in it. By having to listen and learn from the students, the teacher not only legitimizes students' experiences, but also opens herself up to critique and contestation. Moreover, dialogue in the context of critical pedagogy means that both students and teachers are held accountable to their ideas and beliefs. (Weiner, 2003, p. 58)

Of course, the very pragmatic question remained of how I might go about authoring the actual online space for the course (usually described as "developing the course") consistent with these intentions. At a minimum, this space shouldn't get in the way of this "spirit" by unintentionally erecting obstacles to such dialogues and accountability. At best, it should enable and even encourage such dialogues and accountability.

I was lucky because I was involved in ongoing discussions and collaborations with my partner Alice Lai, whose scholarly work took a more judicious and cautiously critical look at online education than many others'. (By this I mean that the arguments and research of the latter were frequently predicated on assumptions that were suspect at best. This was especially evident to someone like me when such educational research was inspired or propped up by blatantly oversimplified misreadings of theories and theses from the humanities.) Among other things, I wasn't about to let myself fall into the trap of assuming that just because the course would be online,

the context of the Internet helped to ensure "democratization of authority." Nor was I about to assume that just because students could discuss with one another – unlike in an independent study, say, or a lecture – that this *necessarily* meant that there would be "value added" with respect to those other educational modalities. On the contrary, inasmuch as peer-to-peer discussion was capable of reinforcing socio-cultural common sense and hegemony at every turn, my sense was that the only thing I could assume about peer-to-peer discussion was that its educational potential, online or face-to-face, remained a wide open question, not something to be celebrated or condemned wholesale (see Lai & Ball, 2004).

Of course this kind of skepticism can send one on a long detour of reflection and analysis before arriving at a point of confidence for proceeding with the practical work of the day, and I was on a deadline. Ever seeking to balance the real and the ideal, I decided that I wouldn't simply choose from the menu of conventional "course models" that some CDL faculty had already been using; but neither would I go off to live in a cave with a team of other faculty and instructional designers until we had figured out what a really good model would be. Instead, I would choose to invent a new model by modifying one or more of the existing CDL models in a direction that seemed appropriate to the spirit of the pedagogy I was after. While not in a position to be self-assuredly confident that my own model would in fact be better than those which already existed, I figured that it probably wouldn't be worse. So, at least I wouldn't be doing worse than conventional

> *I wasn't about to let myself fall into the trap of assuming that just because the course would be online, the context of the Internet helped to ensure "democratization of authority."*

expectations, and if I was fortunate, I would be doing better. Moreover, in trying it out – through experiencing this model with actual students – I would perhaps learn what kinds of things seemed to be working (or not) more quickly than if I had tried to figure it all out in advance while sitting around a cave. I will now describe four particular aspects of the model I created for the course (in its initial version in 2003).

Four Aspects of My Model

1. Dialogue about Learning Goals

One aspect involved encouraging dialogue about the learning objectives. Consistent with conventional CDL practice, I did my best to articulate what my preconceived assumptions about learning objectives were. I wrote out one of the syllabus documents, "Course Learning Goals," to describe some of the goals that I had in mind for students before I even knew who they were. These included rather general goals related to food and drink per se:

> The overall goal of this course is to provide you with a forum for exploring a variety of conceptual tools that scholars in the humanities use to examine food and drink *in cultural context.* It seeks to enable you to *contextualize* food and drink as part of culturally specific social, political, economic, ecological, historical, and other processes. […] You will learn to conceive of food and drink *as a process.* That is, you will learn to conceive of food and drink as *cultural practice* and as *cultural expression.*

They also included specific academic skills (e.g., "Learn how to identify major concepts, assertions, and issues at stake in humanities texts"), and generally developing (or further developing) critical skills and perspectives away from less critical, less rigorous "common sense" perspectives about socio-cultural phenomena:

- learn to consider culture in *context*
- learn to consider culture as a *contested process*
- learn to interpret culture in a Ê *nonreductionist* fashion Ê

For each reading/discussion module and for each written assignment option, I also created hyperlinks to short descriptions of the learning goals I had in mind in connection with them. For example, for the second reading/discussion module:

- learn what is meant by an **issue** in the context of the humanities, and be able to distinguish **issues** from **themes, problems, ideas,** etc.
- learn what is meant by **interests** in Ê relation to the concept of issues. Ê
- learn to **identify particular issues** Ê involved in cultural identities. Ê
- learn to **ask whose interests might be at stake** in particular issues.

At the same time, though, and as valuable as I thought my own preconceived learning objectives were, I also created opportunities for students to assert their own learning objectives. The initial assignment was for students to describe their own personal and/or professional (or sometimes arbitrary!) reasons for taking the course. I asked them to articulate any learning goals they might have already had for themselves when they decided to take it. This, I hoped, would help enable me – as appropriate – to adjust my own preconceived learning objectives as appropriate in individual students' cases. It would help me take into consideration students' own interests and goals when I would be responding to them in discussions, when I would be chatting with them about possible projects, or when I would be evaluating their submitted work. I also created a final assignment that asked each student to review the documents outlining the learning goals set by me and those set by the student himself or herself, and to write a self-assessment of their learning based on all these initially-articulated goals. My plan was to take this self-assessment into account as I composed my final written evaluation of their learning (and assigned a grade), as well as to take it as an opportunity for me to learn more about what might have "happened" during the course. On the whole, then, my model sought to build on the conventional CDL course expectation that learning objectives be made explicit by making those objectives ultimately subject

to dialogue and negotiation between the mentor and the students.

2. Flexible Assignments

A second way I tried to ensure that my model for a course was enabled to unfold more dialogically than in a more conventional model was through the setup of its three broadly-defined required projects (a personal experience project, a book or film interpretation project, and a fieldwork project). Rather conventionally, each student was told they would be required to do one project in each of these three broad categories. However, in my model, the order of the assignments, not to mention the specifics of each project, were left unconventionally wide-open. The projects were broadly-enough defined that none of them really had to be tied to particular discussions at a particular time during the term (though in some cases it could entail doing a little reading out of the assigned order of readings for discussion purposes). My intention was that these details would "fall into place" in the most appropriate way for each student, depending on his or her unique trajectory of learning over the course of the term. I housed all the information about the projects in a single module accessible throughout the term. Since listing things on the screen one item after another inescapably implied some kind of order, I made an educated guess about what was likely to be the preferred order for most students (in terms of the order of assigned readings) and followed that, but tried to make it clear to students that they should do the projects in whatever order made the most sense to them, especially given what they were learning through readings and discussions.

I believed it was important for the course to provide plenty of explicit guidance up front to students about possible approaches they might take to these projects, while preserving flexibility. Conventional CDL practice seemed to me to be either not to provide such flexibility in assignments in the first place, or, to do so by offering multiple options to students. I chose to do the latter, and provided three or four different assignment options, each one elaborately detailed, for the "personal experience"

Figure 1

OPTION 1: FOOD REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY, ISSUES AND INTERESTS

Click **here** to link back to general directions on **How to Choose and What Order to do Your Projects In**.

This project asks you to find and discuss representations of food in terms of identities, issues and interests.

*Important Note! You might need access to a scanner or a camera in order to complete this assignment. You could use a conventional camera and mail in your pictures, or use a scanner to digitize them and attach them with your assignment. You could use a conventional camera and have the developer provide you with **.jpeg** files on a CD-ROM (many department store photo labs will do this) that you can mail in. You also could use a digital camera.*

Preliminaries
Throughout this course, we see many examples of cultural groups being identified with particular foods and/or food practices. For example, Cajuns are identified with crawfish, Pineys with foraging, African-Americans with fried chicken, and the French with wine.

Choose a cultural group that you are interested in, and some food or drink that you think has become part of that **culture's identity**. You could choose the food item itself, or a food-related practice.

How to do the Fieldwork
Find one example each of any **three** of the following items that you believe illustrates the connection between the cultural identity of the group and the food (or drink) you have chosen:
1. a cookbook
2. a publicly displayed image (poster, advertisement, billboard, sign, graffiti, etc.) **[take a picture of it]**
3. a Web site **[record the Web site's exact address]**
4. an informational pamphlet, tourist brochure, guidebook, or other document aimed at "outsiders"
5. a television or radio commercial or episode, or a scene from a film **[record it if you can, transcribe it and/or write a brief description of it]**
6. a newspaper or magazine article

What You Should Write and Turn In
A. Identity
For **each** of the three items you have found, you should start by doing the following. *Make sure you do all three parts for all three items.*

1. Provide a properly documented bibliographic reference.
   Click for more information on **proper documentation**. Note: You may use any style for bibliographic entries that
   you would like (Chicago/Turabian, APA or MLA) as long as you choose one style and use it consistently.

2. Provide a brief summary or description of the item. The summary/description of each item should be approximately one full paragraph.

For item (2) above (a publicly displayed image), you must include a file with the image. For (5), you need only to provide a transcription and/or description. In the case of (1), (4) or (6), you may want (optionally) to include a file with images.

   A note on recording images digitally: You could use a conventional camera and mail in your pictures, or use a scanner to digitize them and attach them with your assignment. You could use a conventional camera and have the developer provide you with .jpeg files on a CD-ROM (many department store photo labs will do this) that you can mail in. You also could use a digital camera.

3. Explain how you think the item illustrates the connection between the **cultural identity** of the group and the food (or drink) you have chosen. Again, a full paragraph or two should be sufficient in most cases.

B. Issues and Interests

Then, after you have completed the above three tasks for all three items you found, you should list three **issues** that you think these items raise, or issues that you can relate to these particular items. For **each** issue, write a full paragraph in which you describe how you think the food and cultural identity you examined relates to this issue. Are these issues interrelated? How? Also, try to mention whose **interests** might be at stake in each issue.

⬆ For Upper-level Credit

Students who have signed up to take this course for upper-level credit must write an additional two pages (approximately 600 words) analyzing the relationship between cultural context and the production of meaning. Specifically, you should address the following question: How might the meaning of a food change depending on its cultural context? In other words, how might the same item of food, or the same food practice, have a **different** meaning in one context than it does in another? You might want to use examples from your fieldwork to illustrate your point.

Click to view the Learning Goals for this Independent Project.

In order to complete this assignment, you may need to use the resources of the Empire State College online library to locate books and journal articles. In particular, you may find it helpful to use the research databases in Cultural Studies and the Social Sciences that can be found in the listing of Database Subject Guides. For example, under Cultural Studies, you can find information on food and culture by searching the following databases: Humanities Abstracts, AH search, Project Muse, Gale Expanded Academic ASAP. Under Social Sciences some useful resources include Social Science Citation Index, Social Science Abstracts, EBSCO Masterfile, and the Sociology and Psychology collections.

Remember, whenever you use resources (including books, journal articles, newspaper or magazine articles, Web sites, class discussion Web sites, and more), you must document them in accordance with policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. *Click to view information on Proper Documentation.*

---

and "fieldwork" categories of assignments, and a list of almost 20 films and books from which a student could choose for the "interpretation" assignment. (For an example of such a predesigned assignment option, see Figure 1 for the complete online document for one of the choices for the "fieldwork" project.)

Perhaps rather unconventionally, I also included an additional option on the list of choices for the "personal experience" and "fieldwork" projects, called Develop Your Own Project. It was intended for any student who, after reading the available predesigned fieldwork assignment options, might have a different idea for a project to conduct "in the field." Before getting started, a student who preferred to pursue her or his own option was expected to contact the mentor and pitch the idea – for approval, but also so the mentor could raise questions about the proposed project as deemed necessary (such as inquiring what the student intended to learn through such a project). I also made sure to state that the "proposal" itself would be considered

as a portion of the work completed for the overall assignment.

In practice, because students articulated their own interests and goals at the outset of the course, it wasn't necessary for the mentor to wait for students to choose this "other" option: The mentor also could take the lead in recommending the possibility of other ideas for projects. For example, a mentor might recommend to a student pursuing a degree in literature to consider doing all three projects on literary texts relating to food and drink.

Linked with each of the three projects spaces also was a small-group threaded discussion area so that all the students who happened to be working at the same time on the Personal Experience Project, say, could discuss their ongoing work – challenges, discoveries, accomplishments – with one another. Overall, then, I was trying to create a structure that enabled each student's ultimate trajectory through his or her projects to emerge dialogically, not only through instructor-student interaction, but also through interaction among the

students themselves. And, I tried to do so by providing lots of explicit guidance, especially through offering several elaborately pre-designed options, and the explicit possibility of student-led options.

3. Theoretically Underdetermined Content

A third aspect of my model had to do with the way I approached including "content." Weiner argues that a cultural studies pedagogy "must provide an under-determined theoretical and methodological framework so that students can think creatively in the face of newly emerging cultural realities on the one hand and hegemonic social forces on the other" (58). (It also seemed to me that this was another good way to guard against the pitfall of wrongly assuming that one can easily gain "persuasive authority" over students, as I mentioned earlier.) "[F]reed from the constraints of any one particular school of thought, i.e., Marxism, feminism(s), critical theory, postmodernism, etc." (60), a pedagogy based on an underdetermined theoretical framework attempts neither to

depoliticize itself, nor to impose wholesale – through a direct, linear indoctrination – the instructor's particular political program and preferred methodological approach on students.

One way I tried putting this idea into practice was by having the course center around a broad group of "course concepts" to which students could be briefly and explicitly exposed, and which could be more deeply elaborated on (implicitly or explicitly, and possibly contradictorily) in the assigned readings. Students would then use, combine or apply these concepts in various ways on their own in the discussions and in their written assignments. The particular concepts that I settled on for this course were the following: cultural identity, difference/ otherness, issues, interests, beliefs and values, meaning/interpretation, aesthetics, everyday life, practice, memory, and the senses. Purposefully, and importantly, not only did this particular constellation of concepts not come directly from any one particular social or cultural theory, many of the potential interrelationships and possible uses of them remained unknown to me as well.

Moreover, I sought to include them in the online space in an unconventional way, lest they appear as (what called at the time) "mini-lectures" on concepts in socio-cultural theory which students were expected by me, in advance, to master in a very particular way. So, rather than introduce the "content" of these concepts in conventional content documents within a particular module, I simply mentioned these concepts "in passing" in other documents which assigned

Figure 2
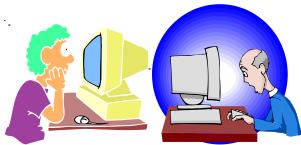
CLASS DISCUSSION (Weeks 1-3)

Click to view the Learning Goals for this discussion and readings.

Background/Readings
Read the three articles by **Angus Gillespie**, **C. Paige Gutierrez**, and by **Psyche Williams-Forson**. Much of this reading comes from the humanities discipline of **folklore**.

These three articles will help us begin to explore the relationship between food and **identity**, and to consider the difference between the notion of **discovering identity** and **exploring how identities are constructed**. In them, we see various examples of cultural groups being identified with particular foods and food practices. For example, Cajuns are identified with crawfish, Pineys with foraging, and African-Americans with fried chicken. So, the articles enable us to explore the relationship between food and **cultural identity**, and the related idea of **cultural differences**.

Discussion Question
Based on the readings, your experiences, and any additional information you may have come across (for example, on the Internet), **what are some of the ways that this process of identification can occur?**

For example: **Who** identifies the Cajuns with crawfish, the Pineys with country food or African-Americans with fried chicken? In what particular contexts does this happen? (**When? Where? How?**) What are, or what have been, some of the rationales that people use to identify Cajuns with crawfish, Pineys with country food, African-Americans with fried chicken?

For Upper-level Credit
Students who have signed up to take this course for upper-level credit also should discuss how a concept such as identity might help us understand food and drink in cultural context.

the readings and discussions, and created hyperlinks wherever they were mentioned, so students could click on them for "more information," as it were. See Figure 2 for an example where "identity," "discovering identity," "exploring how identities are constructed," "cultural identity," "cultural differences" are the concepts that get hyperlinked to in the setup of a threaded discussion based on particular assigned readings. (Everything in **underlined boldface** is a hyperlink.)

Many of the documents in the course, including those which described project options (see again above for fieldwork option 1), also hyperlinked to the course concepts they mentioned. In addition, since these "content" documents that were hyperlinked to needed to be housed somewhere, I created a separate space called Course Concepts for them, and only them. Thus, this space looked more like a handy "lexicon" of (nondoctrinally-specific) cultural theory than a conventional

"module" containing lectures on content that were expected to be mastered in full by all students at a particular time.

Moreover, recognizing that some students would likely resist moving away from "common sense" approaches to thinking about culture, I also strove to be cautious about the ways I framed my very short "introductions" to these concepts.

Consider, for example, the concept of "cultural identity." It usually doesn't take long for undergraduate students in a course on food and culture to start making assumptions about "authentic" foods in their discussion postings. In accordance with "common sense" notions of identity, students tend to discuss whether this dish or that restaurant is "authentically Italian" or "truly Chinese," or about how unfortunate it is that what was once culturally "pure" has been "corrupted" by immigrants or corporate greed. There is a temptation for the critical educator to rush to point

out to students that the identities they are discussing are constructed, that they are using the notion of "authenticity" as if its meaning was well-defined, well-known and universally agreed upon, and that notions of "authenticity" are frequently powerful tools for inventing and perpetuating unjust exclusionary practices. Yet, doing so greatly risks compromising a student's willingness to learn the kinds of critical approaches to culture that assert such things, because it can be readily perceived by the student as threatening, implicitly or explicitly, his or her sense of self in terms of his or her own particular social and cultural identities.

For this reason, it seemed to me that for many students, understanding the constructedness of cultural identities would have to be a long-term learning goal, not something I could assume or quickly take care of once and for all in the first module. Therefore, in writing the course documents for introducing the construction of cultural identities, I made sure not to frame it in

Figure 3
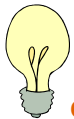
CULTURAL IDENTITY

The concept of identity is particularly useful for studying **cultural identities**. And, not surprisingly, food is one of the many aspects of culture that people often relate to cultural identity.

Many Americans identify food made with pasta and tomato sauce as **Italian**.
Many people around the world, including Americans, identify hamburgers as **American**.
Many Americans in the north identify collard greens with **the South**.
Many Americans consider eating quiche or drinking sherry a mark of **feminine** identity.

1

Those who want to **discover identities** might ask:
What unique set of characteristics defines the culture of California?
What are the essential aspects of the culture of the United States?
What defines the culture of African-Americans?

2

In the humanities, at least nowadays, we tend to ask questions about **the construction of identities**, like:
Who identifies California with "fun in the sun"?
Who identifies the United States with baseball, Thanksgiving turkey, democracy and apple pie? In what contexts?

terms of a right way for looking at identity (as socially constructed) and a wrong way (as natural, as given, as unproblematic). Rather, I explained that there are at least two ways that people think about identity – one which tries to "discover" unique characteristics or essences of something given, and one which tries to interrogate the particular contexts in which a particular cultural identity gets associated with certain things. See Figure 3 for an example of a complete "course concept" document.

In short, I implemented the presentation of course concepts online in ways that I thought might avoid encouraging students to jump too quickly to conclusions about the value of particular ways to examine and understand culture, and about the potential efficacy of such concepts in the first place. I also tried presenting them in a format that I thought might discourage students from taking them as a "threat" from on high ("You'd better learn this material!"), but rather as material which could ultimately prove very helpful, even necessary, to their own quests to learn more, and more rigorously and critically, about aspects of food and culture that interested or intrigued them. Finally, my very selection of concepts was purposefully "underdetermined," so that it would not only be relevant to any number of different lenses or theories that might be used to understand culture, but provide an extra check against my (or any other mentor's) tendency to impose any one particular approach or doctrine. All this, I believed, would encourage legitimizing students' experiences by making it all the more necessary for me (or any other mentor) to listen and learn from students and to remain open to critique and contestation.

4. Look and Feel

A fourth aspect of my model that I will mention has to do with what CDL-ers sometimes call "the look and feel" of the course's online space.

Once again it was tempting to follow conventional practice which, at the time, was to include photos and pictures on course pages that were relevant to the subject matter of the course. Certainly there were infinitely many "food and culture"

photos one could choose from! But I worried that what created "visual interest" on the page for one student could provide a "visual distraction" for another. Moreover, and more distressingly, such images would just be sitting there on the page and not be turned into objects of analysis or critique. Inasmuch as such images were themselves socio-cultural phenomena, as would be the ostensible "obviousness" of the connection that they had to the course's subject matter, they would be potentially *reinforcing* common sense assumptions about culture instead of providing an opportunity for problematizing that common sense. That is, they would likely be interpreted by students as having been deemed by the course author (or its current mentor) as unproblematically representative of something about food and culture. This, I feared, would undermine the very pedagogical intentions of the course!

If images were going to be brought in, it would have to be done in a way that encouraged students to look at them critically. Since not all students would necessarily be visually-oriented (or primarily "visual learners"), I decided it would be inappropriate to impose such a task universally, and better to offer opportunities for doing so. Thus, for example, students could choose to interpret a work of food writing or they could consider a food *film*. One of the fieldwork assignment options asked students to create a photo essay about "the doing" of a recipe. This assignment was closely tied with readings by Luce Giard dealing with the embodied creativity and agency that can come into play through "gesture sequences" in "ordinary" everyday cooking.

Another field option was in the spirit of "visual culture" education, focused on the critical examination images in terms of "visual politics." This had two parts, "The politics of meat" and "the politics of food and nation," and asked students to look for images or other visual examples that exemplified (by supporting or by challenging) the arguments of several assigned readings. In Part 1, students were asked to seek images (offline) demonstrating or challenging the connections between meat and gender posited by Carol Adam's book

The Sexual Politics of Meat. In Part 2, they were asked to find visual evidence (online) supporting or contradicting Roland Barthes's assertions about how food communicates meanings about "the nation."

When it came to the "look and feel" of the actual Web pages of the course's online space, I found some simple clip art images in one of the repositories we subscribed to that I thought might serve students as simple navigation mnemonics (see Figures 1-3): Lightbulbs on the top of every page describing a course concept; a person sitting at a desk on the top of every page describing a project option; and so on. I thought this would add a modest amount of "visual interest" to the Web pages while also helping students know or remember "where" they were in the online space. (Still, for example, lightbulbs signify "brightness," and what or who is considered "bright," or why knowledge is equated with "light" – these too are not socio-culturally neutral or uncontested, but at least these kinds of issues could be left to a different course, such as one on educational theory …)

Conclusion

I have tried to articulate a good deal of my thinking as an academic area coordinator and as a course developer in proposing and authoring *Food and Drink in Cultural Context* during 2003. As I have tried to suggest, there were not only many decisions to be made – from the initial choice of subject matter all the way down to the visual appearance of documents – but numerous temptations along the way in the midst of significant freedom, making these decisions complicated and risky. I have probably omitted discussion of many other temptations and decisions along the way, and I don't want to claim that I always made 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 would feel like I was in a position to significantly rethink and revise. More on that in "Part 2" …

References

Ball, E.L. (2003). Greek food after Mousaka: Cookbooks, 'local' culture, and the Cretan diet, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies, 21*(1), 1-36.

Feng, J. (2003). We are what we eat: Food, culture and identity in literature and film retrieved from http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/tut/f02/tut100-12/.

Herman, L. and Mandell, A. (2004). *From teaching to mentoring: Principle and practice, dialogue and life in adult education.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Knobler, A. (2003). Eat, drink, man, woman: A gendered history of food retrieved from http://www.tcnj.edu/~knobler/food.htm.

Lai, A. and Ball, E.L. (2004). Students online as cultured subjects: Prolegomena to researching multicultural arts courses on the Web in *Studies in Art Education, 41*(1), 20-33.

Seitz, D. (2002). Review: Hard lessons learned since the first generation of critical pedagogy in *College English, 64*(4), 503-512.

Watson, J.L. (2009). Social analysis 70: Food and culture retrieved from http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~anthro/social_faculty_pages/FoodandCulture2006.htm.

Weiner, E.J. (2003). Beyond "Doing" cultural studies: Toward a cultural studies of critical pedagogy, *The Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies, 25,* 55-73.

"It is a matter of no small consequence that the only people who have lived sustainably on the planet for any length of time could not read, or, like the Amish, do not make a fetish of reading. My point is simply that education is no guarantee of decency, prudence or wisdom. More of the same kind of education will only compound our problems. This is not an argument for ignorance, but rather a statement that the worth of education must now be measured against the standards of decency and human survival – the issues now looming so large before us in the decade of the 1990s and beyond. It is not education that will save us, but education of a certain kind."

– David Orr, *What is Education For?* (1990)

Reflections on Mentoring and Sustainability

Gohar Marikyan, Metropolitan Center; Carol Yeager, Center for Distance Learning;
Cindy Bates, Northeast Center; Betty Lawrence, Center for Distance Learning;
Margaret Souza, Metropolitan Center; Nazik Roufaiel, Center for Distance Learning

At the All Areas of Study Meeting 2008, a number of mentors presented their reflections on the multiple connections between mentoring and sustainability. At that session, Cindy Bates, Gary Krolikowski, Betty Lawrence, Alan Mandell, Gohar Marikyan, Frances Mercer, Chris Rounds, Nazik Roufaiel, Margaret Souza and Carol Yeager offered a wide range of thoughts, some of which, in edited form, are presented here. Thanks to all for their participation in this project.

Mentoring: Not Something That One Can Read In "How To" Books

Gohar Marikyan

Although I believe I have learned a lot over the past years at Empire State College, there is always more to learn about mentoring. Mentoring is not something that one can read in "how to" books in order to memorize the proper steps. There is no hard and fast formula. It is not something that can be explained in a few words, either. Mentoring is something more than an accumulation of knowledge. There are many very knowledgeable people who cannot mentor. In addition to knowledge, mentoring is about making beneficial and productive changes in the lives of our mentees; it is about seeing things the way they see them; it is about thinking with them; and yes, it is, finally, to share their happiness when they complete their studies at Empire State College.

As a mentor in mathematics and computer sciences, I strive to creatively respond to each student according to his or her academic needs and goals, always searching for the proper tools and methods that are individually appropriate. With each student, my arsenal of resources grows considerably. Although my teaching style can vary depending on the specific topic and level

of study, my overall approach is to create a relaxed learning atmosphere combined with individualized attention. Students want to feel they are important, and important they are.

I always very carefully watch the process of learning in my students. It is very rewarding to see how they progress, to see their incredible efforts to understand a topic that is alien and even frightening to them, and to be aware of how they get excited about learning. I strive to be a trustworthy and knowledgeable teacher for them; someone to whom they can go with their worries, their questions, and their search for knowledge. We search together, we discuss together, we laugh together, and most importantly, we learn together – mentor and student.

I believe the best yardstick for judging the quality of mentoring is the student. When one student wrote: "the good doctor rescued me from a quagmire of misinformation and frustration," I was humbly gratified. It is exactly these types of appreciative comments that add energy and enthusiasm to our mission and contribute to the sustainability of mentoring.

Guiding Each Other

Carol Yeager

When I call myself a mentor, what do I mean? When I use the title of mentor, who am I? What do I do? Well, part of the flexibility that is inherent in mentoring, part of its sustainability, is that, "it depends!"

I like to think of myself, in the words of Ruth Noller, as a "guide on the side and not the sage on the stage." That is, a mentor "guides" individuals into more creative problem-solving methods. A mentor guides individuals into discovering that questions do not end with simple answers, and that more questions offer greater possibilities for learning. Mentors need to be academic

advisors, teachers and guides in academics, professions, and perhaps, too, in everyday life.

Ernest Boyer, one of the founding spirits of Empire State College, defined the mentor as an expert in the adult student's field of interest and, at the same time, a guide for adult students in designing a college program leading to a degree relevant to that student's personal and professional goals. Since its inception, practicing this kind of mentoring has been part of the core value of the educational experience of adult learners at Empire State College.

From my perspective, mentoring is both a process and a model. Thus, in this model, mentors strives to support processes of all kinds that contribute to independence and creativity; mentoring may involve complex role reversals (including the possibility that, over time, the mentee may become even more successful than the mentor), and, very importantly, mentors and mentees both continue to develop and contribute to each other's growth. (Interestingly, even though potentially quite intense, the relationship may be short-lived; it also may continue for a lifetime.) It's exactly this kind of reciprocity that connects mentoring and sustainability.

It's also crucial to acknowledge the importance of mentoring to mentors. My mentors within Empire State College have been Susan Oaks, Ken Abrams and Betty Lawrence. Relationships with these colleagues have deepened as they have encouraged my own problem-solving skills and overall growth as a creative mentor. Mentors mentoring students; mentors mentoring mentors; and Empire State College alums mentoring students: all of these variants represent important engagements with the college and with the collective learning that sustains us.

Collaboration, Creativity and Compassion

Cindy Bates

Most people are surprised to hear that I find many similarities between my work as a theater director and my work as a mentor. While there are indeed differences between these two roles, both of them require me to engage in collaborative, creative and compassionate relationships with others. These three components of my work are what make both directing and mentoring sustainable practices for me because they allow everyone involved to constantly reinvent themselves and discover new areas of knowledge.

There are many different styles of directing. I tend toward a more collaborative style because I feel that when we open the doors of thought and expression, we create more opportunities to fulfill our individual and collective artistic pursuits. My job is to provide leadership through what is a truly improvisational process. I create a safe place for actors and designers to try out ideas, discover new possibilities, and, ultimately, to hone their work into a finished product. I do end up making decisions about which acting choice seems to work the best or what color shirt a certain character should wear. But even my decision-making process is open to discussion (most of the time!) with the people who have to bring those decisions to life. Over the years, I have found that if I provide an open space where collaboration is encouraged, our creative juices flow much more easily. We also have much more fun when we work in a setting where everyone's ideas and discoveries are valued. But to make this kind of personal investment a sustainable practice, we need to have compassion for one another so that we are constantly striving for each person to realize his or her unique creative identity.

When I switch hats to my role as a mentor, many of the same principles apply. On the best days, my work with students is collaborative, creative and compassionate. Whether we are engaged in designing a degree program plan or deciding which materials to include in an individual study, I try to create a safe space for students

to try out their ideas, discover new possibilities, and ultimately make decisions for themselves. Like a director, I have certain knowledge and experience that can be useful to the student, so I try to shape this into guideposts for students without letting it stop them from thinking outside the box. When the student contributes his or her ideas, experience and passion, we suddenly find ourselves in a space (much like the rehearsal room) where creative ideas can flow and collaborative decisions can be made. Compassion provides the foundation for our work and makes this academic improvisation a sustainable practice.

At the end of the day, I hope that as a mentor I am helping students to become "directors" of their own journeys and that by doing so, I am encouraging them to make learning an ongoing and thus sustainable practice in their lives.

Changing Technology, Sustaining Mentoring Reflections

Betty Lawrence

Although I have been a mentor for many years, in some sense, after returning from a recent sabbatical, I feel like a new mentor. Before my sabbatical, I was phasing out as a long-time mentor primarily for International Programs students; now, almost all my new mentees are from the Center for Distance Learning.

As I beginning mentoring anew (!), several key aspects of mentoring for me have not changed. In each interaction with my mentee, it is my consistent goal to listen to where she or he is at that moment, not where I think she or he should be. I try to approach my mentee as a fellow learner. Thus, for me, communication is key; content, as appropriate, always follows.

What has changed over these many years? The way my students and I use technology to facilitate our communication is what has changed most. My goal is to use technology as a tool to enhance the ways in which the student can be at the center of her or his individual learning experience. A term used quite a bit at the Sloan-C conference was "personal learning environment," which relates well to our Empire State College

core values. Ideally, the student constructs a learning environment that works best for her or him. For example, if that student enjoys working with others, synchronous or asynchronous discussion groups to discuss math problems or the prior learning assessment process can be arranged. Or, if appropriate and possible, the student could meet with other students interested in degrees in emergency management or information systems.

Of course, our current systems do not yet support a student portal, which would be a way to help facilitate the creation of such personal learning environments. Social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn provide some of these opportunities for students, and I have been experimenting with these two applications with some success. Mostly, they provide an informal way to get to know more about my students, just as I used to in a face-to-face meeting when we set aside the first few minutes to share thoughts about life in general. These informal connections are always important.

But these early explorations make me realize how far we are and how much we need to learn in order to utilize technology in a sustainable way; that is, to continue to improve how we connect with each other. For mentors and mentees, I can imagine a Web 2.0 enhanced network that provides ubiquitous linkages among mentees,

> *In each interaction with my mentee, it is my consistent goal to listen to where she or he is at that moment, not where I think she or he should be.*

mentors, fellow students and other faculty. While keeping our core values closely in view, I look forward to experimenting with ways to improve our use of technology to meet our communication needs.

Mentoring: The Elephant in the Room

Margaret Souza

If we want to consider the question "Is mentoring sustainable?" it would behoove us to consider the issue of what mentoring is. Since I arrived at Empire State College, I have been called a mentor, as are all of my faculty colleagues. During my orientation, the principles and practices of mentoring were discussed and we watched various role-plays as a way to introduce us to the concept. The focus was on the development of a relationship with a mentee and the interactions that enabled mentees to articulate their goals, as well as their life experiences in the process of developing a plan for their academic career at the college.

However, over my time here, I have come to realize that "mentoring" is in many ways the elephant in the room. We all use the term, but it seems there is hardly a consensus about what mentoring really is. I certainly do not mean to call for a uniform notion of what it should be, but I think we do need a more clearly differentiated concept of its most important elements. The diversity is so great: from "we should really not be doing much but instructing," to "our goal should be to establish a long-term relationship in which we support the mentee through the continual growth process of their educational experience." Clearly, even if there is a Weberian "ideal type" of mentoring, there are lots of variations in our lived experience.

If mentoring is to be sustainable, how do new mentors and professionals incorporate the concept in their daily reality and what concept are they developing? Thus, for example, with the influx of new professionals, where do we integrate each person in this process of mentoring and individualized educational planning that we claim are hallmarks of the college? Should they be "hallmarks?" Do we care about the possible conflation of "independent" studies and "individualized" studies? Can we arrive at a consensus that allows for particular center and program "cultures" while maintaining the integrity of the mentoring

concept? Or, has mentoring become outdated in the face of a new "business model" of college education that is being thrust upon us by external (or perhaps even internal) forces?

The ways in which these processes intersect seems to be related to the way in which Empire State College markets itself. It would seem that "mentoring" and what it entails must become central to our conversation about its future. Only then can we come to a conclusion regarding whether it is sustainable at all.

The Mentoring Transfer of Power

Nazik Roufaiel

Mentoring, that elusive term, is not only teaching, coaching, social working, leading, motivating, inspiring, collaborating, social networking, believing in what we do, researching, community building, fact finding, trusting, feeling and respecting others, preparing for the unexpected, and understanding – mentoring encompasses all of these qualities, and more. But as we specifically think about mentoring our adult students, and about mentoring and sustainability, it's the mutual transfer of power that stands out.

As I see it, relationships – ones that are dynamic, reciprocal and long-term – are really the foundation of mentoring. Mentoring is about partners sharing the same interests, having the same goals, working collaboratively, sharing responsibilities for their actions – being stakeholders with a common learning goal. Such relationships are dynamic because they are rigorous and purposeful, full of energy and enthusiasm, and, because they are in an ongoing state of development. And they are reciprocal because, perhaps in different ways, mentoring promotes a mutual interest in learning, an opportunity to teach and learn from others. Finally, these mentoring relationships are long-term because they do not end at some easily defined point; rather, they continue towards a target that is developmental, supportive, encouraging and motivational to both mentor and mentee. Such long-term relationships are fueled by

care and curiosity to know what might be next.

But like in any ecological system, it's also impossible to neglect power. All learning creates power, the power of knowing something new.

But like in any ecological system, it's also impossible to neglect power. All learning creates power, the power of knowing something new. In this sense, mentoring is the transfer of this power between the skillful mentor and mentee in a specific domain of expertise, each party playing a role. But as distinct from other models of learning, these are roles that aren't permanently given. Mentors and students can actively participate in setting their common goals, think of ways to solve their common problems, and communicate respectfully with one another. Such mutual learning can bring about personal and social change and can transform both the mentor's and the mentee's understanding of our world, thus resulting in a real transfer of power.

This is not so simple and doesn't always happen. Mentors need to promote a coherent approach that is based on collaboration, support, guidance and attention to emerging expertise. Thus, for example, mentees need experience making their own decisions, thus building their cognitive capacities and sustaining their potentialities. They must not only know but also feel that everyone is a learner and a teacher, and that everyone has the ability to reason, to be creative, and to be engaged as critical thinkers. Such an understanding of the unique needs and capabilities of individual learners is difficult to sustain.

Found Things:
An Ecological Model of Breadth

Miriam Tatzel, Hudson Valley Center

A two-year conversation on the topic of "breadth" led by APLPC (the Academic Policies and Learning Programs Committee) culminated in a collegewide workshop on the topic in 1995. (The college had previously taken up related issues in 1983.) Carol Schneider, president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, was our guest, and mentors from across Empire State College (Silvia Chelala, Xenia Coulter, Keith Elkins, Lee Herman, Alan Mandell, Jacke Rose and Barbarie Rothstein) offered reflections on the meaning of "breadth" – of the spirit of academic diversity and holism within individualized degree programs in a pre-general education world. Miriam Tatzel's contribution to that workshop nicely touches on connections between our understanding of "breadth" and some of the themes of "ecological thinking" taken up in this issue of All About Mentoring. *Thanks to Miriam for her willingness to let us use this piece.*

The point of view I will present is not news. We're all familiar with the idea of ecology. The word makes us think of the environment and maybe about homeostasis. We are reminded that all systems can be looked at ecologically – that is, in terms of how the parts of the system relate to each other and what the checks and balances are. This way of thinking has been around for a while. It has resonances with systems theory and holism. I think many of us, and this includes me and my students, are bringing this "new mind set" as one of my students calls it, to our thinking about issues in many domains – health, politics, the family and the environment. At this time in history, as we humans seem to be propelling ourselves toward social and planetary ruin, this new mind set may be able to take over when the old mind set burns itself out. In that sense, ecological thinking is a preparation for the future.

If we are in the process of a radical, although perhaps slow, shift in epistemology, what are the implications for education? I believe an ecological perspective suggests a model for breadth, and I believe it offers a vision of breadth in education for the 21st century.

The impetus for my thinking this way begins with a student. On his application for admission, he checked off all the areas of study and in the accompanying essay he says, "I know that little in the world exists in isolation. I am not surprised to realize that in running my restaurant my knowledge of Japanese literature is as important as my knowledge of bookkeeping." (And his is not a Japanese restaurant.) My intuition was to start him with reading Gregory Bateson, and as we talked our way through *Steps to an Ecology of Mind,* I got further intuition that this stuff is very relevant for the goal of breadth in education.

Gregory Bateson is usually identified as an anthropologist; he describes himself as a biologist; and his book, *Mind and Nature,* is classified as philosophy. Along the way, he was a founder of Family Systems Theory and he coined the term "double bind." The range of his own work attests to the breadth of his way of thinking. He said he was looking for "the pattern which connects" and he further believed "it is patterns which connect."

Although I think Bateson's work is somehow key, I have to admit he's hard to understand. My understanding can go in and out of focus, and even what I do grasp is not so easy to transmit. Nevertheless, I will try to present a selection of his ideas. Then I will sketch some ways the Bateson/ecological perspective can fit into our program. I invite you to contribute. I am eager to hear ideas and elaborations on how to define breadth ecologically and how to apply this thinking to our work with students. I'm only at the beginning of this.

One very important principle is the Theory of Logical Types, which Bateson gets from Bertrand Russell. To use language we are more familiar with, we could talk about "levels of analysis." For example, individual behavior is at one level of analysis, group behavior at another. The members of a category are not the same thing as the category. Don't confuse the two types or levels, for what's true of one may not be true of the other. As another example, a word and its referent are two different logical types. The theory of logical types is akin to the saying "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." It's a nonreductionistic perspective.

Sometimes we deliberately confuse logical types. In 'play' (in the sense of "pretend") our actions have a meaning that's different from what action would mean if we were not playing. If I put my hands around your neck and pretend to strangle you, you will respond very differently if you understand that I'm exasperated with you but love you anyway vs. believing I really mean to strangle you. By shifting the context, i.e., the logical type, from real to play, the meaning of the action shifts. Meaning depends on context. Another type of "play" with the logical types can be seen in paradox. Suppose I tell you that I am a liar. You start out believing me, and then you get to "liar;" if you believe that, you have to change I am to I am not; but "I am not a liar" contradicts the first statement, and round and round you go. If I tell you that you should be more spontaneous, this is also a paradox because I am asking you to deliberately do something that by definition is the antithesis of deliberate action. Peter Elbow's book on writing, titled *Nothing Begins with N,* also plays with logical type. We start by thinking of "nothing" as a referent and then are switched to thinking of "nothing" as a word.

The theory of logical types has an important application to the learning process, as there

are different levels of learning. One level is behavioral and specific: for example, we learn that red means stop and green means go. The second level of learning has to do with understanding the context for the first-order learning; we learn that there is a class of learnings, namely discrimination; in the red – green case, traffic provides the condition for this discrimination. Third-order learning is harder to understand, and probably rare. It's learning about the context of contexts. So far we have that you can learn to make a discrimination (first-order) and you can learn about discrimination as a category of behaviors (second-order). Third-order learning might be the realization that a different type of learning or behavior is called for. This is probably too simplistic an example, but if the red light is on for a very long time, a motorist might suppose the light is broken and that the discrimination context no longer applies; the "new" context might be one calling for judgment about how to proceed. In more complex situations, we may sometimes need to totally reframe what we think the context is, to think the "unthinkable," something out of bounds of the rules we've learned.

The theory of logical types also applies in analyzing systems. Bateson distinguishes between two types of systems: runaway systems, which escalate, and self-correcting systems, which balance out. Runaway systems cause trouble. Examples of runaway systems are the arms race and addictions. In agriculture and medicine, the use of pesticides and drugs can lead to resistant strains of pests or germs, and then the need for even stronger "medicines." In all these cases, an action that makes sense at one level of analysis, because it resolves an immediate problem, turns out to have disastrous consequences at another level, because the problem is exacerbated in the long run. Short-term and long-term, individual and group, are different logical types.

The theme of "change" is another "metatopic" that applies in many domains. According to Bateson, successful change must satisfy two conditions. First, it must fit the internal requirements of the organism or system for its coherence; there are limits on the sorts of changes an organism can incorporate and still survive. Second, the

change must fit the requirements of the environment, that is, it must be adaptive. As a result, systems are basically conservative, to maintain their structure and viability, but modifications do occur. Changes come about through stochastic processes; these are random events which are superimposed on an overall context of regularity. Some of the random events will "work" and become part of the system, as in Darwin's concept of natural selection. The two great stochastic processes Bateson identifies are learning and evolution. Those random changes in behavior or in genetics that do take hold and stick are those that meet the two criteria of homology (that is, they fit in with the existing structure) and adaptation.

Bateson regards the arts as very important. He's fond of quoting Pascal, that "the heart has reasons even reason doesn't know." He believes that we really do apprehend the whole system – that we do know what's going on, but it's not an intellectual knowledge. It's a knowledge that comes to us through image, metaphor, feeling, intuition. Art (along with dreams and to some extent religion) is a corrective to the purposive view of life. What he means by purposive is the tendency of the conscious mind to focus on a problem and a goal without awareness of the context and repercussions of actions. Thus, cultivating the aesthetic faculty is important for our individual and collective lives and should be an important part of education.

History would be taught in a different way. (I am indebted here to C.A. Bowers's analysis of how Bateson's ecological thinking applies to history.) Our view of history would lose ats anthropocentric focus, and humans would find their place in nature. Historical movements would be seen in terms of an interplay between culture and habitat, the history of the human-habitat relationship.

Looking beyond specific disciplines, an ecological model can be useful in contracts having to do with change or intervention in a system – whether in business, human services, education, health, whatever. The intervention must be assessed in terms of its repercussions through the whole system, and not just its effect on the target issue. Innovation is not always benign and may

have untoward consequences. One of Bateson's warnings on this score is that the "remainder" of the system will crowd in on the innovation and make it irreversible (for example, rent control in NYC was to be a temporary palliative in the 1940s, but instead the real estate market has become encrusted around it).

In any intervention, we have to mind our logical types. If you want to help a community or get food to people who are hungry, where do you place your help? Aid to the government of a country that's been hit by an earthquake or famine may not reach the people who are suffering. As we've seen, money given to charity may wind up in the leader's lap of luxury and do little to correct social problems. Think about social interventions: school busing to achieve desegregation; giving out condoms in high schools to prevent the spread of AIDS. How do we begin to understand the whole systems of which, in these examples, racial divisions or AIDS are a part, and how do we know the leverage points that will alter the systems for the better?

How do we begin to understand the whole systems of which, in these examples, racial divisions or AIDS are a part, and how do we know the leverage points that will alter the systems for the better?

To continue a bit more along the lines of theory and practice: when I came to Empire State College, I witnessed a holistic approach to education in the New Models for Careers project. It was eye-opening for me to see how liberal studies and career development were combined. The theory informed the practice and the practice informed the theory. The distinction between liberal and professional study did not exist,

or rather the two were aspects of a whole. This is a good model for practica and field experience.

Ecological thinking may be a subject matter in its own right, for example, contracts on systems thinking or on the nature of change. We might even think about levels of breadth, with a variety of disciplines being a lower level, and systems analysis being a higher level.

As a next challenge, how can we conceptualize degree programs so that breadth can be seen not in terms of the sheer variety of components (the old mindset) but in terms of the relationship among components? Here I propose a kind of cluster design.

Let me back up a bit and start with what is often a presenting problem in degree design. Students have groupings of learnings that are related to each other. Human development is related to human services. Special education is related to human development and human services. Business is related to human services administration. So here is a student – this is a true story – who is a secretary in a developmental disabilities agency and she has learnings and interests in all these four areas. And they're all connected. Couldn't we organize a degree program in terms of clusters rather than concentration and general learning? Couldn't we show the ties between one cluster and another as well as those studies that overlap between clusters? Such an holistic approach to degree design

would be able to capture more realistically the structure of the student's learnings.

Finally, I want to point out that we have all along been working with students in an holistic way. We see the person in the life situation, and we see learning in the context of the student's life – career, family, locale, health, developmental stage and learning style. At times even broader issues come into play, such as the recession.

I will sum up by saying that this approach to breadth – call it ecological, systems or holistic – means the ability to grasp the whole. A broadly educated person can view the system from several levels of analysis, or contexts, can see how the components relate to one another, and can find similar patterns across diverse fields of study.

> " … I know very well there will be global warming, that everything will explode, will be destroyed. But after reading treatises on this, what do I do? … Even if I know rationally that it is all in danger, I do not believe that it can be destroyed. That is the horror of visiting sites of catastrophes like Chernobyl. In a way we are not evolutionarily equipped, not wired, to be able to imagine something like that. It is, in a way, unimaginable."
>
> Slavoj Zizek, "Ecology" (from *Examined Life,* 2009)

Mentoring in the Context of the Ecological Crisis

C. A. (Chet) Bowers, Professor Emeritus Portland State University

It must have been at least 35 years ago that Alan Mandell asked me to write an article for a journal he was editing at the time. I am delighted that he has asked me to write about what I have learned during these intervening years that may have some relevance for thinking about mentoring. Reading Donella Meadows' *The Limits to Growth* and Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* as a graduate student at Berkeley, as well as holding a deep suspicion that western philosophers had wrongly privileged abstract ideas over orality and other cultural ways of knowing, set my intellectual compass in a direction not followed by others who were thinking about educational reform. It's been a long and isolated path where the travelers I met along the way were mostly cultural linguists, anthropologists and Deep Ecologists. These encounters led to key ideas that are relevant to mentoring as we move closer to the "tipping point" where cultural changes may not slow the rate of global warming. What I learned from these thinkers about the linguistic processes that carry forward the deep cultural assumptions constituted before there was an awareness of environmental limits is so little understood by classroom teachers and university professors that we seem caught in the double bind that Albert Einstein warned us about. As he put it, we cannot rely upon the same mindset to correct the problem that created it.

In this short piece, I want to summarize three areas in which we need to do some serious rethinking, and comment briefly on their implications for mentoring in an era of ecological crises. But from the start, it is necessary to identify the scale and scope of the ecological crises we face – especially since our technologies and economic system maintain the illusion that we exist in an era of plenitude and that, if there is a problem, it is only that we do not have enough money to consume as much as we can produce. There are many dimensions of the ecological crises that are beginning to impact us directly, and that are already threatening the lives of several billions of people who are struggling to meet the basic necessities of life. These include the melting of glaciers, the spread of drought, the changes in the chemistry of the world's oceans and the collapse of major fisheries, the disappearance of over 30 percent of the world's topsoil, the loss of forests that serve as carbon sinks, and the extinction of species. Other losses that usually do not make this kind of list include the loss of linguistic diversity and of the intergenerational knowledge that sustain the diversity of the world's cultural commons. The latter two losses are especially important as they are sources of knowledge and skills that have enabled different cultures to live within the limits and possibilities of their bioregions. These losses also lead to more people, including Americans, being dependent upon consumerism.

Given this context, the three areas we need to rethink, especially in public schools and universities, include the following. First, we need to learn to make the transition from thinking of intelligence as an attribute of the individual to understanding how to nourish ecological intelligence. Second, there needs to be a wider understanding on the part of educators of how language carries forward the misconceptions and values of earlier thinkers who were unaware of environmental limits. Third, how to revitalize the cultural commons, as well as understand how they are being undermined, needs to become part of the curricula of public schools and universities. At the university level, the focus needs to be on the various cultural forces that are transforming what remains of the world's diversity of cultural commons into new markets. These forces include the destructive influence of western philosophers and social theorists, ideologies, technologies such as computers, various status systems, educational sources of cultural amnesia, marginalization, and silences.

I want to briefly summarize these three areas, as well as introduce some of the implications that I believe are relevant to thinking about mentoring. Importantly, mentoring relationships already avoid some of the limitations associated with privileging abstract, print-based knowledge that marginalizes the importance of culturally mediated and embodied experiences of pursuing interests and developing talents. Thus, my focus will be on the ecologically problematic cultural assumptions and linguistic patterns that may be taken for granted by the mentor.

Mentoring that fosters ecological intelligence

The ancient Greek word *oikos* referred to a wide range of cultural practices in the household and community. It was only later that Ernst Haeckel transformed it into the neologism "oecologie" that eventually became "ecology" – that is, the study of natural systems. We need to recover the ancient Greek understanding of learning the interactive cultural patterns essential to community while also retaining the more contemporary understanding of the behavior of natural systems as ecologies. Both cultural and natural ecologies involve interdependent systems where no organism or action exists on its own. Gregory Bateson refers to the changes circulating within different ecosystems and within and between cultural and natural systems as the differences which make a difference. These differences, or actions upon an action, can also be understood as the patterns that connect, which in turn lead to changes in other parts of the cultural and natural ecology.

Ecological intelligence is what many indigenous cultures rely upon in order to adapt their cultural practices to the

cycles of renewal in their bioregions. For example, the Quechua of the Peruvian Andes express ecological intelligence in their ability to observe what the changes in their environment are communicating about when and where they should plant their fields. Their ceremonies both re-enact the patterns of human/nature interdependence as well as give thanks for how nature nurtures them. Ecologically-oriented scientists are also exercising a limited form of ecological intelligence as they study the energy flows and cycles of renewal. Social scientists also rely upon a limited form of ecological intelligence when they study patterns that connect, such as how the patterns of discrimination and class differences impact the lives of people.

Ecological intelligence takes into account the interacting patterns, ranging from how behaviors ripple through the field of social relationships in ways that introduce changes that are ignored by nonecological thinking, to how an individual's actions introduce changes in the energy flows and alter the patterns of interdependence within natural systems. When we pay attention to contexts, interactions and the consequences that follow from these actions, we also are exercising ecological intelligence. Ecological intelligence is not something we have to create anew, as it goes back to forms and expressions of intelligence exercised in hunter-gather cultures. They had their mythopoetic narratives, but their survival depended upon careful observation of the cycles and patterns in the environment, as well as the intergenerational knowledge they continually tested and refined.

Unfortunately, western philosophers from Plato to the present have largely denigrated this form of intelligence by representing rational, abstract and thus decontextualized thinking as having higher status. Over the centuries, ecological intelligence has been further undermined as the idea of the autonomous individual became accepted as the basis of our political and social justice system – and now as the source of ideas and values. The introduction of perspective by artists in the early 15th century helped to strengthen the cultural myth that privileged the individual as a separate onlooker on an external world, just as Rene Descartes further strengthened the myth of intelligence

as separate from the cultural and natural ecologies that individuals interact with in ways that are too often ignored. Today, the myth of the autonomous individual is being reinforced by educators who urge students to construct their own ideas and who promote computer-mediated learning on the grounds that it enables students to decide what they want to learn and value. Cell phones as well as many other cultural forces further undermine awareness of contexts, relationships, interdependencies, and the consequences of human behaviors that ripple through both cultural and environmental ecologies. Such taken for granted linguistic conventions as using the phrases "I think," "I want," and "what do you think?" continually reinforce the myth of not being part of the interdependent cultural and natural ecosystems, but rather being a separate observer and thinker.

What are the implications for mentors?

The first would be to become more aware of how the taken for granted cultural assumptions influence the participants in mentoring relationships. Special attention needs to be given to how the student may represent her/himself as being an autonomous observer and source of originality and intentionality. This assumption as well as many of today's taken for granted cultural assumptions gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the industrial/consumer culture that is now entering its digital phase of globalization.

Over the centuries, ecological intelligence has been further undermined as the idea of the autonomous individual became accepted as the basis of our political and social justice system – and now as the source of ideas and values.

Other assumptions include the idea that change is an inherently progressive force, that this is a human-centered universe, that mechanism provides the best explanatory framework, that language is a conduit in a sender/receiver process of communication, that traditions limit the individual's freedom and self-discovery, that (still for some) patriarchy was part of the original creative process, and that free markets have the same standing as the law of gravity. It is likely that everyone involved in mentoring relationships has unconsciously learned to take for granted several of these cultural assumptions.

A second suggestion would be for both participants in the mentoring relationship to reinforce each other in giving greater attention to the cultural and environmental patterns that connect, to the consequences that follow from different behaviors, and to how these consequences affect others – in both the cultural and natural systems. The subjectively-centered self is such a prominent tradition in mainstream western culture, even among artists and people searching for a deeper sense of meaning and purpose, that it needs to be discussed and, if possible, reframed in ways that take into account how an action affects the actions of others, including the natural systems, in ways that limit their development.

A third suggestion would be to become attentive to the ways in which language thinks us as we think within the possibilities made available by the language: Just as the cultural assumptions have led to thinking that individuals are basically autonomous beings (or have the potential to become autonomous), we have a tradition of thinking of the other participants in these complex cultural and natural ecologies as being self-contained entities, such as a weed, a crime, a behavior, a value, an idea, and even a word. Thus, for example, our educational institutions leave most graduates with the idea that language is a neutral conduit that enables ideas, data and information to be passed to others. That is, most students graduate without understanding that most words are metaphors that carry forward the meanings framed by an earlier choice of analogs. Many of these analogs were chosen by men who were unaware of

environmental limits, and who took for granted many of the cultural assumptions of their era. Recognizing that words have a history has important implications that are seldom considered. That is, they are part of a complex linguistic ecology that can be traced back to earlier narratives and evocative experiences. Thus, the use of such words and phrases as tradition, technology, property, data, intelligence, progress, critical thinking, and so forth, carry forward the way of thinking of earlier times, as well as the silences and prejudices that were taken for granted.

Overcoming this general lack of historical perspective suggests another one of the ways mentors can foster ecological intelligence. Students need to be encouraged to examine the history of key words in the modern vocabulary that are contributing to undermining the intergenerational knowledge of the community and that lead to behaviors that further degrade the environment. For example, they need to consider the cultural context that influenced John Locke's analogies for understanding the right of individuals to own property, the early cultural basis for thinking of technology as a neutral tool, as well as the basis for thinking of traditions as obstructing progress and rational thought. Students' ecological intelligence develops as they are encouraged to consider the patterns that connect the historical and cultural sources of influence, as well as how ideas and values affect relationships within the natural environment.

Ecological intelligence involves trying to escape from the linguistic colonization of the present by the past. An especially critical example of when ecological intelligence needs to be encouraged is when professors, political elites and demagogues refer to the founder of *The National Review,* Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush as "conservatives." These promoters of capitalism, free markets and undermining of Constitutional protections should be more accurately described as "market liberals." To reiterate a key point: words have a history, and the word conservative, when used as a category of political theory, can be traced back to Edmund Burke, Michael Oakeshott, the authors of *The Federalist Papers,* and to contemporary environmental thinkers such

as Wendell Berry and Vandana Shiva. The word carries forward many problematic interpretations of what should be conserved, such as states rights and prejudicial traditions. The important point, however, is that the genealogy of political metaphors such as conservative, liberal, libertarian, and so forth, as well as other metaphors, needs to be examined. Given the threat to our civil liberties and such long-standing traditions as habeas corpus, the viability of local markets and democratic practices, and to the self-renewing capacity of natural systems, it is important to think ecologically about how to rectify the use of words that may otherwise lead more people to equate the political slippery slope we have been on in recent years with progress.

How fostering ecological intelligence leads to revitalizing the local cultural commons

To reiterate, the way we unknowingly accept basing relationships and values on the meaning of words that were framed by analogs selected hundreds of years ago becomes especially critical to whether we move to a post-industrial form of consciousness and community. Substituting the phrase "cultural and environmental commons" for what most people associate with community will help in making this transition. Even in its most positive use, the word "community" is too limited to convey the complexity of the cultural and natural ecologies that we are dependent upon. Stripped down to the simplest explanation, the cultural commons represents the intergenerational knowledge, skills and mentoring relationships that enable members to be more self-reliant in the areas of food, healing, creative arts, craft skills, narratives, ceremonies, civil liberties, and other aspects of daily life that are less dependent upon consumerism and participation in a money economy; basically, it encompasses what is shared in common, which in some instances may be traditions of exploitation and prejudice.

The word "commons" is now being used to refer to the cyber-commons, and its history in understanding the environment as a commons can be traced back to Roman law. The intergenerational knowledge and skills now being widely shared – ranging from

how to grow, prepare and share a meal; how to discover talents and skills in a wide range of the arts; to the local efforts to make political decisions that protect the local cultural and environmental commons from being integrated into the supposedly free-market economy – have profoundly different consequences than what is experienced in our consumer-dependent lifestyle.

Revitalizing the cultural commons enables people to be less dependent upon a money economy that too often exploits the most vulnerable people as well as the environment upon which future generations will depend. The intergenerational knowledge and skills that represent alternatives to the industrial mode of production and consumption also have a smaller ecological footprint, and lead to developing the skills and relationships that are the basis of mutual support. This is, in effect, a life sustaining ecology, and it varies from culture to culture and from bioregion to bioregion. And like the traditions that are the basis of the slow food movement and that are carried forward by mentors in the arts, the cultural and environmental commons will continue to exist along with a more selective dependence upon modern technologies in the post-industrial era that we must enter if we are to avoid total ecological collapse.

Very importantly, the revitalization of local cultural commons across North America, and in Third World cultures that are questioning the western model of development, involves mentoring relationships. These relationships, if examined in terms of specific activities and skill development, are not framed in terms of fostering more "individual self-direction," "independence" and "ongoing questioning and revising." These words and phrases are based on the same deep cultural assumptions that lead to the kind of individualism required by the industrial/consumer-oriented culture. As these words and phrases have a special standing in the thinking of both market and social justice liberals, it is important to clarify how metaphors that are often associated with progress in achieving fuller individual lives may actually support the forces that lead to becoming dependent upon consumerism. In *Rebels Against the Future,* Kirkpatrick Sale notes that "it was the task of industrial society

to destroy all … that 'community' implies – self-sufficiency, mutual aid, morality in the market place, stubborn tradition, regulation by custom, organic knowledge instead of mechanistic science – had to be steadily and systematically disrupted and displaced." He goes on to identify the connection that is too often overlooked today, namely that "all of the practices that kept the individual from being a consumer had to be done away with so that the cogs and wheels of an unfettered machine called 'the economy' could operate without interference … " (1995, p. 38). In short, the industrial/consumer-oriented culture requires the form of individualism that is still celebrated by many educational reformers (including those who promote mentoring) who now argue that students should construct their own knowledge.

This linguistic tradition of reproducing the conceptual errors of the past can still be seen in how much of our thinking represents traditions as obstacles to progress and individual self-discovery.

However, when we consider the traditions of organic gardening, of craft skills and knowledge, of the creative arts, of local decision making about how to protect civil liberties and the viability of the environmental commons, we find the traditions that we re-enact and modify in daily life are not impediments to progress. The experientially-grounded nature of ecological intelligence does not require treating progress as in opposition to traditions; nor should a student's discovery of interests and development of talents be seen as being undermined by forms of intergenerational knowledge and skills that are the community-basis of mutual support. However and importantly, ecological intelligence does not privilege innovation and experimentation over traditions of community self-reliance and mutual support that have been tested over generations of living in ways that do not require exploiting the environment of other cultures.

We have to consider mentoring relationships without succumbing to the meaning of words that have been dictated by the ideology of so-called liberal/progressive thinking, which have given us a mixed legacy of social justice achievements and the industrial/consumer-dependent culture. If we do that we will find that traditions, intergenerational knowledge and skills, awareness of relationships and patterns of mutual support, the use of language that takes account of context and tacit understandings, and moments of dialogue – all of these qualities are integral to our students' pursuit of interests, questions and desire to achieve at a deeper level of accomplishment.

Above all, we need to continually think against the grain of today's formulaic thinking by keeping in mind that the western theorists who identified the analogs that now frame the meaning of such words as progress, individualism, freedom, emancipation, and so forth, were not aware of ecological limits. Their analogs reflected

> *… ecological intelligence does not privilege innovation and experimentation over traditions of community self-reliance and mutual support that have been tested over generations of living in ways that do not require exploiting the environment of other cultures.*

the "advanced" thinking of their era. However, they did not take account either of other cultural ways of knowing or the traditions of the cultural and environmental commons that their lives depended upon and took for granted. Like the Roman god Janus, their vocabulary enabled us to make important gains in the area of correcting social injustices and in establishing a framework for civil liberties, but now we need to revise this vocabulary in ways that are culturally and ecologically informed. These words can then take on the meanings that reinforce the exercise of ecological intelligence. This requires becoming more ethnographically informed about the differences between the cultural patterns that strengthen traditions of community mutual support and that do not further adversely impact the viability of natural systems.

Note

More in-depth discussions of how language reproduces the misconceptions of earlier thinkers and examples of an ecologically informed vocabulary, as well as in-depth treatments of ecological intelligence and the political economy of the cultural commons, are available in two online books: *Toward a Post-Industrial Consciousness* and *Educating for Ecological Intelligence*. Both may be accessed by going to www.cabowers.net/ or Googling C.A. Bowers.

References

Leopold, A. (1990). *A Sand County almanac*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Meadows, D. (1972). *The limits to growth*. New York: Signet.

Sale, K. (1995). *Rebels against the future: The Luddites and their war on the Industrial Revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Toward an Ecology of Caring: Teaching our Teachers

Patricia Isaac, Center for Graduate Programs

I n a series of phone interviews with Alan Mandell – three to date – we explored the concept of caring and its connection to mentoring at Empire State College – specifically in the Master of Arts in Teaching program (M.A.T.). This conversation came about as a result of the M.A.T. Caring Committee's efforts to chronicle how our M.A.T. students/teachers are caring, and the significance of this rather elusive term to our common work.

Without doubt, caring is hard to define, but whatever its specific definition, it moves us to be committed, give effort to, and to think beyond our own personal desires – to act selflessly for or on behalf of others. In effect, I have come to see how caring is mentoring, and as Empire State College faculty, we take to heart our mentoring role. For the M.A.T. program, our caring efforts also should model the way for our students who also are teachers; and for these teachers who, we hope, should model this caring for their own students. This is the essence of the ecology of caring.

Why caring?

The M.A.T. program is currently seeking accreditation through the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). The TEAC requires all teacher preparation and education programs to show evidence of preparing competent, qualified and *caring* educators. Here, for example, is TEAC's Quality Principle I: Evidence of Student Learning - 1.3: Caring and Teaching Skill:

> Above all, teachers are expected to act on their knowledge in a caring and professional manner that would lead to appropriate levels of achievement for their pupils. Caring is a particular kind of relationship between the teacher and the student that is defined by the teacher's unconditional acceptance of the student, the teacher's intention to address the student's educational

Patricia Isaac

needs, competence to meet those needs, and the student's recognition that the teacher cares. Although it recognizes that the available measures of caring are not as well developed as the measures of student learning. The TEAC requires evidence that the program's graduates are caring. (p. 12)

As co-chair of the M.A.T. Caring Committee, I readily accepted the challenge to further articulate the more intangible aspects of caring, fondly called the "gushy" stuff. I found this undertaking difficult, but extremely enjoyable. In reviewing our program, the committee saw our teachers caring in their classrooms. We found evidence of such caring in student writing assignments, through direct observations of their classroom teaching, and in their capstone project, the M.A.T. portfolio. But we've continued to clarify exactly what we were finding and observing.

I was introduced to Milton Mayeroff's *On Caring* (1971) during my first phone conversation with Alan. I gravitated to this book because of its simplicity and directness,

and because Mayeroff laid the groundwork for caring in such an appropriately self-reflective manner. In general, Mayeroff looks at caring as "giv[ing] comprehensive meaning and order to one's life … [it can] provide a fruitful way of thinking about the human condition … and may help us understand our own lives better" (p. 3).

Mayeroff defines caring as "helping the other grow" (p. 2), and it is through this lens that caring has a significant relationship with concepts that Mayeroff describes as "the major ingredients of caring"(p. 13): knowing, alternating rhythms, patience, honesty, trust, humility, hope, and courage. (pp 13-28) These concepts provide an especially meaningful way to further think about, search for, and confirm evidence of our own caring and the caring of our M.A.T. students.

Knowing – *One must understand the other's needs and respond properly to them. One should work to understand who the other is and his/her powers and limitations.* Just as we seek to know our students, our teachers must know their students, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they learn best. Signs of this quality can be found in their lesson plans, the types of materials they bring to class, and how well they understand and can teach in their content areas.

Alternating Rhythms – *We need to move back and forth between a narrower and wider framework. One must learn from the past, discern trends, long-term effects, and tendencies.* For our teachers, this aspect of caring is two-fold: they are not only learning from their own tendencies and checking and monitoring for what is and what is not working in their classroom; they also must take their cues from the education arena at-large. What has changed in educational research? What insights from this vast literature can help them in their teaching practice? What new learning can help them become more effective teachers?

Patience – *One should give time and thereby enable others to find themselves in their own time. Patience includes tolerance of a certain amount of confusion and floundering, thus acknowledging respect for the growth of the other.* The concept of patience is played out every day for some of our teachers in their high-need urban and rural classrooms. They are learning to be patient with exceptional students, students with significant behavioral problems, and at times, learning patience with the school community. Importantly too, they are learning to be patient with themselves in order to grow into highly competent teachers.

Honesty – *Being honest with oneself includes being open to and confronting one's own ideas, practices, assumptions and relationships. It is not about not doing something, but about "actively" engaging with oneself and others.* Our teachers face the challenge of honesty when first entering the M.A.T. program. Once in the classroom, there is nowhere to run. Teachers must confront their biases and limitations, and be determined to see, to question, and to grow. Ultimately, it will be their students who will suffer if they choose to ignore this call to honesty. This is the most critical lesson for a classroom teacher to learn.

Trust – *Caring involves trusting the other to grow in his/her own time and in his/her own way. Trust in the other to grow is not indiscriminate; it is grounded in actively promoting and safeguarding those conditions which warrant such trust.* Our teachers must provide a safe and positive classroom environment, which fosters growth and belonging. Having a well-managed and engaging classroom is one sign of an effective teacher. Our teachers must be fair and consistent in addressing problems in order to foster trust. They must also trust themselves and their decisions and not be hesitant to ask questions and seek assistance when needed. Isolation is not an option.

Humility – *Continuous learning about the other and actively acknowledging that there is always something more to learn is part of our expression of humility. Caring itself expresses a broader meaning of humility as overcoming the arrogance that exaggerates our own powers at the expense of the voices and powers of others.* Our teachers

must understand that they have great influence over their students, just as we have over *them*. They also must see that their perception about a student's achievement can create expansive growth or significant delays. If we aren't humble in the face of things we don't understand, we'll lose the most important opportunities we have to learn.

Hope – *There is hope that the other will grow through my caring. Hope is an expression of a present alive with possibilities; it rallies energies and activates our powers. Hope implies that there is or could be something worthy of commitment.* Our teachers tell many stories about their students' plights. They talk about their students' poverty, poor home life, despair about the future, and horrific mental health problems. At times, hope and a sympathetic ear are all *our* M.A.T. students have. In turn, they can help *their* students develop and articulate a vision for the future and try to instill the hope that it can be realized.

Courage – *Courage makes hope possible, is present as we, our students, and their students go into the unknown.* Our teachers came to our program hoping, as teachers, to improve the lives of children and young adults. Often, quite courageously, they have left behind the comforts of previous lives in order to teach. It is never certain if they will find or retain a teaching position. It takes courage to stand in front of your class for the first time and try to show confidence, and to learn the language and the ways of a new school culture. We need all the courage we can muster when we see that the "security of familiar landmarks is done" and that we "cannot anticipate fully who or what the other will become or [we] will become" (p. 27).

Conclusion

To some, caring may seem too simplistic and of little value – in effect, almost banal. But I believe that those who understand the wonderful, noble, and most challenging of tasks of public school teaching know that these qualities of caring are at the heart of what we do.

Noddings (1995) contends that "caring is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling that makes

people kind and likeable. Caring implies a continuing search for competence" (p. 675). Taking our cue from Noddings and Mayeroff, the accreditation process gives the M.A.T. program reason to pause and reflect on our prior accomplishments and on the need for further questioning and refinements. With "caring," we have another lens through which to view ourselves and our students – our fellow teachers. There is power and courage in such a self-reflective process.

A Personal Note

Caring took me on a personal journey back home to Arizona not more than a few months ago. I went back to find what I felt I was desperately hungering for and missing: spiritual love and welcoming arms. I went back to connect to the people who helped to shape me, who nurtured me and assured me that love and caring transcends time and space. I went back to the reservation to see the many individuals who are my native family. I instantly felt at home because we see the world in the same way. I was told I came back home to restore harmony and balance in my life. My brother blessed me in a ceremony as a way to help me put my feet back on the right road, with all of the good intentions that animate my journey. He said, "You know the way home and someday you will come back for good. For now you do the work you were sent to do and stay true to the right road." Caring is at the heart of it.

References

Mayeroff, M. (1971). *On caring*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Noddings, N. (1995). Teaching themes of care. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 76(9), 675-679.

Teacher Education Accreditation Council: Guide to Accreditation. (2005). Washington, DC: Teacher Accreditation Education Council.

This essay is dedicated to the Master of Arts in Teaching Class of 2009 Central New York Center graduates, who inspired this writing.

An Ecological Perspective on Blended Learning: A Literature Review

Hope Adams, Center for Learning and Technology

Introduction

The key promise of blended learning is its ability to enhance learning opportunities and experiences. Thus, for example, the power to access informational materials on demand – anytime and anywhere – is a great advantage for students whose learning has been limited to a synchronous face-to-face model (Bourne, McMaster, Rieger & Campbell, 1997). Internet technology also allows online instructional methods to be integrated into educational curricula worldwide (Stepp, 2002). Szabo's study (1999) argues that it is possible to develop a flexible blended learning environment on the firm foundations of curriculum design.

Some researchers have provided a historical overview of blended learning education (Ostrow & DiMaria-Ghalili, 2005), while others have examined the effects of Web-based teaching methods on student learning (Jang, Hwang, Park, Kim & Kim, 2005). Educational research has offered advice and direction on how best to integrate technology into traditional education (Yu & Tsao, 2003). Whatever the focus, the dominant research paradigm has separated mind from matter, or separated learners from environment (Frielick, 2004). More recently, Zhao & Frank (2003) promoted the examination of technology integration from an ecological perspective. The ecology metaphor (Petrides & Guiney, 2002) is used here to emphasize that understanding a complex blended learning environment requires a framework that is active, interdependent and adaptive as a single ecosystem (Stevenson, Rollins-Searcy & Taylor, 2004). As Frielick put it: "The emerging ecological paradigm proposes a unified view of mind, matter and life" (p. 40). Indeed, Anderson and Mohr (2003) suggested that the ecological perspective

Hope Adams

could meet the need for a comprehensive conceptual framework to guide research and assessment. Such a perspective posits that individual learning occurs within a set of nested contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992, 1996), which fit together somewhat like the levels in a virtual classroom ecosystem (Banning, 2001). Such information needs to be synthesized into a total system picture in order to gain a fuller understanding of learners and their attitudes.

As part of my dissertation work, I developed a case study which explored how such an ecological perspective could be used to closely examine the factors that provide avenues for blended learning, the approaches that can support blended learning, issues of assessment in an online environment, and ways to involve mentors in the overall planning process. Throughout, I was learning about institutional change and about an ecological perspective. My focus here is on the latter.

Review of the Literature

An ecological approach has been employed in a number of contexts: using data to improve education as knowledge ecosystem (Pór, 2001); analyzing students' achievement in an urban ecosystem (Stevenson, Rollins-Searcy and Taylor, 2004); examining students' learning environment in a school ecology (Lui, 2002); and making sense of leadership issues within an organizational ecology (Honig, 2004). All of these approaches try to demonstrate that the ecological framework extends the traditional concepts of "educational improvement" to consider a holistic perspective that includes a wide variety of interconnected fields (Petrides & Guiney, 2002). The very structure of this literature review borrows from an ecological framework proposed by Shachaf & Hara (2002). This framework consists of three components: external environment, internal environment and boundaries. It suggests that internal and external environments influence blended learning through a dynamic zone of academic development (Frielick, 2004).

The Ecosystem of the Blended Learning Environment

The ecosystem framework was developed in the field of social ecology. Social ecology describes a host of perspectives associated with many academic disciplines and theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1996). The ecosystem approach describes learning in a blended learning environment consisting of levels within the systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992, 1996). Such "nested contexts" can be visualized this way:
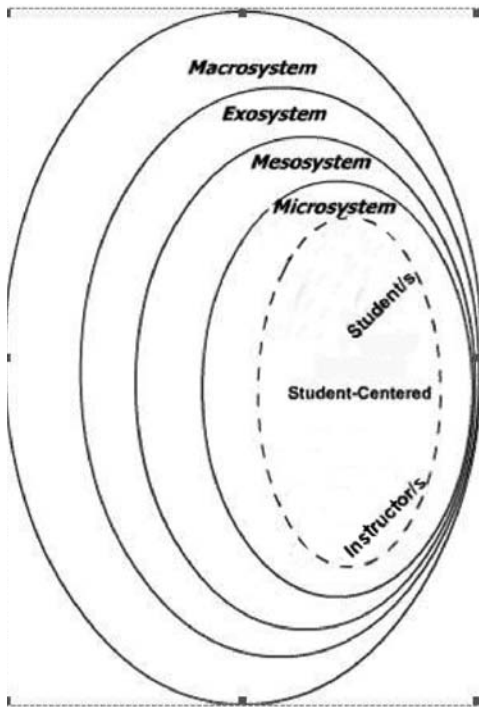
Figure 1. Nested Contexts

The innermost level, the *microsystem,* attends to the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the immediate environment (Montero & Stokols, 2003). It examines individual learner's or mentor's selected demographic characteristics, such as learner's age, gender, school status and working statues. Sammons (1999), for example, identified personal factors as affecting the learners' attitudinal behavior, specifically the attitude towards blended education (Mathur, Stanton & Reid, 2005). Gender is included in this system because it is thought to be a means of interpreting constructed learning roles (Sammon, 1999).

Age is another possible factor at this level, because it is important to find whether attitude differences exist within age categories. Thus, for example, age groups process computer information differently. Those who have limited computer experience may have a steeper learning curve with blended learning objectives and activities (Passig, 2001).

Similarly, an individual's physical and psychological capabilities may be associated with their roles and relationships. It has been suggested that health characteristics make some exceptional learners withdraw from environments that demand physical activities (Johnson & Hegarty, 2003). Individuals with various health challenges and who display difficulty may disengage from learning with technology. For example, the ability to accurately view the color renditions on a computer monitor may at times impede the colorblind learner (Douglas, 2001).

The *mesosystem* refers to the reciprocal relationship between learners and their immediate two or more *microsystem* learning environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1996, Montero & Stokols, 2003; Shachaf & Hara, 2002). Within the *mesosystem,* diverse settings are related in a blended learning environment through the Internet. It is believed that learners' academic development does not occur in isolation (Frielick, 2004; Driscoll, 1994). Learners communicate using language and other cognitive tools. Vygotsky (as cited in Driscoll, 1994) promoted the idea that there are areas between actual development levels and potential development levels. At the actual development level, the learner solves problems independently by using previous knowledge, while at the potential development level, the problem-solving processes are guided by a mentor or in collaboration with more capable peers (Frielick, 2004).

This so-called "zone of proximal development" as one component of an ecological approach to blended learning refers to multiple zones of academic development (Frielick, 2004). In Frielick's ecological model of teaching and learning, the inner or inter/intro-personal zone represents the communication relationships between students, subject matter and mentors. Attention here is paid to the learners' physical home, travel time to college, access to library and other resources, and family.

The *exosystem* refers to the dynamic interrelationships between the college and informal settings such as a student's home or office (Montero & Stokols, 2003; Shachaf & Hara, 2002; Zhao & Frank, 2002). In addition, some unexpected events are beyond the control of learners as a result of institutional decisions. Often student attitudes about learning reflect their current interests and perceptions based on their own prior experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1996). Thus, results of any assessment should include its ecological characteristics – such as an individual's attitude (Anderson & Mohr, 2003). The identified operational factors at the exosystem level would include the online discussion community, attitudes toward blended learning, and more broadly, the cultural context in which a student is learning and living.

The last outermost context, *macrosystem,* encompasses the first several contexts (exo, meso and micro systems) (Bronfenbrenner, 1996; Shachaf & Hara, 2002), and considers factors in the general environment in an organization as governed by global, political, cultural, human resource and symbolic environments (Shein, 2004). Leadership practices deal with blended learning tasks at various dimensions (Kouse & Postner, 1992; Boltman & Deal, 1992; Starratt, 2005) and shape new organizational structures to transform the institutional culture, and in turn to improve student achievement (Spillane, 2005). Thus, one can see that to achieve maximum results, leaders cannot single-handedly lead educational institutions; instead, they need to promote distributed leadership, or shared leadership, to build empowered support systems (Bolman & Deal, 1997) within a much larger college ecosystem.

Finally, leadership practices, blended learning policies and decisions, and support from college administrators form part of the macro level. Figure 2 shows the ecological model with identified factors at each level.
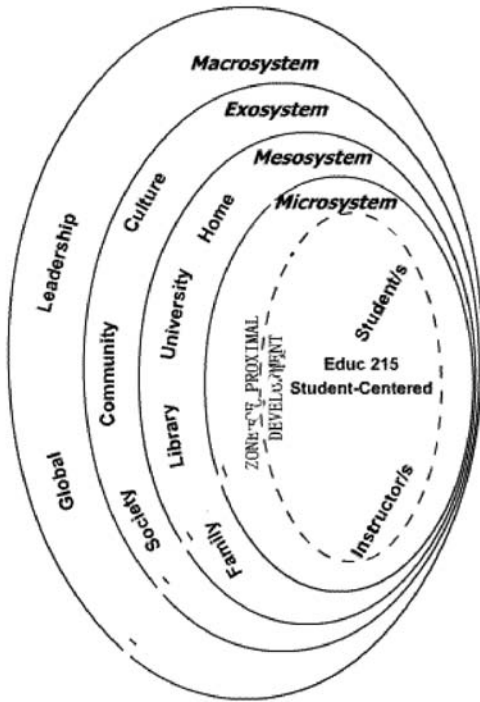
Figure 2. Ecological Blended Learning Model

Student Centered Blended Learning as a Boundary

Over the last decade, student-centered learning has received much attention in educational research literature and college mission statements (Frielick, 2004). This particular domain focuses on personal and interpersonal relationships and analyzes attitudes that are affected by the educational system as a whole. The notion behind this is that students learn best if they are placed at the center of the learning experience and required to construct their own knowledge through conversation, exploration and reflection (Frielick, 2004).

According to Hannafin (2004), student-centered approaches encourage interactive behaviors that provide learners with opportunities to express their individual interests and needs. Hannafin (1997) believed that a virtual classroom provides an efficient means for learning. In a student-centered learning environment,

it is necessary to access information; yet, access alone is not a singularly sufficient condition for effective learning (Hannafin, 1997). For *real* blended learning, the students have to become both a navigator and driver in the artificial superhighway on route to exploring and manipulating knowledge through dynamic ecological interaction (Banning, 2001, Zhao & Frank, 2003).

The model would look like this: (see Figure 3)

Within such a learner-centered perspective, McCombs (2003) argued that the process of assessing the roles of educational technology in the teaching and learning process are changing. There is an increased trend toward examining learning from a more holistic and integrative perspective (McCombs, 2003) within the ecosystem framework. In such a fast-changing world, the focus of learner-centered practices need to be balanced with emphases on individual learners and their ecological needs, which address the personal and environmental domain of educational ecosystems (McCombs, 2003).

In the case of learner-centered online learning instruction, the ecosystem perspective suggests that instructional designers look at the immediate physical, social, political and economic environments to gain an understanding of what the learners' attitudes are toward the college's "modern" (e.g., online, at blended) approach to learning. A basic postulate is that, even when provided with blended learning resources, ecosystem factors can affect the decisions a learner makes about how to survive in the Web-based environment.

Figure 3. From an Instructor-to Learner-Centered Model
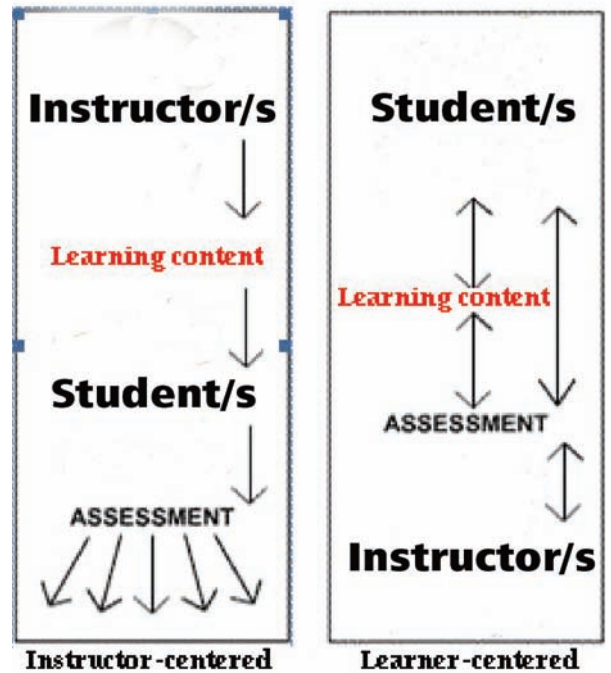
Adapted from Frielick, 2004, p. 130

Conclusions

A primary goal of this essay has been to introduce the literature on blended learning programs, particularly as it relates to the articulation of an ecological perspective. There is an argument here. It is that in setting up or examining the outcomes of any blended learning experience (for example, comparing it to learning in a classroom environment) an ecosystem analysis should be utilized to understand, support and evaluate the success of the project. It is only by remaining attentive to such a holistic view that researchers can locate and more carefully examine the true web of factors that influence a student's learning.

References

The following list of references is intended to provide a first look at the wide range of material that either directly focuses on or complements the ecological perspective. It is necessarily meant to be suggestive of what is now a significant body of scholarly work in this area.

Anderson, J.A., and Mohr, W.K. (2003). A developmental ecological perspective in systems of care for children with emotional disturbances and their families. *Education and Treatment of Children, 26*(1), 52-74.

Banning, J. (2001). *Ecology in the lecture hall*. Advocate Online. Retrieved March 24, 2005, from http://www2.nea.org/he/advo01/advo0103/front.html

Bolman, L.G., and Deal, T.E. (1997). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass.

Bourne, J.R., McMaster, E. Rieger, J. and Campbell, O. (1997). Paradigms for on-line learning: A case study in the design and implementation of an asynchronous learning networks (ALN) course. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 1*(2), 38-56.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1996). *State of Americans: this generation and the next*. New York: The Free Press.

Frielick, S. (2004). *The zone of academic development: An ecological approach to learning and teaching in higher education*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. College of the Witwatersrand, Hohannesbury.

Hannafin, R.D. (2004). Achievement differences in structured versus unstructured instructional geometry programs. *Educational Technology Research and Development 52,*(1),19-32.

Hannafin, M,J., Hill, J.R., and Land. S.M. (1997). Student-centered learning and interactive multimedia: Status, issues, and implication. *Contemporary Education, 68*, 94-99.

Honig, M.I. (2004). The new middle management: Intermediary organizations in education policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26*(1),65-87.

Jang, K.S., Hwang, S.Y., Park, S.J., Kim, Y.M. and Kim, M.J. (2005). Effects of a Web-based teaching method on undergraduate nursing students' learning of electrocardiography. *Journal of Nursing Education, 44*(1), 35-39.

Johnson, R., and Hegarty, J.R. (2003). Web sites as educational motivators for adults with learning disability. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 34*(4), 479-486.

Kouze, J.M. and Posner, B. (2003). *The five practices of exemplary leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Liu, P. (2002). School ecology and the larding of young children. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 38*(3), 119-123.

McCombs, B.L. (2003). *Assessing the role of educational technology in the teaching and learning process: A learner-centered perspective*. White paper presented at The Secretary's Conference on Educational Technology-2000.

McCombs, B.L. (2003). *The learner-centered framework on teaching and learning as a foundation for electronically networked communities and cultures*. Retrieved Feb. 5, 2005, from http://www.pt3.org/VQ/html/mccombs.html

Montero, M., and Stokols, D. (2003). Psychology and the Internet: A social ecological analysis. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior, 6*(1), 59-72.

Ostrow, L., and DiMaria-Ghalii, R.A. (2005). Blended education for graduate nursing: One state school's experience. *Journal of Nursing Education, 44*(1), 5-10.

Passig, D. (2001). The interaction between gender, age, and multimedia interface design. *Education and Information Technologies, 6*(4), 241-250.

Petrides, L.A., Guiney, S.Z. (2002). Knowledge management for school leaders: An ecological framework for thinking schools. *Teacher College Record, 104*(8), 1702-1717. Retrieved Feb. 4, 2005, from http://web27.epnet.com/externalFrameHeader.asp

Pór, G. (2001). The knowledge ecology. *BizEd*, 30-33.

Sammon, D. (1999). Correlations between teacher characteristics and teacher attitudes toward multimedia development, among mentors utilizing the multimedia authoring program, Hyperstudio. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Idaho State College, Idaho.

Schein, E.H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Shachaf, P. (2002). Ecological approach to virtual team effectiveness. Retrieved March 22, 2005, from http:www.slis.Indiana.edu/CSI/WP/WP02-08B.html

Spillane, J.P. Distributed Leadership. *The Educational Forum, 69*(2), 143-149.

Starratt, R.J. (2005). Responsible Leadership. *The Educational Forum, 69*(2), 124-133.

Stepp, J. (2002). Student perceptions on language learning in a technological environment: Implications for the new millennium. *Language, Learning and Technology, 6*(1), 165-175.

Stevenson, J.M., Rollins-Searcy, R. and Taylor, V. (2004). Reading and mathematics alliance-building for urban precollegiate and postsecondary ecosystems. *Read Improvement, 41*(2), 113-121.

Szabo, M., and Kanuka, H. (1999). Effects of violating screen design principles of balance, unity, and focus on recall learning, study time, and completion rates. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia, 8*(1), 23-42.

Yu, C., and Tsao, C. (2003). Web teaching, design, security, and legal issues. *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal, 45*(3), 191-203.

Confessions of a Paper Fetishist: Critique, Diversity and Sustainability

Kate Forbes, Central New York Center

One of the interesting things about being at an institution that is sparsely populated with ecologists (unlike the land-grant institutions of my upbringing) is that colleagues are consistently seeking my input on "green" ideas. This is reasonable, given that sustainability and environmentalism are culturally synonymous with ecology. Still, I always feel a bit sheepish that I, an ecologist, have relatively little to contribute to the discussion. My academic training to date has focused on abstractions, on models, on the hypothetical co-existence of species, on the role of variation in shaping the whole. Ecologists, while unable to agree upon what it is that they do[1] (say, examining the abundance and diversity of organisms)[2] do seem reasonably unified in their tendency to not directly address issues of sustainability.

Sustainability is an inherently interdisciplinary concept. Most definitions of the term (and there are many) focus on how a practice relates to three criteria.[3] Sustainable practices must not degrade the environment; that is, we should be able to conduct them indefinitely, despite the finite resources that are available to humans at any given time. There's a degree of practicality to sustainability; if practices aren't economically feasible, they're also not sustainable. A practice that requires continuous economic inputs may not be in one's long-term interest, particularly if those running the show are hoping to turn a profit. Lastly, sustainable endeavors promote social justice (or at the very worst, do not create further injustice).[4] It's considered uncouth to claim sustainability by virtue of efficiently hoarding communal resources.

Only one of the three criteria above is tied to the science of ecology. Worse yet, the environmental criterion is, in my biased opinion, the most straightforward. There are rules to making money (having money in the first place and disobeying other rules may be a good start), but these are more guidelines than anything; lots of intelligent people have failed spectacularly at obtaining economic sustainability. Sadly, the path to social justice is a question for the ages. Humans have a spotty record of sharing economic and natural resources, or generally refraining from conflict for extended periods of time, much less refraining from oppressive practices. In this context, the science of not damaging the environment seems straight-forward. Dumping poison into rivers leads to poisoned rivers. Cutting down a forest destroys the habitat of forest-dwelling animals. Granted, there's room for nuance and non-linearity in this discussion (the question of just how much poison we can dump into a river before various bad things happens comes to mind). However, the first principles of ecology as applied to environmentalism and sustainability seem fairly basic.[5]

As I've laid out above, we've already got two-and-a-half hurdles to jump over if we're going to "be sustainable," so how do we accomplish this? Fixing society is an overwhelming task. There are too many problems at too many levels. It's easy to focus on seemingly distant issues, rather than personal issues. *Someone* is poisoning my drinking water. It's tempting to start using the passive voice and just go home; sulfur oxides are being released into the atmosphere. How unfortunate.

At this point, I should admit that I have a problem. I have an unhealthy attachment to paper. I find it aesthetically pleasing. A clean, crisp sheet of paper holds endless possibilities. Paper also is an essential tool for academics. Thanks to technology, these days writing paper is a fairly low-brow product, readily obtainable by the masses. Still, it is (figuratively and literally) the currency of the academic realm. Unlike pixels, words on paper seem real to me. There's something unseemly about ideas locked inside my computer monitor, crossword puzzles not folded, papers unsketched upon.

You've probably realized by now that my attachment to paper isn't particularly rational. To give you an idea of the extent of my sickness, I enjoy the smell of distant paper mills. Growing up in Minnesota, and having spent extensive time in Wisconsin and Finland, the thick, acrid, yet not entirely unearthly smell makes me feel at home. Paper mills smell like vacationland, like "up North" (although employees of Georgia Pacific may disagree with me on this one). I'm also susceptible to completing the disingenuous emotional connections that people are prone to making to natural resource extraction. Paper's a part of my heritage! My grandfather grew up a logger in the Pacific Northwest (never mind that most of what he cut down was far too valuable to be wasted on paper, let alone that he left the logging industry the first chance he had, resenting the tremendous human and environmental costs). Other relatives grew up in the logging towns of Northern Wisconsin (having visited the area recently, it would appear that they were

Kate Forbes

fortunate to have retired and/or moved by the time the forests somehow disappeared).

I am a realist, however, and there are very good reasons for saying that I love the smell of *distant* paper mills. On the one occasion that I found myself far too close to a massive Stora-Enso facility in Ostrobothnia, I recall making a hasty retreat, nauseous, and mortified to witness children playing in their yards across from the plant's gates. It's best not to live next to a paper mill, nor downwind or downstream from one. It takes massive amounts of chemicals to turn pulp into paper – including bleaches and other chloride compounds that give new paper its smooth feel and bright shine. Sulfur oxides are released into the atmosphere. The massive machines inside paper plants (which a fellow graduate student in Wisconsin confided in me aren't terribly fun to operate) require a lot of industrial lubricants. Carbonless copy paper once contained PCBs, too – it is not a coincidence that the Fox River, in the heart of Wisconsin's paper country, is notable for hosting more than its fair share of the toxins.[6]

The imperative to use less paper should be obvious to anyone else who has smelled a paper mill. Still, people are stubborn. People keep insisting on using paper. *I* keep insisting on using paper. Altering established behavior requires an external nudge, if not an outright leap of faith. I'm not used to getting ideas electronically. Granted, I read and occasionally participate in the blogosphere, but "new media" are new – they aren't "real" (which may be one of the biggest things they've got going for themselves). I'm in the habit of printing out academic ideas; properly reviewing manuscripts involves ink and sketching.

I brought my print-first-think-later perspective to my work with the Center for Distance Learning. I didn't like the challenge of reading upright words. Words should be flat. Above all else, I knew that words should never, ever, scroll. This paradigm meant that I needed to print out every assignment I received prior to marking it up with pen and ink, and subsequently rewriting these comments electronically. This process killed trees and poisoned waterways, which was unfortunate. That wasn't the real killer though: it readily became apparent

that doing my job twice over was horribly unproductive. A few assignments into the term, I resolved that harnessing the wisdom of over a dozen years in academia, I would begin to grade electronic assignments electronically.

Unsurprisingly, my foray into electronic grading was a resounding success. Perhaps this is the scale at which real environmental progress occurs. While it may not be productive to try to overhaul all of one's habits at once, this "try it, you'll like it" version of sustainable living has the promise to deliver real change to real behaviors. As citizens and professionals interested in promoting sustainability, picking our battles may prove key to our success. Moreover, "saving the Earth" may not be the sole motivation behind individuals' changing habits.

Academics are strangely positioned when it comes to changing society. On the one hand, our careers are based upon critique. We seek to challenge our students' assumptions. On the other, as celebrated, learned individuals, we are prone to taking our own assumptions for granted. As much as any other group, we engage in a constant process of critique. However, when it comes to changing the habits of others, we need to ask ourselves when (and if) our culture of critique is productive.

Having spent ample time in queer and feminist circles, I've witnessed critique backfire on a daily basis. Countless times I've seen strangers and colleagues judge other peoples' lifestyles against arbitrary standards. Who is "really" queer? Who is "really" a feminist? Who is a tool of the patriarchy? I find these sorts of questions tiresome and offensive. It's clear to me that they're premised on the false assumption that all people share the same values. Either a failure to understand diversity or a hostile rejection of it in favor of one's own superiority likely lies behind such shaming.

The problem this discussion raises for discourse on sustainability is that when it comes to the environment clearly "we"[7] are right and "they" are wrong. It is imperative that all people live sustainably. Anything else would be, well, unsustainable. However, "being right" isn't enough to carry the day, particularly when faced with other people

with different views that also are "right." The danger, I fear, with critiquing each other's lifestyles is that it may lead those on the receiving end to run in the other direction.

As much as "we" pride ourselves in being part of the solution, we need to resist smugness. Showing off our priorities with appropriately sustainable lifestyle accessories may raise awareness of green living, but it also may reinforce other people's sense of otherness. Ultimately, we need to use diversity as the backbone of a movement towards sustainability. Just as different people have different personalities, different living situations and different priorities, there are multiple routes to sustainability. Rather than convincing people of the need to "do the right thing" (as defined by "us"), we should allow for the reality that different people have different motivations. We also should look to address the diverse limitations to sustainable living that people face. Our aim should be to listen and cooperate, rather than to compete and judge.

> *How do we critique without critiquing?*

How do we critique without critiquing? In my mind, this is where science pays the biggest dividends. Yes, there is room for research (i.e., how much poison is too much? What do we do if we've crossed that threshold?). However, I think that society greatly underestimates science's ability to bound discussion. Science is merely logic applied; there's a limit to what any scientist is investigating at any one time, and half the trick of science is bounding and defining just exactly what that is. An ecosystem ecologist spends much of his or her days drawing boundaries around ecosystems and measuring inputs and outputs within these systems. In the applied field of industrial ecology, practitioners study the consequences

of specific products and processes. What are the qualitative results of our inputs and outputs, and how might we redesign systems to make things more balanced?

A scientific approach to discourse on sustainability yields two main benefits. The obvious advantage is that a quantitative approach yields quantitative results. Rather than pitting "good" against "bad" and conflating "bad" with "cataclysmic," we can collect information that will help us set priorities. For example, we know that heavier airplanes use more fuel, but how does the ecological cost of heavy-set travelers compare to the costs of air travel in general, inefficient aircraft engines, inadequate mass transit, or pineapples on Long Island? A second benefit of taking a scientific approach is that we can define which personal choices, priorities and realities are up for debate, and which are off the table. Should we really be debating the merits of fat people on airplanes?[8] In my opinion, such a debate is beyond the pale; I'm simply not willing to put every person's every attribute up for debate. The where and why of where to draw the line is still problematic, but not nearly so much so as the absence of a line altogether.

People all have different paths to sustainability. I've found change one step at a time. Though it wasn't made for the right reasons, my shift away from paper has the same impact as a more righteously driven choice. Focusing on diversity in sustainability has already begun to pay dividends. For example, acknowledging and challenging the reality of the underclass has led to programs that allow some recipients to use public assistance to purchase locally grown farmers' market produce.[9] Thanks to these programs, the poor can get affordable, nutritious food, local growers can expand their markets, and our planet can see the benefits of reduced fossil fuel use and otherwise sustainable agriculture. In some cases, everyone can win, whatever their motivation.

Notes

[1] Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, *Defining Ecology,* http://www.ecostudies.org/definition_ecology.html.

[2] H.G. Andrawartha and L.C. Birch, *The Distribution and Abundance of Animals* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1954).

[3] Andrew W. Savitz, *The Triple Bottom Line* (Jossey-Bass, Somerset, NJ, 2006).

[4] I would argue that failure to adequately promote social justice constitutes an injustice in-and-of itself, but I'm feeling charitable and that's a different essay.

[5] At least one scholar has gone on record questioning whether science is really the biggest roadblock to sustainability: Julian Agyeman, *Sustainable Communities and the Challenge of Social Justice,* (New York University Press, New York, 2005), 40-41.

[6] Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, *PCB History – Fox River,* http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/FoxRiver/pcbhistory.html.

[7] I have no idea who this refers to either, although presumably it's people interested in creating a more sustainable society.

[8] Edwards and Roberts recently calculated the energy costs of obesity, conveniently ignorant of my two suggestions about the responsible use of science and critique: Phil Edwards and Ian Roberts, "Population Adiposity and Climate Change," *International Journal of Epidemiology* (Advanced Access Published on April 19, 2009).

[9] United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, *Farmers Market Nutrition Programs,* http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP/FMNPfaqs.htm (accessed May 27, 2009).

Three Poems

Barbara Tramonte, Center for Graduate Programs

My Brother's House
(for Charles)

I am in my brother's house
and he's not here.
In a casual conversation
by phone
I ask,
How do I get on the Internet?

We warble about the WEP key,
Verizon, broadband, a password.
When he has exhausted his
knowledge of what I might do
he says, "Oh, and lieutenant, use
the white sulfur instead of the explosives."
Then adds,
that's what they used to say in Vietnam
when they wanted the village to burn faster
bigger, with more imagination.

One Nation

In America
the weather forecasts
nationalism.

It will snow in Pennsylvania
because a front in Missouri
whistles cold air
through the plains
causing high pressure systems
to pelt hail on New York City
shooting ice along the seaboard
so that dear Mrs. Biddenhauser
on the rocky coast of Maine
can't get down her driveway
to retrieve her mail.

Someone

Someone in a poor neighborhood
Someone with dreams
Someone whose dreams are
doused, damp where they need to be
dry and crackling,
Someone whose desires
are strong, fuerte,
and imagined only
by them.

Someone
Someone who knows that dreams
don't care about nutrition
and dreams screech past allergies.
dreams sneeze at psychological trauma
and stick their tongues out
at the Buddha.
Dreams buy chi in dangerous alleys.

I don't care about what you had for breakfast
or whether you exercised after it
I don't care if you're wheat free, gluten free, sugar free.
I want to know if you are free
free to undress to the bone
when your name is called.

Sustainability and the Need for Wisdom

Lorraine Lander, Genesee Valley Center

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). Many people associate the term with problems related to climate and the natural environment, but the concept of sustainability can be applied to many other situations beyond these, including a more general idea that we should plan and make decisions so that our selves, our processes and our organizations can continue to function over time and without limiting others. If this type of planning and decision making sounds complex and difficult to carry out, then wisdom may be one answer.

This essay will consider sustainability and discuss the complexities of understandings necessary for decision making related to sustainability. Further, wisdom will be explored as one answer to understanding complex topics that could aid us in making more sustainable decisions. Last, I will suggest some ways that we, as educators, can promote wisdom and understanding of sustainability.

Sustainability and Critical Thought

The concept of sustainability can be applied to a variety of decision-making situations, for example, in terms of planning, where someone making a decision is asked to consider the future consequences of the path they are choosing. When this does not happen, undesirable conditions may eventually result. For example, CEOs of large corporations have been criticized for short-sighted decision making, observers hypothesizing that this may, in part, be due to the relatively short length of average employment they have with each organization they represent. Planning without considering the long range consequences of decisions is likely not sustainable thinking.

Sustainability also can be considered in terms of solving problems. In this regard, someone solving a problem can consider not only whether solutions will solve the problem, but also the consequences of the solution for all parties who may be affected over time. Sustainability also can be considered in terms of collaboration. Efforts to create long term peace and harmony between disparate groups around the world can be examined for their sustainability.

Lorraine Lander

In fact, while many people might consider problems of the environment to be limited to nature and climate, the United Nations Environment Program (2004) in a report on motivation for sustainability takes a broad view of "environment" and includes a variety of current world problems and issues in their discussion of sustainability, including:

- Energy – Production, Consumption and Climate Change

- Waste – Reduction, Recycling, Disposal

- Transportation

- Pollution – Air, Soil, Water

- Resources Consumption

- Social Exclusion – Disadvantage and poverty, Third World inequities

- Health and Safety

- Pesticides and Organic Foodstuffs

- Labor Security

- Human Rights

- Business Ethics

The idea of using sustainability as a lens for thinking critically about a topic has become so useful that a new discipline is emerging: "Sustainability Science" is a new academic field that takes an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to work toward the multiple goals of supporting human needs, maintaining the environment, and moving toward sustainable consumption patterns. It differs from many fields in that rather than starting with rational interest in a phenomenon, it starts with a problem and then involves members of various disciplines working toward a solution. The field attempts to take complex issues and through knowledge structuring and data collection methods work more effectively with the issues and systems involved. Harvard University's Sustainability Science Program at their Center for International Development is one leader in this field.

Moving toward solutions to any of the problems listed above involves working through complexities and may require understanding of systems about which we know less than we would like to know. Computer models are now commonly used to understand climate change, for example, but there is disagreement over their utility and effectiveness. How can we repair, restore, or even halt the damage being done to various parts of these complex systems when we do not fully understand them? Many people likely turn away from

environmental and social problems because they seem too complex and insurmountable and we may fear doing more harm than good.

Can Science Help?

Thinking in terms of complex systems is a challenge and may particularly challenge many fields of science. Fritjof Capra has written extensively on systems thinking and the environment and particularly in his book, *The Hidden Connections* (2002), proposes a theory of living systems based in part on organismic biology, Gestalt psychology, general systems theory and complexity theory. Capra proposes that systems thinking is difficult because it is nonlinear (networks are the typical organizational scheme), and yet much of our scientific thinking is based on linear thinking such as considerations of cause and effect. He further proposes that systems thinking is difficult for us because we tend to focus on the components and apply value to membership, when the true value of systems is in their interactions and in their very complexity.

Shifts in our perceptions may be necessary for understandings of living systems, according to Capra, so that we come to see the whole rather than the parts, and we come to value relationships, rather than objects. We need to see the importance of context over form or position, so we can accept that a system is only understood when considered in the context in which it operates. He further proposes that we must come to value quality over quantity because both relationships and contexts cannot be measured in quantitative terms. We must move from a focus on structure to a focus on process since systems develop and evolve. And, we must come to search for patterns, rather than contents, since examinations that focus only on content are too static for the dynamic nature of systems.

One result of this struggle to understand the complexities of real world problems has led to the strategy of mimicking nature's solutions to complex problems. Janine Benyus's *Biomimicry* explores a variety of examples where solutions from nature are being borrowed to solve human problems. In fact, this approach of using

nature's solutions has led to the creation of a database (Biomimicry Institute, 2008) that is searchable by function and structure, to allow for consideration of how nature solves a problem, as an inspiration to solve human problems. So, we may be able to use the complexity or the "wisdom" of nature's solutions to create our own solutions.

David Orr, a pioneer in the environmental field in terms of architecture and green building, believes that systems thinking is necessary to understand the problems of the environment and sustainability, yet systems thinking and pattern identification are difficult (2005). He joins many who are concerned that science alone cannot solve our problems – that something is missing. Orr proposes that our foremost problems are more related to "problems of heart and empathy, and only secondarily problems of intellect" (p. 105).

Donella Meadows (2005) writes of "dancing with systems" as a metaphor for working with systems thinking and the sustainability movement. She cautions us about being overly optimistic that systems thinking and computers can ever fully lead to understanding the complexity of our environment. She writes that "self-organizing, nonlinear feedback systems are unpredictable" and "uncontrollable," although they are understandable in general ways (p. 194). Reductionist scientific thinking is unlikely to lead to a complete understanding of our world, or help us solve our current problems if we do not know how to optimize or what to optimize (p. 195).

Meadows further suggests that living successfully in a world of systems requires

> *... we must come to search for patterns, rather than contents, since examinations that focus only on content are too static for the dynamic nature of systems.*

more than calculations and measurements; it requires humanity – or what Meadows refers to as "systems wisdom" (p. 195). She suggests that we start with studying the rhythms of the system to understand the forces that support and maintain it. We need to engage in continual learning and pay attention to what is important (and not just quantifiable), and add an ethical component so that we are "going for the good of the whole" (p. 202). She suggests that rather than fearing complexity, that we celebrate it for its intricacies, rhythms, patterns and strengths.

Wisdom and the Complexities of Systems

How can we manage the many aspects and variables of complex systems? How can we balance science with ethics and work toward the "common good"? Wisdom may hold some answers to help us with the complexity of systems thinking and the ethical concern necessary for solving world problems, particularly those of sustainability and the various environments in which we live, since wisdom has been associated with both complex decision making and ethics.

What is wisdom?

Although wisdom has been of interest to people for thousands of years and there is much history behind our understandings, it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider all those perspectives. For a broader review of wisdom, see Carol Bassett's chapter in *The Handbook of Adult Development and Learning* (2006) on the topic. Here, I will focus on modern understandings, particularly from the psychological perspective. Dictionary definitions of wisdom include reference to "accumulated learning" and "knowledge," although "judgment" and "positive societal benefits" are also referred to (Merriam-Webster, 1991). In fact, knowledge of various kinds underlies most conceptions of wisdom, although knowledge alone is insufficient.

There are two generally accepted ways of conceptualizing wisdom: implicit theories and explicit theories. Implicit theories of wisdom are concerned with ways that wisdom has come to be understood and recognized in the everyday world. Clayton

(1975) conducted one of the first modern psychological examinations of wisdom. She found three aspects in common understanding including affective aspects such as empathy and compassion, reflective aspects such as intuition and introspection, and cognitive aspects such as experience and intelligence.

Robert Sternberg (1985) also investigated implicit theories of wisdom and wise behaviors. His findings identified six qualities, including reasoning, knowledge/ understanding, ability to learn from ideas/ environment, judgment, effective use of information, and effective perception or discernment.

Paul Baltes (1993) examined the topic of wisdom and found that it is concerned with important and difficult matters of life, and involves special or superior knowledge. Wisdom appears to reflect knowledge with special scope, depth and balance applicable to life situations; it is well-intentioned and difficult to achieve, but easy to recognize.

Explicit theories of wisdom attempt to focus more on the behavioral expression of so-called "wise thinking." In terms of modern theories of cognitive development, wisdom has been associated with moving beyond Piaget's formal operational period (1932) to a next stage, commonly considered postformal operations (Riegel, 1973; Sinnott, 1998). Postformal operational thinking typically involves reflective thinking that considers both context and multiple perspectives (Kitchener and Brenner, 1990). These multiple perspectives include motivational and life experiential perspectives (Pascual-Leone, 1990).

Sternberg's balance theory of wisdom (1998) proposes that wisdom balances interest and responses to environmental context with achievement of a common good. Tacit knowledge and practical intelligence are used to balance multiple interests (personal and other) to achieve positive good.

Baltes also proposes a theory of wisdom, the Berlin wisdom paradigm (Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 1993). This theory suggests that balancing multiple sources of information and perspectives is another important aspect of wisdom. It identifies five criteria

associated with wisdom, including factual knowledge, procedural knowledge, life-span contextualism, relativism of values and recognition/management of uncertainty.

Lombardo (2008) proposes a simple version of wisdom as knowledge, skills and ethics. In his conceptualization, deep learning is necessary for wisdom. This deep learning involves acquiring a synthesized and comprehensive understanding of a field of study or domain of knowledge through recognizing its various parts and seeing the "big picture." Deep learning in this model is related to conceptual reorganization and is more enduring than surface learning. This deep learning, necessary for wisdom, also connects with critical thinking and metacognition, and contributes to the creation of practical knowledge, as well as to the intrinsic motivation to learn.

How Wisdom Develops

According to Lombardo (2008), wisdom requires experience and effort to achieve. It develops through both the acquisition of knowledge and using knowledge toward positive goals for self and others. It is connected to other virtues such as courage, transcendence and compassion.

Erikson (1959) proposed that wisdom develops through practice in solving daily problems. Given the field-dependent nature of various conceptions of wisdom, Erikson's viewpoint would suggest a certain type of wisdom related to everyday life. Baltes (1993) and Sternberg (1998) both suggest that wisdom builds on knowledge, thinking ability and understanding of both the context of the knowledge area and the environment. Both also acknowledge the usefulness of exposure to role models early on. These role models lay a foundation for working toward wisdom as a goal, but also demonstrate the learning process and appropriate use of knowledge.

Some competencies have been associated with developing wisdom; for example, Arlin (1990) identified openness to change. Chandler and Holliday (1990) also identified judgment and communication skills as important related supports for the development of wisdom. Labouvie-Vief (1990) proposed that an integration

of personality and logical thought was essential. Meacham (1990) identified the importance of acknowledging and learning from mistakes. Sternberg (1998) saw connections between practical knowledge and emotional intelligence as an important foundation for the development of wisdom.

According to Peterson and Seligman (2004) the following characteristics have been associated with acquiring wisdom: curiosity, love of learning, judgment, critical thinking, open-mindedness, ingenuity/originality, practical intelligence, social intelligence, emotional intelligence and perspective.

Postformal thinking is sometimes considered equivalent to wisdom. Commons and Richards (2003) propose four stages to the development of postformal thinking with each stage reaching increasing levels of complexity of thinking. Stage one is associated with systematic thinking, including understanding of multiple causes and ordering of possibilities. This thinking occurs at the level of variables in scientific thinking. Commons and Richards estimate that perhaps 20 percent of the population may think at this level in some aspect of their lives. At stage two, the postformal thinker performs the same systematic thinking, understandings and ordering of possibilities, but using systems, rather than variables. College faculty who are heavily involved in research likely think at this level.

Stage three (Common & Richards, 2003) allows people with postformal thinking to create new fields out of multiple metasystems. The stimulus for this development is usually a poorly understood phenomenon and this creation takes place at the level of paradigms, involving metasystemic thought. This pattern of thinking has been seen in various scientists historically, and the emerging field of sustainability science would appear to benefit from thinkers at this level.

Stage four is cross-paradigmatic in nature (Common & Richards, 2003). Thinking at this level can allow for creation of new fields or paradigms, but an understanding of more than one paradigm (ordering and understanding again, but at an even more complex level) is necessary for this level of thinking. There has been little research

about this level, at least in fields of science, since it is very rare, although there are historical examples, like those of Copernicus and Descartes.

One limitation that becomes apparent in considering postformal thinking in terms of wisdom is the lack of the ethical and social components that are often considered by other theorists who consider wisdom. Thus, for example, while Common and Richard's developmental stages of complex thinking may foster one aspect of wisdom, it seems to be missing other components. This may be science, but is it wisdom?

Basset (2006) proposes four components to wisdom and methods to develop each. These include discerning (cognitive), empathizing (affective), engaging (active) and being (reflective). She proposes that *discerning* can be developed through deep understanding of causes, consequences and relationships. *Empathizing* can be developed through awareness of multiple perspectives, compassion and generosity. *Engaging* can be developed through encouraging sound judgment, decision making, actions based on fairness, and moral courage. *Being* can be developed through self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-transcendence.

Kramer (1990a) provides another perspective on the development of wisdom. Wise persons can acquire and practice wisdom-related skills through healthy cognitive and emotional development. Wisdom develops first through relativistic thinking where there is an understanding of knowledge as influenced by contexts with the associated understanding that contexts are always changing. Relativism progresses toward dialectical thinking. Dialectical thinking allows for wisdom, as it includes the understanding that all knowledge and reality are in continual flux and associated with inherent contradictions. Healthy cognitive development occurs in the presence of emotions, and both relativistic and dialectical thinking can help an individual come to develop further in both their emotional and cognitive functioning. How many who have gone through scientific study or formal education would say that these other types of thinking have been a part of their education?

Wisdom and Education

Understanding and supporting the development of wisdom also is an important topic for its implications on how we educate individuals. Maxwell (1984) writes that we need a revolution in our educational purpose and in our educational processes, so that we come to value the development of wisdom over simply acquiring knowledge. Lombardo (2008) further proposes that if the purpose of education has become teaching and encouraging students to "learn how to learn" and be self-directed, then the development of wisdom may be one result. Lombardo also agrees that the development of wisdom should be the ultimate goal of education.

Life experiences are one context of learning that can be especially complex and can foster wisdom. To the extent to which an individual chooses to seek out rich experiences, reflect on them, and acquire new knowledge and skills as a result, they may in effect increase their chances to acquire wisdom. Higher education, especially for adult students, may provide such an opportunity.

How can educators help foster the growth of wisdom? Guiding students toward content appropriate to their interests, encouraging critical thinking/reflection on that knowledge, providing good role models for wisdom through the work we assign and as we engage with our students, promoting ethical thinking and social responsibility, and encouraging sharing with others – all of these would seem to be important components. Colleges today are moving toward "greening" their campuses and operations, as well as greening their curricula. These practices would seem to be rich opportunities to be role models for students in terms of environmental responsibility, but they also encourage ethical and social responsibility for our environment and the world around us. However, we should not limit ourselves to saving paper and energy, but consider the broader contexts of the various environments in which we live as we work toward sustainability in multiple ways.

We are fortunate as an educational institution that at Empire State College we work with adult students who are engaged in truly complex lives. We also operate in andragogical ways to foster deeper and more meaningful learning through our emphasis on reading and writing. In addition, we foster the critical thinking and reflection that is an important part of the development of wisdom through our individualized approaches to degree planning, study development, and a wide choice of learning activities and assignments that complement the development of critical-thinking skills. We also foster self-directed and life-long learning, which can contribute greatly to the growth of wisdom.

Many people believe that the purpose of a college education is to help students to intellectualize their experiences. I would

To the extent to which an individual chooses to seek out rich experiences, reflect on them, and acquire new knowledge and skills as a result, they may in effect increase their chances to acquire wisdom. Higher education, especially for adult students, may provide such an opportunity.

like to suggest there should be more to education than intellectual and critical-thinking skills. If we are to encourage and promote wisdom and ultimately help with complex understandings and decision making that may have an impact on the welfare of all of us, then we cannot just focus on the intellectual domain. We need to help our students develop ethical perspectives and a concern for others, and learn to integrate intellectual knowledge with these other understandings. Civic engagement and character education are

two methods that public schools are using to promote these latter capabilities. Perhaps we can think of ways to incorporate more of these orientations into our own work with students. In the broader context of higher education, our question becomes: can we come to promote the levels of postformal thinking discussed earlier, while also promoting the affective and active components as well?

Wisdom would appear to have many benefits if we can employ it when we think about sustainability. I believe we have an opportunity to contribute to making the world a better place as we provide our students with opportunities to develop wisdom. I think that as we work toward "greening" our own practices, and providing learning opportunities for students to use their emerging critical-thinking skills around the issues of sustainability in its various applications, we also will be making a contribution toward wisdom in ourselves and in our students.

References

Arlin, P.K. (1990). Wisdom: The art of problem finding. In R.J. Sternberg (ed.), *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development,* (pp. 230-243). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baltes, P.B. (1993). The aging mind: Potential and limits. *Gerontologist, 33,* 580-594.

Baltes, P.B. and Smith, J. (1990). The psychology of wisdom and its ontogenesis. In R.J. Sternberg (ed.), *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development* (pp. 87-120). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Baltes, P.B. and Staudinger, U.M. (1993). The search for a psychology of wisdom. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 2,* 75-80.

Benyus, J. (1997). *Biomimicry: Innovation inspired by nature.* New York: HarperCollins.

Biomimicry Institute (Retrieved 2008). http://database.portal.modwest.com/.

Capra, F. (2005). Speaking nature's language: Principles for sustainability. In M.K. Stone and Z. Barlow (eds.). *Ecological Literacy* (pp. 19-40). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Capra, F. (2002). *The hidden connections: Integrating the biological, cognitive and social cimensions of life into a science of sustainability.* New York: Doubleday.

Chandler, M.J. and Holliday, S. (1990), Wisdom in a postapocalyptic age, in Sternberg, R.J. (ed.), *Wisdom: Its Nature, Origins and Development.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Clayton, V. (1975). Erikson's theory of human development as it applies to the aged: Wisdom as contradictive cognition. *Human Development, 18,* 119-128.

Commons, M.L. and Richards, F.A. (2003). Four postformal stages. In J. Demick (ed.). *Handbook of Adult Development,* (pp. 199-219). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Erikson, E. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle.* New York: International University Press.

Bassett, C. (2006). Laughing at gilded butterflies: Integrating wisdom, development and learning. In C. Hoare (ed.). *Handbook of Adult Development and Learning* (281-306). Oxford University Press.

Kitchener, K.S, and Brenner, H.G. (1990). Wisdom and reflective judgment: Knowing in the face of uncertainty. In R.J. Sternberg (ed.) *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development* (pp. 212-229). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kramer, D.A. (1990a). Conceptualizing wisdom: The primacy of affect-cognition relationship. In R.J. Sternberg (ed.) *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development* (pp. 279-313). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Labouvie-Vief, G. (1990). Wisdom as integrated thought: Historical and developmental perspectives. IN R.J. Sternberg (ed.), *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development* (pp. 52-83). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lombardo, T. (2008) The pursuit of wisdom and the future of education. Retrieved on Dec. 28, 2008 from: http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/dd/wisdom05/pursuit_of_wisdom.pdf.

Maxwell, N. (1984). *Knowledge to Wisdom: A Revolution in the Aims and Methods of Science.* Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.

Meacham, J.A. (1990). The loss of wisdom. In R.J. Sternberg (ed.). *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development* (pp. 181-211). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meadows, D. (2005). Dancing with Systems. In M.K. Stone and Z. Barlow (eds.). Ecological Literacy (pp. 193-205). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th ed.). (1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Orr, D.W. (2005). Recollection. In M.K. Stone and Z. Barlow (eds.). *Ecological Literacy* (pp. 96-110). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Pascual-Leone, J. (1990). An essay on wisdom: toward organismic processes that make it possible. In R. J. Sternberg (ed.), *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development.* (pp. 244-278). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Peterson, C. and Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Piaget, J. (1932). *The Moral Judgement of the Child.* New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich.

Riegel, K.F. (1973). Dialectical operations: The final period of cognitive development. *Human Development,* 16, 346-370.

Sinnott, J.D. (1998). *The development of logic in adulthood: Postformal thought and its applications.* New York: Plenum.

Sternberg, R.J. (1985). Implicit theories of intelligence, creativity, and wisdom. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 49, 607-627.

Sternberg, R.J. (1998). A balance theory of wisdom. *Review of General Psychology, 2,* 347-365.

United Nations General Assembly. (1987). *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. Transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to document A/42/427 – Development*

and International Co-operation: Environment. Retrieved on: June 15, 2009.

United Nations Environmental Programme, MPG International. (2004). *Sustainable Motivation: Attitudinal and Behavioral Drivers for Action.* http://www. mpgintl.com/sustain/english/MPG_Intl_ Sustainable_Motivation_Report.pdf.

> *"The future, even the fairly near future, is not merely unknowable; it is inherently uncertain. Some scenarios are more likely than others, no doubt, but nothing is fixed. Indeed, the future is more volatile than ever before: a greater number of radically different possibilities exist because technology has grown so influential, because ideas spread so rapidly, and because reproductive behavior – usually a variable that changes at a glacial pace – is in rapid flux. Moreover, all these variables are probably more tightly interactive than at most times in the past, so the total system of global society and environment is more uncertain, more chaotic, than ever."*
>
> – J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun* (2000)

Flying Towards Saratoga

Deborah Amory, Central New York Center

79 MPH east into the sunrise:
An early frost ices the fields,
Dark blue pre-dawn sky above.
The thruway, that ribbon'd highway:
Flat black water below, mist rising,
A silent shroud across our shoulders.

In Dolgeville, the mists suddenly shift
And the perfectly round white silver dollar
Of a sun hangs inches above the horizon.
Darkness, and then light.

The fog is back in Canajoharie.
Beech-nut Foods, where model workers arrived punctually,
Toiling amidst art and superior hygiene
In the Arkell's factory.
Today the grand stone Catholic church
sleeps silently beneath the thruway.

Bob and I were detoured here, once;
Thruway closed, off on Rt. 5,
Chatting, cursing, laughing,
Flying towards Saratoga.

Today we exit at Amsterdam.
Abandoned factories gape along the river's edge,
The Calvary Assembly of God now the town hall.
A beautiful brown girl with pigtails
Taunts her older brother, waiting for the bus.
We ascend crookedly up out of the river valley
And the mists disappear, brilliant sunshine again.   The
cows seem not to care, and
The chestnut mare stands, resolute, staring into space.
Trying to forget, or see? Like me.

Bob would still be talking with his hands,
79 MPH east into the sunrise,
Flying towards Saratoga,
If he wasn't dead.

In honor of our dear colleague Bob Milton, who loved people and life, deeply and well; chatting, cursing, laughing and mourning still, we remember you.

Core Values of Empire State College (2005)

The core values of 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 (Empire State College, Metropolitan Center, 325 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013-1005) or via e-mail 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 e-mail to Mandell as WORD attachments. In terms of references and style, *All About Mentoring* uses APA rules (please see Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association or http//library.albany.edu/users/style/ap2.html).

All About Mentoring is published twice a year. Our next issue, #37, will be available spring 2010. Please submit all materials by Jan. 15, 2010.

EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK