ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

A PUBLICATION OF SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

Issue 39 • Spring 2011

"It is important to listen. My most frequent mistake is trying to impose my point of view or other personal expectation on a multifaceted world. When we set out to improve life for others without a fundamental understanding of their point of view and quality of experience, we do more harm than good. Often, little more is required than to listen. The best change is one that enables those with plugged ears to hear what the so-called 'voiceless' have been voicing all along."

Lauren Reichelt,
"Making Polarization a Last Resort,"
Tikkun, *winter 2011, p. 63*

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ISSUE 39 SPRING 2011

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Photos courtesy of Stock Studios, and faculty and staff of SUNY Empire State College, unless otherwise noted.

Cover image
Carol Warner, "The Best of Everything," 2006, mixed-media room installation.

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Special thanks to:
Gail Stanback who provided valuable help for Justin Giordano's piece, "Music in Our Times" (p. 15-16) in *All About Mentoring* 38.
Mary Folliet for Judt research and reflection. **Yvonne Murphy** for ongoing help and insight. **Jacque Dixon** for last-minute aid.

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EDITORIAL

The Expertise of Humility

"Nobody sticks a finger in an electric fan to see what will happen. Conversely, we have all we can think about."

John Ashbery, "Zymurgy," in Planisphere, *2009*

We depend on our expertise. Indeed, we calibrate the degree to which, in any given situation, our expertise is acknowledged, exercised, deepened. And we worry, with good reason, about the myriad ways in which what we think we do best is ignored, denigrated or just plain thinned out. Why learn all that we have learned if we're not even given the space, the time, the encouragement to strut our stuff?

Yet, from the very start, Empire State College has been confused about what legitimate strutting should be all about. What kind of strutting, if any, is appropriate for mentors to do? We didn't come to this place, did we, to become the kinds of experts we would be if we were on the faculty at a Research I institution, or even at a more conventional four-year liberal arts school? But, at the same time, did we expect to be mired in what some feel to be the daily drudgeries of a new fangled version of Melville's famous scrivener? Yes, of course, we appreciated Boyer's revision and expansion of what is "scholarly," but, bottom line, even as so-called "mentors," we just didn't want to give it all up. We're scholars – of some sort – damn it!

We have learned that the qualities and expressions of meaningful mentorial expertise at our college (and at other colleges with core values similar to ours) are incredibly hard to articulate and, for sure, to regularly practice. And our difficulties are only made rougher by the slippery terrain of taken-for-granted assumptions about the glow of the professor-as-expert. It's just not so easy to surrender, especially when confronted by the not so distant fear that such a scholarly construction is all that stands in the way of the loss of any kind of academic identity. When we're frightened, we desperately grab onto a more conventional ideal.

The question, however, shouldn't go away: How, every day, sitting face to face with a student or being online, or working with a group, or taking a call – how, in any of these forms, can we – should we, as mentors – display what we know? As an experimenting college, shouldn't there be an experimenting expertise?

I'd say this: The professorial strut is tantalizing. Faculty pass along what they claim to know, develop curricula and whole programs based on their authority, produce research that assures their pedigree, and are rewarded for their single-minded commitment to their scholarly vocation. Professors are deemed authentic; they take pride in and expect recognition for their labors and fight for their time.

And I'd also say this: The mentorial strut is harder to recognize let alone act on, exactly because the lure of the professorial is so strong. Can it ever be that responding to a student's difficulty in organizing her thoughts, or confusion about what new studies he should take up, or worries about how her kids are responding to her many hours in front of the computer – that we truly believe that attention to these matters has real academic significance? How about searching for an article with a student on a topic with which we're not familiar because that student mentioned in passing that he had a question about it, or trying to just hang in there to find the learning we sense is lurking somewhere in a student's work experience, or going back and forth, and then again, with a group of colleagues in an effort to revamp some procedural matter, or staring at a screen struggling to find just the right phrase to capture our judgment about the outcome of a student's work? Do we genuinely take these activities to be part of our scholarly lives? Do we ever imagine in our heart-of-hearts that they are appropriately academic and carrying them out is an expression of our expertise?

Our challenge is not to draw ever-finer distinctions between teaching, service and scholarship because even within such an ingrained tripartite model, we know that there is already a tacit hierarchy. Our dilemma also cannot be reduced to one of workload, although without doubt, we have been bitten by this menace and its legacy of unfairness for years. I'd argue that the expertise of mentoring (in as much as we honor it at all) plays second fiddle because it is our own version of "care work," a fantastic blend of the cognitive and the affective, a kind of experiential-emotional-intellectual labor that has been historically demeaned (so often as "women's work"), but is personally enriching, socially valuable and intellectually complex.

Yes, of course, deskilling continues to occur in many areas of labor (teaching at all levels included), but we shouldn't confuse deskilling with the true skills necessary to carry out a complex and difficult faculty role and the deep learning demanded to do it well. We shouldn't use our fantasy of the professorial strut as the criterion to judge an on-goingly experimental mentoring expertise that rests much more on our nuanced responses to not knowing, to our commitment to listening, and, overall, to a tradition of strong academic caring, than to the arrogance of claiming "I know it and you surely don't." Our distinctive mentoring strut is one that, in a most intricate turn, embeds our expertise in humility – a humility that we have to nurture together.

Alan Mandell

Imagination and Art: Children Cope with War

Judith Gerardi, Metropolitan Center and Center for International Programs

Childhood and warfare symbolize opposing ends of life experience. We cringe when the two occur together, as they increasingly do. Bewildered children make efforts to lead a child's life as they are faced with militia attacks, bombs, deportations, and continuing loss and change. Powerless adults make efforts to protect children and to see them as having a normal future, actively pursuing those goals in the midst of war, deprivation, and continued threat and likely death. While children often weather armed conflict remarkably well, it is not without worry, terror, frightening thoughts, and uncertainty about their future. Who are these children and how can we understand their experience and psychological reality? How do they psychologically cope with living in a war zone? Both surviving victims and those who perished report to us through their diaries, essays and drawings. This paper addresses their drawings, a means for self expression and, often, coping with extreme danger.

In their drawings, children express themselves nonverbally in ways that often are more natural for them than are words. They enter their inner world as they draw and can usually achieve a level of truth that reflects their reality. Further, since the communication does not rely on a particular language, the child's voice can speak to any viewer. While individual and cultural meanings cannot be interpreted from the drawing alone, the child's primary reality as presented in the drawing is usually clear. Freed from the limitations of language, we can read children's drawings to learn about a shared experience of events that may be separated by time and location. War is such an event.

An important aspect of healthy psychological development is free exploration of the actual environment and the one beyond it, the imagined or hypothetical environment of fantasy. Both exploration of day-to-day life and of the imagined world of fantasy are compromised during extreme threat, including war. Danger restricts physical exploration of the actual environment. It also can restrict mental exploration of the imagined environment. Imagination often fails to contribute to healthy psychological coping when the individual's psychological energy is focused on survival and cannot offer an emotional release or a means of creating mental solutions to the chaos of bombardment, deprivation and loss. Instead, fantasy becomes restricted, dominated by efforts to psychologically tolerate extreme physical and emotional upheaval. In effect, imagination gets stuck, unable to satisfactorily aid ego development.

Yet imagination also has the potential to retain its role in healthy mental exploration, the focus of this paper. The use of imagination operates in two interrelated ways in relation to compensating for the restricted physical exploration of the child's environment that is associated with life in a war zone. First, it allows self expression. The child can create a world that he controls, one in which he can find emotional release, take on new and different roles, and express his innermost reactions and thoughts. Second, for some children, imagination allows mental exploration that begins to address psychological coping.

Self Expression

The first way in which imagination provides an antidote to restrictions of place brings the child beyond the miserable, limiting, dangerous world of war so that he can create the world that he needs. In that world, he can freely engage in mental exploration of his observations and thoughts. The child finds that he can create and occupy a visual representation of his psychological reality. Against a background of group suffering and powerlessness, imagination provides affirmation in the form of recognition of the child artist's individual being. This first way in which imagination operates during war, then, is centered on self expression. It facilitates emotional release and the preservation of the child's sense of individuality.

Mental Exploration

The second way in which imagination provides an antidote to restrictions of place, psychological coping through mental exploration, allows the child to entertain solutions in fantasy that are not possible to her in the real world. This possibility is severely restricted by the physical danger and emotional tension of war, which threaten the typical ways that children's imaginations serve their psychological well-being and mental life. However, when imagination continues to operate more freely, it can provide an alternative to the reality of war. The child can continue to explore possibilities in her imagination that are unavailable in the danger of a war zone. I will give examples of drawings that illustrate these points.

Children's Psychological Experience of War: The Drawings

The drawings presented and discussed in this paper were created by children aged 6 to 14 during four different wars spanning close to 70 years, from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) to Darfur (2003-2010), thus representing different time periods, regions and world cultures. They show disturbing similarities, including portrayals of explosions, destroyed structures, mutilated and dead people, family, dislocation, and monsters. They show the mayhem of attempting to escape the assaults. This is what children see, and it continues. I believe that you will be struck by the common experience visually reported by these children. The drawings selected for this paper were placed in five groups: transition

from peace to war and homes under aerial attack, escape, fear, coping, and anger directed at the enemy.

Transition from Peace to War

The first set of children's drawings, depicting homes and surrounding areas under attack, are representative of many such drawings. They show air bombardment, face-to-face combat, street bombs, and damaged buildings and people. Whether home is mud, thatch, wood, cement or brick, the drawings show remarkably similar scenes of air and ground attacks. The viewer is drawn into the scene, to the child's clear depiction of his crumbled world. The drawings make it unhappily easy to enter the child's psychological reality: loss of the assumed safety of home.

During the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s, young Spaniards were evacuated to children's colonies elsewhere in Spain or in neighboring France, away from active violence, where they attended school and drew pictures. One such child was a 13-year-old girl, who drew a transitional moment from peace to war. Drawing 1 depicts a peaceful town under aerial attack, mothers walking holding a child's hand, two wounded or dead among the neat buildings, one building shattered, and a child covering her eyes.

The child artist captures the new reality in great detail, juxtaposing orderliness and human care and attachment with destruction and death. She skillfully presents a complex and nuanced scene, showing her ability to render scale and proportion. The pretty sturdy buildings evoke stability; the mother and child pairs evoke trust and care. The child artist surely intended to show innocence, unawareness of the threat that, in fact, has taken place around the corner. The picture centers on a child mid-page under a substantial verdant tree, covering her eyes, suggesting the wish to not see or accept what is happening around her. This drawing is a particularly fine illustration of the changed world faced by children in war and of the dawning awareness of the threat and what has been and will be lost.

Drawing 2: Croatia, "Mama, Wait for Me." Boy, age 11, c. 1991.

Another transitional drawing similarly shows normal life and its family bonds juxtaposed to aerial attack, damaged buildings and victims. Drawn during the wars in Yugoslavia (1991-1995) by an 11-year-old boy from Zagreb, Croatia, it is titled "Mama, Wait for Me." A bomber dominates the scene with a bomb below it on a direct trajectory to mother and child who are walking away from the yard and the home with its shattered and dislodged windows. Another bomb is on a trajectory toward a child's swing, as if symbolic of attack on the child and childhood pleasure.

The next transitional illustration was drawn by a child from Darfur in 2005 (unknown age and sex) and again contains air and ground attacks. In this drawing, the scene is broader as if viewed from a distance and includes many huts and people. (Drawing 3)

The roughly drawn huts and stick figure people stand in contrast to the more detailed bombers and ground attack vehicles, as if to emphasize the overpowering assault, the extent of damage, and the entire village having been victimized. Children often draw disturbing objects in greater detail than other parts of their pictures. (Drawing 3)

Drawings 1-3 represent increasing dominance of wartime assaults. Drawing 1 shows the contrast of peace and attack in a small town. Drawing 2 shows an aerial attack on a house that surely is meant to be the child artist's. Drawing 3 shows the rampant bombing of an entire village in Darfur, Southern Sudan. Another Darfur drawing shows a family's escape, which eventually brought them to a camp in Chad. Drawing 4 by a 9-year-old girl from Darfur shows victims holding each other. This drawing of escape emphasizes connection among family members. The child artist explained what she drew as people running from the Janjaweed, guns, planes and bombs "all together." "All of us – my family – we were screaming and running from the Janjaweed … holding each other by the arms to keep together. Here in camp we are safe, but my father … was lost." At the

Drawing 1: Spain, Girl, age 13, 1937-38.

Drawing 3: Darfur, 2005.

Drawing 4: Darfur, Girl, age 9, 2005.

"All of us … holding each other by the arms to keep together. Here in camp we are safe, but my father … was lost."

~Nine-year-old Darfur girl

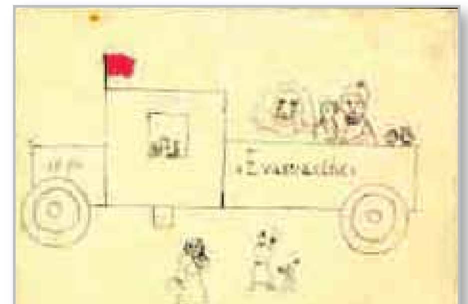
lower left, the child has drawn what appears to be a member of the Janjaweed, roaming armed groups in Sudan's Darfur region and elsewhere. The figure is drawn in fuller detail than the terrified victims.

" … All of us … holding each other by the arms to keep together. Here in camp we are safe, but my father … was lost." The comparative lack of detail in the rendering of the victims puts in high relief the primacy of human connection, as seen in the figures holding each other, as if constituting one mass. In this example, we can see that drawing gives children a means for processing the catastrophe that befell them, bringing potential benefits. For example, it can get the fear out of the child's mind by objectifying it on the page; this is a beginning, a foundation for later understanding. If it's out there, it can be examined. Drawing 4 also is interesting in that it illustrates the emotional importance of family. Mental health workers and researchers typically find that family or community support can be associated with resilience and psychological survival.

Escape

The paired drawings numbered 5a and 5b show stunningly similar evacuations from internal armed conflict in Spain and the former Yugoslavia – events separated by over 50 years.

In each, we see children boarding vehicles to a safe destination as parents look on. The weight of separation and the unknown future are clear.



Drawing 5a: Spain, "Evacuation" c. 1937.

Drawing 5b: Croatia, "Evacuation" c. 1991.

Drawing 6: Croatia, "Ghosts and Skeletons in My Closet," Girl, age 12, c. 1991.

Drawing 7: Croatia, "Fear," Boy, age 12, c. 1991.

Fear

In addition to rendering memories of the horrors of enemy attacks and their experience of escape, children of war draw their fears, often in the form of animals, monsters and supernatural symbols such as ghosts. Fear consumes children during the extreme threat of war and recognizing it and making it the subject of one's artwork can be helpful.

Children's depictions of their fears are clear and communicate easily to us, the viewers. Such drawings form an important vehicle within which children can tap and express their emotional life. Externalizing emotions in some way can allow a child to release some tension, can make a chaotic fearful situation more understandable by bringing meaning to it, can make part of the threat more manageable and allow the child to see herself as in control of some part of the danger and terror, and can be a key element in laying a foundation for coping with the dreaded reality. Thus, both emotional well-being and dealing with realities can be bolstered through art, through the child's own drawings. In this section, I present drawings illustrating fear and the different ways that children of war express it.

Drawings 6 and 7 show two Croatian children's fantasy representations of their fear, transforming it into an object of their own creation. Drawing 6 (c. 1991) by a 12-year-old Croatian girl, who titled it "Ghosts and Skeletons in My Closet," brings fear into her familiar place that once was safe – her home. In the form of skeleton/mummy-like figures, evil enters through windows or from a closet, leaving blood on the floor.

The threat is all around and continues to invade the child's private space. The viewer feels the closeness of the threat to the child's psychological reality. The danger shown in Drawing 7, by an 11-year-old Croatian boy, is immediate and overwhelming, as made evident by the monster taking in excess of half the page and being more defined than the human figures. The enormous dark-eyed sharp-toothed monster attacks people who are drawn both smaller and in less detail. The emotional dominance of danger and fear as represented by the monster also is seen in the use of stark and varied colors, in contrast to duller and less varied colors of people. The white of the paper is the only background. This lack of context or scene creates a sense of being overwhelmed, of unbound fear.

The child artists whose work is seen in Drawings 6 and 7 both seem focused on uncontrolled threat. Yet, it is actually positive that these children objectified the overwhelming threat present in the war zone. The ghosts and monsters were created by them and served them by focusing their attention on specific objects rather than on a generalized unease in their actual world. This is a first step in coping.

Other children drew fear in a more personal or interior way, with human beings as the central figures, perhaps forcing the viewer to recognize that it is a child experiencing the emotions that were put on paper. The depiction of fear in Drawing 8 by a 6-year-old Serbian girl is particularly raw. The figure seems to hang in space, laid bare.

Drawing 8: Serbia, "Fear in Me," Girl, age 6, c. 1991.

Drawing 9: Terezin Concentration Camp, Girl, age 6, 1942-44.

The child artist's title for her drawing, "Fear in Me," is a miserable and poignant description of the helpless stunned figure.

Similar to Drawing 8, Drawing 9, by another 6-year-old girl, an inmate in the Terezin concentration camp in World War II, is stark and shows raw terror. This pencil drawing of two girls, a large flower, a smaller flower, grass and the sun is contained within a three-sided frame drawn by the child artist. The line quality seems light, but a digitally archived copy at the Jewish Museum in Prague reveals stronger, firmer, darker lines. In that copy, it is more apparent that the child drew a three sided frame around her drawing, as if to try to contain her fear. The girls and the sun have grid-like teeth, as if clenched in fear. This very young child attempts a quite detailed drawing. The detailed teeth suggest their importance to her emotional experience.

A teenage girl in Terezin, age about 13 or14, drew a girl with raised fists and large double doors in the background. Like Drawings 8 and 9, it is quite interior and raw. Attention to the fists suggests their importance to the child artist. Like Drawing 8, the human figure is the focus of Drawing 10, which is a similarly stark presentation of all-consuming fear, here with anger or frustration added. The double doors may portray a barrier against the horror that lies behind them. There were heavy wooden doors of this sort in the Terezin camp, and people were aware of other inmates being taken elsewhere within the complex when accused of minor transgressions against the rules of the concentration camp.

These five portrayals of fear, Drawings 6-10, illustrate different ways that children used their art creations to relieve anxiety during wartime. Drawings 6 and 7 objectified the feared thing in the form of monsters or supernatural figures, the child artist constructing a specific focus on which to project emotional turmoil. Drawings 8-10 suggested a personal and interior reaction with the child artist using humans as central figures. In either approach, drawing provides the child with an emotional outlet, the release of tension, and a step toward seeing herself in control of some part of the danger that she and her family have been facing. Drawing the fear casts the child artist as a person of action. She decides what to draw and how to draw it. That is a first step in regaining control of chaos. The next step is to explore ways to deal with the danger and cope with the psychological threat to mental health. Drawing can constitute such a next step.

Drawing 10: Terezin, Girl, age 13-14, 1942-1944.

Drawing 11: Croatia, "My Vukovar," Girl, age 13, c. 1991.

Psychological Coping

The previous examples of self expression and emotional release in children's war drawings revealed how drawing could lay a foundation for psychological coping. For example, depicting monsters creates a specific object which may allow the fear to be focused, allowing the child to release psychological energy that is needed to confront life in a war zone. Clearer steps in the direction of coping are seen in Drawings 11-13, where imagination becomes an ally in living with fear and danger.

Like "Ghosts and Skeletons in My Closet" (Drawing 6) in the "Fear" section above, "My Vukovar" (Drawing 11) by a 13-year-old Croatian girl, depicts a feared object, in this case, a menacing animal on its hind legs. This contrasts with Drawing 6, where the feared object is a supernatural figure, something magical and hard to control. Being a familiar and recognizable object, the animal, although vicious, is more real and perhaps potentially manageable.

The fear is embodied and under the control of the artist who created it. She drew it. Despite bright or harsh colors, which may suggest raw emotional explosiveness, the child artist shows complex planning and thought in her drawing. Taken together, these two aspects of the drawing show the viewer a way in which emotion and thought may work together to form an avenue to psychological coping.

Drawing 12 by a 12-year-old girl in Terezin is based on a standard fairy tale, "The Sorcerer and the Golden-Haired Girl," and depicts a threatening animal/monster. However, in her imagination and drawing,

the child artist shields herself from the monster by encasing the figure of the girl in a protected space.

In her drawing, she could protect herself from danger. The child artist demonstrated a way to cope with real threat through imagination – by creating a barrier between the innocence of the golden-haired girl and the horror of the monster.

Drawings 11 and 12 both draw on imagination to express threat and explore how to cope with fear. Drawing 11 houses the threatening animal in a "real" scene of destruction to which the child artist gives her town's name, my Vukovar, making it clear that the child artist is specifically depicting her town. Drawing 12 is a fantasy without background, as if we are entering the child's imagination. These individual differences in coping reflect the ways in which one medium, drawing pictures, can meet varying preferred psychological styles. One is more tied to reality, the other more to fantasy.

Drawing 12: Terezin, "Sorcerer and the Golden-Haired Girl," Girl, age 12, 1942-44.

Drawing 13: Spain, Girl, age 12, 1937-38.

Drawing 14: Spain, Boy, age 12, 1937-38.

Drawing 15: Spain, Girl, age 12, 1937-38.

A more agentic approach to handling the psychological impact of war is seen in Drawing 13 by a 12-year-old girl who had been evacuated to the safety of a children's relocation colony during the Spanish Civil War. Moving beyond the construction of a protective shield in her fantasy, the young artist drew a child taming a monster, which she clearly identifies as the enemy through a swastika, the symbol of her oppressor's ally. She depicts a boy taking an ax to the monster and thus taking control of the threat. This is an example of active coping through art. The child takes initiative in fantasy; she is the agent of action. That is a very strong means of coping. It also is interesting that the background of this scene is idyllic: hills, trees, an altogether pleasant picture interrupted by the war monster.

Anger

Coping can take place in the form of expressing and directing anger. Drawings 14 and 15 are two such examples from the Spanish Civil War. Drawing 14, by a 12-year-old boy, is dominated in the foreground by fists raised against the bombers in the sky. Drawing 15, by a 12-year-old girl, shows the militia fighting the enemy. It is captioned: "This drawing shows the militiamen who are at the front and who attack Fascist airplanes." Like Drawing 13 of the child walking a leashed animal, Drawing 15 illustrates taking charge, a psychological protective factor for child mental health during war. The history of the Spanish Civil War could support these children being more likely than other child war victims to entertain the possibility of taking charge, seeing it modeled by adults. For example, adults made children safe by evacuating them to children's residences distant from active conflict (in this case, a location in France) where they lived a relatively familiar and ordinary life. The Spanish Civil War drawings often reflect factors identified as psychologically protective by Apfel and Simon (1996), including the value of adult

support, caregivers being in actual control of the children's daily life, and having a group goal that drives the war or conflict.

How Art Supports Children in War Zones

Drawings from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) to the present, a period of over 70 years, show that through the visual arts, children illustrate and bring meaning to their experience of war. The act of drawing taps imagination, which is a vital developmental expression and tool throughout childhood that helps support the child's effort to make sense of the world in which she lives and her place in it. It can be of particular value to children as they try to make sense of their experience of living in a war zone. In addition to artwork providing a means for finding comfort and achieving a level of understanding of the catastrophe of war, it can provide a means for the child to express inner turmoil and explore ways to cope with threats to her psychological well-being. How does this work?

First, child art achieves self expression and its components: emotional release and a sense of one's individuality. Second, child art can provide a means of coping through mental exploration of imagined solutions to extremely threatening events.

Self Expression and Affirmation of Individuality

An important characteristic of child art is that it is not tied to language. A child can express confusion and fear nonverbally. Huxley (1939) writes of drawings by those evacuated to the safety of children's camps during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939): "Their drawings are more eloquent than their words, better than their syntax (n.p.)." Of Sudanese child refugees, the Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (AVSI) (1998) reported that drawing was part of the recovery process: "The words and drawings flow from what is uppermost in their minds; they receive no direction (n.p.)."

The child's psychological needs for emotional release and affirmation of individuality are given little room during the chaos of war when avoiding danger and meeting basic physical needs demand intense attention from both children and adults. Child artwork offers a possibility for meeting these two psychological needs. It can offer emotional release, for example, by locating fear in a dreaded object such as a monster, creating frightened self portraits, or by depicting explosions and destruction. It can affirm individuality by providing a means for the creation of one's own unique personal world on paper, preserving a sense of self, of being "me," the person of action, who makes the picture.

In the early 1940s, Jewish children deported to the World War II concentration camp Terezin, northwest of Prague, drew over 7,000 pictures under the direction of a fellow inmate, the artist and teacher Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. Milton (2001) addresses the way in which such child artwork was able to alleviate the constant awareness of adults and children that their lives were under the complete control of their captors. She argues that in Terezin, Dicker-Brandeis used art as an outlet for children's imaginations and as an escape "enabling them to gain control of their own personal space and time" (p. 30). That is, controlling a part of one's life, what one draws, shows children that they remain vital and capable, an alternative perception to the reality of having all aspects of their lives determined by the enemy in charge of the concentration camp. These children were provided moments of freedom to explore themselves and their inner world. They also signed their artwork, which recognized agency, the exercise of individual will, of being effective in having an impact on the material world.

Mental Exploration

With art materials, children can re-envision their world in ways that portray time-separated events and confusing experiences. For example, drawings can combine elements of the child's life before war with life under attack. Drawing 1 showed a transitional moment: a peaceful town under aerial attack, mothers walking holding a child's hand, two wounded or dead among the neat buildings, one building shattered, a child covering her eyes. It is an illustration of the child selecting elements that are incongruent, in this case, peace and aerial attacks, which can form a step in meaning-making by first portraying the incongruency. This makes available to the child the discordant elements which had disturbed her understanding of what she perceived.

Children also can depict imagined scenes of defeating the enemy. Two drawings from the Spanish Civil War collection demonstrate this approach. In Drawing 13, the enemy portrayed as an animal is actually leashed and under a child's control. In Drawing 15, enemy airplanes are targeted. These uses of art for mental exploration illustrate the potential value to the child of a preferred personal story, explanation or wish. This can be soothing to a threatened child.

Children's war drawings selected for this paper illustrate the clear ability of children to depict what they see and recall, create visual representations of their war-based fears, and use the medium as an ally in their effort to use their minds and imagination to envision and cope with the atrocities that they have witnessed.

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Mentoring: A Poet's View

Susan Jefts, Center for Distance Learning

Maybe it all comes down to poetry versus prose. The whispered or the spoken, the implied or the stated. The more subtle light of evening versus the bright light of day. It's hard to live solidly in both worlds. I think most of us have a preference for one or the other. Is it the difference between intuitive ways of perceiving and the more sensing, meaning via the five senses, way of perceiving? Sometimes it seems to be. Multitudes of colors, dimensions and possibilities versus the observable ones before us or known in our minds. "I dwell in possibilities," Emily Dickinson said of poetry, "a fairer house than prose." This is not to say that prose isn't colorful and full of dimension and possibility – it often is. But poetry is unique in possessing that quality Octavio Paz calls "roots and wings." It likes to fly to unchartered places, as well as dwell in the deep rootedness of the earth. It needs both, and can have both, even in the same line.

But is it an and/or thing we're talking about? Don't we have the capacity for both poetry and prose in our lives and the way we see? And isn't there a need for both in this world? There are days when I just want to go in a straight line. I have a list and I want to get it all done. If I stopped for every stray atom or metaphor that wandered into my mind, the day would be shot. No meetings attended, nothing mailed, no calls returned. I'd be a happy and creative, but disorganized, mess. Some days I need the set parameters and completion of prose. Point A to point B with just a few detours. I can go like this for a while, maybe even a week or two, but then something happens. I start to miss the subtleties and uncertainties of life, and the turning of them into something – something of captured beauty, and not necessarily with purpose. It starts in unlikely settings: a meeting at work, a call from a student, or an exchange of money at the coffee shop. I become aware that something is missing in these exchanges and if I stop for a moment, can sometimes find it dwelling between words, or in the patterns of light and shadow across a counter. It is the rest of the story, the unsaid words. It is where poetry tends to live.

It occurs to me that mentoring is a little like this. So much of it is about how we choose to see. It can help to know if our natural way of seeing is by way of possibilities and associations or in more of a sensing manner of considering what is already there before us, and of what seems to make "sense." Our culture has us trained to perceive in more of a practical and logical manner, whatever our natural preference, and this can leave out a whole world of possibilities. What I believe we (and our students) could benefit from when mentoring, is a conscious turning to the intuitive, associative parts of our minds, where we might dwell a little more in possibility.

It is relatively easy, in many cases, to guide students along toward developing degree plans with a minimal amount of deep reflection on either of our parts. I find that when I stop, however, even just for a few minutes, and look at a degree plan backward or forward or a bit upside down, it can take on a new light. Often the clues have been there all along. Something a student once said in email, or a recurring word or phrase. Often they are the asides. They don't find their way to the center because they seem unrelated at first, perhaps illogical. This tends to be where the gems lie; in the odd juxtaposition of words or ideas that can lead to the most interesting and original places.

I have been working with a student who started with a concentration title of philosophy, but during her first few months as a student at the Center for Distance Learning, she occasionally mentioned her interests in human services and writing. From time to time, I would ask her how she saw her concentration in philosophy

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developing, but she was never sure. One day I decided to play with this, toss back to her some of her own words and thoughts that included her interests in journalism, human services and philosophy. She had especially liked a philosophy class where they talked about how there are no absolute truths. We spent the next week emailing back and forth about this idea and aspects of her three interest areas. We explored what about them she was drawn to and how writing relates to philosophy, and how writing relates to mental health and community services. Then we progressed to considering different ways of combining some of these areas.

She said that from this process of exchanges she felt a whole new world of possibilities open up for her. She had not considered that there might be meaningful connections between her different interests. I suggested she read about the area of interdisciplinary studies that could help her translate these connections into a viable academic program. Over the next days, she shared a multitude of possible ideas, and of subpossibilities within them, things I would not have thought of.

Now, a few months later, this student has chosen a focus and is progressing along in her degree plan. I've learned from this and a few other similar experiences that it can be worth it to take the time to explore away from the known degree path, which students often take as a way of default. I think the fun and joy that comes from the experience fuels both mentor and student and is well worth it, although I'm also aware our student loads prohibit us from doing this as often as we might like. Some students will respond to this exploring, and some won't. It can be in the timing or in the wording. Or it can be in trying out new ways to encourage students to find the phrases and ideas that are lingering beneath the surface, waiting to be discovered and turned into something unique, and perhaps more deeply reflective of who they are. Like poetry.

Center for Mentoring and Learning Faculty Reassignments

Katherine Jelly, Center for Mentoring and Learning

The Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) sponsors two faculty reassignments with the Center for Mentoring and Learning (CML) each year. These reassignments, funded by the Empire State College Foundation, support projects related to mentoring, teaching and learning, and offer an opportunity for faculty to further their professional development and share their work with colleagues within and beyond Empire State College. Each reassignment provides a quarter-time release from regular mentoring responsibilities over a period of one year beginning and ending in July.

We encourage applicants to discuss project ideas with the director of the Center for Mentoring and Learning, Katherine Jelly, the college professor of adult learning and mentoring, Alan Mandell, or members of the CML Advisory Board (for a listing of members, please visit http://cml.esc.edu/advisory_board). Applicants should also consult their deans early in the process of developing a proposal. After consulting his/her dean, the applicant submits the application along with a current curriculum vitae to the dean, who forwards these materials, accompanied by his/her recommendation, to OAA.

Upon completion of the reassignment, the faculty member submits a report to the director of the Center for Mentoring and Learning, with copies to the dean and provost, regarding the outcomes of the project. In addition, we encourage faculty to publish this report in *All About Mentoring*.

This year's (2010-11) recipients are:

Kate Forbes (Central New York Center)

Frank Vander Valk (Center for Distance Learning)

Diane Gal* (School of Graduate Studies)

*funded through OAA but working with CML.

Please see the CML website for descriptions of their projects at http://cml.esc.edu/programs/current_faculty_reassignments.

This reassignment opportunity and details for applying are explained in the collegewide announcement from the provost's office, "Sabbaticals, Reassignments and Other Faculty Development Applications." Applications are due by Sept. 15, 2011.

Educating the Digital Citizen in the 21st Century

Nicola Marae Martinez, Center for Distance Learning

I. Prologue

A headline caught my eye recently while browsing a local bookstore. *Foreign Affairs* had a leading story titled: "The Political Power of Social Media: Communications Technology Will Help Promote Freedom but it Might Take a While" (Shirky, 2011). One might have thought that the article referred to current historic events taking place all over the Middle East and Africa, but in fact, the article pre-dates recent uprisings and covers a wide range of political and social movements for which social media have been instrumental. The author points out that:

> Since the rise of the Internet in the early 1990s, the world's networked population has grown from the low millions to the low billions. Over the same period, social media have become a fact of life for civil society worldwide, involving many actors – regular citizens, activists, nongovernmental organizations, telecommunications firms, software providers, governments … . (p. 28)

Recent political uprisings with citizen protest in Tunisia, Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries reflect a new level of mass mobilization using mobile and social media. These media are shaping domestic and foreign political agendas, affect our privacy and security, and are changing the nature of individual autonomy and freedom. We have entered an information era in which the teaching and learning of these media should be critically embedded in the educational program, with careful consideration given to ethical, privacy and security concerns. Digital media literacy is a critical component of civil society in the 21st century.

One of my strong interests as an educator is to encourage autonomy among adult learners. Understanding adult agency and autonomy are strong underlying themes in my own scholarly work. In the 21st century, agency and autonomy are intrinsically linked to our ability to be informed digital citizens. In my course, Privacy, Security, Freedom: Social Concerns for the 21st Century, we cover the implications of living in a world within digitally mediated surveillance; technology tracking tools; dataveillance; and a wide range of threats to privacy, security and civil liberties. In addition to researching these topics from philosophical, policy analysis, legislative and current events perspectives, students debate the balance necessary to uphold individual privacy and civil liberties within an era of ongoing security risks. The role of the student as actor and agent, within various degrees of autonomy, reveals the potential for the development of both personal and political autonomy as the course unfolds. Students comment on their learning:

- "After learning the information I have learned in this course, I am eager to make a difference either in how I vote, what corporations I support, or even to be more informed about our nation and our government. I have really grown to appreciate academic and scholarly sources. Our media and news stories have such a slant on them that it's difficult for anyone to know the truth."
- "Our group as a whole was introduced to some of the most complicated issues facing citizens and government today. We explored, analyzed, researched and even debated acts of legislation, political and social commentary, not to mention philosophy. Our eyes were opened to the various issues facing modern society; privacy, security, terrorism and cultural awareness were only some of the topics we delved into."

In a world in which our media is dominated by a very small handful of new sources that provide the same account of events to subscribers, assessing alternative sources of news and information is essential. This is where social media tools are becoming indispensable for the everyday citizen as well

Nicola Marae Martinez

as for the educator. Instant access to news from a number of international sources provides us with a deeper understanding of events and a variety of viewpoints. In addition, the ability to analyze, create and disseminate content using a wide range of social and digital media tools is becoming a necessary literacy for the 21st century citizen. Emerging research, along with increased interest from our students, highlight the importance of educating for digital media literacy.

II. Why Digital Media Literacy?

According to the New Media Consortium *Horizon Report* for 2010 and 2011, "Digital media literacy continues its rise in importance as a key skill in every discipline and profession" (p. 3). In fact, digital media literacy is consistently listed as the top challenge in this report on emerging trends and challenges in higher education. *The 2010 Horizon Report* discusses the difficulty of encouraging digital media literacy among faculty as well as students. The primary difficulty is the problem of educating faculty so that they feel prepared to share this learning with students and to allow students

to research, create, disseminate and publish using these media. This lack of familiarity among faculty may lead to hesitation in adopting digital and social media for mentoring and learning.

III. Defining Digital and Media Literacy

In *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action,* author Renee Hobbs (2010) provides an excellent definition of digital and media literacy:

> The term 'digital and media literacy' is used to encompass the full range of cognitive, emotional and social competencies that includes the use of texts, tools and technologies; the skills of critical thinking and analysis; the practice of message composition and creativity; the ability to engage in reflection and ethical thinking; as well as active participation through teamwork and collaboration. (p. 17)

Hobbs further defines digital and media literacy "as a constellation of life skills that are necessary for full participation in our media-saturated, information-rich society. These include the ability to do the following:

- Make responsible choices and access information by locating and sharing materials and comprehending information and ideas
- Analyze messages in a variety of forms by identifying the author, purpose and point of view, and evaluating the quality and credibility of the content
- Create content in a variety of forms, making use of language, images, sound, and new digital tools and technologies
- Reflect on one's own conduct and communication behavior by applying social responsibility and ethical principles
- Take social action by working individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, workplace and community, and by participating as a member of a community."(p. vii)

Hobbs's report proposes the following competencies of digital media literacy (p. 19):

Essential Competencies of Digital and Media Literacy

1. **ACCESS** Finding and using media and technology tools skillfully and sharing appropriate and relevant information with others
2. **ANALYZE and EVALUATE** Comprehending messages and using critical thinking to analyze message quality, veracity, credibility and point of view, while considering potential effects or consequences of messages
3. **CREATE** Composing or generating content using creativity and confidence in self-expression, with awareness of purpose, audience and composition techniques
4. **REFLECT** Applying social responsibility and ethical principles to one's own identity and lived experience, communication behavior and conduct
5. **ACT** Working individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, the workplace and the community, and participating as a member of a community at local, regional, national and international levels

IV. Digital Media Studies

Digital, social and new media studies are growth areas attracting a changing demographic in arts and communications concentrators at the Center for Distance Learning. Academic area coordinators serving mentees in these areas are seeing a rise in students who matriculate with a large number of prior credits in arts, design and media studies, with a need for advanced-level studies in their concentration, and an interest in digital and new media. There were 204 combined admissions application inquiries for the areas of arts and communication (at CDL) between June and November 2010, a number that reflects the strongest area of interest for potential concentrators among the areas of The Arts, Cultural Studies, Historical Studies and Educational Studies.[1]

The rising interest in digital media studies reflects an ongoing interest from the general education student seeking digital and media literacy skills, as well as a new group of students needing advanced studies in digital media topics. Previously, CDL courses in the arts, digital media, and media and communications were designed to serve the general education student seeking to fulfill requirements. Our new mentees are arriving at CDL with either a large number of transcript credits in the arts from previous institutions, or extensive professional expertise in an artistic field. Some students are bringing both of these to the college, and are ready to move immediately into degree planning and undertake studies at an advanced level. These students share the common characteristic of having previous studio training in an artistic genre, sometimes at a very advanced level. They find themselves at a place in their career where they must either prepare for a career transition or acquire new, advanced skills and knowledge that will position them favorably for future opportunities. Many of these students are requesting new studies in digital arts and media. Most of them need to take these studies at an advanced level, including a capstone course in their concentration.

As an academic area coordinator at the Center for Distance Learning, my role includes being a mentor and supervising adjunct instructors teaching sections of the courses under my purview. One of the difficulties encountered working with instructors is that they have different levels of skills and knowledge of emerging media and technology. I recently participated in a significant revision of a digital art and design course, which included the addition of ethical, legal, policy and social aspects of digital design, as well as the incorporation of social media as tools used by the students in

their learning activities. In the case of digital media studies receiving significant revision, the largest problem we face is *not* in helping students master new tools and incorporate them into their learning; it is, rather, the necessity of helping instructors prepare to teach courses that include new and social media. More often than not, the issues that arise are related to the assessment of learning within this new media environment. Student transgressions with regard to the use of the media are rarely technical. They often occur due to the blurred lines between ethical uses of media, intellectual property rights, and the tension between "common practices" and "academic expectations."

One challenge we face is in analyzing, evaluating, recognizing and implementing the appropriate digital media tools and technologies for teaching and learning in higher education without succumbing to the appeal of the shiniest new trend of the moment. Another is assessing the effectiveness of these degrees of literacy, ensuring that they are not taught to the detriment of deep learning in meaningful topics, and providing learning experiences that are rich in opportunities for research and the development of critical thinking. A key strategy for encouraging digital media literacy is to place a strong emphasis on acquiring the skill of learning to learn, which is congruent with our commitment to serving lifelong learners. Hobbs offers the following chart (below) as a guide for instructional practices for digital and media literacy education (p. 23):

How might this translate into working with a student in face-to-face, blended or fully online studies? The following studies include most, if not all, of the practices that may be applied using both individual and group activities. Note that rather than keeping a diary, students are presenting their reflections in blog format or using other digital and social media environments.

Digital Storytelling

Students in Digital Storytelling master at least one new tool every two to three weeks. In a distance learning environment, they do not receive one-to-one tutorial assistance as is common in the laboratory setting. Rather, they are directed to seek tutorial assistance in social media spaces such as YouTube, how-to.com and other World Wide Web

Instructional Practices of Digital and Media Literacy Education

Keeping a Media-Use Diary	Record-keeping activities help people keep track of media choices and reflect on decisions about sharing and participation, deepening awareness of personal habits.
Using Information Search and Evaluation Strategies	Finding, evaluating and sharing content from a variety of sources helps people explore diverse sources of information. Using search strategies appropriate to one's needs helps people make discriminating choices about quality and relevance.
Reading, Viewing, Listening and Discussing	Active interpretation of texts helps people acquire new ideas, perspectives and knowledge and make sense of it in relation to lived experience. Dialogue and sharing help deepen understanding and appreciation.
Close Analysis	Careful examination of the constructed nature of particular texts encourages people to use critical questioning to examine the author's intent and issues of representation.
Cross-Media Comparison	Comparing and contrasting two texts that address the same topic help people develop critical thinking skills. By examining genre, purpose, form and content, and point of view, people recognize how media shape message content.
Gaming, Simulation and Role-Playing	Playful activities promote imagination, creativity and decision-making skills, supporting people's reflective thinking about choices and consequences.
Multimedia Composition	Message composition using a combination of language, images, sound, music, special effects and interactivity provides real-world experience addressing a particular audience in a specific context to accomplish a stated goal. Teamwork, collaboration and knowledge sharing enhance creativity and deepen respect for the diverse talents of individuals.

resources that provide superb step-by-step instructions in video and with screencasts using a wide range of the very tools students are learning to master. In addition, digital media online courses have a student café in which students help each other learn some of the more difficult aspects of using Twitter and other social media tools.

Students typically enroll in this popular study with a wide range of skill sets. Some students start the course with excellent writing skills – superb writers, expressing an interest in writing and storytelling, but tentative about their limited digital skills. Other students begin stronger on the technical side, with less confidence in their ability to write a good story. The shared student spaces in this study provide them with the opportunity to express their concerns and share their work with their peers. This highly supportive environment allows students to share strategies and provide feedback on the development of each other's projects, which is a wonderful preparation for peer critique.

One way to foster critical analysis, evaluation and thinking is through the implementation of carefully designed rubrics that allow students to participate in peer critique and evaluate digital media artifacts. For example, in the Digital Storytelling course, students apply a digital storytelling rubric to the review and evaluation of professional digital stories, as well as those of their peers. The rubric used in CDL studies was adapted from a tool created to evaluate digital stories at the University of Houston.[2] A wonderful side effect of applying this rubric to the analysis of different story projects is that students gain a strong grasp of commonly accepted criteria for the creation of digital stories as they evaluate them. It helps them understand where their own stories fit within the spectrum of other digital narratives.

This type of course, which has a focus on both storytelling and digital media mastery, provides all levels of students with the opportunity and skills to gradually acquire competency and literacy as the study evolves. In my experience, even the student with the least technical skill among her peers has been able to create a blog; learn Twitter; review, research and evaluate digital media resources; and create digital stories that combine elements of written narrative, audio commentating, visual resources, moving images and music. All of these skills form the building blocks of digital media literacy.

Digital Art and Design, Introductory and Advanced. These courses have been revised to include a stronger emphasis on applying social responsibility and ethical principles, peer critique, blogging (as a platform for portfolio development and artistic statements) and close analysis.

Information Design. This course has been substantially revised to include all of the recommended practices of digital and media literacy education, along with stronger theoretical foundations and emphasis on contemporary mixed media practices.

History and Theory of New Media. This was a guided independent study using the now defunct Google Wave (incorporated at the request of the student, when Wave was in its early experimental stages). This was a very successful study in which the student communicated privately with me using Google Wave, a rich and flexible environment that supported integration with most types of media, and allowed for both simultaneous and asynchronous dialogue. Students included their preliminary reflections, research, experimentation and dialogue in the Google Wave environment, but selected a number of other tools to assist with their study. Once refined, research and reflective statements were published on student blogs. This study is now being proposed as a CDL course using alternative media environments to create personalized learning experiences.

Studies in Mobile Media. This is a new set of guided independent studies open to students across the college. Current students are working on independent projects using a variety of mobile media. For example, one student is focusing on the medium for artistic expression using photography and video. Another is applying the study to create the research foundation for a business application. The text for this course, *Mobile Technologies: From Telecommunications to Media* (Goggin, 2008), provides a critical analysis for the use of mobile media in global contexts, thus applying the principles of teaching digital and media literacy described above.

V. Danger Zones

The flip side of digital and media literacy is that access to unfiltered information puts the student at risk of encountering compromising content, behaviors and practices. Staksrud, Livingstone, Haddon, and Ólafsson (2009, p. 18) and Hobbs (2010, p. 29) wrote a comprehensive report on research of children's use of online technologies in which they categorize associated risks in three areas: content, contact and conduct (see table below).

Content Risks	Contact Risks	Conduct Risks
This includes exposure to potentially offensive or harmful content, including violent, sexual, sexist, racist or hate material.	This includes practices where people engage in harassment, cyber bullying and cyber stalking; talk with strangers; or violate privacy.	This includes lying or intentionally misinforming people, giving out personal information, illegal downloading, gambling, hacking and more.

While I find this useful in the analysis of related risks for our adult students, in my experience the following are the types of risks we are most likely to encounter in educational uses of digital and social media: Privacy and Personal Data at Risk; Security Risks; Intellectual Property and Copyright Issues; and Ethical Considerations.

Privacy and Personal Data at Risk

Access to digital and social media ecosystems comes with an unfortunate trade-off, in which the student is in danger of being tracked by the very websites and tools that he or she uses in order to create this knowledge. It is not uncommon, for example, for their birth date to be required to sign-up for any given Web resource. Sometimes a student is asked to provide even more personal information. This personal data is often harvested for sale to third-party advertisers. When students are asked to share information openly on a blog, to distribute their work using various Web tools, or to create objects that may become the property of the company that created the tools used, a whole new level of digital media literacy is required. Virtual worlds such as Second Life provide the student with anonymity – they may select an avatar name of their choice, and only Linden Lab, the company running Second Life, will have access to that data. Disclosure of another avatar's personal and private information is a grievous breach of the Second Life terms of service, and therefore a bannable offense, which is not taken lightly. Following is an excerpt from the community standards that addresses the issue of disclosure.

Second Life Community Standards[3]

Disclosure

Residents are entitled to a reasonable level of privacy with regard to their Second Life experience. Sharing personal information about your fellow residents without their consent – including gender, religion, age, marital status, race, sexual preference, alternate account names, and real-world location beyond what is provided by them in their resident profile – is not allowed. Remotely monitoring conversations in Second Life, posting conversation logs, or sharing conversation logs without the participants' consent are all prohibited.

The student selecting to participate in virtual world activities is afforded a level of privacy protection that is currently higher than when they use Facebook, for example, which has an unfortunate history of making private data public without the user's knowledge. Facebook also has been charged with harvesting personal data for the use of advertising, particularly with their Beacon program. On Aug. 12, 2008, a class action lawsuit was launched against Facebook, which was later settled for the sum of $9.5 million (Brodkin, 2009). Students should be informed of the risks they take when registering for these social media services and learn to review their privacy and security settings on a regular basis.

Security Risks

The use of digital, social media and Web 2.0 tools puts the student at risk of exposure to a wide range of threats. These range from low-level annoyances, such as infection by a computer virus, to more serious threats such as being hacked by a malicious intruder. In addition, the student should be aware of the dangers inherent to revealing private and personal data on social media networks. This may lead to serious security breaches such as identity theft, cyber stalking, harassment, and other undesirable side effects of being a digital citizen. The best preventative measure is to educate students in calculated risk analysis and raise their awareness of the implications of privacy policies and security policies, ethical considerations and legislative issues involved in using digital and social media for knowledge sharing, acquisition and creation.

Intellectual Property and Copyright Issues

Digital media literacy, in my opinion, must include some education on instructional copyright and copyright law, as well as ethics. The questions of intellectual property and copyright have two sides. The first involves the use of intellectual property of others by students. Do students understand that they cannot choose content created by others without their permission, even if it seems to be readily available online? In this new era, some students struggle to understand that digital artifacts belong to their creator, and unless otherwise stated, should not be appropriated, refashioned or repurposed without permission. The other side of intellectual property and copyright involves the protection of the student's work. Many free tools have a lengthy terms of service agreement in which, buried in small print, they claim full ownership of any content and materials uploaded using their service, or, require the user to grant the service a perpetual license to use and redistribute the content, even in advertising. Students should pay careful attention to the content ownership clauses of any terms of service agreement prior to registering for a service.

Ethical Considerations

The convenience of digital and social media comes at an ethical cost to both users and providers. Choosing to access a digital or social media site (or application) presents the user with an ethical choice regarding how they choose to use, and share digital assets available to copy, download and disseminate.[4] Will they respect copyright, attribute original authors, and share information responsibly? Will they pay for monetized digital content rather than seek out pirated versions? For the provider, ethical decisions are multi-layered, and in many ways define the nature and intent of the organization offering the application and services. Will they collect user data and track user activity? Will this be with or without user consent? Will they sell this data to third party businesses? How will they protect and store the information and assets? Students should be prepared to investigate whether the company providing a digital tool or service is ethical in the handling of user data and information, asking questions such as: Does all content created by the user remain the intellectual property of the user, or a company claiming all rights to all materials created with their tools? Is the provider downloading hidden applications to a user's computer to harvest information or use for advertising? Does the application leave security gaps that might provide an entry point to an intruder? Ethical use of content and how providers use private personal data are two of the key components of ethics, along with security policies and practices. In addition, we need

to educate students in ethical approaches to the repurposing, creation and sharing of content.

VI. Epilogue

On February 11, 2011, I sat next to our colleague, Nazik Roufaiel, a native of Egypt, at the New Mentor Orientation in Latham, N.Y. We watched Arabic broadcasts on the Al Jazeera Network in real time as historical events unfolded in Cairo. As we viewed the live video stream of protesters demanding the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, ongoing updates popped up on my iPhone from *The New York Times,* CNN, BBC, Reuters, *Le Monde,* and other news sources. Colleagues from all over the world were commenting on the events on Facebook, and my Twitter feed filled with instantaneous accounts of the live happenings. Social and mobile media were not only purveyors of news to those of us watching from afar. In a mashable article titled "Egyptian President Steps Down Amidst Groundbreaking Digital Revolution," Emily Banks (2011) commented on the role of social media in the revolution:

> From the beginning, the revolution in Egypt was propelled by the use of social media. It at least partly began on Facebook with the creation of Facebook groups that gained hundreds of thousands of members and promoted the early protests in Cairo. Subsequently, the government blocked Facebook and Twitter and eventually shut down Internet access completely. And with the outside world following the unfolding revolution online, political leaders and others, including Twitter, spoke out against the violence and freedom of expression issues at risk. (p. 1)

Later that day, a colleague commented that he was a little perturbed that one of his new mentees had delivered the first draft of his degree program rationale via iPhone. Meanwhile, a student taking mobile media studies shared his new blog, with an analysis of several mobile applications, before even completing his first reflection for the study. It seems that some of our students are already embracing the tools underlying digital and social media literacy.

The college's *Vision 2015* includes the following social mandate:

> Our mission is to provide education to people who are actively engaged in sustaining and seeking to improve a challenging, diverse and problematic world. Our role as a public institution is not separate from our citizenship in the same world that challenges our learners. We must endeavor to provide the education they need to thrive as individuals, as members of communities, as active citizens and as agents for change. (p. 4)

I invite you to consider this statement in alignment with Hobbs's (2010) comment on the role of digital and media literacy in education:

> Digital and media literacy education offers the potential to maximize what we value most about the empowering characteristics of media and technology, while minimizing its negative dimensions. As the Knight Commission report, Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age, explains, informed and engaged communities need citizens who appreciate the values of transparency, inclusion, participation, empowerment, and the common pursuit of the public interest. (p. xi)

I propose that educating ourselves and our students for digital and media literacy is an important aspect of effective teaching and mentoring for 21st century citizenship.

Notes

1. *Leads by total June to November 2010.* Internal data report on potential applicant inquiries by center and by discipline. This information is based on an analysis of prospective student inquiries, for the period from June 1, 2010 through November 30, 2010. It was generated by the college's office of Admissions, SUNY Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, NY, 2011
2. University of Houston, Digital Storytelling Rubric, retrieved April 5, 2011. http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/DS-Project-Guidelines-2010.html
3. Linden Lab, "Second Life Community Standards," http://secondlife.com/corporate/cs.php. San Francisco, CA: Accessed April 1, 2011.
4. Assets include data provided, photographs and other images, documents and written content, and any media or digital artifact created and uploaded by the user.

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"The individual and social aims of education are not only both essential but also are each necessary to the other. Only through the actions of competent, ethical creative individuals can a society be sustained and improved. Only through the systems and ethos of a humane and supportive society can an individual thrive and reach his or her fullest potential. Further, it is only through working in the social realm – with and for others – that the self can develop. Thus, education must foster not just the individual's growth and accomplishment but also social justice, appreciation of diversity and attention to the greater good. Each of these aims is essential. Each needs to function in constant interaction with the other."

Katherine L. Jelly, "Between Individual and Society: An Essential Dialectic in Progressive Teaching and Learning," in Higher Education for Democracy, *1999, p. 189*

Three Poems

Chansak Suwanchaichinda,
Long Island Center

Lost but Found

The star, there, our star
Every night, together
Always mesmerized
By the white gem

The familiar sound
Your voice, your laugh
Still echoed in my mind
Never forgotten

I'm here again
Looking at our star
But tonight, the cold breeze
Is my only company

Can the star see you?
I really wonder
I hope, at least
You can still see it

I am behind, I know
But wait for me
One day soon
You will be found again

Debra Monte, Center for Distance Learning

Awakening

Bathe me in your sunshine
Let me drink you in
And take you deep.

Rising and falling
The breath comes in
And out.

Redemption washes over me
Like a gentle
Warm
Breeze

At one within
At once
Without.

Canyon Heart

I hear what you say
I've heard the words before
Both as a young and trusting girl
And now … years later.

But your words
Echo
Within the
Empty chambers.

Bouncing
Back and forth
Looking for a place
To land.

With nothing to
Hold onto
They
Slip away.

Changing Ways of Knowing for Transitioning Women

Jo Jorgenson, Rio Salado College (Tempe, Ariz.)

Schuante, a soft-spoken 47-year-old African American woman with five children, spent over 20 years in and out of prison, yet she emanates a profound state of well-being in her life now. After serving her last sentence, she returned to the community almost four years ago and secured employment in a field for which she was trained while incarcerated. Schuante continues to be successful in her work today. When asked about turning points in her life, she remarked, "To be honest, it only boils down to one thing for me: it is education."

Reflection

When I first encountered her among a group of learners in a construction program that taught carpentry and electrical skills, Schuante was nearing release from a minimum security facility and finishing her workforce development training as a college student in prison. At Rio Salado College in Tempe, Ariz., incarcerated students enroll in certificate and associate degree programs while still in prison. Although the array of educational offerings has fluctuated over the last 25 years along with the state budgets and the political climate, the Department of Corrections has maintained contracts with the local community colleges throughout Arizona to provide opportunities for inmates to advance their education and learn skills that will improve their chances of employment. During one of these peaks in the department's commitment to education for inmates, Rio was able to expand experiential learning for minimum security women by training them at actual construction sites in the community. The students, working alongside their instructor, applied theory to practice by building Habitat for Humanity homes and remodeling businesses and educational work spaces for government and industry.

As I observed Schuante in this environment in my role as an administrator of instructional programs, I was struck by the contrast of her quiet, shy demeanor and the strength of her voice as she shared her learning experiences and knowledge with the newer students. She mentored and tutored, easily conveying her love for the electrical trade and her hope and dream to be a part of that industry after her release. It wasn't until more than a year later that I chanced upon her again as one of 11 interviewees whom I selected by criterion and snowball sampling strategies to be part of a phenomenological study. My purpose was to explore women's perceptions of their post-secondary educational experiences during incarceration and the influence of that involvement in their lives post-release.

The study was completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, but I have been acutely interested in the relationship of education for incarcerated men and women to successful community re-entry for over 30 years. For much of that time, I have placed special focus on positively impacting the lives of women who have been serving sentences of probation, imprisonment, or parole for criminal activity. My exposure to their stories of economic and social marginalization as women struggling to survive in a world dominated by male principle has deeply moved me to concentrate my energies on creating enhanced and equal educational opportunities for this population. In my current position as dean of instruction and community development, my level of involvement is one that is more closely aligned with policy change, and less connected with individuals. Nevertheless, my passion for providing quality-driven post-secondary educational opportunities to incarcerated adults and juveniles is a constant. With regard to incarceration and reintegration, we have egregious social issues that need serious attention and contemporary, innovative solutions.

Jo Jorgenson

Relevance

In the United States, more than 2.3 million adult men and women are incarcerated in penal systems nationwide. More than one out of every 100 adults is behind bars; this country has the largest number of people under confinement in the world (Pew Center on the States, 2008). The cost of educating a prisoner is less than the cost of incarcerating that prisoner (Erisman and Contardo, 2005), yet the value of education in the reduction of recidivism continues to be debated. Additionally, the burgeoning cost of incarceration and current economic shortfalls have led to programmatic cuts that inevitably affect educational funding.

I was intrigued by the approach Owen (1998) offered for viewing the increased criminality of women. Building on the work of previous research, she posited that women's criminal behavior is reflective of their attempts to survive under conditions that they did not create. They have been economically marginalized to the extent that they are not able to cope in a conventional society that still places great value on traditional roles such as those of

mother and wife. If women's experiences are contradictory and fraught with sexual, physical and emotional abuse, their pathways may be littered with a series of bad choices that lead to imprisonment. Thus, female criminals have not become more dangerous; rather, the system has become more punitive in response to the crimes they have committed (Bloom, Chesney-Lind, and Owen, 1994).

The theoretical base for my study was informed by two main ideas that are constructive-developmental in nature: that the meaning of the women's lives during incarceration shape their futures following release; and, that how the women learn to participate in the process of knowing (i.e., Women's Ways of Knowing) influences their understanding of self and their ability to navigate in the larger world. The most prominent finding of my study was that while the skills and knowledge attained through higher education are critical for releasing women to become financially stable, the transformation they have made in their ways of knowing about self and others are the true guide to successful re-entry.

Approach

In Weis and Fine's (2000) discussion of a social researcher's role in sustaining "safe spaces" in qualitative research, the authors posited:

> The spaces into which we have been invited provide recuperation, resistance, and the makings of 'home' … Not rigidly bound by walls or fences, the spaces often are corralled by a series of (imaginary) borders where community intrusion and state surveillance are not permitted. These are spaces where trite social stereotypes are fiercely contested. (p. 57)

Thus, the success of this study was dependent upon my ability to tread carefully and respectfully into this innermost sanctuary, or space, and to seek the stories women have to tell about their journeys during and following their release from prison. To this end, my perspective and experience with imprisoned women was germane to my effectiveness in gaining access to, and most importantly, the trust of the participants. My genuine motivation and trail of my life's work provided me admittance into those spaces that might otherwise be barred from access. Women who trusted me referred me to others, and my immersion into the process of in-depth interviews to seek understanding of the life-views of women began. The study focused on a single, overarching question: do college learning experiences in prison contribute to positive reintegration for women upon release; and if so, how do those experiences improve released women's reintegration?

Schuante invited me to interview her at the tiny, one bedroom apartment she calls home. It was clean and neat, and illustrative of the pride she has in her life now. Her lived experience, as shared with me, was both tragic and inspiring as a story of life at its worst and its best.

Early Memories of Learning

To understand the stories of their lives prior to incarceration, I initiated the interviews with questions that would encourage the participants to reflect on their early memories of life and their first experiences with learning. Schuante talked about her family as a "middle-class family" and recalled that she "never wanted for anything." She was brought up "with manners" and she "believed in God." She shared her positive memories of her early school years and the teachers who told her that she had potential.

Early in the interview, Schuante disclosed that as a young child she had been happy, had loved school, and was raised by a family who could take care of her needs and support her interest in gymnastics and extracurricular activities. The tragedy that occurred in her life at age 13 was the moment that, in her own words, "took me way off course." As she shared her story with me, the emotion was still raw and the tears barely under control.

> I was young and I had a brother that was killed and he was shot outside at close range and for me to be a little girl, 13 years old, and it was right around the corner from my house and it was at the beginning of the school year and I was happy about going back to school, then something like this happened. So I finally got up the courage to go around there to where my brother was at … from the way it sounded, it was really bad. So when I went around there and saw what I saw, my brother laying in the street … big hole in his stomach, bones sticking out … oh my God. … he didn't make it … so I was just so crushed … . I didn't understand … I gave up on everything, I had to go to school, I had to walk around the corner and see the stain from my brother's blood … oh God. So then I started taking another route, which was a longer route because I didn't want to walk by and see that. I started skipping school, I gave up on everything. … I come from a middle- class family, never had to want for nothing. I let it all go, next thing I was hanging with the wrong crowd, ditching school. I got on drugs, in and out of jail, prison …

Seven of the interviewees in this study specifically referenced a loss of self-esteem as they grew older and experienced life-altering events. Five of the women began with stories of positive recollections, while six of them began with memories of difficult childhoods. However, all of the participants expressed some level of discord in their lives early in the interview. To their self-portraits, Schuante and three others added descriptors such as "lost," "hopeless" and "depressed."

While the type of trauma endured by each woman may have differed widely in seriousness or intensity from an outsider's point of view, each woman revealed a profound sense of sadness as she shared her story of the beginning of what eventually led to a downward spiral in her life. For some, it was a tragic event; for others, it was a defining moment of marginalization in their lives – a specifically, bounded time when in retrospect, they began to see themselves falling into a void of unhappiness and self-loathing.

Transitioning to Learning in Prison

Each of the participants shared her beginning moments of attempting to deal with the crises in her life by taking charge – or empowering herself – to change direction. In their own words and way, they were sharing their memories of trying to gain their voices (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1997/1986). All of the participants expressed their desire to enroll in college classes, but with some trepidation and an

intrinsic effort to self-protect. One comment was, "I don't know if I was scared or if I just felt if I was doing something toward being a better person that this would go by quicker or faster, or make it alright. But I just knew I needed to get in on that … " Another said, "I was nervous," and yet another commented that "I was actually fearful of college at first until I got in there to see it wasn't that bad." As each interview progressed, the dialogue about the learning process, as a whole, intensified. In Schuante's words:

> I couldn't wait, I had to stay at [the maximum-security unit] for a year … if it wasn't for me coming in here and getting this now, then I would get out and go right back and do the same thing [that got me here before]. I needed to take a look at myself, because apparently I was not doing things right, and as long as I continued on this same path, it was going to take me to the same place – prison or death, or maybe both.

At this juncture in their stories, none of the women articulated an understanding of the significance of their decisions to be in college beyond the desire to avoid temptation in order to change their direction in life. Patterns emerged from the interviews illustrating their processes for reorienting their earlier learning experiences and self-protecting to strengthen their success. School provided a buffer against the troublemakers, and it helped to create a subset of like-minded women who could support one another in positive ways. By avoiding controversy, and caring and supporting others, they contributed to their own "holding environments," defined by Kegan (1982) as a supporting or "amniotic" internal environment (p. 140) where one is safe to evolve and to let go.

Gaining Voice From Learning

These women found an internal place of safety for learning where they began the process of growing and changing. They began to trust and listen to their inner voices, rather than those of their peers. They prioritized their time in such a way as to allow for study and reflection. As a continuum of change, and in the surroundings of a learning environment that they found to be nurturing and supportive, the women cocooned themselves as protection from their worlds of the past.

Although the types of learning experiences varied from traditional or hybrid learning models to distance learning classes, the participants spoke of the influence of caring educators in their learning process. In their discussions of those who were significant in their lives, every participant expounded on one or more educators who inspired them, confirming the notion that caring is integral to pedagogy. The women offered feedback about many educators and some noneducators who were a positive influence, as well as some who were not.

They recalled learning methodologies that engaged them in the classroom, interactive lab and other hands-on experiences. They talked of skill-building and resultant learning challenges as value-added. Regardless of the methodological approach, the participants emphasized their accounts of knowledge-making within a community of either a few or many that fostered trust and collaboration. One instructor was noted in particular for his positive influence:

> He showed us that we have choices and that the choices that we make impact others … but, that we could, as women, become whatever we want to.
>
> He was just an awesome man, he cares about us and he just looks at you, he never looked at us as prisoners/inmates. He looked at us as people, who we were. I can't thank him enough for that. Even to this day, I talk about him all the time; my teacher was the best. He had a good influence on everybody.

Those who were in self-directed study referenced the feelings of trust gained through unwavering volunteer support and teachers who expressed a genuine interest in their learning through frequent and steady written responsiveness.

Louise talked about her experience with an educator who volunteered her time at the prison facility:

> She was always positive, no matter what. If she said she was going to do it she did it … always. And that is an extremely important thing because you are used to people saying they were going to do something and they didn't do it. She did it, and you can guarantee when that class was getting ready to start you had your books. And you had pencils, paper, graphing calculators, things that you needed to do your classes you had … That was probably the biggest impact because in the beginning if she hadn't done what she said, I wouldn't have had trust in that, but she always did what she said she was going to do … I mean, [she] is an absolutely phenomenal person … she makes you believe in yourself when you don't think that you can. When you don't believe in yourself one bit, she's there to tell you: 'You can do this, you can do this.'

They also talked of the collaboration among their peers evidenced in study group sessions, or the confidence gained by helping other students with homework. Those in classroom and lab settings described collaboration as the teamwork of classmates, or the shared learning experiences of teachers who taught while demonstrating their openness to learning. This fostered trust in those who might have otherwise just been authority figures. This entire new learning environment helped the women to develop a new level of consciousness through their learning experience (Taylor and Marienau, 1995).

In the ongoing recollection of their learning events, the women continued to reflect on their attainment of knowledge, and all that they were deriving from it. As they expanded on those experiences during the interviews, they gained strength of expression, articulated in words and with tone and inflection. They shared purpose in thought and action and spoke of "whole new worlds" with new-found confidence in their abilities. They voiced feelings of empowerment while remaining philosophical about their journeys in academe. Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000) discussed the process of continuous learning as one that approaches "new situations willing to pose and pursue questions out of wonderment" (p. 39). The women in this study, as they gained voice, were not afraid to focus on learning; in fact, they thrived on it. They carried their feelings and their resolve with them following imprisonment.

I was not prepared for the stories of how the participants' knowledge-making experiences led them to reach out to those who continued to struggle, or how the evidence of another's setback seemed to genuinely sadden them. Their focus seemed to shift from being self-absorbed, to the world around them, or caring for others. This capacity for empathy signaled a fundamental change for them in the way they perceived themselves and those around them – from a stance of doubting to believing.

There were others who characterized their defining moments as those experiences that taught them unexpected skills such as those learned in the construction technology classes.

> [My best moments were] when we built the first house, the Habitat [for Humanity] house that we were building. When we finally got done with it – wow – 'look what we did, just a bunch of us.' I think it was 15 of us that got to go out all the time. Like 'look what we did, we made a house you know,' and then we got to have the people come, the owners – yeah, that was really cool – to meet them. It was awesome that we could. You know – as a girl, I didn't really ever think about construction. I don't know if I want to do something like that – *that's a man's job* – but it's really not. Especially with the electrical part – you use your brain more and you don't have to do all the heavy lifting and all that stuff, but it's still just as interesting building the houses – the experience was awesome, just the people. It made me feel 100 percent better about myself, about educating myself and just being more knowledgeable, period.

Connection Between Learning and Reintegration

As the participants shared their experiences returning to their communities, they provided valuable insight about education as a tool for successfully overcoming roadblocks. While the data clearly pointed to the difficulties the participants have faced, the data also underscored the significance of their feelings about the empowerment they gained from learning. According to the findings, the ability to find and keep a job had more to do with the participants' finesse at maneuvering the maize of obstacles put in place by societal norms that bar felons from being given a chance to work. Most of the women had some difficulty finding employment, even though they could demonstrate aptitude based on their education. While the majority was working, some were only able to get part-time employment, and others had not been able to find meaningful or challenging jobs. They said repeatedly, "Society is very unforgiving."

The participants' stories offered some examples of how higher education aided in securing employment. Moreover, their exposés about learning as a transformational experience of self were, perhaps, as influential in successful employment outcome, and certainly paramount in giving them the courage to overcome the many obstacles they face with criminal records.

Schuante, who was hired shortly after release in the field in which she was trained, received an outstanding evaluation for her six-month review. She gives the credit to her college education because it changed her outlook about herself and her capabilities as a worker:

> All this comes from [college]. I never thought this would happen in my life. If it wasn't for [college] and me going in and getting that education, and really coming out and doing something with it – applying myself … and that right there, everything that I have, I could just cry right now because of everything that I have. Before I went in, I went in with nothing, if it wasn't for this class, the program, I'd a came out with nothing. Telemarketing is the only thing that's available for someone that doesn't have no experience or nothing like that. So because of [college], I've come a long way. And also, education has just changed my life totally, if it wasn't for the things I got under my belt as far as those credentials, I'd be out there struggling at telemarketing or working at a hamburger joint. I just have a different outlook on everything.

In Schuante's earlier description of self, she used words such as "lost," "hopeless" and "depressed" to define her place in the world. She now views the tremendous change in her life as:

> I mean now – now I feel so good. I mean, look at the things I accomplished, I actually have a GED, and then I have college courses, and I did quite a few of the college courses, and it's like it just feels good to me.

While Schuante was successful in securing a job where she could apply her skills, the majority of the participants reported employment as the primary challenge after release from prison. In spite of this ongoing challenge, the women viewed their educational experience as one that fueled their sense of self-worth and their resolve to live their lives differently.

Synthesis of Learning and Community Re-entry Experiences

Through the participants' expressions of the influence of learning on their personal growth, or ways of knowing, and their hope for their futures, I was able to better understand what education seems to have done for these women. They knew themselves differently. They could reflect, they could choose, they built new capacities that reach beyond the skills learned through their course work. As a summarizing essay of sorts, they shared their feelings about life, the struggles that have shaped them, those who remain significant in their lives, and their educational journeys.

The findings underscored the significance of the change that has occurred for the participants relative to self-perceptions. All of the participants noted positive attributes about themselves such as "someone with a good personality who loves people and is also a good motivator, good influencer … a very good person," "very independent and focused," "I like me, actually I love myself now … I didn't before," "I'm proud of myself," and "happy, motivated, ready to learn … I adapt well, extremely well." Two of the participants described themselves as "survivors." Although, their perceptions of self were more positive, some of participants used descriptors that pointed to their tentativeness. One interviewee shared that she still had "problems," "but the problems that I have I deal with now, I deal with them."

The evidence of education's influence on these women's lives was multifaceted, varied in color and texture, and woven throughout their experiences. It was embedded in their self-perceptions, in the approaches they have taken to their struggles, and in the recounting of their successes. It also was undisputedly positive and good. According to one participant:

> It made me think, give people a chance. Let them in and not be so negative. I think that when I was doing drugs there was a lot of negativity. Everything was bad, and 'oh my life is horrible.' Just that whole perspective has changed. That people are actually really awesome, everybody has their own personality and [I] just take them as they are. [The world] is a better, wonderful place and I actually get to see it when I'm still alive. There are so many things I want to do and I can't wait to do them. My life was a small box before.

The major change for these participants was in whom they understood themselves to be – as learners, as workers and as contributors to the wider community.

Thus, while trade-related or academic skill level contributes to success, the women emphasized the significance of pure grit and confidence in their ability to be successful at actually getting the position, or to be patient and persevere if not hired. Overwhelmingly, their voices turned to reflections of positive attitude, ability to concentrate, work ethic, openness, honesty, oral and written communication skills, maturity, enthusiasm, and dedication to life as the more meaningful elements of survival and sustainability. The existing literature referencing college-level education's influence on attitudes of released women is scarce. However, there is research that points to the positive effect of learning experiences on women during incarceration, particularly with regard to the lasting effects of instructors' care and encouragement in the classroom (Mageehon, 2003; Reisig, Holtfreter & Morash, 2002; Rose, 2004; Severance, 2004).

The women interviewed in this study credited their demonstrated resolve to succeed in their journeys to their learning – to the long awaited, but undeniable belief they had gained in themselves through the rigor of study, and in the hearts of those who taught them and learned with them.

The exposure to new and different learning opportunities actually changed their earlier views of themselves as women and as learners, hence the transformative learning that Kegan and others have described (Kegan, 2000, p. 48).

For most of the women, this transformation seemed to grow from their very early positive learning experiences, which were reversed somewhere along the journey, to the joy that learning brought once again. They communicated a wealth of newly acquired skills, but also seemed to have changed their frame of reference for knowing.

I hope that this study will be used as a guide for higher education, colleges and community leaders who have interest in the development of initiatives that address transitioning for women from prison. If there is continued effort to deliver the learning opportunities and environment necessary to encourage and promote collaborative solutions for these re-entry women, their possibilities for personal and social adaptation may improve, and their struggle to successfully forge a meaningful pathway and call community "home" may be realized.

Note

All quotes are taken from personal interviews of women that I conducted between August and October 2008.

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"So They Will Honor You as a Human Being": Indigenous Knowledge and the Practice of Mentoring

Jeffrey P. Lambe, Long Island Center

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, I volunteered for a nonprofit environmental education organization when the landscaping season ended. We had contracts with the New Jersey Division of Corrections and Division of Family, Youth Services (DYFS). This is when I met Tekaronianeken Jake Swamp and Wanbli Nata'u Javen Tony Tenfingers, onkwehonwe (original or real human beings) who embodied two of the great cultural traditions of Turtle Island (North America), the Kanyen'keha (Mohawk, the People of the Place of Chert or Quartz) and the Oglala Lakota. In subsequent years, I volunteered with the Tree of Peace Society, a cultural and environmental education organization that Jake founded. At one point, Jake commented: "Why don't you get that piece of paper so they will honor you as a human being?" I have been reflecting on the meaning of this suggestion for a long time. Needless to say, I got that (which turned into those) piece(s) of paper. In the following essay, I will describe some of the unique aspects of mentoring and other insights that I experienced with these two extraordinary people – insights that have influenced the way I approach mentoring students at Empire State College. It may be unreasonable to suggest that those outside of an indigenous culture adopt an indigenous perspective to mentoring and learning. However, attentiveness to a different cultural perspective can prove enriching and can enhance the work that we do.

The natural world is the model for the type of mentoring and learning that I experience. One way to think about indigenous mentoring and learning is the process of "coming to know" through a reciprocal relationship and reflective process between mentor and mentee. As I will describe below, this pedagogy is grounded in a sense of respect for individuality, cultivation and obligation. The continuing unfolding of the renewable quality that is mirrored in the natural world is innate. Although the individual beings and process that exist in nature are distinct, they are interconnected. The natural world is based on both individual integrity and contribution in conjunction with others. This ongoing interconnection facilitates the renewable spark of life's continuance. This is the model for many expressions of indigenous cultures. For example, during the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy, Those Who Build the Longhouse) naming ceremony, the community is reminded about the importance of observing children as they grow: simply watch them. Ideally, there is an obligation to nurture and cultivate the unique attributes that the child will certainly express in the coming years. In turn, these qualities enrich the community and create a healthy world for future generations.

Both Jake and Tony shared traditional narratives and personal stories when they worked in counseling and education environments. Cultural narratives intersecting with personal experiences in a reflective manner is one characterization of traditional teaching and learning. In a sense, traditional narratives hold the culmination of knowledge of a people. These are often expressed in figurative language and represent different levels of experience and knowledge. They are meant to extend to and guide those living today, as well as future generations. In essence, such narratives are a cultural framework that guides people as they *come to being* or *become real human beings*. The narratives, along with the help of elders, knowledge holders, and others helps us embrace the joys and challenges that we meet along the way. There can be many layers of meaning – some that are culture specific, and others that speak to the entire human experience. The nature of traditional narratives allows for disparate, even contradictory, truths to arise simultaneously. It is up to the listener to seek her or his own understanding by drawing on personal inferences. In this sense, truth and validity are determined in terms of a resonance within one's experience and being.

Jeffrey Lambe

I am continually intrigued, challenged and inspired by the depth of knowledge that is grounded in – and stems from – expressions of indigenous knowledge. Even at a young age, I felt that although the knowledge base that I was experiencing was very different, in terms of depth and complexity, it was akin to anything that was being taught in a college or university. This was further validated by the fact that we were regularly solicited to incorporate the Tree of Peace Society's cultural programs with community service learning components of colleges and universities.

While working with the state of New Jersey, I found that the types of learning environments created by both Jake and Tony were designed so that all who

were present could participate equally as learners. Often, for example, the roles of correction counselors, incarcerated youth, adult learners, and the mentor were in a sense suspended. With cultural narratives as the basis of our common work, all were encouraged to reflect on who they were, how they were conducting their lives, and the nature of their relationship to others. The atmosphere could be intimate and personal. This often caused problems, particularly among those who assumed a distanced role because of their responsibilities as counselors. Some were also put-off by the personal nature of this approach. At times, they were challenged by what the narratives and process evoked.

There are other unique qualities to the spirit of this approach. Indigenous mentors begin from a grounded perspective. Preconceived ideas about a mentee are not the norm and may be considered disrespectful. Advice and counsel is individualized, gained through observation, deep listening, and working with the person based on who they are. Often, traditional narratives provided the basis. This was true in my experience. Through careful observation, both Jake and Tony took the time to understand who I was before they made suggestions. They never spoke in an authoritative manner or said things in a direct way like, "you should do this" or, "you shouldn't do that." Their advice was mostly suggestive. Their words often dug deep because they were not based on predetermined or subjective notions; they stemmed from empathy and nonjudgmental observation, and were spoken in a nonconfrontational way. It was because of my experience of their approach that I was forced to really think about my thoughts and actions.

My exposure to indigenous knowledge and community service learning sparked a strong interest in the philosophical and experiential dimensions of knowledge. I have come to appreciate different "knowledges" and have developed a strong interest in how culture and experience inform the construction, communication and validation of knowledge, particularly in educative environments. Perhaps this is the reason that I became very interested in Empire State College's unique and even radical approach to prior learning assessment. Questions related to the legitimization of experiences, skills, aptitudes and bodies of knowledge and how these are understood, translated and validated by the culture and values of institutes of higher learning are complex, intriguing and certainly not simply answered.

Indigenous mentors begin from a grounded perspective. Preconceived ideas about a mentee are not the norm and may be considered disrespectful.

The experiences described above help me think about the practices of mentoring at Empire State College in other ways. Whether we are talking about creating a degree plan or an individualized study, writing a degree rationale, or thinking about prior learning assessment, student centeredness, a core value of Empire State College, is fundamental. A mentor guides the mentee to seek her or his own understanding through drawing on personal inferences. As I mentioned above, truth and validity are not predefined by some set of rules, by turning to a set of preset options or behavioral or conceptual outcomes. They are determined by resonance within one's experience and being. The ability to really listen to students is essential in order to ascertain who they are in terms of interests or personal and/or professional goals, trajectory of study, and how their degree will help them achieve their goals. Adult learners desire clarity and direction. Most new students to Empire State College are excited, apprehensive, and, at times, fearful because of any number of factors related to contemporary adult learners. Deep reflective listening inspires incisive questioning that arises from – and speaks to – who the individual is, thus encouraging learners to look inward and develop deeper critical thinking skills and clarity. Ideally, this stretches them to unexpected areas and levels. Nuanced interpersonal and conversational skills can aleviate student anxiety and help one create a balance between flexibility and structure, challenge and support. I strive to listen deeply in order to successfully cultivate students' interests and goals within the administrative and curricular structure. This requires a reflective process between mentor and mentee. As many mentors at Empire State College will attest, this process is enriching and continually helps one grow as an educator.

I feel very fortunate to work at a college that values and engages the term "mentor" and whose core values mirror my experiences and education philosophy. My exposure to the mentoring skills that I described earlier was somewhat unique. Although I do not use cultural narratives when mentoring, the skills that I saw and experienced among indigenous people and that I strive to continually develop are used by many mentors collegewide.

One final but important point that my own mentors instilled in me was the understanding that the insights and knowledge gained from our mentor should be used for the benefit of those around us, for the natural world, and for future generations. I like to think that I can make a contribution to helping students at Empire State College achieve their goals. Perhaps this is a part of what Jake meant when he suggested that I get that piece of paper all of those years ago.

Upstream Gallery Exhibit, "Collaboration is the Theme"

Mara Mills and Celest Woo, Hudson Valley Center; Yvonne Murphy, Central New York Center; Mindy Kronenberg, Long Island Center

Mara Mills
Hudson Valley Center

Collaboration happens in many ways and as a theater professional, collaboration is a way of life and one that allows me to be most creative and to bring others into the process.

The Upstream Gallery/Empire State College collaboration began when Allen Hart, a member of Upstream and an artist with whom I have collaborated, suggested to the board that they bring me in to direct a project for the December 2010 group show, something that was different, exciting, and might attract more people to the gallery in a time of light attendance.

Previously, I had worked with several organizations to produce collaborative, creative projects bringing together artists, writers, poets and playwrights. Hart had attended two of these at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill, the first connecting visual art and playwrights, the second connecting sculpture and poetry. The Upstream Board agreed. The committee met and decided on the procedure: eight artists, eight poets. The poets would choose work that they found inspirational, and thus their partners in collaboration. Poets could respond to already produced work, the poet and artist could conceive and produce new work, the artist and poet could find work that spoke to them from already produced work, or any other collaborative process they chose.

The next step was to go to Amy Ruth Tobol, the Hudson Valley Center's collaboration-savvy and artist herself, associate dean. My thinking was that it would be fun to bring two organizations into collaboration and I knew that I had talented colleagues in Empire State College mentors. Amy Ruth suggested Mindy Kronenberg and Yvonne Murphy. I had already approached Celest Woo, who is one of my favorite collaboration partners. Two of the other poets were Empire State College alumni – one from the master's program and one, an undergraduate. The other poets invited came from outside the Empire State College circle but within my collaborative network.

Ready, set, go … poets choose artists. Until the writing was finished and the performance work began, I played spider, keeping in touch and meeting with my Upstream partner, Mitch Goldstein, the president of the board. We measured walls, placated artists and writers, kept the stream of communication open and angst to a minimum. Just before the show, most of the poets came in (some with their artists) to rehearse. This wasn't a reading, it was a performance, and rehearsal time was needed to look at transitions between pieces, and hear voices to decide order and pace. For me, it was a high point as the poets and I worked out the performance plan and added new moments, such as one poet (male) walking across to another reciting her poem as she (Celest) danced it, creating a connection between writers – yet another collaboration.

I was pleased with the outcome. The poems were meaningful, the art was important – and the combination of the art and word enhanced both. All of the collaborations worked on an artistic level, and one partnership had an impact that was important both on a human and an artistic level. One of the artists had decided she was no longer going to paint because of major personal stress in her life. This was to be her final show, her final brush-to-canvas moment. Instead, because of the relationship between her and the poet, who brought more than a way with words, the artist is painting again, inspired by the collaboration with her poet. Who can ask for anything more?

And here's a poem from me …

As I Stand Here Folding

… Why don't you write said my muse
as i folded his laundry.
A poem a story why not a novel
my hands smoothed the creases
he came closer
i laid the boxer shorts atop the bleach
whitened hill
… You don't seem to write anymore
i chose a tee shirt
closer still eyes solemnly questioning.
caressing its front i tame the tides of fabric
… Remember when you used to write …
gently i shape the sculpture of its sleeves
… Those poems. he stretched out his arms
for emphasis
upon them i laid my poem fresh and clean.

Yvonne C. Murphy
Central New York Center

I chose June Otani's painting, "A Desert Home," without knowing its historical and autobiographical context. The serene, restrained overtone of the piece belied a profound nervous tension. It was quiet and buzzing. That tone intrigued me. I was also drawn to the sense of elegance and understatement inherent in the composition and use of color. Drawn, too, to its architectural quality – I admired Otani's precision. My own work is very often crowded, excessive, congested, chock full of hyperbole and overstatement. I could learn from this artist.

After I met and corresponded with June Otani, I learned of this painting's background, her family's internment in two different camps during World War II and

her feelings about the treatment of Arab Americans in light of current conflicts. I spent the better part of a gorgeous autumn day at her home, getting to know her art and her life. Borrowing imagery and the language of Japanese Zen gardens, I wrote a poem that I hope reflects the beauty and austerity of her painting but also the confinement, dislocation and shame of her experience.

As a result of our collaboration, Otani recast the painting as a mixed-media installation for the Upstream Gallery show. She added a beautiful, large scroll of paper behind the painting, stenciled ethereally with silvery numbers that were her addresses at the camps. She told me our collaboration brought up long forgotten memories and helped her ease out of an artistic rut. I never told her, until now, that our collaboration was a gift, of grace.

Gardens Without Water

Gila River War Relocation Center 1942-45
(for/after a painting by June Otani)

sabako, desert, raking sand into Zen rivers,
stone families huddled into rows
inside tar papered barracks – turquoise,

Otani and "A Desert Home"

Sondra Gold artwork

amber, turquoise – some rocks get fissured,
rakes leave fractures, a framework over sky.

Superstition Mountain looms,
cacti and mica, raking order out of chaos,
arrangements maturing with the seasons,
a birthday cake, hot dogs, anthropologists,
deep brown clay scarring, mended with
wire bandages.

A miniature landscape pruned into
abstraction,
wanting ocean, rivers' recurring patterns
recalling waves, rippling water: rocks turned
to hide their faces, their flaw.

Celest Woo
Hudson Valley Center

I collaborated with Sondra Gold, and was immediately drawn to her work because it was based on dance, as her artist statement made clear. Once I looked at her pieces, I could see it: we both discovered we love art that represents body movement.

Vertiginous

Passé tilt left, flat. Weight on whole foot. Right heel forward. Lead with sternum. Slight arch. Feel your right little toe. Arms slice through air like a bird, feeling its currents and resistance, interacting with it. Fingers slightly feathered, palms out. Stretching the length on both sides between hips and top of rib cage. Gaze soft left.

Relevé. Bones align: straight line of energy between right shoulder and left big toe, through rib cage, hip, thigh, shin, metatarsals.

Passé tilt. Vertigo. Living life on two axes.

Combining precarious lift
with staying grounded
tilting one's way
merging risk and connectedness.
Risk: knights once met in tilts,
aiming lances to unseat.
Pinball machines bear "Tilt!" signs
and warn you with red lights
that you've lost center,
forfeited the game.
A motion sensor
calibrated to stifle and punish movement.
In modern dance,
your center is the sensor,
calibrated to breathe movement into stillness
and stillness into motion
so that a tilt is an adventure
not a violation,
an act of trust,
a shifting off the center,
a displacement from one's groundedness.
At the county fair,
screams of delight emit
from the red Tilt-A-Whirl
as people revel in centrifugal and centripetal
forces
whipping them round, up then down,
left then right, simultaneously, rebounding

like the dynamics in dance
of fall and recovery, tension and release,
suspension, rebound, up and over,
isolating our center from our extremities
so we can whip our head round,
flick arms akimbo,
swing our legs in loosened hip sockets
and preserve our center of gravity
that pulses power into the flightiness
of fingertips, elbows, toes.
The Tilt-A-Whirl remains still at its center,
so that if you stood there,
regarding the hills and dales traversed by the
whirling red chairs,
you'd revolve slowly,
still yet moving,
surveying the fairground.
Still yet moving is how to tilt,
moving the torso without breaking the line
between upper rib cage and hip,
just carving out the underside.
This is how I find myself:
carve out that underside, that ignored
negative space,
breathe into it, energize it,
a bubble of air
to create a vector
in the opposite direction.
I used to break lines of passion
allowing that dead space to intrude,
pull me off balance, crumpling my form.
The key to tilting side is pulling upright
– dance works by forces in opposition –
pulling the left hand away from the right
knee
feeling the line of connection between them,
pushing the floor away with the standing leg
as my center settles.
I emerge from a crumpled world
of desires too close-bound
and vectorless
into a place where opposing pulls
expand me, birdlike,
aligning delicate bones
into a tilted
vertiginous
exhilaratingly lopsided
interstice.

Mindy Kronenberg
Long Island Center

When I was asked by Mara Mills, along with colleagues from Empire State College, to be a part of the Upstream Gallery exhibit, "Collaboration is the Theme," I was delighted at the prospect of working with a visual artist to test my own poetic perspective and linguistic sensibility. In the past few years, I had participated in collaborative exhibits at art galleries on Long Island, some sponsored by the Survivors Art Foundation. These had provocative and poignant themes such as Breaking the Walls of Bias and The Body Altered, and I wrote poems in response to works in various media that expressed a spectrum of pain and triumph. It was a challenging exercise in both artistic license and humility.

Mara asked each of us to connect with an artist from a list of Upstream community regulars, view their work online, and make a connection with someone whose visions or artistic execution resonated with our own. She left the nature and process of these collaborative pairings entirely up to us. I was drawn to Arline Simon's collages and sculptures for their metaphoric possibilities – they spoke to me in images, abstract and representational, whimsical and dark – that sparked my curiosity while inspiring my own narratives. Arline and I had conversations by email and on the phone, sharing images and poetry until pairings clicked for both of us. I was drawn to three of her works, using an existing poem for a mixed-media piece, and writing new poems for a sculpture and the acrylic collage, "Minding the Grid," which struck me as both a window and warning sign to the artist and viewer.

Minding the Grid

There is no map
to where the pigments
of her imagination take her,
no kick line of wired poles
crowning miles of fertile ground.
A panicked stranger
rides the brakes
looking for signs,
points to a passenger's
lap tented and veined
with turnpikes and tolls.
A billboard reads:
The shortest distance
between two lines
is not art.
Mind the grid
and it minds you,
hapless traveler.
These roads might well
point toward the light,
but look around you.
We roll on empty
straight into the dark.

Arline Simon's "Minding the Grid"

Blended Learning Online: New Perspectives and Practices

Sheila Marie Aird and Mary V. Mawn, Center for Distance Learning

This reflection will offer an additional way to define "blended learning." To date, most models of educating have been discussed and approached from either a face-to-face model, face-to-face model with an online component, face-to-face with a residency component, or simply online. Although the discussions about these models are complicated, and the camps of best versus better models will always exist, what is clear is that education as we know it is evolving on a daily basis. How students choose to be educated is not only creating a change in the learning landscape, but is ultimately changing the basic ways we educate and how we choose to blend or not to blend. We are left to deal with a central question: How do we educate in a meaningful way that allows the student to empower themselves and drive their own educational pursuits?

Sheila Marie Aird

Mary V. Mawn

The idea of blended learning is not a new concept. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) describe blended learning as "both simple and complex":

> At its simplest, blended learning is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences. There is considerable intuitive appeal to the concept of integrating the strengths of synchronous (face-to-face) and asynchronous (text-based Internet) learning activities. At the same time, there is considerable complexity in its implementation with the challenge of virtually limitless design possibilities and applicability to so many contexts. (p. 96)

Heinze and Proctor (2004) define blended learning in a more generalized fashion: "Blended learning is learning that is facilitated by the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning, and founded on transparent communication amongst all parties involved with a course" (p. 10). In fact, this second definition describes what mentors and students having been doing at Empire State College throughout its history.

While the majority of students at the college's Center for Distance Learning (CDL) study at a distance, they too are engaged in different learning models. For the sake of this discussion, we would like to share some examples of how "blending" can be viewed through another lens. The discussion we offer will focus on how we "blend" at CDL, and the infinite possibilities that can develop from using these approaches to engage, enlighten and place education in the hands of the student.

Although this reflection is not a pedagogical discussion per se, it is an attempt to create dialogue, raise awareness and expand the definition of how we view and describe blended learning.

Blended Distance/E-Learning

Distance learning has changed dramatically in the shift from print-based to Web-based, which has informed how we interact with and educate our students. Another ingredient is today's student of the digital age, who is often seeking a more interactive and authentic online experience. Defined as the 21st century learner, this group of students is quite comfortable with blogs, wikis and other social media. A recent article in *Education Week* (2010) asked: "How do you define 21st-century learning?" Responses from 11 educators pointed to the need for learner-centered, real-world educational opportunities. One expert states, "Twenty-first century learning will ultimately be 'learner driven,'" while a second states, "Students in the 21st century learn in a global classroom and it's not necessarily within four walls." Individualized and lifelong learning are also key elements. As another respondent stated: "No longer does learning have to be one-size-fits-all or confined to the classroom. The opportunities afforded by technology should be used to re-imagine 21st century education, focusing on preparing students to be learners for life" (p. 32).

As we look to expand the definition of blended learning, taking into account the 21st century learner, we explored some of the ways that we "blend" in the online environment. We approached our task by inviting colleagues to share, in their own words, how they think about and integrate blended learning in the studies that they create and/or teach. These examples span various areas of study and, as will become evident, use different approaches to online blended learning.

Blended Learning: Online and Community-based (Example 1) – Tom Mackey

This term, I am working with a student on an independent study on social and community informatics. The open learning environment at Empire State College encourages this kind of exploration with experimental modes of learning, in this case, a study co-designed with the student. This is a course that I originally developed in 2007 for the Honors College at the University at Albany. I happened to mention my experience teaching this course in a blog posting and one of my students in Digital Storytelling was intrigued by the idea, expressing interest in doing something similar at CDL. This student is engaged with her community and contributes in many ways through food drives and other volunteer work. She was interested in the idea of a course that required service learning, an activity that she was already involved in, and would allow her to blend theory and practice in a meaningful way. For this study, the student blogs about theoretical readings related to social and community informatics and she conducts service learning in her community, reflecting on the readings and bringing these insights to her observations. She also conducts a structured field study, where she analyzes the organization from a social and community informatics perspective and identifies a need that then impacts her work at the community location. The blend occurs on several levels – blending theory and practice, in place and online learning, individual and collaborative practice, course work and service, and integrating a range of hybrid technologies to tell her story and to contribute to the technology needs and strategic planning of the organization.

Blended Learning: Online and Community-based (Example 2) – Joyce McKnight

I think my Community Organizing course at CDL is a good example of blended learning, as well as of service learning. It contains the usual asynchronous discussions and written assignments. I [also] use Elluminate [a virtual learning environment] for weekly online conversations. I frequently talk with students on the telephone about their individual projects; and, almost every semester, one or two students do face-to-face things with and for the on-ground community organizing projects I am doing. For instance, in spring 2010, one of my students built a balloon dart board for a Kids Carnival we had for the Teen Connection [program], and came up from near New York City with his wife and family to run it. This semester, a Schenectady student has joined at least two of the neighborhood organizations there and has been doing very valuable volunteer work.

Blended Learning: Online and Hands-on (Example 3) – Ken Charuk and Mary Mawn

The Science of Cooking is a fully online course that takes a unique approach to blended learning. In this course, students use hands-on laboratory activities performed with common household items and ingredients in the student's own kitchen to explore the science of cooking. These activities are designed to make connections between theory and practice, and offer students different ways to connect with the course content beyond an exclusive printed-word learning style. Authentic, everyday activities such as browning meat and kneading dough help students understand the underlying biological, chemical and physical concepts and processes. This blending of theory and practice, text and hands-on is intended to promote deeper learning, as well as the understanding that science impacts everyone's lives.

Blended Learning: Online and Virtual (Example 4) – Audi Matias

Many higher education institutions, particularly those involved in online learning, have discovered the great potential that virtual environments, such as Second Life (SL), brings to their programs. In the interdisciplinary, online course The Future of Being Human, we use SL to create a blended learning approach that provides students with a supported, constructive learning experience. A series of activities utilizing SL are scaffolded throughout the course in order to help students with the technology; in addition, the instructor meets on a regular basis, virtually, with the students. As with any experiment, students approach the SL activities using the scientific method. For the final SL-based learning, they are required to develop two hypotheses before they start their experiment, [each including: a description of] the world(s) they expect to see, the technologies they chose to use, and their experience as an avatar. Then, they participate in the activity, making observations based on their two hypotheses. This addition of a virtual meeting space component is a great gateway for students and instructors to come together, despite the physical constraints, to reflect on educational materials and subject content.

Blended Learning: Online and Field-based (Example 5) – Phil Ortiz

In Marine Biology, students are asked to spend some time at the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk (CT). Although they don't interact with their course instructor while there, they do meet with the members of the team of folks who helped develop some aspects of the course (who also appear on a DVD that was produced for the course).

Blended Learning: Online, Field-based, and Virtual (Example 6) – Sheila Marie Aird and Mitchell Wood

In Public History: A Shared Conversation (to be offered starting in fall 2011), an advanced course, students will explore the concepts and practices of public history. Students will explore and critique diverse media, including film and websites, oral history collections and photographs.

Students also will take self-guided tours to physical and virtual public history sites and will have the opportunity to conduct hands-on research projects ranging from video documentation to traditional research papers.

Blended Learning: Online, Active, and Virtual (Example 7) – Pat Lefor and Betsy Braun

As described on an Empire State College blog (http://commons.esc.edu/cdl-course-highlights), written by Betsy Braun:

One popular art course, The Photographic Vision, employs virtual field trips to enhance the student experience. Primarily an overview of photography, its history and the many genres it encompasses, this course also teaches hands-on techniques. The field trips are designed to expose students to a wealth of historical, educational and artistic knowledge directly related to each module's topic. A visit to the American Museum of Photography provides a history of the discipline, as well as unique exhibitions and research resources. The websites of individual photographers and galleries offer high-quality, contextualized images and lessons in presentation. These, in turn, assist students as they complete their own photographic assignments for group critiques. Throughout the course, students take full advantage of experts working in diverse photographic specialties such as journalism, portraiture and documentation. At the *National Geographic* magazine site, students find professional advice on specific topics such as taking photos in the rain or shooting with available light in addition to the vast archive of the magazine's renowned images.

Blended Approaches in Distance Learning

As is evident from these seven examples, CDL faculty working in "blended" environments use an array of methods. These approaches include:

- Connecting the applied to the conceptual/theoretical;
- Individual reports and group discussions;
- Multiple modes of assessment, including student choice of final project;
- Technology-enabled (online) and hands-on (offline);
- Interdisciplinary;
- Text- and video-based;
- Discovery through primary source documents;
- Map blogs;
- Virtual field trips;
- Blogs and wikis; and,
- Learner-centered activities.

There are other courses at CDL not mentioned here that are already developed or are in production that offer a blended approach to student learning and that also take into consideration various learning styles. As the educational landscape and our students change, we will continue to look at different resources and tools of engagement to enhance the educational pursuits of our students. Such approaches – some that exist, others yet to be discovered – will serve them both inside and outside the academic arena, and open the dialogue to the way by which "blended" is viewed in the e-learning/online community.

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The Haiku Maker

Robert Congemi, Northeast Center

As too often these days, Daniel awoke from a deep sleep, not immediately certain of his whereabouts, seemingly drugged, the usual for him recently. What followed was the process of getting back to his normal self – a clearing of his head, the waning of pain. It was the price he had decided of the great stress upon him, his agency in Albany County, the cosmos since what the newspapers were calling the Great Recession.

"I'm not myself," he told a young co-worker named Jenna, reflecting back to an earlier conversation. "How will we ever find places for all the homeless and would-be homeless?"

But, also, simultaneously, the morning's sunlight was simply overwhelming his bedroom, making itself a means for equilibrium, substituting warmth for exhaustion, coziness for anxiety. Alone in bed, in the room at the back of the little suburban house he shared with his wife and two children, Daniel couldn't help observing, regarding the moment:

"Well, isn't this a surprise? Now if only I didn't have to re-enter the world. Especially today."

So, too, shortly after rising from bed, could he not help giving in again to an impulse to write a tiny poem upon the matter? Finding paper and pencil in a table beside his bed, Daniel dropped down into a chair and thought about composing. He prepared to write a haiku, poetry an older colleague from work had introduced him to, whose practice was curiously a new pleasure for him.

"It's fun and satisfying," the colleague, whose name was Donovan, observed. Donovan had studied literature at the university and still read a great deal. Their offices at the agency were contiguous. "Seventeen syllables in three lines – five, seven, five – and if you're any good you might even capture how ephemeral nature is."

"Oh, is that all?" Daniel, the social worker, had asked.

"No, actually," Donovan went on. "If you're really good, you also manage to suggest correspondences between the various worlds – you know, among humans, animals, birds, flowers … "

Robert Congemi

"Anything else?" Daniel was droll, but very interested.

"Sure," Donovan said. "But I don't want to overdo it at first. Someday we'll talk about meaning vibrating like an arrow that has just hit a bulls-eye."

"I'll do my best," was all Daniel had managed to say, and turned to the list of phone calls he needed to return to clients and unsolicited callers asking for help in finding a place to live.

Surprisingly, this morning Daniel found the tiny poetry coming easily to him. He knew he wanted to connect the sunshine with his dreaming, and to be pleasantly ironic about it.

"Let's see," he said aloud, and wrote: "'Lighting up my room' … that's five syllables." He started the second line by finishing his thought: "'The sun.'" He paused, but was having good luck and quickly added, "' – though my dreams were warm … '" That made seven syllables for the second line. Now for the last line. "'Enough and … '" He did not struggle for long. Was he in some kind of Buddhist zone? Donovan had told Daniel haiku was a Buddhist thing, spiritual, mystical. He even got his rhyme and the necessary two syllables. " … 'abloom.'"

Finished, Daniel smiled at his success, raised a wry eyebrow and somewhat reluctantly proceeded to his morning ablutions and dressing, reprising the poem as he went along:

Lighting up my room

The sun – though my dreams were warm

Enough and abloom.

When these were done, Daniel went downstairs to his kitchen to get food to take with him to work for lunch, the creaky steps of the house reminding him of how alone he was without his family. His wife and two children had gone to visit Daniel's in-laws. He himself had been unable to abandon his responsibilities at work, but the children were on school holiday and his wife Emily had not seen her parents for several weeks. Daniel missed his family very much, just as he had known he would. He hated to be separated from them in any way. The previous day he had seen them off. Daniel stood in the driveway with the children, at the side of the family's house, a bungalow with the conventional bushes and shrubs and porch. Emily was still inside the house,

making certain she had forgotten nothing for the week's trip and readying herself to drive the 300 miles to her family home. His daughter Grace stood before him, looking up at Daniel in her pretty, travel dress, while his son was behind her a few paces, hopping up and down, typical of him, a 6-year-old boy.

"Grace, I want you to look after your mother," he instructed his eldest child. "You know she can work herself into a state, when there is too much for her to think about."

His daughter looked and grinned at her brother.

"What is it?" Daniel asked her.

Grace did not mind replying. "Daddy, that sounds like you, not Momma."

Daniel considered the veracity of this. Behind them, his son continued to hop up and down.

"Sean," he scolded his son, not able to think of anything else to say.

When his wife and children had gone, Daniel had walked around seemingly without point to the back of the house to its backyard, as he now looked out at it from the kitchen window. The sun that morning was also shining brightly and encouraged his lingering. Daniel noticed that the roses he had planted against a side fence earlier in the spring were becoming a verdant bush – a spectacle of red, pink and white blossoms – and turning his glance, just for a moment convinced himself he actually saw tiny butterflies on the grass in the far corner of the yard. Such imagination succored him and soon he was thinking of composing another haiku. While preparing coffee and then the lunch to take to work, Daniel again pushed words, syllables and lines about in his mind, hoping to see if he could capture his fanciful thought about the butterflies and its surprise. Again, too, for some reason, composition came easily, especially the rhyme, though finding the exact number of syllables for each line kept him busy for more time than he really had to spare. Finally, he wrote the second haiku of the day:

While musing, I see

Pink butterflies on my lawn …

O, no. Just pansies.

Taking a bus the few miles into the city – Emily had their only car – Daniel sat on the side of the bus closer to the houses of the working class streets, unable to keep his thoughts exclusively on the workday ahead of him. The bus carried passengers like him, mostly government and civil servants from the suburbs just beyond the city. As the bus passed an intersection of cars and pickup trucks and convenience stores, Daniel thought of a conversation he had had with his father weeks before. His father now lived in a small town east of the city, in an area virtually rural, which he preferred.

"Why do you do what you do?" His father was already retired.

Daniel was visiting, dutifully staying in touch. His father had been a high school gym teacher and football coach. Daniel stood beside him in the finished basement where his father had his workout equipment, athletic awards, and a huge flat screen television set for watching sports events.

"I don't know. I just want to."

"Isn't the work a bitch? Doesn't it get you stressed out of your mind?"

Daniel had to smile and nod. "Yes. It does." They had had this conversation before.

"Then why? Is this work really what you want to do with your life?"

Daniel sighed. "It's got to be done." His father surfed the television channels, like a teenager. He was looking for an important post-season soccer game.

"And when something good happens, really good, it feels meaningful, as they say," Daniel added.

His father settled on a basketball game for the time being. "I wonder," he observed. "Maybe that's just rationalization. You've always been a romantic. How long do you plan to continue to do what you do?"

Daniel had had to think about his father's blunt conversation, but now, as the bus brought him closer to the city and its government buildings, he found himself noting the people in the streets, those who lived and mostly rented in the buildings only blocks from the city's downtown. To his chagrin, the pedestrians looked impoverished or nearly so. Standing out from others, a teenage couple walked together holding hands in the morning's sunlight, and this image, too, captured his imagination. Not wanting to lose the image, Daniel quickly reached in his pocket for his paper and pencil and raced to capture it, his mind searching anew for proper words and thoughts. By the time he reached his bus stop in front of the building where he worked, he had composed his third haiku of the day, which had given him a bit of trouble to work out. Daniel had fussed over the connotation of key words and decided to be satisfied with what he had written until perhaps later that evening, when he had more time to linger. Now, he read the tiny poem to himself:

Youth, so lovely,

Strolling in the sun … While I tire

When I walk, thirty.

Whatever pleasure the unfinished haiku had given him was momentary, for as soon as Daniel ascended the flights of stairs to where his agency was located, he found it already furiously busy. Junior staff members and interns were at their work spaces or in cubicles on the phones looking overwhelmed, as were his other colleagues, not much older than the interns and junior staff and not much younger than Daniel. Seeing him, one of the interns, Susanna, said:

"Daniel, thank God you're here. The calls are coming in every minute. I've been on the hotline since … "

"I'll help, don't worry," Daniel told her.

Taking a handful of phone messages from Susanna's desk, Daniel crossed the large main room of the agency and went into his office. Pausing a moment to look out his window, he peered down on the street below and watched pedestrians passing by his building, others sitting on stoops or lingering across the street, or going in and out of small stores. Finally, drawing in his breath, he picked up the first message and

dialed the number indicated on it. After several rings, a frail, old, frightened, female voice answered.

" … Yes?"

"Hello," Daniel said. "You called early this morning, ma'am, and left a message?"

"Who are you?"

"The county housing agency. Are you in … New York?"

"Yes. Yes. Oh, God, thank you for calling me back." The old, frightened voice abruptly sounded a bit relieved. "I've been calling everybody. Whoever I could find in the phone book."

Daniel was not surprised. "You should know, ma'am, this office is for counties north of you. You really should be calling authorities where you live."

That seemed to make her alarmed again and set her back.

"But I've been calling everyone where I live. Nobody gets back to me, nobody helps me. I've been trying to get help for days. Please don't hang up on me. I need someone to help me. Please help me."

At such urgency there was little else for him to say: "Don't worry. I won't hang up." Daniel swung around in his seat and again looked out his office window down on the people, the stores and the buildings on the street across from him. "I'll do everything I can."

Her voice was extraordinarily weak. "Thank God, thank God … ."

The intensity of her need made him feel like a special mission had been assigned to him. "Tell me why you called. Please."

"I called because I don't know what to do."

He thought he heard her crying.

"I'm a very sick woman, you know."

"I … I'm sorry."

"I worked for the government, too. And got workers' compensation. I was hurt on the job. That was several years ago." She hardly paused. "And now I'm in my late 70s, and I have diabetes, and I can hardly walk out of the house, and God knows what else I have."

"Again … I … I … I'm sorry." It was all he could think of saying. Was his work even impoverishing his ability to think and speak?

"I'll make it, though. I'm not pathetic," the old woman proclaimed, suddenly affecting energy. "But they put me in a terrible building. Sir, you should see the building I live in. It's so old and falling apart. And the neighborhood is very dangerous. I've never complained. But now … it was so cold this winter. You know how cold it was?"

"Yes, ma'am. I know. It was very cold." Daniel thought to be a bit light-hearted. "I live north of you."

"Well, sir, it was so cold, I could hardly get out of bed." She was not to be deterred. "I slept in the bed with my overcoat on. Can you believe that? In this country? Letting the landlord do that to American citizens. Not giving people any decent heat." She would not stop. "Someone could have frozen to death. Probably did. What is this country coming to? And it's going to get worse and worse."

On this point, Daniel thought he could not have agreed more, though he kept his silence and continued to listen.

"So the pipes burst. That's what happened. The pipes in this house burst. There was no water for who knows how long. I couldn't wash myself, or wash clothes. I heated water over the stove. And then inspectors came. And now the building is condemned and everybody has to get out."

Unable to resist the impulse, Daniel looked outside onto the street, this time spying young women leading a long line of small children farther downtown, toward City Hall. The children all held on to a rope to be orderly and for safety.

"We have to get out." The old woman was implacable in her fear. "And nobody knows where we're going to go. We don't have any money. We hardly get by. People are going to starve if things don't get any better. I've got to leave in two weeks. I have to get out of my apartment and find another place to live in. How am I going to do that? I can't do that? I don't even know how to do that? Young man, you've got to help me. I don't know what to do. I don't know who else to ask."

Daniel sighed deeply. His neck tightened up. It had been doing that for some time now, though it never used to.

The old woman's voice seemed to echo in his brain:

"Please help me? I have nowhere else to go."

When the call was over, Daniel was not exactly sure what to do, despite his experience. He had schooled himself in crisis situations to take his time, to see if there weren't *some* kind of solution possible. But nothing came to him. Then, rather fancifully, though not unheard-of for him, he decided perhaps his *unconscious* or subconscious, or whatever his analytic friends called it, could work on the problem while he focused his attention elsewhere. The something else was easy. He would call his wife.

Taking up his cell phone, Daniel punched in Emily's code, and after a number of rings, she answered him, which was very relieving. Perhaps she was no longer angry with him.

"Where are you?" he asked her. He hoped she was alone.

"I'm at the beach. We're at the beach."

Of course – he had forgotten. The town beach on the shore. A very rich and private place.

"How did the trip go? No trouble? Did the car perform all right?" He hoped she'd say yes.

"Mainly."

"Mainly?"

"That sound," Emily explained. "That sound the mechanic you went to doesn't understand. The car made that sound most of the trip. But I kept the windows closed, and the radio on. And talked to the kids."

"I see," Daniel said. "How's the visit going?"

At this question, Emily's voice seemed to brighten a little, perhaps despite herself.

"Good."

"What did you do? Did your folks take you all out to eat?"

She really didn't want to hurt him.
" … Yes."

"At that restaurant?"

"We did go there, Daniel."

"And shopping today? Your mother took you to those expensive shops?"

"Some of them are chains."

"*Some* chains."

"Daniel, why are my parents bad because my father's successful?" she asked him. "They haven't hurt you."

When the call with Emily was over, Daniel turned his attention still another time to his window, now even more unable to think of what to do. Life was becoming too complex and hard for him. Not quite directly across the street, students with their textbooks sat on a stoop in front of a tall building that housed a print shop on the street level and apartments on the three stories above the shop. The young people also struck him as archetypal, iconic. Daniel wrote a fourth haiku of the day, forcing a wistful and bemused feeling upon himself. He had no trouble writing the poem:

Students on that row

Of brownstone steps – I saw them

Twenty years ago.

Minutes later, however, leaving his office and returning to the main work area, Daniel compelled himself back to the task at hand. What could he *possibly* do for the old woman? What could he come up with? Who did he know? For a start, he walked to his friend Jenna's desk. She supervised the interns. Donovan was on a site inspection.

"Jenna, I just talked to a lady from the city. She about broke my heart. Apparently, she had her phone book out, called any place that had to do with housing, and got us."

Jenna looked up from her own work. She had papers scattered across her desk. "What did the woman say?"

"She's in her late 70s, her building's condemned, she has to move out, and of course she has nowhere to go and absolutely no one to help her."

Jenna sighed. "Terrific. I thought I'd heard it all."

Daniel sat down in the chair beside Jenna's desk. "And I'm not sure what I can do," he explained to her. "Maybe we can find out where she might be on the list for another apartment?"

Jenna stopped her work, understanding what Daniel was asking, and began to type into her computer. "*That's* an idea. Hold on. I've already done that a few times this week. What's her name?"

Daniel told her and Jenna finished processing their inquiry on the computer. Both she and Daniel waited a few moments and then, reading her computer screen, Jenna seemed amazed at what was there and turned to Daniel. "Are you ready? Guess what number she is?"

Daniel gestured that he hadn't a clue.

She passed along the bad news: "Your old woman's number 5,322."

"What?" Daniel felt slapped.

"That's right. 5,322."

"But that's insane," he said.

"We live in an insane world."

He tried to explain to Jenna, who didn't need an explanation. "But the woman will be dead before she's moved halfway up that list. I'd put money on it."

"Well, that's the situation," Jenna replied, no happier than he.

Daniel shook his head. "Is there any way she can get jumped?"

"You mean put over all the other people?"

Daniel wasn't sure what to say. "I … I guess. Her case is so bad. She *is* on workers' compensation."

Jenna was not impressed. "That might mean something. But there's probably lots of other people who could say the same."

"I know." Daniel glanced around the large room. Everyone was working so furiously. "I just want to help her," he said. "I just want to help a sick, old lady find a decent place to live. He looked at his colleague. "Can't we do something for her?"

"Daniel, I'm just a clerk," Jenna answered him. "I wish I were a commissioner, but I'm not. What about Anthony? Maybe he can do something. Or think of something. He likes you."

Daniel considered her suggestion for a few moments. It was plausible. "I've been on committees with him."

"Call him," Jenna said. "See what he says."

Thinking about it further, Daniel finally nodded.

"All right," he told her.

Once back in his office, Daniel called his colleague, who also was in New York City. He and Anthony had worked together in the past few years.

"Tony, you've got to help me," he said to his colleague, when Daniel had him on the phone. "I know it's probably out of line. But this lady's in a very bad place."

"Everybody's in a very bad place, Daniel."

"Tony … "

"I can't jump her."

Daniel probably went farther than he should have. That's how strongly he felt, especially these days. "Tony, the woman's nearly *80,* she has no money, no family, she's an invalid, she has to get out of a condemned house we once put her in." He raised his voice in frustration at his colleague. "*Somebody's* got to do something."

At first, Anthony was silent, but then he said: "You're getting yourself too worked up, old buddy. Let me see … Let me see."

"Yes … see," Daniel said. "See."

As the day went on Daniel tried hard not to be *too* emotional. After all, that's what everyone said was best for him. He looked out his office window still a *further* time on the street below, to see if there were not something now which would strike him as poetic, but at the moment nothing particularly special or exciting came to him. This being the case, he turned back to his papers and messages, again forcing himself to be as resolute as possible, and sorted through the number of calls he needed to make and had planned to make the day before.

Starting with one he thought would be relatively straightforward, Daniel recalled a young couple, graduate students at the university who had appeared at the agency two days earlier. They were worried, though not quite as lost or desperate as other clients recently. Immediately, Daniel had liked them, and was reminded of himself not that many years ago. The young man said he was a philosophy student at the university, the young woman in anthropology. They had little money and hoped the agency could find them an inexpensive apartment.

"We're both trying to get through graduate school," the young woman explained, Daniel hearing nothing he hadn't heard often before. "We'll take most anything you have."

"And then fix it up," the philosophy major said.

Calling for them, Daniel spoke to an available landlord, a man who owned a number of low-end buildings. "They look like great young people," he told the landlord. "They can't afford the dormitories at the university and are willing to take anything not too expensive."

The landlord hesitated. It was as if he were renting out luxury apartments. "Uhh … you're sure about these kids? Sometimes students will tear a place apart just for fun. Or they think it's a good, revolutionary act."

"I'm sure," Daniel said, dry. "Let them see one of your places. You won't be sorry."

His next call was for an elderly Hispanic couple. Their daughter had called and then personally brought her parents to the agency. She was a feisty girl. Her parents, shy and tentative, smiled sweetly through the interview.

"My parents are from San Salvador," the daughter told Daniel. "I am so excited they're here. It's been years. I assured them you could find a nice home for them." Her toughness softened, at least for the moment, her worry manifesting itself.

"You can do that, can't you?" She leaned forward. Suddenly, Daniel thought she, too, might cry. "It doesn't have to be the Taj Mahal. Just something they could live in close by. That would be wonderful."

The young woman's parents watched Daniel closely, the old people already grateful. My God, he thought, poetry can be found anywhere.

"I'll do my best," he told them.

The second landlord was even more troublesome than the first. Daniel had worked with him several times before, and after all the economy *was* in such bad shape, and tough times would soon be getting even tougher.

"Can they make the rent?" the landlord asked, challenging Daniel. "More than a couple of my tenants have not been able to recently. I'm a businessman after all."

"Talk to them," Daniel told him. "And the daughter. I have a feeling she'd do anything to help."

"I'll need two months up front, and a security deposit. I can't not do that anymore."

"Sure," Daniel said.

The following call was the toughest. It involved a daunting complaint, one familiar enough to Daniel. The city wanted to establish another residential home for people with mental and social problems. But Daniel talked as convincingly as he could with the complainant and, finally, prevailed, using all his experience and conviction to placate the man for the time being. The man was absolutely furious. Daniel imagined a big, imposing person, in construction or something.

He was beside himself.

"Look, I've heard you guys are going to put one of those damn houses for crazy people in my neighborhood," he began. "Right on my god damn street! Well, I'm telling you you're not going to get away with it. I don't care if the city or the state or the god damned country is saying it's okay. Not in my neighborhood. I'm thinking of getting all the neighbors to organize a protest. To fight back!"

"Sir," Daniel attempted to explain, the man pausing, perhaps calmed a little, his protest being made. "The group home is not a bad thing. Do you have any experience with them? We have plenty of data we can show you. I'll give you the names and addresses of other homes we have in the city." He tried to make himself as compelling as the man was. "Go there and see for yourself. Have the neighbors join you. And, by the way, a few years ago, I lived only a few doors away from a group home, with my wife and children, and we never had any trouble at all. I'm not sure we even saw any clients who lived in the home."

The man actually continued to listen to him. Silently, Daniel thanked the gods.

"And, this may not impress you," he continued, almost afraid to stop talking, "But the people are not institutionalized. They get a place to live that's a nice house, decent rooms. That can't be bad. Suppose it was someone in your own family? Who was so old, who couldn't take care of themselves, who needed a little help, a little looking after? Someone to give them their medication, or to ask if they're comfortable?"

Now it was Daniel's turn to pause. He supposed he shouldn't go on any more and leave the situation open to more criticism. But he couldn't help making one last point.

"Please, come around to the agency. We'll give you all the information you need. We'll give you records. We can get testimonies. Again, this is a good thing, sir. A good thing."

Daniel held his breath. The man on the other end of the phone mumbled and grumbled. Could I have been successful? Daniel wondered.

"Well … I don't know," the man replied. "You sound like a smart person. I don't know what to think. I think you're too smart for me. I'll think about what you said."

When he put the phone down, Daniel sighed, relieved.

But rather than relax, Daniel kept on working. He didn't slow down for the rest of the afternoon, until it was time to stop for the day and go home. Before leaving the agency, he couldn't resist studying it with a curious eye, observing his colleagues at their work spaces or in their offices, the implacable papers covering desks, devoted souls on the phone scratching notes furiously or writing up their inevitable

reports. Walking again to Jenna's desk, Daniel thanked her for helping him earlier and told her Anthony had promised to get back to him with maybe something positive for the old, handicapped woman in the city. As he walked down the stairs of the building, Daniel even found himself trying to write another poem, thinking suddenly with fondness of his own home. He had an idea to make a poem out of the fallen leaves of the past week, and rather quickly, his run of creativity this day abundant, regardless of his stress, coupled a chore of September with his supposed aging:

Brilliant, autumn noon –

Yellow, red, and gold-leafed trees.

Ah, my back sore soon!

Sadly, though, as fate would have it, as Daniel awaited the bus to return home, to his near despair, the day soon inexplicably turned dark again. He had been waiting in innocence at the bus stop at the end of the street from his agency. Several people waited alongside him – the usual suburban people who like himself lived only a few miles beyond their small city. Among them was a man Daniel had seen often before – a small, aggressive, rather unpleasant, intellectual-looking man. Catching Daniel's eye, for some reason the man moved determinedly through the small crowd of people toward him, and it was soon apparent the man meant to spend his time on the bus riding with Daniel. Daniel cursed his fate.

"Daniel, right?" the man asked, reaching him and following Daniel up the steps of the bus, to pay his fare immediately after him.

"Yes … " Daniel answered, uncertain.

The man pursued him down the aisle of the bus and promptly sat next to Daniel. He seemed implacably intent on conversation.

"Riding the bus now? Trying to save some money?" The man spoke rapidly, nervously. "I am. With this economy, huh?" The man seemed overflowing with a strange energy.

Daniel smiled weakly. He tried to find something to say. "I'm glad things are getting a little better."

The small, aggressive, intellectual, self-centered man raised an incredulous eyebrow and leaned toward Daniel, apparently to better make his argument. Daniel wondered why this was happening to him.

"Yeah, I know they *say* things are getting better. They talk about some little money being paid back. Or they talk about a tiny up-tick in housing sales. Or they get all bent out of shape when the stock market goes up." The man leaned even closer. "Sure, the stock market goes up. Big deal! It's just flimflam. They're just taking care of each other, and how is that really an indicator anyway? My God, but Wall Street is unrepentant."

Daniel tried to keep his balance. He struggled to be polite, to be a part of this unforeseen conversation. "A lot of people think things are getting turned around. Maybe not as quickly as we'd like, but all kinds of reporters and analysts are saying so."

But the man looked at Daniel with great incredulity. "Where are you getting your information?"

"Uhhh … from television … the news and commentary shows. And from the newspapers. Good newspapers."

The little, aggressive man seemed to have trouble staying in his seat. "Listen, Daniel, I know something about economics, too. I minored in it at college. You know, Adam Smith, *Wealth Of Nations,* Keynes, neo-Keynesian theory. I did a paper once comparing capitalist and socialist economics."

Daniel felt, out of the blue, as if a part of his destiny, he was in the middle of a diatribe.

"So let me tell you, neighbor," the man continued. "Nothing significant has really happened. There are all kinds of negatives still out there, and it is my prediction that they will remain out there for some time. In addition to very little real payback, in addition to an up-tick or two in the housing market, in addition to whatever the hell Wall Street is doing. Take, just for instance, next year. What happens when the stimulus package is gone, past, caput, used up, siphoned off, smuggled or stolen away in some degree by the geniuses of evil? I ask you that. As they say in baseball, wait until next year. Then with no more money, the real reality is going to kick in, we'll be back to where we were, and God help us, because there will be no billion dollars to help us out. How much can we borrow from China for God's sake? All China has to do is sneeze and the good old United States of America is history. And also how much more money can we print? We're already printing money like crazy. Where do you think the stimulus billions came from? No, sir, we've already mortgaged off the next several decades of our future, God help us." The little man looked triumphant. "And that's the good news."

"What do you mean?" Daniel managed to ask him, feeling nearly overwhelmed.

The man seemed incredulous. "What do I mean? I mean who knows what else is out there? This could be only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. I've heard rumors that there's more and more to come. This might be just the first wave."

When Daniel finally exited the bus, he felt lightheaded. It was as if he had been attacked, assailed as badly as by anything else that day. He didn't quite remember his first steps of walking. He wondered if he didn't feel nausea.

But, then, suddenly, at the same time, somehow he felt an overwhelming urgency to … to rebel. To be absolutely defiant and assert that he'd had enough. It was the most curious thing. He simply *needed* to rebel. In some kind of existential protest, Daniel chose not to accept what the aggressive, little man had said. Something he didn't quite understand fought a sense of despair, and Daniel found himself putting down his metaphoric foot. *Who* was to say what the future would bring? How could *this* man know any better than anyone else what the future would be? Good God, he was merely a *neighbor.* In a small town, beside a small city, located in a huge country, in a vastly huger world! No, no, Daniel decided, simply asserting himself. He would not be overcome by this man, especially after all the struggling he had endured during the day.

Reaching the end of the first block of his walk home, as silly as it was, he began speaking aloud, too, aware of his own

absurdity. He thought of what he should have said in rebuttal to the aggressive little man. Daniel would assert his own diatribe.

"Surely, America can overcome this latest crisis?" He crossed the street, heedless of any traffic. "Look what monstrous things it has overcome since its birth. Take its birth. Was there ever a miracle? How could it have happened? A few colonialists overcoming the greatest nation on earth, possessing the greatest Navy and Army? It was inconceivable to everyone. The early defeats, again and again. The rag tag army. The desertions? But what happened? Something absolutely extraordinary. So how can this neighbor of mine think the country can't overcome this mere blip? Driving the English out of our land? Writing a world-famous Constitution, to say nothing of overcoming a horrendous Civil War? Good God, think of that for a moment. Talk about hard times. Endless fighting, and then the assassination of the president, the only man in the world who could have held our country together. On and on it went until we were the greatest nation on earth. Let's talk about the Second World War … "

At this point, Daniel reached his house. He wondered if his own outburst had at least brought him a little stability. Also, standing there, he wondered suddenly – in a real turnabout of his attention – if the house itself seemed … *poetic.* Yes, poetic. Or that he made it so, his modest bungalow house, the house of a mere worker. Unable to resist, Daniel walked up the driveway alongside the house slowly, touring what he for the moment actually thought of in fancy as his domain. He reached the end of the side of the house, where by chance a past owner had left a basketball hoop fixed to the top of the old worn-out garage, where another had scraped a car against a door of the garage. He found himself looking again at the little garden and lawn directly behind the house, and then to an open space beyond them, bordered by scraggly trees. Next, he stared off at the wooded space beyond this clear area, that at first was sparsely occupied by trees and gradually became thicker and thicker until it was a wood, a darkening, almost secret, almost forbidding place. Strangely, all that he saw, *even the dark place,* filled Daniel with a sense of sweet familiarity, with a redeeming sense of ownership. Sighing with possession, he went inside the house.

Putting his briefcase down, which was filled with forms and manuals and letters, Daniel took off his coat and looked to see if any mail had been delivered. It was his habit. There was none. But on the telephone answering machine, he could see he had two messages. Hopeful, apprehensive, Daniel clicked on the first message. It was from his friend and colleague Anthony.

"'Daniel, sorry I missed you at the office'," Anthony informed him. "'The impossible task you set me took a bit of time. Believe it or not – I was able to get your little, old handicapped lady moved up. Our people will be calling her in the morning. The workers' comp. helped.'"

Smiling, his heart starting to beat faster, Daniel clicked on the second message. It was from his Emily. It simply said: "'Call me.'"

Now, at the advent of some kind of epiphany, Daniel tapped Emily's number into his cell phone. Almost immediately, she answered him.

" … Is everything okay?" he asked her.

"Yes."

" … Well, then?"

"I just wanted to talk to you." There was kindness in her voice. It was his own Emily! "I had to tell you I felt so bad about our conversation before. I'm not sure why I was so edgy." Then, a long pause. "Now, I just want to say that … that I love you, Daniel. I … I *really* do. I wouldn't change anything. You believe me?"

" … Yes … I do," he managed.

"Good. I love us."

" … So … do I."

She sighed in relief. "Then let me put the kids on. They want to say hello to their father."

When the call was over, Daniel tried to watch television, but nothing interested him, and besides, he was too excited to watch television. Instead he took to writing a little poetry one last time for the day. The first haiku came almost as easily as the others. He would acknowledge the dark side of life. After all it *was* a part of everything.

Far behind our house,

A hollow I can't forget.

Dark, still, secret place.

The second haiku was more difficult. But in time it came, too. Daniel thought it turned out to be his best one of the day.

Man at dusk alone,

Raking leaves of fall, do you

Dream upon the moon?

Mentoring: A Social Relationship, An Academic Partnership

John M. Beckem II, Center for Distance Learning

Through a quick Google search, I found Empire State College: *Everywhere and Online*. Intrigued by the format and the SUNY affiliation, I applied for an area coordinator position at the college's Center for Distance Learning (CDL), interviewed, and was offered the job. Prior to my start date, I re-read the job description and saw the "mentoring" portion, which seemed to be a large part of this "teaching" job. I called the dean, Meg Benke, and asked, "So what is mentoring?" and she answered simply, "It's similar to advising but from a bigger perspective. You correspond with students and help them to plan their degrees."

At the start of my new job with the college, I assumed I would be helping students choose "classes" from different topic areas and requirements to "customize" their degree programs.

That's the point where my mentoring career began.

I learned that a mentor is not an advisor. Mentoring is more than course selection. Mentoring is a constantly-evolving process that changes with each person, program and point in time. Mentoring is a social relationship based on an academic partnership. I have celebrated grandbabies with my student mentees; I have coached them through military transitions; I sent a sympathy card to a now-graduate whose mom recently died. For the first time in my career, as a mentor, I have a chance to bring together all of my experiences and perspectives – academic, corporate and military – to help guide and shape the future of other learners. This is an opportunity and a gift.

With a basic understanding of the mentoring philosophy, I'm ready to begin my first student relationship. Like any other smart professional, I ask my colleagues, "So what is degree program planning? How do you actually do it?"

That's the point where my mentoring career evolved.

I realized that I felt exactly how our students feel when they begin – except I am not the person who is returning to school after raising kids for 20 years. I am not the bank vice president pressured to earn a bachelor's degree by December 2011. I am not the high school graduate trying to work, impress my parents and pay my car insurance, which is due next week. I am the person who needs to help students figure out how to choose 128 credits to create a balanced, quality degree program, consistent with SUNY and Empire State College policies, which will be accepted by the faculty assessment committee. I realized that to truly understand my mentees, I needed to embrace their concerns and be able to relate to the anxiety of a first-term Empire State College student, from financial aid questions to academic research, technology, instructor communication concerns, and so much more.

Motivated and empowered, I wanted to learn all I could to help students to be successful in their academic career at Empire State College. At CDL, I met with Cynthia Flynn, director of operations, to understand how the entire process works from recruitment to acceptance, in both paper and electronic formats. I met with Joe Boudreau, coordinator for special programs and retention, to find out what factors contribute most to student success at the college. I asked Craig Lamb, director of academic support, how I could help my students meet their various academic needs. I also spoke to Chuck VanVorst, who works for the college's Office of Veteran and Military Education, to see what's different about military students and the transitions they encounter when returning to college. I discussed student challenges and common issues with David Caso, director of student and academic services at CDL. I read the entire *Student Degree Planning Guide,* highlighted and rabbit-eared 25 different pages, and asked CDL colleagues Dana Henson, Diana Hawkins and Ginger Knight for answers, guidance and clarification.

John Beckem

Now ready to mentor, I scheduled my first student conference call … and the rest is history.

That's the point where my mentoring career matured.

I now have over 35 mentees and my group is growing on a weekly basis. I have several students enrolled in my Planning and Finalizing the Degree course. To continue to learn more about the degree planning process, I have been both a participant and chair in several assessment committee meetings. I also partnered with Carol Carnevale as my "mentor buddy."

I am happy to be here, sharing my thoughts and experiences with each of you in this publication. In my first 12 months, I have researched, evolved and matured in my mentoring role. In order to capture my first-year experiences in one place, I developed a mentor-blog at www.escmentor.blogspot.com. This is an interactive website where

students can access valuable information about classes, academic policies and learning resources of all kinds.

While I continue to work with new and existing students, I know I will continue to learn more, as each student brings a new opportunity and a new perspective. With that in mind, I wonder … where will my mentoring career grow from here?

Note

Thanks to Diana Hawkins for her help in editing this document.

Suspending our Suspicions

A quote from European historian Tony Judt that was included in All About Mentoring #38 *(inside front cover) contained a quite awful error. Judt's words (from his 2010,* Ill Fares the Land) *should have been:*

"All collective undertakings require trust. From the games that children play to complex social institutions, humans cannot work together unless they suspend their suspicion of one another. One person holds the rope, another jumps. One person steadies the ladder, another climbs. Why? In part because we hope for reciprocity, but in part from what is clearly a natural propensity to work in cooperation to collective advantage" (63).

Judt, the Remarque Professor in European Studies at NYU, died of A.L.S. (Lou Gehrig's disease) in August 2010 at the age of 62. His final volume, The Memory Chalet *(2010) contains the following:*

"Though I am now more sympathetic to those constrained to silence I remain contemptuous of garbled language. No longer free to exercise it myself, I appreciate more than ever how vital communication is to the republic: not just the means by which we live together but part of what living together means. The wealth of words in which I was raised were a public space in their own right – and properly preserved public spaces are what we so lack today. If words fall into disrepair, what will substitute? They are all we have" (154).

Interiors

Installations by Carol Warner, Metropolitan Center

"The Best of Everything," 2006, mixed-media room installation, Parsons The New School for Design at Peer Gallery, New York, N.Y.

My work bridges the gap between photography and sculpture. I am particularly interested in appropriating photographic images from a variety of print media and expanding them into three-dimensional spaces.

My current series of home improvement installations are based on the idea of a "dream house." They combine found images of luxury apartments with home improvement materials from "big box" stores. The resulting sculptural environment examines the economics of housing, the process of consumption, and the complexities of achieving the American dream. The goal is to explore the way photography generates longing through these snapshots of idyllic home life.

"The Best of Everything" features the projection of a found image and replicas of objects staged in the original photograph, such as a chandelier, a pillow, a candy dish and a herring-bone floor. The intention is to invite the viewer into an environment framed by the gallery, which presents an unusual space between media and reality.

"Have it All," 2010, vinyl sign, 24 x 48 inches. This sign in the window was part of a larger, site-specific installation titled "River View" that was created for the art exhibition, "Weaving In & Out."

PHOTO CREDIT: ALISON BURSTEIN

"River View" installation in progress. "Weaving In & Out" was a collaborative exhibition in a new green development in East Harlem called "Tapestry." The exhibit took over this raw ground floor space at 245 East 124th St. Curated by Jodie Dinapoli, Ella Levitt, Manon Slome of No Longer Empty with Trinidad Fombella from El Museo del Barrio.

PHOTO CREDIT: ALISON BURSTEIN

"River View" was derived from photographs found in local real estate listings. The appropriated images were enlarged, printed and mounted on board. A rug was made to look like the one in the photograph.

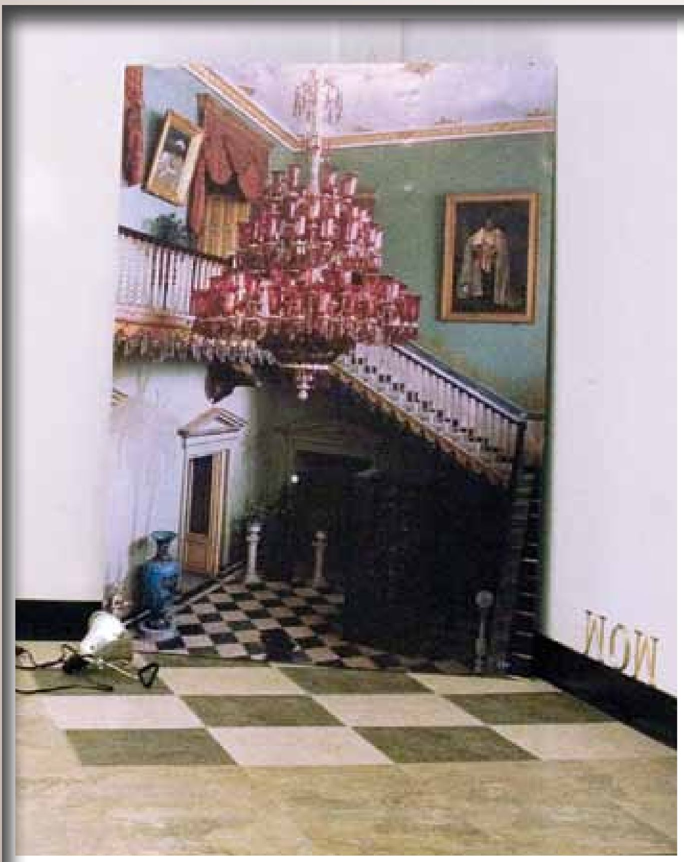
PHOTO CREDIT: ALISON BURSTEIN

I worked closely with interns from the organization No Longer Empty to realize aspects of the installation, "River View," which included recreating a pattern by hand on a store-bought rug, installing signs and building floors.

"River View," 2010 (detail). The photograph on the right represents a luxury apartment interior. Below: The photograph in the installation is a view of the East River. The overlapping flooring was created onsite and includes vinyl tiles and pebble tiles with grout. The building materials used in the installation reflect different aspects of the photographs. Sometimes they mimic actual parts of the images – like the rug. Other times they play off the images; for instance, here, the pebble flooring, often seen in contemporary bathrooms, becomes a river bed.

"River View," 2010, mixed-media installation, 10 x 20 feet. Visitors can walk on the floors or sit on the rug.

“Pythian Condo,” 2006, mixed-media installation, room size 12 x 7 feet. This piece is from my “Home Improvement” series. The objects are installed to mimic the angle in the photograph. The title was derived from the text accompanying the photograph in the original listing.



“Bathroom,” 2006, mixed-media installation, 3 x 8 x 6 feet. This is a scenario into which the viewer can almost enter, hence the tile walkway and actual slippers.

Left: “Interior,” 2006, mixed-media installation, 5.5 x 6 x 6 feet. The materials in this piece invoke socioeconomic differences; they fail to live up to the grandeur represented in the found photograph.

Lessons of War

Elaine Handley and Claudia Hough, Northeast Center

"War is so epidemic in its occurrence, devastating in its impact, and lasting in its aftermath, that we must study it and tend to it and treat it." – Edward Tick

He stood in the front of the room, holding the book he authored *Ghosts of War* (2009). Ryan Smithson looked like a typical college kid, not like a veteran who had recently spent a year in Iraq as an Army engineer. Smithson came to our War Stories class to read from his book, to share how he came to write it and talk about using writing as a way of healing.

Claudia Hough (left) and Elaine Handley

Smithson takes a deep breath, opens his book and begins reading the chapter "The Town that Achmed Built." The students, including three veterans, are riveted in their seats as Smithson reads about being ambushed by insurgents in the town of Samarra. It is the first time he witnesses the destruction of women and children. It isn't easy for Smithson to read these words that describe the loss of his innocence. It isn't easy for the rest of us to hear them. We're all visibly shaken, including Smithson, who pauses to compose himself. He continues with another chapter from *Ghosts of War:*

> The hardest part of a combat tour is not the combat. It's not the year or more away from home and family. It's not sleeping in Humvees or eating MREs. It's not the desert sun that makes everything too hot to touch. It's not the fear and wild atrocity you experience. You get used to all that. Bombs are just bombs. Blood is just blood. The hardest part of a combat tour, I've discovered, is coming home. (p. 290)

Ryan Smithson, veteran and student

Now the veterans in the class are leaning forward in their chairs; they are really connecting to Smithson's story – the inability to talk about what happened in Iraq, the feelings of loss at leaving other guys behind, the night terrors, the paranoia. Smithson's words are brutally honest – we're all getting emotional. When he finishes the chapter, no one says a word; the room is totally silent. The two younger vets speak first. There is an instant tangible bond between the vets and Smithson. They have questions, they want to know more, and, to our amazement, they immediately start to open up about their own experiences right in front of the class. It is a transcendent moment.

Our veterans returning home to families, jobs and college face overwhelming obstacles, including the long-standing rift between the military and the public. As one student soldier put it: "The majority of college campuses don't support the war, they don't support what we're doing … it's a struggle." They often speak of being invisible to the American public who is unaware of some of the good they are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as building roads and schools. It's not so much that they do not feel cared about; it's more that society seems to be unaware of what soldiers are facing.

Adding to feelings of misunderstanding, veterans returning to college are often intimidated by the academic environment.

They are moving from the highly structured, hierarchical military life to one that prizes individuality, choice and exploration. The decision-making skills needed for success in college can be overwhelming for veterans, especially for those with mental or physical injuries. Not all who have served in the military suffered physical injuries, but many veterans are coming to college with psychological needs that are different from those of other nontraditional students. The psychological effects from the trauma of war often contribute to student veterans' feelings of isolation.

Writer Maxine Hong Kingston in *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace* (2006) explains how she discovered in her early work with veterans that they needed to *write* in order to help heal the trauma of war. By writing, they created a written record of their experience and were able to see how their thinking developed. "Processing chaos through story and poem, the writer shapes and forms experience, and thereby, I believe, changes the past and remakes the existing world. The writer becomes a new person after every story, every poem; and if the art is very good, perhaps the reader is changed, too" (p. 1-2).

Dr. Edward Tick, a psychotherapist and author of *War and the Soul* (2005) writes about helping veterans recover from post-traumatic stress disorder. He believes that in order to heal, veterans need to tell their stories and have a public platform: "Veterans most often withhold their stories, not only because of the pain evoked in telling them but also because they fear that, in our culture of denial, we won't properly receive them" (p. 221). Soldiers returning home need to share their stories, and writing them down helps them process their war experience.

We were familiar with the work of James Pennebaker and Louise DeSalvo, Marion MacCurdy and Charles Anderson, and Jeffrey Berman, all who have worked with students using writing as a tool to help process difficult life events. It got us thinking. What if we created a study that could support our returning veterans and educate other students and ourselves about the multifaceted realities of war? We were uneasy about it. What did we know of war – in these days of an all-volunteer army – two writing and literature mentors with no military service, who have never seen war firsthand? We were keenly aware of our inexperience, our naïveté. So what business did we have mucking about creating a war course?

As experienced writing and literature teachers, what we *do* know about is the power of the written word. We know literature can illuminate aspects of your self and your experience; that writing helps you process what you know and what you don't know; that both literature and writing are about making meaning, and even change people's lives. We have experienced this ourselves and we've watched it happen to scores of students. Finding the stories, poems, films and articles that explored war was something we could do. We were confident we could create meaningful assignments that would help us all discover what happened to people directly and indirectly involved in war. With students, especially those who have had direct experience with war, we would educate each other. In his introduction to his *War* (1995) short story anthology, Jon E. Lewis writes: "War is the ultimate, the most extreme of human experiences … . No other human activity is like it, or so pervaded by the imminence of death. War is perhaps the supreme theater for asking the questions about what it means to be human" (p. xiv).

And so we created, War Stories: Reading and Writing About the Impact of War, which was first offered in 2009; the study is currently a 4-credit study group organized into six modules.

The first module asks an obvious question: What do we know of war? The first writing assignment is this:

> Some of us know about war from first-hand experience, some from family and friends who were soldiers, but all of us got messages about war, courage and patriotism from our families, teachers – from different aspects of society, like TV, the movies and books. So what messages did you receive about war? Who or what influenced you most in your thinking? Are the messages you received as a child different from what you believe now?

The responses we received were not unexpected. Many students learned about war from TV and movies – and also from toys. Andy, who went on to become an Army Ranger and was among the first troops to parachute into Afghanistan during the U.S. invasion, wrote:

> I was about seven years old. I had my Air Force academy sweatshirt on, a sandwich in front of me, and the television blaring. I couldn't eat my sandwich though, I was too intrigued with the movie I had on. Sure, I had seen it five times, but I couldn't get enough of it. I loved *Top Gun,* I loved the military, I knew I wanted to be a part of that, and I knew it at a very young age. I wanted to be disciplined, I wanted to look sharp in that uniform, but most importantly I wanted to show my patriotism in the most simple, yet hardest way possible. I had the red, white and blue coursing through my veins. I had the "Star Spangled Banner" playing in my head. Ever since my first baseball game when my grandfather, a Korean War veteran, had me stand and take my Twins cap off and put it against my chest, I knew I wanted to be one of those sharp dressed men holding that flag.

Laura wrote about her firsthand war experience as a young child:

> My first experience with war was in Cuba during the Revolution. Castro was fighting in the Sierra Madres and Batista was trying hard to keep him from getting a foothold in Havana and other major cities and towns. Being a small child, the real danger of the situation escaped me. There were times when windows were shot out and we slept on mattresses on the living room floor. My grandfather, with a shotgun in his hand would stay up all night, waiting and listening. Occasionally, men, bleeding from wounds would arrive at our back door. They would be ushered quickly and quietly to the kitchen, and then they were gone.

Other students reported learning about war through the lens of good and evil as represented by the good guys and the bad guys; the good guys were always suppose to

win. Students read two Tim O'Brien short stories: "The Things They Carried" and "How to Tell a True War Story," the latter, in particular, as a way to think about the idea of emotional truth and the casualty of truth in war. Also we asked the students to begin a journal that they were to maintain throughout the course as a place to sort out their reactions to the stories, videos, films and class discussions.

When the study met for the first time, we handed each student a small plastic army guy – the kind most of us played with as kids – and asked students to use it as a writing prompt: What feelings and memories did it evoke in them? What did such a figure represent to them now? After writing, we asked students if they wanted to share what they wrote. We were surprised by two of our students who proclaimed, "These aren't toys, these are instruments of war." They went on to explain how they had kept these "toys" in their pockets at all times while they were deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, as a way to communicate with the locals about the U.S. military maneuvers in a particular area. Because they did not share a common language, using the army guys allowed the soldiers to demonstrate their intentions.

Module Two is War and the Media: Militainment. Since the media plays a major role in shaping our attitudes about war, we want students to look critically at some of the mainstream news sources (print and online) to get a sense of the range of information and opinions we are exposed to about the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Students begin their work by viewing and critically analyzing the documentary *Militainment, Inc.: Militarism and Pop Culture* which takes the position that the Pentagon and Hollywood have collaborated to depict war as entertainment. Next, they write an essay comparing and contrasting various media accounts of an event of their choosing related to the war in Iraq or Afghanistan. Abu Graib was a popular topic the first time we taught the study.

Students collect information about the event from a liberal, conservative and international media source, and then apply specific critical thinking questions to help them come to their own reasoned conclusion about the information and the event. For some of the students, this "compare and contrast" assignment of looking at how events are portrayed in the media is truly eye-opening. They had no idea that the news is so slanted. One student wrote that she had not known that conservative and liberal perspectives were so dramatically different. Another student wrote that she'd come to understand that "decoding media claims" was daunting. Students came away from this assignment convinced of the importance of getting their news from more than one venue and to be on the alert for bias. Dick wrote:

> At times it seems that civilians see the military as a cohort of modern day gladiators whose exploits serve to entertain us. On TV we can watch live pictures of the wars in the Middle East. So called "reality programs" show carefully edited scenes of combat intended to excite but not offend the viewers. We can watch as Predators, flown by men and women who sit in Texas and "fly" the unmanned air vehicles through a laptop computer, bomb villages in Afghanistan. It seems that we are trying to make war into a kind of video game.

When the study met for the first time, we handed each student a small plastic army guy – the kind most of us played with as kids – and asked students to use it as a writing prompt …

For our in-class writing, we bring World War II propaganda posters to class and ask students to analyze the images and messages. They are surprised to discover how powerful the combination of images and words are in manipulating our emotions and promoting a particular notion of patriotism.

What Is Heroism? is our question for Module Three. Because heroism is so much the public face of war, and the label "hero" has become ubiquitous, we believe it important to ask students to think about what heroism means to them, and how our culture defines it. In that spirit, we listened to Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler's Vietnam War anthem "The Ballad of the Green Berets," and we read and discuss the biographies and poetry of World War I soldiers Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. Students are also asked to read "The Banality of Heroism" by Franco and Zimbardo.

Chris, a student who had recently served in Iraq, was particularly taken with Sassoon's struggle:

> Siegfried Sassoon was an interesting writer. I was surprised by the letter he wrote that told his superiors of his feelings that the war was not win-able. The words he wrote to his commanding officer saying "I am a soldier speaking for soldiers … I am making the statement as an act of willful defiance of military authority … I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings … The ends I believe to be evil and unjust" were very powerful words. I believe this was important to our class because it showed that soldiers in a war are often very conflicted about it, or even adamantly against it.

In this module, students were asked to view the films *Glory!* and *Hurt Locker* and decide which of the characters are heroic and why. Paul wrote:

> … there are very few who have the desire to volunteer this courage, bravery and honor before they are called to do so. The word hero is sometimes very loosely thrown around; it is not a label because a label can easily be removed. To be a hero is a title, something that you have earned and something that never goes away unless it is replaced by something nobler.

Module Four is dedicated to The Homefront. It was important to us to provide students the opportunity to consider how war affects those at home, especially children. We use short stories by Pirandello, Faulkner, Alcott and essays from *Operation*

Homecoming; in class we watch the film version of the Faulkner short story “Two Brothers,” that chronicles how a young boy reacts to his brother’s enlistment during WWII. We also have students listen to popular anti-war music from the 1960s and watch “Private SNAFU” cartoons from WWII. We bring Twain’s “The War Prayer” to class, where we read it together and discuss what Twain was saying to those who support war but are not soldiers. Students are given the opportunity to write a true or fictionalized story about a soldier coming home from war, from either a soldier’s perspective, or that of someone who has been on the homefront.

Lisa, a student with no military experience, wrote about witnessing a soldier’s young family waiting on the tarmac at an airport as his flag-draped coffin was carried off a plane. As the family walked back through the waiting area, people in the airport became silent; some saluted and others bowed their heads. She told the class it was at that moment the war became real to her.

Our veteran students usually choose to write about their own experience. Dick, who had been a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, wrote about how difficult re-entry was:

> When our tour of duty in Vietnam was down to the last 30 days we became so-called short timers. We would joke with each other about our return to the world. We reminded ourselves not to use profanity when asking our mothers-in-law to pass the salt. We boasted that the first thing we would do at home was to make love with our wives; the second would be to put down our luggage. We promised to never come back to Vietnam … . It immediately became apparent to me that they [my family] had gone crazy while I was away. I knew they loved me and meant well, but their words and actions were confusing. I had no idea of what it was they expected of me or what their conversations were about. My son screeched and cried all the while. My mother asked me silly questions. My wife, now a most serious young mother, acted nothing like the young bride I had left to go to war. I felt quite ready to get on the next plane to Saigon.

A student who had been deployed twice and expected to be deployed again wrote about using alcohol to cope with feelings of guilt and anxiety. He described plunging back into his old life, only to find himself incapacitated with nightmares and panic attacks. He ended his essay by writing: “ … when you go to war you will always carry that war with you. And once you become a soldier you will always remain one.”

Module Five is Coping. We begin by discussing Pennebaker’s healing and writing research and DeSalvo’s five qualities of a healing narrative. We talk about war and trauma, and present this work as a writing tool students can employ at any time to enable their own healing from trauma. We have students read George Saunders’ humorous essay, “Heavy Artillery,” and discuss the role of humor in coping. For their writing assignment, students interview someone who has been significantly influenced by war in order to learn about the circumstances of the war experience, how he/she has coped, and how the experience changed the person. This turned out to be one of our most powerful assignments. Students choose a wide variety of people to interview, but often select relatives who they had previously never talked to about their war experiences.

One student interviewed his grandmother about how she coped during WWII. He learned how memories of war, even for those on the homefront, last a lifetime. Also, he discovered the contrast between civilian involvement in the war effort then and now. Some students interviewed the spouses of deployed soldiers, and others interviewed people in the military who have been deployed about coping both in combat and with reintegration. Dick decided to interview his wife, who was 19 and pregnant when he left for Vietnam; they had never talked about what it had been like for her while he was at war and when he returned.

> She said she was angry at the Army for turning our family upside down and even angrier with the anti-war demonstrators who used such terms as ‘baby killers’ to describe soldiers … . According to her, I returned from Vietnam an angry, impatient man who had no time for either her or our son. She said I acted as if I could not wait to get back to the company of my buddies in the Army … . When asked if feelings leftover from her wartime experience influenced her views of current issues, she responded saying that she was disheartened by our country unfairly asking so much of today’s military families. She went on to say our nation’s unwillingness to share the burden of our military families seems evidence that the country has lost its moral compass.

One particularly powerful documentary we watch together during this module is *Muse of Fire*. This film, featuring soldiers and family members reading their writing, serves as a model for our students and emphasizes the healing benefits of telling our stories.

The final module is Reintegration. Students read a series of stories and articles about the challenges of soldiers reintegrating into society after having been at war. In class, we watch a YouTube talk by psychotherapist Ed Tick who points out that many indigenous societies have rituals and ceremonies that allow returning warriors to tell their stories and help them become part of society again. Our American society provides no easy way for soldiers to pick up their civilian lives again.

One of the assigned readings is “Betrayal in the Field” by Helen Benedict that chronicles the difficulties women soldiers endure beyond the trauma of war: many are sexually harassed and even raped by their fellow soldiers. When they return home they find little or no help coming to terms with this devastating trauma. This was particularly eye-opening to our students, including our male veterans.

Have we accomplished what we set out to do when we created War Stories? We know some things for sure. War Stories created a communal academic environment where people deeply affected by war could write the truth, as they know it, about life-defining experiences they have participated in or witnessed – with support and without judgment. War Stories gave people permission to write, to process their experience, to gain clarity and perspective – to take action, rather than to feel helpless in the face of traumatic events. The Gulf

War veteran and author of *Semper Fi* James Swofford, wrote " … the most complex and dangerous conflicts, the most harrowing operations and the most deadly wars, occur in the head" (p. 298). Many veterans go for years without talking about what they have witnessed or done in war. They don't think their families and friends can understand what they have lived through, and they are afraid that expressing their thoughts and especially their feelings will make them look weak. Writing gives them a way to tell their stories, and share them when and if they are ready. One of our military students wrote:

> The course's written assignments brought my family closer to understanding my experiences while at war, and my strange way of looking at things. I had to write about topics that I would just as soon forget. This was a good thing for me. It opened up the flood gates to my locked up feelings. I wasn't comfortable writing at a college level, so I sent my papers to my family to proofread them. This was my way of opening up.

Along with the nonmilitary students in the study, we had the opportunity to go beyond preconceived ideas and stereotypes of the military and to better understand how our communities, families and soldiers are all changed by war.

When we asked students to discuss whether their thinking about war and its impact changed during the term, and, if so, what influenced their thinking, their responses were honest and insightful.

Keeping a journal, interestingly enough, seems to be especially valued by the students with military experience. Chris wrote about the importance of keeping a journal:

> I kept up with my journaling every two or three days and it was a big help to me. It has helped me put to paper many feelings that I needed to deal with. Many of the things I have put down in my journal have been very thought-provoking and have helped me reopen many doors of events and emotions that I have closed and that needed to be reopened.

Kim, who'd had no military experience, commented on how important the journal was for her to sort through what she was encountering:

> I felt that many of the stories we read triggered many emotions that I was not always sure where they came from but after writing in my journal, I was able to put some of the emotions into perspective. Having never experienced war firsthand there were times when it was very difficult to handle some of the information that we read. I have never really talked about war with people who have served.

Other comments included one man admitting that the course had required him to keep an open mind because he so strongly opposes the current wars, as well as this statement from someone who thought the course was going to be quite different:

> Prior to attending the course, I expected to have previous war veterans as classmates who have recently returned from Iraq. I had envisioned two hours of chest pounding and hoorahs from the participants. On the contrary there was a mix of people from various backgrounds who shared very different views on the subject.

An active-duty military student, who has served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, wrote:

> I never felt judged during the class. I could speak my mind and true feelings about war without ever worrying about being condemned for them or my actions. If the mood in the classroom had been different, I never would have been so outspoken. I actually looked forward to class, despite working all day.

Another student veteran wrote:

> War Story's [sic] was brain food for me … . War Story's covered every angle from liberal to conservative, from war-numb civilian to the war-wrung veteran. You knew what you had to do, but how you were to feel, think and write was up to you.

We learned a great deal about our student veterans as a cohort from creating and teaching War Stories. Military students, we found, often arrive with training and skills that make them potentially excellent students. We have found many of them to be determined and highly disciplined, attributes that can make them dedicated and motivated learners. They often arrive understanding the value of critical and creative thinking skills, paramount to problem solving, improvisation and their survival in combat situations. Military personnel understand the necessity for good, clear communication and can be taught to further develop these skills in writing. Many people who have served in recent wars are Reservists and are older. Beyond their military experience, they have rich life experience to which they can relate and connect their learning, making them potentially deep and committed learners.

As a rule, our student veterans dislike ambiguity; they like structure and certainty. The military culture is all about goals, objectives and timelines. When you can put academic work in that context it is easier for them. Respect is big with them, and they respond well when it is clear that we respect their experience and perspective. Empire State College's many study options, from online studies to tutorials, allow veterans to exert control over their learning environment and increase the chances of academic success. The college's mentoring model provides these students with support and resources that might be more difficult to learn about on a conventional campus. The opportunity to build a relationship with someone who can explain and help the student veteran with academic decisions may be invaluable.

I could speak my mind and true feelings about war without ever worrying about being condemned for them or my actions.

Civilian life is slow compared to being in a combat situation. Active and recently deployed, and nonactive military

students are used to action, and the more contemplative aspects of academic life can be frustrating. They want answers – yesterday. We have noticed, too, that military students often bite off more than they can chew. Sometimes, like many of our other students, military students just disappear, not finishing their work, not responding to emails and offers of help. Were they redeployed? Did they get too overwhelmed by academic demands?

To consciously support veteran students demonstrates that colleges welcome diversity in ways that are rarely talked about. Besides being dedicated to identifying and eliminating classist, racist, ageist or sexist attitudes, it shows that diversity of experience is welcomed, and that colleges strive to foster an inclusionary environment that is dedicated to erasing veteran's social alienation by inviting them into a community of discourse that contends with real world dilemmas. The lived realities of experience in our complicated world desperately need the rigorous critical inquiry and communication skills that can be honed in the academic environment. And higher education needs to learn from people whose lived experiences are the stuff of literature, philosophy, history and politics.

Ultimately, we believe that what matters most is that we give students – and ourselves – the opportunity to think about and explore all the complicated aspects of war. As the writer James Salter says, we need to know about war, because it is about us.

Note

Quotes from students in this essay were collected from study group assignments and discussions during the 2009 and 2010 terms.

References

As expected, the literature on war is immense. We recognize that we only touch on a small sliver of that work. Included below are references to some of the key texts mentioned in our essay. If anyone is interested in receiving a fuller bibliography of the materials we have collected, we would be happy to share them with you.

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War Stories Project

Claudia Hough and Elaine Handley have joined with Cindy Bates to work on a project that evolved out of the War Stories study. They have collected stories about war from the Empire State College community that they will craft into a performance piece. It will be presented at the new Arts Residency on Thursday, Nov. 3, at Proctors Theater in Schenectady, N.Y.

Education and Individualism: Some Notes, Some Questions

Carla R. Payne, Professor Emerita of Graduate Studies, Union Institute and University, and Adjunct Faculty, Community College of Vermont

1. I have the privilege of teaching philosophy, which gives me a glimpse into what students are thinking. Over the years, I have noticed that the ethical relativism that is endemic among undergraduates is beginning to have an analogy in their attitude toward ontology. Not only do many of my students insist that what is good and right is relative to the individual, but also that what is *real* is real only in relation to the individual person. This goes beyond even Jamesian pluralism to what amounts to an insistence on the democracy of existence itself. Whatever the logical merits of such a position, it does not seem to result from reflection on the nature of things, but rather from a sense that any other position would not be *fair,* i.e., that a monolithic reality would infringe on individual *rights*. This may be the ultimate ought-is argument: x should not be the case, and therefore x is not the case. But I am concerned here less with the soundness of this train of thought than with the way it mirrors the assumptions in our present political environment.

2. Some examples to consider:

- Headline: Rift in Arizona as Latino Class is Found Illegal. A high school class in Latino literature is found to be in violation of Arizona legislation (HB 2281, May 10, 2010), which stipulates that "A school district or charter school in this state shall not include in its program of instruction any courses or classes that include any of the following: … Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals" (Lacey, 2011).
- After the shootings in Tucson, Sarah Palin is quoted as saying that ". . . acts like the shootings in Arizona 'begin and end with the criminals who commit them, not collectively with all the citizens of a state.'" "Ms. Palin quoted former President Ronald Reagan as saying that society should not be blamed for the acts of an individual. She said, 'It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions'" (Shear, 2011).

The political implications and motivations of the Arizona legislation and of pronouncements similar to Palin's have been widely canvassed, but the extent to which they reflect a major theme in American culture, rooted perhaps even more deeply than chauvinism, is not being given equal attention. Individualism is the mantra, and the virtues of individualism are proclaimed and assumed, but rarely examined for their implications. Are we, after all, biological atoms, each thrown into the world to compete with every other, owing nothing of ourselves to any others and therefore without essential ties beyond ourselves? Aristotle asserted that we can't even *be* human outside human society, and there are centuries of research demonstrating the importance of the social environment on our physical, physiological and psychological development. But radical individualism occurs and recurs as a leading motif, and indeed as an article of faith, throughout American history. Our most recent versions of libertarianism trumpet it: because any government that is democratic is necessarily a collective enterprise of the governed, even such a government must infringe on the absolute autonomy of the individual person. The contemporary insistence on the virtues of choice and on the total responsibility of each person for his/her own fate, which we see shaping policy from health care to financial regulation, is another variation on this same theme.

3. An educational system is bound to reflect the underlying assumptions of the society that it serves. But we must recognize that to the extent that education is implemented through social organization, there is a fatal inconsistency in insisting that certain values can be inculcated and at the same time that what we experience doesn't count in making us who we are. Does it make sense to argue that family values (or any values) need to be cherished and perpetuated, and simultaneously that we are all radically and solely responsible for who we are and what we do? Or does this argument apply only to criminals, while those of us who turn out to be "good citizens" owe our virtue to parental teaching, proper schooling, religious indoctrination or divine grace?

4. It is interesting to realize that in 1930, at the beginning of the Great Depression, John Dewey drew a distinction between an older individualism and a newer one, regarding individualism as a "mental and moral structure," itself dynamic, evolving and changing "with every great change in social constitution" (Dewey, 1962). The older individualism he saw as rooted in feudalism, and as later transformed by the industrial revolution. It was defined by economic self-interest, at a time when such an understanding of individualism represented resistance to prevailing legal and political repression. But "emergent individualism," according to Dewey, consonant with the forces of the present time, is impeded by our "opposing the socially corporate to the individual" (1962). Of course the terms of that opposition are now themselves transformed by the passage from the machine-dominated industry of his era to the digital technology of ours, but Dewey's rejection of personal or individual gain as the sole and permanent driver of progress is still highly relevant, as is his repudiation of the idea that the ties that bind us together in community "are merely external, and do not react into mentality and character, producing the framework of personal disposition" (Dewey, 1962). It is the contradiction of this very insight

that is unfortunately frozen into law in the Arizona statute, in the insistence that we are or can be human persons apart from our membership in groups with other humans. With Aristotle, Dewey says: "Individuals who are not bound together in associations, whether domestic, economic, religious, political, artistic or educational, are monstrosities" (Dewey, 1962). This is not to deny the legal and ethical responsibility of each individual for what that person does or does not do, but to recognize that becoming an accountable individual is an essentially social process.

Dewey noted that the opening of a new continent in America shaped the older, feudal individualism into a romantic form, with the energies of individuals focused on opportunities for personal gain, yet in the aggregate serving "national life" (Dewey, 1962). This is the same view that grounds the contemporary ethos of personal aggrandizement. We are to pursue our own interests, becoming entrepreneurs one and all, and scorning the common or collective effort implied by any project, policy or endeavor that is *public* rather than *private*.

5. Historically, progressive education is viewed as breaking with mainstream ideas about the role and purposes of education, but it also can be seen as embodying this same romantic view of the individual person. Progressive education led the way in this country in recognizing the interest of the learner as crucial to significant learning, but in the version that characterized some of its leading institutions (e.g., Goddard College, Union Institute, SUNY Empire State College), the fundamental assumption was that the individual exists *prior* to social experience, and is given with all those characteristics that determine interaction.

> The Goddard philosophy starts with the individual. It holds that each person is truly unique, has his own needs, has to contend with a special set of problems, possesses talents peculiar to him, and is worthy of the respect and love of his fellow men. It assumes that learning is inherent, natural, individual, active and the means to self-fulfillment. It says that education is the reconstruction of experience of the individual by himself for himself, but that it also is a transactional process through which the learner is constantly taking something from his environment and giving something to it. It is a social as well as an individual process and it involves all of the personality, that which we call intellectual as well as the emotional and the physical. (Davis, 1996)

The opening assumption that learning is individual in this statement trumps the subsequent characterization of it as a social process, and ignores the social *purpose* of education and growth as postulated by Dewey. It also disregards his criticism (and Kilpatrick's [Beyer, 1997]) of the notion that "the consciousness of each person is wholly private, a self-enclosed continent, intrinsically independent of the ideas, wishes, purposes of everybody else" (Dewey, 1916). The goal of self-fulfillment here is an individual goal. This point is more than a theoretical subtlety, since it was very influential in determining the orientation of the programs initiated at Goddard and elsewhere, and in the primacy in those programs of the individual learning contract or study plan and independent studies over the exchanges of ideas, questions and responses in which "knowing" occurs. That is not to say that there were no group settings included in the programs, but typically they were occasions for the display and presentation of individual projects, rather than regular opportunities for the collaborative construction of understandings. In this respect, certain interpretations of Dewey's thinking and their implementations did not depart from mainstream American educational philosophy, which has generally treated learning as a solitary pursuit, with learners side-by-side, but rarely together.

6. It also is interesting to find that this last citation from Dewey appears on many websites these days as evidence of the insidious, pernicious and un-American socialist tendencies of Dewey and Deweyeans. This misreading could be reinforced by the language of the question he put as a corollary to the critique of atomistic individualism: "Given feelings, ideas, desires, which have nothing to do with one another, how can actions proceeding from them be controlled in a social or public interest?" (Dewey, 1916). *Control* of the sovereign individual is exactly the bugaboo, the taboo, the evil empire that we are to combat and that threatens us and our persons, according to the thinking that seems to inform both the Arizona school legislation and much current political invective. Reading Dewey's "controlled" to mean "focused" or "directed" would be more consonant with his overall position, although the roots of the darker interpretation are deep in our history and culture. While the depiction of the natural and ideal human condition as the unfettered competition of completely autonomous persons – each owing nothing to the others – may appeal, it has long had its detractors. Hobbes is the most obvious. Anarchy and civil war cannot support civilization, and he thought that we would give up a good part of our liberties to avoid social chaos. Total freedom leading to unfreedom, total responsibility leading to irresponsibility: is this the true foundation of progressive educational thought?

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My Lost Stories

Steve Lewis, Hudson Valley Center

Out of the refracted tunnel of macular degeneration, my 92-year-old mother points a misshapen finger toward the cluttered table. Then she says with a shrug, "That's about my mother."

My eyebrows rise involuntarily as I reach for the two carelessly folded sheets of paper next to a ripped envelope. One is a dark photocopy of a story from the *Brooklyn Eagle,* dated June 24, 1906; behind it is another with the same date from the *Saloon Keepers News.*

Both articles are about an incident involving a 17-year-old girl named Jennie Sakol, robbed of $1,500 by two "well-dressed thugs" in East New York who got away in a covered wagon. According to the reports in both papers, the girl had gone to the bank for her father, my great-grandfather, who owned a saloon on Stone Avenue (now Mother Gaston Avenue) and, ahem, cashed checks for customers on the weekend.

Because my eternally tight-lipped mother has never spoken of Jennie Sakol, I don't connect the name to my maternal grandmother right away. I do know, although I do not think I have heard it from my mother, that when Jennie Sakol Aaronson grew ill and was hospitalized in 1926, her 13-year-old daughter, my mother, was sent off to summer camp in the Catskills – and the two never saw or spoke to each other again.

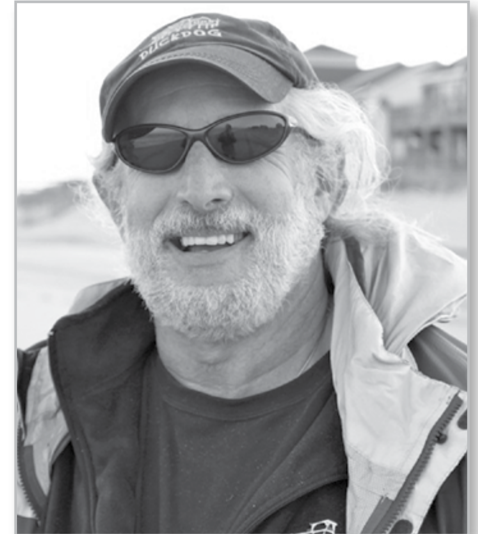
That was pretty much all I knew of my grandmother before reading the story of the robbery on Stone Avenue. And, frankly, because I had so little connection to the young victim of the robbery, the articles provided only an interesting source of conversation at the next family dinner (everyone laughing at the vision of bandits escaping in a covered wagon) … and I later used it as a "trigger" for one of my creative writing workshops. But in the end – as in the end of another full and wearying day trying to stay upright on this spinning planet – I have to admit that it meant little more to me than finding an intriguing daguerreotype of an unknown subject in the 75 cent bins of local antique stores.

So?

So now it's several years later and my mother is several years silenced beyond this life and I know nothing more about my grandmother than I did the afternoon I read the *Brooklyn Eagle* and the *Saloon Keepers News*. But I am haunted now by that shadow of a 17-year-old girl robbed by the two well-dressed thugs. The girl who would die 19 years later when she was 36 years old, leaving behind a daughter who was robbed of her tongue by the triple betrayals of a helpless mother, a hapless grieving father and a Brooklyn neighborhood of misguided or cowardly adults who kept mother and child away from each other for several months – and then eternity.

And so in the breathless spaces in a breathtaking life built around seven children and 15 grandchildren, I sometimes find myself staring off into space like my mother often did, wishing that I knew just a handful of stories about this Jennie, something, anything, a few words strung together here or there about what she looked like or what she cooked well or the punishments she meted out or which lullabies, if any, she sang to her baby girl to sleep. How bereft little Lillian must have felt at 13, a motherless child.

A few months ago, I drove alone to the 1950s gray rancher on Long Island where I grew up, and as I neared the house I could feel my mother's bereaved soul all around the small manicured property, in the grassy plot where a maple tree once shaded the front yard, in the chiseled bushes like a fence in front of her bedroom window, in her silences at supper, the sighing shoulders doing dishes, the quiet clicking of knitting needles in front of the Sylvania TV at night, the empty pages of a painful past beyond words.



Steve Lewis

There was no point in stopping in front of the house. It's a shell to me. I rolled past the Schnippers' house where their little girl Cheryl died of a brain tumor when I was 7 (and no one said a word to me about it), turned the corner onto Westwood Circle, past Bobby Jayson's home (whom I haven't spoken with in 46 years), past Dr. Kent's (who would come to the house with his black bag and talk to my mother not to me), and onto the Long Island Expressway, leaving behind all those untold stories that might have become a fertile plot of ground to better grieve a mother's passing.

Perhaps because I so long ago left that quiet neighborhood to live a life teeming with children and words, no doubt trying to fill in some of the blanks she left behind, I drove upstate to my home in the mountains thinking not of my enigmatic mother or my unknown grandmother, but, oddly enough, the thousands of writers who have come to my classes and workshops over the past 40 years to tell their stories. To put into words

the medicinal narratives that, after all is said and rewritten, remind us that we're not alone on this half dark and ever-spinning planet. This planet that is awesome in its gifts, breathtaking in its fearful reprisals. This planet that makes some stories too painful to tell.

In soulful contrast to my unreadable mother who kept her tongue, those good writers spend considerable money and time to urge themselves away from weary work and household chores and the inherent pleasures and tensions of family life, not to mention the adoptive comforts of television and intoxicants and food, to write their stories. How simple it would be for them to scoop up some ice cream or drink some beer and turn on the television and let nameless teams of script writers fill the emptied hours with words that evaporate before morning. But these remarkable tellers of mine, most of whom labor on without paycheck or byline, who inform my world in ways beyond words, resist such easy comfort. In the days between classes they write their hearts out. That is not a metaphor.

So L.W. writes about a hard father and a harder deployment in Vietnam and hardest of all, the anguished tale of coming home to an angry, unforgiving country; and C.A. moves so resonantly between the sacred and profane lines of a gritty Pittsburgh skyline and the sandy Connecticut shoreline; and J.G. opens up the second-story window of a childhood in Westchester to see what happens after his father runs off to Mexico with a neighbor; J.E. tells us of a misbegotten bicycle trip from Minnesota to New York; E.M. the drama of a lost nephew in Broad Channel.

And so I think, and I think, and I can't stop thinking of my grandmother, Jennie Sakol, and how different things might have been if only I could have had my mother in my class.

"To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin."

bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress, *1994, p. 13*

Reflections on a Journey of Learning to Adjust My Blind Spot

Heidi Nightengale, Central New York Center

As a faculty mentor with the Auburn Unit of the Central New York Center, one of the studies that I guide involves investigation into the work of Daniel Goleman. Goleman made his theoretical research about emotional intelligence both groundbreaking within the academy and accessible to those outside the academy who grabbed his books off the shelves of local bookstores and helped him become a *New York Times* best-selling author.

Goleman's work caught my attention as an administrator of not-for-profit organizations in the 1990s, years before I came to SUNY Empire State College in the mentor role. Goleman speculated that emotional intelligence (EQ) far out-predicted the likelihood of life success at home, in school, in the community and in the workplace than its counterpart, the long validated intelligence quotient (IQ) and its well established testing methodologies used to arrive at a static IQ.

At the heart of Goleman's work was a series of competencies. I studied them. I pondered them. I wondered if *I* had them. He postulated that personal and social competencies such as empathy, self-awareness, self-control, social skills and motivation were far greater predictors of happiness and success than the IQ. In his ground breaking book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ* (1995), Goleman details these personal and social competencies and argues that the common link between them and emotional intelligence is the concepts of compassion and humanity.

The hallmark of these competencies for me was empathy. Even Goleman admits that while this is a fluid, developing and developable competence, he knows little about how one *comes* to become empathetic. Still, it is this competency and my on-going reflection on it that led to the work for which I was honored to receive the Altes Prize for Exemplary Community Service last year. That is, it was Goleman's thinking about empathy that led me to a movement away from a personal blind spot I had been hiding.

Early on, I found myself emotionally, physically and spiritually impacted by remarkable people, mostly young people, who came into my life nearly always through a serendipitous series of events.

Heidi Nightengale (left)

Phone calls from local school administrators would indicate that a teen and senior at the high school district was homeless. At the very least, high school graduation was at stake, as the adolescent had aged-out of any intervention from the local department of social services. Without shelters and programs for theses girls, my home could provide a refuge from the streets and could offer routines and safety to help them remain in school through high school graduation and beyond. In an underground railroad of sorts, the first call from a frustrated school administrator (someone who could not get law enforcement, social services or not-for-profit human service agencies to respond) prompted that first sheltering experience. Several more young girls followed to cross the Finger Lakes Railroad tracks to my home.

But my blind spot was showing up emotionally. Why did I want to do this work? Did I house these youths and try to provide for their emotional, nutritional, educational and other developmental needs because of a narcissistic need to receive accolades? Did I simply want to feel good about *myself* more than feel connected to the whole village ideology that in other parts of world society creates a quiet stepping up to just *take care?*

As my work continued, I found my answers following the path of discovering and exercising my emotional intelligence.

I kept at it, and also continued many other pieces of volunteer work in my community in an effort to impart my academic and experiential knowledge. I wanted to work for good programming for youth and families at risk. I wanted to work toward ensuring some overall good in my community. And as I met many people in this work, one thing kept creeping up in my conscience: Those I was working with and for were very often endowed with Goleman's competencies – and especially with empathy – as a typical hallmark.

I kept thinking about Goleman and about his newer work on what he describes as "the emotionally intelligent workplace" (2001). Around me and inside me I was moving far from any "look at me"-narcissism about contribution, and instead beginning to attach personal and social competencies to a teaching model based on leading by example. I was exemplifying one of Goleman's tenets: Emotional intelligence is not static. It can be cultivated, and I believe that in my cultivating, I was working to pick the fruits of this emotionally intelligent garden and feed them to specific and special young girls, entire not-for-profit youth serving organizations, and peace and diversity task forces among other community groups.

I wanted to work for good programming for youth and families at risk. I wanted to work toward ensuring some overall good in my community.

Already this has been a life's work, and many of the young people I once impacted as mentor, homework assistant and agency expert volunteer now sit alongside me on the *very* boards of agencies where they participated, played, scraped knees, attended college trips, and sought help of all kinds. Without the blinding near-sightedness of early narcissism that can motivate some in volunteerism, I now fully see that when one works through the immediate perks of the notoriety of "expertise," there are no replacements for the evolving competencies of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and empathy. There are no replacements for humanity linked with compassion. My former blind side is shined now to a 20/20 vision polish each time a child, a young adult or older adult recognizes me as "that lady who taught me to open a new door."

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A Teacher Reflects: Learning About Student Leadership

Dianne Ramdeholl, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

This piece was inspired by attending the WE LEARN (Women Expanding Literacy Education Action Resource Network) Conference and written while sitting on the train returning to NYC. (It was later published in their spring 2009 newsletter). I kept thinking about unspoken but unmistakable power dynamics between students and nonstudents and also between students and other students (and how that impacts and defines student leadership). In my experience, student leadership involves collective struggles, grounded in solidarity, for equity, space and rights. It can never be paternalistic or replicate dominant power structures …

Student Leadership
Isn't innocuous
Flavorless, clear
It doesn't seep gently
Like water,
a lapping stream
It's frothy, bubbling,
Fierce, rich
Residing at intersections of
histories and legacies
honoring past and present
collective struggles
Pushing and pulling …
For and with …
Challenging, questioning,
wild and untamed
For space, voice, rights
Pieces of the pie.
In solidarity
Common struggle
Unquenchable and unstoppable.
It isn't toxic
Perpetuations of dominant interests
further exploitation with facelifts
Mouthpieces for furthering others' agendas
It's grappling, wrestling
Reframing, resisting
Rewriting, rethinking
Renegotiating, re-navigating
Redefining, re-presenting
Dominant terrain.
Co-creating space
Equitably
Toiling collectively,
Democratically envisioning
Dilemmas and contradictions,
Pushing, pulling …
For and with …
Re-imagining
Existing beyond frameworks
Beyond boundaries and limitations
Beyond fixed definitions
Fluid, shifting,
Constant metamorphosis
Unlimited worlds of possibility
Narratives as of yet unwritten …

Making Sense of Mexico: 1975-2010, Part I

Chris Rounds, Central New York Center

In February of 1975, my wife and I left the small town of Yautepec in the state of Morelos, Mexico, after a year in residence. I had been doing dissertation research with a focus on land reform and economic change, and we were going home. Thirty-five years later, in early February 2010, as a part of my sabbatical, I was headed back. I had returned for brief visits a couple of times during the intervening decades, but this would be my first extended stay. I planned an initial visit for three months, then a fourth month in June.

The theme I set for myself was "Making Sense of Mexico: 1975-2010." By this I didn't mean "finding out the right answers"; rather, my aim was to achieve a baseline understanding of what had gone on in my absence. From this I hoped to establish a longer-term research and writing agenda. During the intervening years, I had been drawn far away from my interest in Mexico. More than a decade in academic administration, coupled with 20 years as a mentor in one of Empire State College's smaller units, had left little time for "keeping up" with things Mexican, and I intended to use this time to catch up on what had been going on there. The research agenda would, I hoped, see me through the transition to retirement.

My flight into Mexico City was scheduled to arrive just before 1 p.m. on Feb. 5. I got there at 11:30 p.m. I was still okay, though, since I hadn't lost my luggage, I had a key to my apartment in Cuernavaca (an hour and a half south of the airport), and I could catch a bus directly from the airport. Yet in the middle of the night, the bus was stuck in the capital's traffic for two hours, and I finally got to my apartment at 3 a.m. The next morning's papers carried a story about a burst dike in one of the capital's drainage canals. A major highway and an entire neighborhood were drowning in six feet of sewage. The chaos spread throughout the metropolitan area where the population is nearing 20 million. That traffic jam was suggestive of a major theme that would emerge in my work.

Chris Rounds, bump on a log, between Yautepec and Oacalco, March 2010

My apartment was perfect. In the old central district of Cuernavaca, it was a 10-minute walk from the Zocalo, or central plaza. It was close to local bus routes and a short walk from both the central public market and a supermarket. From the central market, I could catch a bus to my old stomping grounds in Yautepec, located 17 miles east of the city. I had found the apartment with help from Jill Hamberg, our colleague at the Metropolitan Center. She had suggested that I contact Metropolitan Center alumnus Nick Iuviene, who had just returned from Cuernavaca. He, in turn, had given me a name and email address, and I'd even received the apartment key in advance. Things were so much simpler than they had been in the 1970s!

The apartment opened onto a traditional urban patio, protected from the street by a high brick wall. I had a living/dining room, a small kitchen and a bedroom. The bathroom was under the stairs, requiring a modicum of agility, but I could cope. The apartment was most noteworthy for its absences: no television, no Internet access (well, it turned out that there was, but it took me weeks to discover that). No distractions! Beyond these technical absences, other "distractions" also were off the radar: no family, no students, no subscriptions to plow through, no lawn to keep up, no snow to shovel. Indeed the apartment came with what we might call a maid. Petra was the owner's eyes and ears on the ground (he lives in Wisconsin – don't ask). She cleaned the apartment once a week and took my laundry out to the cleaner's. And I found myself free, as I had not been in decades, to read, walk, reflect and write. And boy did I have catching up to do!

My reading began with things I'd brought with me, including a fat history of modern Mexico and a newly published history of capitalism. These were quickly supplemented through trips to the major bookstores in Mexico City, where I picked up books on Mexican environmental history, water and 20th century political history. I also became

a devoted reader of the left-leaning yet very respected weekly *Proceso,* and of the daily *La Jornada.* I picked up additional works recommended by friends, and family members coming for visits provided deliveries from Amazon. Life was good! (I've appended a partial bibliography.)

My daily life quickly fell into a pattern. I was up by 5:30 a.m. and read for a couple of hours. At least twice a week, I spent a day "in the field," either in Yautepec or Cuernavaca, with an occasional trip to Mexico, D.F. (the Federal District … capital). In Yautepec, I retraced walks I had taken 35 years earlier, covering many of the nooks and crannies of the municipality. I took pictures, talked to people, and recorded observations on a digital recorder. I was interested in changes that had occurred in the sugar industry, which had been the heart of Yautepec's economy, and the spread of weekend residences, something that was just getting started during the '70s. It wasn't that Yautepec was, in any particular sense, representative of Mexico. The state of Morelos was substantially better off than all of its neighbors to the south, and radically different from the country's northern states, where population density was low and farms could be huge. Yautepec is blessed with substantial irrigated land and easy access to urban markets and jobs. It is in no sense "average," but it is the place I had gotten to know pretty well, and I wanted to get to know it again, at least to the extent I could in a few brief visits.

During that first month, my home life could fairly be characterized as monastic. I hadn't developed any acquaintances that might absorb spare hours, and I had lots to read and think about. In the mornings, when it was still quite cool, I read on the building's flat roof, with a view of Mt. Popocatepetl off to the east, and much of Cuernavaca to the west and north. In the middle of the day my first-floor apartment was cool enough, and my dining room table doubled as a desk. Meals were simply prepared on a two-burner gas stove, and I treated myself to restaurant meals a couple of evenings a week. Even that fell into a pattern. Pazole at El Barco once a week, Sopa de ajo con dos jeuvos at the Vienese maybe once every couple of weeks, and perhaps a pizza occasionally at the Marco Polo, sitting on the second-floor balcony across from the cathedral. I know what you're thinking … life was hard.

For me, the most amazing part of these early weeks was: I was doing exactly what I wanted to do. The books I read were the ones I wanted and needed to read. The trips I took were to places I wanted to go. My writing focused on what I was reading, seeing and thinking about. I was doing what I had set out to do: making sense of a place that had been on the margins of my consciousness for more than 30 years. It was only then that I began fully to appreciate the "down side" of working at Empire State College. I had devoted a career to responding to the needs and interests of students. I'd loved doing it, and as a result, my education was broadened in many unanticipated ways. I'd developed interests and even some expertise in adult learning, in environmental history, in U.S. foreign policy – all in an effort to anticipate and respond to my students' needs. In doing that, I had willingly sacrificed my currency in modern Mexican history. In 20 years of mentoring, I can't recall a single student request to study modern Mexico.

The first part of this essay (the second section will be included in *All About Mentoring* fall 2011) briefly explores some of the changes I encountered and ponders their implications. I want to emphasize that I left Mexico in early July 2010 realizing that I had only scratched the surface. I also want to express my deep gratitude to Charlie Goff, director of the Cemanahuac Educational Community for his friendship and willingness to share his deep knowledge of Mexico.

Basic Dimensions of Mexico's Change: 1975-2010 Population

In the early 1970s, Mexico's population was growing at a rate close to 3.5 percent. During the intervening years, that rate had dropped dramatically. By 2010, the U.N. estimated that its growth rate was closer to 1 percent. Still, the national population more than doubled, from 48.2 million in 1970 to 103.3 million in 2005 (INEGI, Banco de Informacion Economica 1999 cited in Moreno-Brid and Ros, p. 262). And within the state of Morelos, similarly dramatic growth had occurred. Its population had been around 600,000 in 1970. By 2000, it had reached 1.6 million. The municipality of Yautepec had more than tripled in size over the same period, from almost 27,000 to around 84,000. (These figures are taken from the decennial censuses of the state, 1970-2000.) The visual impact of Morelos's growth is greatest when you begin to descend into the state on the highway that connects it to Mexico City. On that early February morning, I was stunned to see that the plain where Cuernavaca used to be nestled in the upper-right-hand corner was now a sea of lights. This impression was confirmed on my trips to Yautepec. Where miles of fields had once separated Cuernavaca "proper" from its surrounding towns, urban development was virtually pervasive.

Yautepec, when I lived there, was essentially a small town. You could get a full view of it from atop "El Tenayo," a steep hill within the city and just south of the Rio Yautepec. The most striking changes in 2010 involved the city's spread toward the west, in the direction of Cuernavaca. The land there was not irrigated. It had, in fact, constituted the village's original communal land, rocky and planted in corn or reserved for grazing. This year, it was quite evident that housing spread for at least a half mile west of its previous boundary. A similar pattern was evident south of El Tenayo. Indeed, in that direction, two modest and treeless hills just east of what had been the valley's major hacienda, Atlihuayan, were fully developed. As I walked those hills, a couple stopped me to try to sell me a plot of land. They assured me that piped water was plentiful and electrical service was uninterrupted. And housing plots were cheap! A couple they introduced me to invited me into their very attractive home, with fantastic views of the surrounding valleys. The man had retired on the advice of his doctors a few years earlier, and they had moved to Yautepec from the Valley of Mexico because the air was clean and the weather warm. When I walked these hills in 1974, they were nothing but scrub. The only inhabitants I encountered were goats.

Housing developments constituted another new feature. These had simply not existed in 1975. There were certainly weekend

residences, built by people from the D.F. (the Federal District, Mexico City), complete with high walls, lawns and swimming pools. But they were independent units. The housing developments of 2010 were on a different scale entirely. The more modest, older ones consisted of attached houses, sometimes very small ones. From the heights of El Tenayo, they reminded me more of Mexican graveyards than housing developments. The newer developments, very much under construction this summer, were on a much grander scale, covering many acres and surrounded by high walls that could stretch for hundreds of yards. The scale had changed, but the pattern was familiar: lands that had for generations been devoted to food production were transformed into vacation retreats, complete with all of the amenities. And local people, who had once farmed the land, were allowed through the guarded entrances only if they had a job to do.

So Mexico's population continues to grow, increasing pressure on every resource and government service, but the fact that the pace of growth has sharply declined is very important, and heartening. Why this change has occurred has, inevitably, prompted much speculation. The most convincing analysis I've encountered involves the changing roles of women. Back in the '70s, Mexico was a bastion of "machismo." Women, especially poor women, had very little say in most matters, including family planning. Women, again especially poor and rural ones, tended to marry early and bear many children. The expectation was that some would die, others would move away, and the parents saw those who remained both as contributors to the family income and as their only source of security in old age. In the intervening years, several things had changed. Women's access to education had improved. Many worked outside the home. Access to birth control information and methods had dramatically improved. And the age of women at marriage had increased. I'm sure that the impact of these changes varies by class and region, but it seems clear that important changes have occurred.

Transformation of the Mexican Economy

In the mid-1970s, Mexico was at the end of what some think of as its golden age. The economy had been growing at a respectable rate since World War II. The peso was at 12.5 to the dollar, where it had been for years, and public confidence in the Partido Revolucionario Institucional's (PRI) stewardship of the economy was pretty high. This didn't mean that everybody was happy. Income distribution was grossly inequitable, and some other countries were growing at a much faster rate, but the PRI economists were accomplishing their own goals: the rich were, after all, getting richer. Beginning in the 1980s, all of that changed, abruptly and radically. A boom related to the promise of oil revenues and easy access to international capital led to a catastrophic collapse in the early '80s as oil prices fell and interest rates climbed. This left Mexico nearly bankrupt, with the greatest burden falling on workers and the newly emergent middle class. Neo-liberals within the PRI then took over, driving the divestiture of the government's industrial and other investments, and eventually the adoption of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Economic nationalism was abruptly replaced by internationalism. Mexicans were assured that international investment would flow into the country, creating new jobs and lowering the price of consumer goods while increasing their quality. Mexico's economy would be integrated with those of Canada and the U.S., incomes would rise and inequalities would fade away. Along the way, tariffs would be lowered and then eliminated, borders would open to the free exchange of goods, and Mexican industries would be strengthened through healthy competition. Mexico had, in short, bought into the Washington consensus.

What actually happened is a long and complicated story. Here are a few snap-shots:

Investments did flow in, but the vast majority went to North American subsidiaries and virtually none went to small, local enterprises (Juan Carlos Moreno-Brid and Jaime Ros explore this in detail.) New technology flowed in, too, but was employed largely in assembly plants where products were promptly re-exported with minimal local impact, save through the creation of some low-wage, low security assembly-line jobs. What did radically change in Mexico was access to North American retailers, most notably fast food joints and retailers like Walmart. Wealthier Mexicans gained easy access to North American consumer goods. Poorer Mexicans benefitted from greater competition, especially in the form of imported (and heavily subsidized) U.S. corn. The very wealthiest of Mexicans also benefitted, as did their colleagues in Russia, from the opportunities presented by privatization. Carlos Slim, one of the world's wealthiest men, got a huge boost when he bought up Mexico's cell phone services, replacing a public monopoly with a private one. The national economy did not achieve "take-off." The promise of integration with the "Colossus of the North" did not extend to people. And the PRI government lost the last shreds of its credibility as a manager of the economy.

Walmart is there … but its local competitors are as big – and as offensive.

When we left Mexico in 1975, I took a look around the Yautepec open-air market and wondered if it would still be there when I returned. There were, at that time, a few grocery stores in Mexico, and I wondered whether the North Americanization of the Mexican food system would put the public markets out of business. That hasn't happened. What you see in Mexico today are two systems existing in parallel. In both Cuernavaca and Yautepec, the local public markets are alive and well. They look much the way they did when I left: full of great smells and colors, populated by local vendors selling meat and vegetables that have never experienced the inside of a refrigerator, and visited by local people who appreciate the social as much as the practical aspects of buying food. But now a fully articulated parallel system exists, complete with parking lots, air conditioning, and the

total absence of any smell except antiseptic. Walmart is there (now said to be the largest private employer in Mexico), but its local competitors are as big – and as offensive. These mega-stores primarily serve people who drive cars, and people who can afford the luxury of processed food.

A similar pattern can be seen in the restaurant business. Burger King, McDonalds and KFC's are pervasive in the

Food cart: The zocalo, Cuernavaca, Morelos, June, 2010

big cities, but so are the street vendors and local restaurants. One noticeable change involves neighborhood bakeries and tortilla shops. Abundant in the '70s, they seemed much harder to find this year. But it turns out that their products remain readily available, through the tiny neighborhood groceries or "tiendas" that grace just about every residential block. You'll find the fresh tortillas, still warm, delivered each morning by motorbike, snuggled in a cooler near the counter. Okay, the quality and freshness have suffered, but the tortillas survive. One difference, and an important one, is that the price of this staple has jumped, as competition for corn from the North American Midwest booms. Mexican consumers join the long list of victims of ethanol. No worries, you can always buy "Pan Bimbo," the Mexican version of heavily processed white bread, much preferred by members of the elite, who tend to distain tortillas as way too … Mexican.

Politics: The Demise of the PRI

In the 1970s, the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) had been in power for as long as anyone could remember, and its hold on power seemed firm. Its façade had been shaken in 1968 when its soldiers opened fire on massed demonstrators in the Plaza of the Three Cultures: Tlatelolco. And during the '70s, a form of low intensity warfare was on-going involving small revolutionary bands. But the power of the PRI seemed beyond question, as it accommodated dissidents within the elite and did not hesitate to crush agitators within the lower classes. It waved the patriotic banner continuously by asserting its independence from its North American neighbor, and giving vocal support to regional trouble makers like Fidel Castro. At the same time, it never confused rhetoric with reality when it came to private property rights and keeping labor costs low.

In the mid 1970s, there was much talk of new oil discoveries and the promise of a boom just over the horizon, and leaders of the PRI quickly became victims of their own rhetoric, increasing borrowing and public spending and relying on high oil prices both to attract investors and to pay off loans. In the early 1980s, all of that quickly came unraveled, as a downturn in the North American economy resulted in a sharp drop in oil prices and an equally sharp rise in interest rates. The vaunted PRI economic machine went off the rails. What followed, referred to as the "lost decade," was a period of economic contraction, wholesale privatization and stagnation or worse in job creation. Through all of this, the wealthy fared better than the middle classes, who in

Walmart … could have been anywhere. Yuitepec, Morelos, June 2010

turn fared better than the poor. Perhaps it was the PRI that fared worst of all. In many ways, its credibility never recovered.

In September 1985, the PRI suffered another major blow following a massive earthquake that rocked the capital. Damage was widespread and a great many people died, yet the PRI, in the following days, was invisible. Local people seized the initiative and quickly mobilized to search for victims and provide services for survivors. When the PRI belatedly leapt into action, having initially minimized the damage and assured international experts that help was not needed, it sent in the army to protect private property. The party was further discredited when post-quake analysis suggested the pattern of building collapses revealed one of the many costs of corruption. Contractors working on government buildings, including hospitals and schools had clearly used shoddy materials and government inspectors had been paid off.

The 1988 presidential election brought the decline of the PRI into full public view. The PRI candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, chosen, as always, by the outgoing president, was challenged by a leftist spin-off group that called itself the Frente Democratico Nacional (the National Democratic Front). Its candidate, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, was widely believed to have won the election, but the PRI abruptly halted the ballot count and declared its man the winner. This period, between 1985 and 1990, saw the rise of several "civil society" groups, many of them byproducts of the popular response to the 1985 earthquake. Civil society has taken on multiple roles since then and, as we shall see, may be central to Mexican hopes for the future.

Things got even worse in 1994, when the PRI candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, who promised to open the political process and demonstrate the PRI's responsiveness to the public, was assassinated. This event, in May, on the heels of the Zapatista uprising in the southern state of Chiapas on Jan. 1, traumatized the nation, just at the time when Mexico should have been celebrating the implementation of NAFTA, the pact that national leaders promised would pave the way for Mexico's transformation into a fully developed country. What Mexicans refer to as the "intellectual authors" of the assassination was never identified. That fall, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, an official of the PRI and a national senator, was assassinated. During the months that followed, investigations revealed what historians Michael C. Meyer, William L. Sherman and Susan M. Deeds (2007) refer to as follows:

Girl in Sombrero: Watching a World Cup victory celebration, Cuernavaca, Morelos, June 17, 2010

> For at least half a century Mexicans had awaited revelations of corruption each time a new administration replaced an old. But this occasion was different. The news of intrigue, corruption, big money, naropolitics and murder that began to surface in February 1995 was not the typical low-grade moral infection. It was a gothic tale that mesmerized the nation. (p. 618)

This long-running scandal, coupled with yet another economic collapse and a response from the PRI that was little short of catastrophic, finally resulted in the PRI's loss of power to the conservative Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) in 2000.

This sketch of major changes in Mexico between 1975 and 2010 suggests a number of themes worthy of further investigation. In the second part of this essay, I will explore one of them: Governmental Capacity. Powerfully influenced by their North American neighbor, Mexican administrations during the 1980s and 1990s sharply reduced the government's role in the economy and opened the country to foreign private investment. And, as noted, rapid population growth and urbanization increased pressure on natural resources and infrastructure. Simultaneously, democratization both raised expectations and created openings for new approaches to addressing these issues.

The question I will take up is: how prepared are Mexican governmental institutions to respond to the challenges currently confronting them and those sure to arise in coming decades? One narrative suggests that this issue need not concern us: the market will provide. Another argues that strong and responsive governments are essential to the vitality of market economies and flourishing societies. A look at the Mexican experience offers some valuable insights.

Note

References included here are texts referred to in part I. A full bibliography will be provided in *All About Mentoring* fall 2011.

References

Meyer, M.C., Sherman, W.L. and Deeds, S.M. (2007). *The course of Mexican history* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Moreno-Brid, J.C and Ros, J. (2009). *Development and growth in the Mexican economy: A historical perspective*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Found Things: Empire State College Objectives

In 1973, Empire State College published its third "bulletin." (Even now, it's been less than a decade since the college created its first "catalog.") Like the first bulletin (1971-1972), the overall spirit of this 104-page, 5 ½ x 7 ½ inch document is captured in the description of the "objectives, processes and academic offerings" of the college. Particularly telling is the section, "Empire State College Objectives," included here. Written by the college's founding academic vice president, Arthur Chickering, these "objectives" offer a glimpse of the ways in which the college sought to communicate its core values about knowledge and "personal development."

Thanks, as always, to our college historian, Richard Bonnabeau, for assistance in this archival work, and to Arthur Chickering for his help in our efforts to search out the document's author. Readers might be interested in comparing the language and the ideas in this document with Chickering's summer 2010 publication, "Our Purposes: Personal Reflections on Character Development and Social Responsibility in Higher Education" (Liberal Education, 96 *[3].)*

Educational effectiveness is enhanced when the objectives and their relationships to the institutional policies and practices are spelled out. The chance of generating contradictory forces which cancel one another is then minimized. When an educational institution believes in its objectives, it sets into motion forces which affect everyone associated with it. Students must weigh their own purposes and values against those of the institution. They then must determine whether there is sufficient agreement between the two to warrant committing their time and energy to the institution. Clearly stated objectives make this determination possible.

For these reasons, we take time to be as clear as we can about the educational objectives embedded within the admissions process, the Learning Contracts, the educational resources and special programs, and the academic procedures and standards.

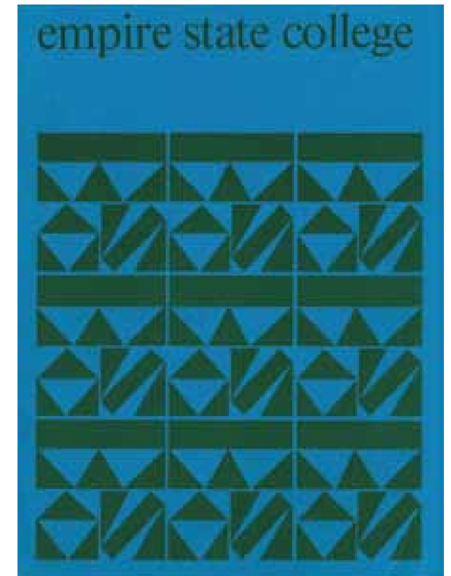
What are our objectives? Think of a pyramid. At its apex are simple communication and reading skills. These skills are supported by several major blocks of intellectual competence, which rests on six major dimensions of personal development. Though they are described sequentially and range from the simple and concrete to the abstract and complex, when a man or a woman enters the Empire State program, all three levels of objectives are met at once.

Empire State's program places a premium on oral and written communication, including effective reading ability.

> When a prospective student visits a Learning Center, he needs to be able to read the materials available there and to talk with others about his interests and what the Center offers. To complete the Admissions Prospectus, he must write answers to difficult questions. Planning, implementing, and evaluating Contracts and Programs of Study calls for continual oral and written exchanges between student and Mentor. Most Contracts require substantial reading and written reports.

Empire State's program requires several major aspects of intellectual competence: knowledge, comprehension, analysis, evaluation, synthesis and application.

Knowledge involves more than recalling specific bits of information, i.e., terminology, dates and facts. It includes knowledge of conventions, trends and sequences, classifications and categories, and major theories or generalizations which are appropriate in a given field. It also includes knowledge of the methods of inquiry and



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of the criteria by which facts, principles, or opinions are judged. Knowledge is acquired through memorization and direct experience, and is reinforced by use.

> Donald Wentworth and Dolores Guion were granted advanced standing in part because they had acquired such knowledge through education and prior work experience … Emma Schmidt's knowledge of philosophy and group dynamics will grow as she reads Spinoza, Bales, and others, just as Bob Lenard's knowledge of Greek culture will expand as he reads *The Iliad*.

Comprehension converts information acquired through memorization into working knowledge. It is evident when people can translate information from one form or another, can express it in their own words, in mathematical terms, in artistic products or literary metaphors. Comprehension is indicated by the power to interpret and extrapolate ideas, and when the consequences are consistent with the information given.

Bob Lenard's comprehension is tested and his interpretive abilities are exercised when after carrying out library research on the non-Western antecedents of Greek Classicism in Persia, Egypt, and India, he writes a paper discussing the non-Western and nonlinear influences underlying Western rationalism … The same is true for Charles Booth when he reads Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* and describes "transcendented being," and of Janet Lessinger when she discusses the experiences of modern life as presented in Kafka's *The Trial* and Laing's *The Divided Self*.

Analysis calls for the ability to break down a communication or an experience into basic elements, to identify the relative importance of ideas or incidents, and to make explicit the relationships among them.

When Emma Schmidt creates her "intellectual autobiography," looking back over her past reading and experiences, she tackles a complex analytic task … Dolores Guion faces a similar challenge when she examines the Health Science Programs at Hudson Valley Community College to determine what they include and whether there have been task analyses of the basic skills and concepts of health career workers … Donald Wentworth's research project on The General Motors sit-down strike will call for similar analytic abilities.

Evaluation calls for the ability to make qualitive and quantitative judgments in relation to given or understood criteria. It calls for judgments about the value of information, materials, and methods for specific purposes. In some cases, judgments may rest on internal evidence such as logical accuracy or internal consistency. In other cases, judgments may rest on external criteria which must be selected or formulated to fit the case, or which may depend upon using standard systems of appraisal.

Dolores Guion's study of Health Science Programs will have a substantial evaluative component as she makes judgments about the effectiveness of student training and the degree to which there is a good fit between the curricula and actual job requirements … Emma Schmidt's study of the agency practices in relation to Spanish-speaking clients will evaluate their effectiveness and responsiveness to such persons and their effectiveness with them, and the degree to which requirements for employment and volunteer work permit persons of Spanish background to participate in the work of those agencies … Chuck Booth's evaluative paper on experimental colleges will scrutinize and make judgments about their methods and curricula.

Synthesis involves arranging and combining elements so that a structure or pattern emerges which was not clearly there before. The result may be a communication in which a writer or speaker conveys his ideas, feelings, or experiences to another; it may be a proposed plan or a set of abstract relationships which classify or explain certain phenomena and may be presented in verbal, mathematical, or artistic form.

Dolores Guion's report will synthesize the results of her analyses of the Hudson Valley Community College Health Science Programs … Emma Schmidt's reports on community agencies which have Spanish-speaking clients and her interviews with faculty members in the Department of Human Services will call for the ability to draw together diverse kinds of information to make an integrated whole … Chuck Booth will need similar abilities when he compiles a bibliography for use in his course and organizes the readings in relation to students' interests … In bi-weekly phone calls and conferences with the Mentor, Bob Lenard and others will create syntheses of their readings, travel, work experiences, volunteer activities.

Application calls for the use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations, or for the ability to compare one set of ideas or experiences with another in order to consider the implications or potential consequences. The abstractions may be general ideas, rules, or procedures or they may be technical principles or theories. The capacity for application is critical if knowledge is to relate to the identification and solution of problems.

Empire State's program has special potency for this kind of intellectual competence. Donald Wentworth is asked how Marx and Engel's definitions of the working class and the owner class apply to his own experiences in and out of the factory. He is asked to examine the relationship between the sit-down strikes and the preceding history of the labor movement, and the relationship between the CIO of the sit-downs and current union activities – especially of the U.A.W., his own union … Dolores Guion undertakes substantial background readings, studies a series of Health Science Programs, and develops her own optimal health education program for Licensed Practical Nurses … Chuck Booth relates Mersault's "Passivity" to the "Aesthetic Concepts of Disinterestedness," as discussed by Kant and Baumgarten; he considers Plato's notion of dialogue as it applies to intercourse between student and teacher … Janet Lessinger reads *Jews Without Money, Call It Sleep, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, The Second Sex, Last Exit to Brooklyn, The Man with the Golden Arm, Division Street America,* and asks, "How do the lives of the persons in these books converge? How does this convergence relate to life in a metropolis? In what ways is the rhythm of urban life an assault against the persons on the underside and on their cultures?"

Empire State's program aims to develop intellectual competence in these major areas. It asks students to acquire knowledge pertinent to their purposes, and to develop skills of comprehension, analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation. Although the emphases differ, most contracts test a wide range of such abilities. In the course of his college career, each student will frequently be challenged to develop these skills.

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However, intellectual competence is only one aspect of individual development. Significant educational experiences influence other major tasks which are the work of human development throughout life: increasing interpersonal competence, increasing awareness, clarifying purposes, becoming increasingly self-reliant, understanding oneself and others, and developing self-consistency. Because these are important areas of concern for many students, and

because the College will have an impact on them, we must recognize them explicitly, take them seriously, and try to operate in ways which help rather than hinder them.

Interpersonal competence is of primary importance in marriage, family life and in social relationships. It also plays a primary role in job success. Most persons quit, are fired, or are unhappy on the job because they can't cooperate effectively with their fellow workers. Interpersonal competence calls for the ability to interpret the intentions and attitudes of others, to see situations from another person's standpoint. It calls for the ability to improvise new roles and alternative lines of action in working relationships with others, and to help them do the same. It also involves self-confidence and the capacity to take the risks that spontaneity and shifting orientations require.

> The continuing relationships between students and Mentors which are part of contract planning and implementation continually tax the interpersonal competence of both parties. Dolores Guion will need such competence when she carries out her research project in cooperation with and under the supervision of Miss Jane Gary, Director, and Mr. Author Powlawski, Researcher, of the State Department of Health Services and Manpower, and she will need it to assure the continued cooperation of the Hudson Valley Community College faculty … Emma Schmidt's competence will be challenged when she visits agencies to learn about their practices in relation to Spanish-speaking clients, and when she interviews Human Services faculty members … Chuck Booth will be tested when he directs his own seminar in basic philosophy, seeks out guest lecturers, and works with his class.

Increasing awareness lies at the heart of liberal education. In very general terms, history, economics, political science, anthropology, and sociology increase awareness of the diverse forces which underlie social changes. Poetry and the arts expand sensitivities and provide new views of the world. Literature, philosophy, psychology, and religious studies reveal the complexities of human nature and human relationships, and the motives and values held by individuals and cultures. Biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology and ecology describe the shifting physical conditions which fundamentally determine our existence.

Skills decline when unused, and specific pieces of information are forgotten or become outdated. However, once we move to more complex levels of perception and understanding, we no longer yield so readily to surface explanations and oversimplifications. Once we experience the reward of new sensitivities, we will not lightly forego them.

> Donald Wentworth's union will not be the same for him after he finishes his first contract … Rockland County will not be the same for Bob Lenard after he completes his extensive readings and his travels through Spain, Italy and Greece, his reflective diaries, his papers … Manhattan, Albany, and Troy will be different places for Janet Lessinger as she pursues the Culture of Cities program and encounters the varied cultures of megalopolis … After reading Spinoza, Wittgenstein, Skinner, and Bertrand Russell, and learning to understand and use philosophical methods, Emma Schmidt's approach to future work and study will be modified.

Clarifying Purposes occurs when such questions are asked as "Who am I? Who am I going to be? Where am I?, and Where am I going?" Significant educational experiences raise such questions. Answers require judgments about the kind of life we want to lead and about vocational plans and aspirations. The work we pursue influences not only how much money we earn, but where we live, the friends we make, and the ways we spend our time. Furthermore, competence develops most effectively when powered by clear purposes.

Empire State's approach, which takes students' purposes as the basis for educational planning and action, generates strong forces in this area. They begin to operate with the initial exploration of a Learning Center, the admissions application, and the Orientation Workshop. Each time a contract is planned and evaluated, questions of purpose and progress are raised.

> Wentworth and Guion know quite clearly where they are and where they want to go. Their contracts and programs of study focus directly upon their career concerns, providing pertinent information, appropriate skills, and broad perspectives … Bob Lenard has some strong interests which provide a basis for beginning study, but his intellectual interests are still uncertain. Not that he minds. On the contrary, he wants to take time to wander through diverse cultures and climates, to explore varied life styles and values of the past and present. His "reactive diary" continually applies his readings and travel experiences to his own past and present, to his own questions about who he is, and where he is going … Emma Schmidt brings two main purposes which guide her initial study – a social work career among Spanish-speaking peoples, and a desire to develop her interest in psychology, philosophy, and politics … Chuck Booth wants to start an experimental school, but he wants a broad foundation underneath that specific philosophy, and a study of three experimental colleges.

As these contracts are carried out and evaluated, the initial purposes which motivated them will be modified. Sometimes those purposes will be sharpened and strengthened, sometimes they will veer off to a newly discovered and attractive angle, sometimes they will be traded entirely for a different vocational plan, a different life style, or a different range of interests.

"Who am I? Who am I going to be? Where am I?, and Where am I going?" Significant educational experiences raise such questions.

Becoming increasingly self-reliant means becoming emotionally and functionally independent; but most important, it means recognizing our interdependence. Emotional independence calls for the capacity to function without constant praise, encouragement, and emotional support. Functional independence calls for the

capacity to go where you need to go and do what you want to do without needing advice and assistance. Fundamentally, we are not so much independent as interdependent. Friends, family, state, and nation depend on us and we on them. Therefore becoming autonomous, "having the capacity to be self-governing and having the right to do so," occurs as we manage our interdependence by recognizing when and where we must depend on others and when we need not.

Empire State's program calls for substantial independence. It asks students to take charge of their own learning, to recognize when they require help and when they don't, and to know how to obtain that help. It asks them to work largely on their own, with periodic advice and evaluation from a mentor, but without the usual support of classmates, roommates, and other friendship groups established in residential colleges.

> Students like Wentworth and Guion, with wide ranging experiences, strong commitments, and demonstrated capacity to get around and act effectively, bring high levels of independence with them … In undertaking a new career after 17 years as a factory worker, Emma Schmidt is making a gutsy step. Success will mean a wider range of alternatives for her, not simply because she has a degree, but because contracts like hers will increase her capacity to pursue those alternatives … Bob Lenard's self-reliance will be tested in his study and travels with his friend. When that ambitious undertaking is completed and after they have faced the difficulties and decisions which will surely arise, they will be confident of their ability to go almost anywhere and do almost anything.

Self-understanding and understanding others calls for the capacity to move beyond relationships of simple understanding to those where there are sympathetic responses to diverse kinds of persons and their conditions. Self-understanding grows rapidly through such relationships. As we test ourselves in new experiences and situations, we come to know ourselves more fully and to develop more realistic ideas about our strengths and weaknesses. Why did we respond like that? Where did those attitudes come from? Can we really make these changes or handle this new opportunity? Life is enriched when we can enjoy a wide range of different kinds of persons, when we can go beyond simply tolerating those who are different and can respond to them as individuals.

> As Donald Wentworth reads about union leaders such as Debs, Haywood, and Gompers, and about industrial leaders such as Ford, Sloan, and Filene, as he reads *Servants of Power* and *What's on the Worker's Mind,* he'll learn things about himself, his past, and his fellow workers that he hadn't recognized before … When Bob Lenard looks into the eyes of a Spaniard, an Italian, and a Greek, he'll see new reflections of himself, his family, and American culture; he'll bring back new understandings for a wider range of future friendships … Janet Lessinger will meet new cultures and new autobiographies which will spotlight different aspects of her own background, and provide a broader base for meeting the diverse persons she encounters in her urban drug center.

Self-consistency exists when word and deed are not in conflict, when they reflect beliefs and principles which hold through changing circumstances. The development of self-consistency is a two part process. First, there is the effort to establish a set of beliefs which makes sense of our own experiences and insights. Then there is the struggle to make actions consistent with beliefs. Because the world continually challenges our beliefs and pressures us toward behaviors contrary to them, maintaining self-consistency is a life-long task. And this is in no way a celebration of frozen attitudes; growth and change do not necessarily violate the kind of consistency we are talking about.

> Significant educational experiences raise important questions concerning attitudes, values and beliefs. The values and attitudes behind Wentworth's long standing union commitment will get a thorough going-over as he studies Marx and Engels and the General Motors strike of 1936-37. He will find that new and more complex levels of self-consistency will have to be created … Chuck Booth will have a similar experience as he compares the philosophies of Camus, Plato, Marcuse, Heidegger, Hegel, and Kant with his own views, the views of his Mentor, and the views of the students who attend his seminar … When Emma Schmidt confronts questions concerning effective "Human Services," as described by college professors and community agencies she also will confront questions concerning human values and the values behind her own impulse toward a social work career … Bob Lenard will encounter values and action expectations which contrast sharply with his own.

This, then, is Empire State's pyramid of objectives. The forces set in motion by this institution effect simple communication skills, intellectual competence, and significant areas of personal development. Clearly, these forces will operate with different intensities for each student, depending upon his or her purposes, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics. But operate they will.

Learning occurs as new conditions require new responses and as new experiences excite new reactions. Students will learn because the experiences built into contracts challenge their competence, test their purposes, and question their values. If the challenge is too limited, or too overwhelming, then not much learning will occur. The most effective contract and program of study recognizes just the right difference between a student's present level of learning and development and what the new plans will require. Then students can use the forces at work to move ahead in those areas most important to them.

“Goin’ Mobile”: Designing for Mobility in Networked Social Spaces

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A Review of:

Open Learning 25(3)
Special Issue
Mobile Learning: Using Portable Technologies to Create New Learning

In 1971, the same year Empire State College was established, Pete Townshend sang about the freedom of the open road in the rock anthem “Goin’ Mobile.” In the days of analog, when music was organized by sequenced tracks, this song was in a fixed position on side two of The Who’s classic LP “Who’s Next.” Forty years later, we remember or imagine what it was like back then by listening to this disc and recalling the sounds that dominated FM radio for at least a decade. From the minimalist synthesizer that opens “Baba O’Reilly” to Roger Daultrey’s primal scream that closes “Won’t Get Fooled Again,” this album defined rock music of the 1970s. The work itself emerged from the disconnected pieces of an unfinished project, *Lifehouse,* a proposed film that was intended to evolve over time with collaborative interaction with concert audiences (Atkins, 2000, p. 14). As a fragmented collection of songs that developed from a failed project, “Who’s Next” works as a postmodern song cycle, defined not so much by the authority of the author to create the narrative, but as an open-ended piece constructed and understood by individual interpretation and collective memory.

The free form FM radio format of the ’70s allowed for the play of multiple tracks from this record, demonstrating the power of randomness and sense-making, an idea that re-emerged 40 years later in Apple’s iPod Shuffle. This one track in particular, “Goin’ Mobile,” accelerated forward declaring mobility as a way of life: “When I’m drivin’ free the world’s my home.” Similar in many ways to other Pete Townshend compositions, this song asserts the power of youth – a disenchanted and rebellious youth, elevated and empowered by rock music, while embracing nascent technologies such as synthesizers and tape machines. Thematically, this song demonstrates the ability either individually or collectively to envision a future and move freely on the open expansive highway. In 1971, The Who played some of these songs at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC), breaking attendance records at this venue with nearly 30,000 fans, and providing a social context for this music in Saratoga Springs and the Capital District (McMichael and Lyons, 2004).

PHOTO BY PETER J. CORRIGAN

The Who

From Analog to Digital

The sense of mobility that is celebrated in this song, even if told from the perspective of a privileged rock star on the road, reflects the revolution of the era and the ongoing momentum toward a shifting networked future. Forty years later, the way we experience music has transformed considerably from the analog “tape machine” mentioned in the song, to multiple portable devices such as the Nano or Shuffle, smart phone, netbook, MP3 player or digital tablet, allowing access to the Internet from anywhere, at times convenient for the user. In the ’70s, records and tapes were containers for music, and now we experience the music itself as pure information, less tangible as a thing found within a sleeve on vinyl or cassette, and now a transparent digital binary, easily downloaded, copied, mashed up, and shared though multiple digital devices. Listeners are now active contributors, downloading and sharing digital content in numerous formats, ranking and reviewing tracks, and uploading their own works as user-generated content.

From Digital to Mobile

Our understanding of mobility continues to change as the cell phone evolves into an all-purpose smart device for doing much more than making a phone call, and the laptop morphs into a digital tablet. Mobile apps connect us to news sources, radio streams, music sites, digital libraries, interactive maps, search engines and social networking resources such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and WordPress Blogs. Through a collaborative social network, we post, tweet, text, interact, read, write, share, and produce information continuously and interactively. According to Chris Anderson and Michael Wolff (2010), the mobile revolution has already taken place. In their *Wired* article “The Web is Dead: Long Live the Internet,” the authors make a convincing argument that we have moved beyond the Web browser as the primary mode for connecting online, and toward increased mobility with smart phones and apps. Although we are comfortable accessing the Web through a browser, Anderson and Wolff argue that: “the Web is not the culmination of the digital revolution” (p. 1). The authors shift the focus from the Web browser to the larger Internet, and how we use it to communicate, create and interact

through various modes, including these convergent mobile devices that fit in the palms of our hands and can be used for making the occasional phone call. Today's mobility continues to be a way to express openness and freedom propelled forward by a youthful sense of innovative app design and use.

Based on the report *Mobile Access 2010* (Smith, 2010), conducted by The Pew Internet and American Life Project, "Fifty-nine percent of adults now access the Internet wirelessly using a laptop or cell phone"(p. 1). This is a significant trend, but perhaps of most importance is what people are doing with these devices. This is a new era for creative freedom, as mobility allows for taking and exchanging pictures and videos, sending and receiving text messages, playing games and downloading music. Individual activities become collaborative actions through linking and interacting with others and by sharing and participating within an expansive collaborative network. The *2011 Horizon Report* identified mobile computing as one of the key trends in higher education, asserting that: "mobiles are capable computing devices in their own right – and they are increasingly a user's first choice for Internet access" (p. 5). This report suggests that the learner is an active, collaborative and interactive participant, and mobile devices provide easy access to the Internet for communication and for the creation of individual and collaborative documents.

Open Mobile Learning

As an emerging trend in higher education, mobile learning is an area for scholarly exploration and for collaborative practice in face-to-face and online environments. The relationship between open and mobile learning has been examined in a special edition of *Open Learning* (2010). This issue features several essays that report on innovations taking place internationally, including: The Open University, UK; The University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa; and The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. As Empire State College rediscovers its own 40-year legacy as an open institution, it is useful for us to see how instructors and researchers are engaging with trends in mobile learning. The essays in this volume also remind us how much technology has transformed in the past 40 years and how we must continuously adapt to these changes. According to guest editor Agnes Kukulska-Hulme, "with its strong emphasis on learning rather than teaching, mobile learning challenges educators to try to understand learners' needs, circumstances and abilities even better than before" (p. 18). As this journal suggests, mobile learning opens education to students with access to a range of portable devices and to international audiences with immediate access to cell phones.

According to Kukulska-Hulme, mobile learning is complementary to current technologies and does not automatically replace other formats such as "desktop computers, pen, paper and printed books" (p. 184). She envisions the mobile device as a way to support learning in between classroom sessions, and as a means to explore both formal and informal learning. In addition, Kukulska-Hulme clearly identified the way mobility opens education to a wider audience. She argued that: "learning is open to all when it is inclusive, and mobile technologies are a powerful means of opening learning to all those who might otherwise remain at the margins of education" (p. 184). She sees the mobile device as a way to engage learners who may have previously been unable to experience traditional modes of learning. Further, she argued that mobility has the potential to bring education to international audiences and "to girls and women, who, in many parts of the world, are still denied basic opportunities to improve their lives through education" (p. 184-185). This ambitious and inclusive method for open mobile learning continues with several research essays that further support the value of this approach.

Netbooks

Mobility extends beyond the smart phone and includes such devices as the netbook. A team of researchers (Gaved et. al., 2010) at The Open University conducted a study of netbook use that included over 300 secondary school students and seven teachers during seven trials (p. 187). The purpose of this study was to determine "how well the netbooks performed as mobile learning devices for education" (p. 188). The context for these open learners included a combination of formal and informal environments such as the classroom, fieldwork locations and home (p. 196). According to this study, "netbooks were ideal as lightweight, portable devices for use in the field, capable of running multiple software programs to transmit video and audio and to store high-resolution images" (p. 197). The netbooks also offered extended battery life which worked well in a variety of field locations, allowing students the flexibility to complete several tasks at times that were convenient for them. The authors recommended the netbook as an option for distance learners because the devices are "highly portable," flexible and open to multiple inputs (p. 198). The netbooks also featured highly usable screens that allowed for a range of activities, from writing to browsing the Web. The study found that students considered the hardware to be intuitive because of their previous familiarity with the netbook functionality, and the network connections allowed for easy access to a range of online resources. Although the researchers are interested in comparing the netbooks to smart phones, it is clear that netbooks offered flexibility and functionality to open and distance learners.

Mobile Media Players (iPods and MP3 players)

The potential for mobile media players such as the Apple iPod was examined by a team of researchers from the School of Education at The Open University, UK. Shohel and Power (2010) examined the use of mobile technologies to improve English-language instruction in Bangladesh. The authors conducted a study of open distance learning based on interviews with teachers who participated in a professional development English in Action (EIA) program. Within this framework, "English-language teachers are provided with media players (iPods), preloaded with video and audio language learning resources, along with battery-powered speakers for use in the classroom" (p. 204). Based on the analysis of interviews, the authors found that "the use of new mobile technology has been shown to facilitate access to learning, as well as improve the quality of teacher education and training" (p. 213). The use

of iPods in particular allowed the English-language teachers easy access to professional development materials in support of their own training at convenient times and in dynamic, portable delivery modes. This approach was especially valuable in a country where English-language teaching was challenged by a rote delivery mode that was not interactive or technologically enhanced. The use of mobile media players in this context appeared to enhance instructor support, while improving the quality of instruction, and offering an innovative and interactive approach to learning.

The use of mobile media players for language learning also was examined by a team from the Department of Languages at The Open University. Demouy and Kukulska-Hulme (2010) explored the use of iPods, MP3 players and cell phones to advance listening and speaking practices in French language instruction. The authors examined how students in a French program delivered via distance learning experienced additional course activities using their own mobile devices. Students did not automatically envision their mobile devices as tools for learning, but found that after involvement with this approach in the course, mobility supported activities for listening and speaking (p. 229). In particular, "the use of iPods and MP3 players was quickly adopted and found extremely useful as a means of increasing contact with the language in spaces and at times that suited their lifestyle" (p. 229). In addition, the use of mobile phones also supported the practice of listening and speaking in language learning contexts, although some respondents preferred the more sophisticated functionality of DVDs over the simplicity of cell phones (p. 229).

Mobile Phones and Social Networking

International distance learning is supported by the use of the cell phone as an interactive device for collaboration. The rapid expanse of cell phone use in South Africa, for instance, has allowed instructors from the Institute for Open Distance Learning to create socially-constructed learning environments through mobile technology. Mpine Makoe (2010) from the University of South Africa (UNISA) described the use of an instant messaging system designed especially for cell phones called "MXit," which can be used on a range of cell phones to create interactive learning environments. According to Makoe, "cell phones hold such a promise for distance education as a cognitive delivery tool to enhance collaborative learning and social interaction because more than 98 percent of UNISA students have access to or own cell phones" (p. 251-252). Makoe notes that these devices include a variety of features for users to take pictures and video, play games, access the Internet, and communicate with other users via instant messaging (p. 252). In this pilot study, Makoe examined the use of MXit by "23 UNISA students who belonged to five study groups, each ranging from three to seven members" (p. 253).

Overall, MXit allowed for interactive conversations in a mobile chat room, between instructors and students, and among peers, across distances (among different provinces). According to Makoe, the use of MXit in this context allowed individuals to maintain control over the pace of their learning while exchanging ideas and experiences with students outside of their own community. The use of cell phones created a mobile network for students to share a common technical language while providing individual choice related to learning activities, interactions, identity and relationship building (p. 256). Through this mobile learning environment, international distance learning was enhanced by a portable networked technology that did not require the traditional computer and Web browser. In this context, the rapid emergence of cell phones as a means to access the Internet reimagined distance learning as a portable, socially-constructed tool for collaboration and self-directed inquiry. For the students in this particular study, the use of cell phones was an empowering activity based on resources they already had access to for the development of interactive study groups.

The increased use of mobile technologies has provided another means to engage in social networking, especially through mobile apps. Users access such resources as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter through mobile phones, creating a portable social network that is no longer tethered by Web browsers or desktop computers. Noeline Wright (2010) explored the use of the microblogging environment Twitter at The University of Waikato in New Zealand. In this pilot study, Wright examined the use of Twitter by students via cell phones in a teaching practicum as part of a teacher education program. Through an analysis of participant tweets, the author found that "Twitter chronologically logged participants' reflective thinking during a school practicum, reduced isolation and supported a sense of community" (p. 263). The portable, on-the-go nature of cell phone microblogging allowed participants to reflect on a range of course activities related to teaching practices, pedagogical theory and relationship building. They also had the opportunity to explore and reflect on those individual daily activities that were not necessarily connected to the practicum (p. 263). The ease of access to other participants in the course diminished any sense of isolation while building a strong sense of community within the group. The 140-character limit of Twitter promoted targeted reflections among learners rather than superficial observations. In addition, about half of the participants used computers with standard keyboards along with mobile devices, creating a blended approach for accessing websites and applications.

Mobility and Innovative Open Access

As we have seen, the examination of mobile learning in *Open Learning* demonstrates the potential of mobility to provide innovative open access to education. The essays in this journal illustrate that open mobile learning is already having an impact on students internationally through netbooks, mobile media players, smart phones, mobile apps and social networking. These emerging technologies allowed for individual reflections and collaborative participation in a range of educational contexts. Portability created learning environments that extended from the classroom, to fieldwork locations, to multiple distance learning sites in support of several disciplinary perspectives.

This networked approach to higher education is consistent with the philosophy of Empire State College as a mentor-learner institution opening education to students at regional centers and through blended and online studies. Collectively, we provide students with multiple approaches to learning, including individualized study, group study, residencies, blended learning, online learning and evolving opportunities for mobile learning. We reach students in communities throughout the state of New York; across the United States; and globally through our Center for International Programs, Center for Distance Learning and International Distance Learning (a portal for providing international students with access to our online courses). Mobility offers yet another innovative format that extends the reach of our distributed learning environment.

At the same time, mobile learning presents us with many challenges as educators and raises several questions: How do we effectively embrace this approach within a decentered and distributed learning environment? How do we effectively adapt mobile learning to our wide range of mentoring practices? Do we have the technology infrastructure in place to successfully experiment with and explore mobile learning? How does mobility influence our understanding of international education? Are we prepared to expand our individualized mentoring and learning practices to the inherently collaborative approaches made available through mobile learning? How do we assess mobile learning outcomes? How do we as an institution collectively embrace new technologies in ways that build community?

The Mobile Future

On the evening of Aug. 2, 1971, Pete Townshend defiantly destroyed his guitar on the stage of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, fulfilling the expectations of fans and demonstrating a revolution in progress. Townshend smashed pop music conventions to bits, while reflecting social and cultural changes of the time, with simultaneous revolutions in politics, the arts and higher education. Empire State College was a part of this transformation, opening education with a nonresidential, decentered approach to mentoring and learning in a variety of individualized learning practices. In 1971, Empire State College was envisioned as a university college that "transcends constraints of space, place, and time" (SUNY, 1971, p. 2). Mobile learning supports this goal by providing access to education that extends beyond any particular location or time. In these portable networked environments, learners access a wide range of digital music, media, text, images and learning objects in an interactive dialogue. Further, mobility provides a resource for building community across local, national and international borders, and for creating and sharing user-generated content among mentors and learners.

As we go into a mobile future, these old songs from The Who are not simply fragments from a failed movie project or remnants from a past youth culture. At the start of an emerging mobile era where flexibility, collaboration, interactivity and openness advance learning opportunities for our students, this is music for the reinvention of a great idea.

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"Music never stops; it is we who turn away" – John Cage

Tina Wagle, School for Graduate Studies

A Review of:

Dear Maxine: Letters from the Unfinished Conversation with Maxine Greene
Edited by Robert Lake

I recently read *Dear Maxine: Letters from the Unfinished Conversation with Maxine Greene* (2010) and wanted to offer some reflections inspired by the work for *All About Mentoring*. For those not familiar with her work, Maxine Greene is said to be the most profound educational philosopher since John Dewey. A prolific author and educator, Greene holds a deep respect for the arts and humanity and is able to see potential in everything and everyone. The book is a collection of letters written to Greene by friends and scholars, many of whom also are considered to be leaders in education today, including Shirley Steinberg, Mike Rose, Elliot Eisner, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Ayers, just to name a few. The letters are poignant and moving. They speak not only to the body of work Greene contributed over the years, but also to the profound impact her work has had on educators globally and perhaps more importantly on the art of thinking critically and innovatively.

The words of 20th century American composer John Cage – doubling as the title for this piece – come from his *Composition in Retrospect* (1983) and were cited by Julie Searle in her letter to Maxine. The reason I chose this title is because as I was reading the book, I was struck by the importance of reflection. Greene believes that one's imagination is the key to conceptualizing a better future. It is the imagination that allows us to think critically and reflect in a way that is open and visionary. Reflection is an act we often encourage our Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) students to engage in throughout their course work, and crucially it exists as a requirement for the final portfolios they create at the end of the program. We ask them to reflect on the past three years as they transition from student to teacher. We believe that such moments of reflection are important in demonstrating growth and lifelong learning. And yet, as I read and thought about Greene and the authors of these letters to her, I wondered, "When was the last time I allowed myself to reflect on imaginative pedagogy or sit with my own critical thoughts?"

The field of teacher-education is changing. More and more standards are being imposed on students, competitors from businesses outside of the educational arena are entering the fray, and the demands upon teachers are greater than ever. In order to house a quality teacher-education program, we cannot be oblivious to this bigger picture; we must keep up with these changes; we have to be diligent in what we offer our students in order for them to be successful in their own classrooms. We have necessarily been preoccupied with these demands, which have required tremendous time and attention. It would be irresponsible of us to imagine they do not exist. But what does all of this attention do to *our* lives as reflective practitioners?

I think many of us at Empire State College often say how busy we are – myself included. But as I allowed myself time to read this tribute to Maxine Greene, I was drawn back to my own roots in the social foundations of education and to the core of that work, which is about thinking – about reflecting – and, importantly too, about being hopeful about education. So, as I read the Cage quote, I asked myself whether any time that was lost not thinking this way was my own fault. "The music never stops; it is we who turn away." I think I turned away. Despite the daily grind of conference calls, contract evaluations and email, I need to pause and reflect on the bigger picture of education and learning. I need to remember what matters to the greater good of society and to social justice. These are the ideals that have been a constant passion in my life and career.

In the introduction to this book, the educational philosopher Nel Noddings states correctly that education has strayed incredibly far from the vision Maxine Greene articulated when writing *The Dialectic of Freedom* in 1988. "Her hope was to open possibilities for all students to achieve some measure of freedom in recognizing possibilities and directing their own lives. In contrast, today's policies aim to control the lives of students through uniform preparation, uniform achievement, and uniform futures" (xxi). Greene discusses freedom a great deal in her many works but never really offers a single definition of it. Instead, she carefully collects ideas of what freedom should include. She has stated that in order to achieve and exercise freedom, "young people need to be invited to engage with the worlds of people, objects and ideas. They must be allowed to communicate in ways that open up spaces instead of closing them down by prescribing beforehand exactly what should be learned" (xxi). I think Greene would believe that neither students nor their teachers can truly learn or teach in a free manner with the iron of standardized tests shackling their wrists.

It is thus not incidental that Greene argued so strenuously for the arts and for the importance of their presence in K-12 education and beyond. For her, the arts provide a space to be creative and free, to think with one's imagination. If young people are allowed this space, they can create without limits and learn without boundaries. Instead, today we are all faced with many pressures to pass so many assessments that inhibit this kind of freedom. I acknowledge and appreciate the arguments about accountability and outcome measurements, but maybe what Greene and the authors of this book are telling us is that it is right now when

imagination-based thinking is needed the most. If we lose this opportunity, we could be turning our backs on possibilities – possibilities that offer hope for the future.

Like many of the book's contributors, I remember the moment I met Maxine Greene. I was a doctoral student making one of my first presentations at the American Educational Studies Association Conference in Miami, and Lois Weis, my advisor, invited Greene to come to our presentation. As usual, she was dressed in black, sitting in her wheelchair with dozens of people approaching her to say hello and shake her hand. I remember being star struck as I had recently read *The Dialectic of Freedom* and thought she was one of the most intelligent people I had ever read. While much of her work is conceptual, it has a humanness about it that offers hope and encourages us to trust that equitable education is possible. Greene showed what I knew to recognize as her down-to-earth self as she commended us on the work we were doing and gave us points to consider as we pursued our research on marginalized populations. It was evident that she cared about our little presentation despite her legendary status and obvious professional clout.

My recollection of this act leads me to a final reflection inspired by *Letters*.

It is no coincidence that I cited Nel Noddings earlier in this piece – Noddings has done a lot of great work with teachers and the notion of "caring." Currently, the M.A.T. program is working on accreditation through an organization called TEAC (Teacher Education Accreditation Council). The program needs to demonstrate evidence that our students – now teachers – have achieved competence in three areas: "content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and caring teaching skills." All three components are essential in a quality teacher, but I cannot help but think that if a teacher didn't care, nothing else would matter. Caring teachers should be willing to give their students a space to pursue freedom in their learning by being creative and thoughtful. This is one key ingredient in building the democratic community that Maxine Greene envisioned. We need to remember Greene's words of hope and creativity that may allow us to conceive of a future with educational innovations that support social justice and excellence for all. In this time of great need for creative and innovative thought, let us not turn away from the music.

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> *"For many reasons, the writing of life narratives is likely to remain central to the practice of adult learning. They are important and effective in multiple ways. There must, however, be room in our practices for narratives that are jarring, unsatisfying, and/or structurally and emotionally jagged. … [W]e must allow stories that acknowledge how a life can be messed up in ways that are not only apparent, or how an attempt to break away from the constraints of the past is only partially successful, as I believe it always is."*
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> *Elana Michelson, "Autobiography and Selfhood in the Practice of Adult Learning,"* Adult Educational Quarterly, 61*(1), February 2011, p. 18*

Adult Education and Politics

Richard Wells, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

A Review of:

The Struggle for Democracy in Adult Education
Edited by Dianne Ramdeholl, Tania Giordani, Thomas Heaney and Wendy Yanow

Does adult education have a political purpose? The seat-of-the-pants answer is yes. To teach adults is to teach a segment of the population that, for a host of reasons, does not have access to a traditional college experience. By providing that access, programs in adult education broaden individual horizons. The more students they reach, at least in theory, the more they contribute to the democratization of a culture.

This is a vague but reasonable enough place to start an assessment of what, exactly, can be political about adult education. But right away it raises two other important questions: What do we mean by a democratic culture? And if it's true that what we have now, in the U.S. anyway, does not live up to our definition, how can adult education contribute to the struggle for the kind of social change that would get us there? This volume of *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* co-edited by Empire State College School for Graduate Studies Mentor Dianne Ramdeholl, sheds light on these very questions. Moreover, the essays, which range from a theoretical discussion of democracy itself to reflections on particular programs and practices to critical analyses of attempts to "democratize" adult education planning and administration, force us to consider the broader political economic circumstances in which adult education programs must operate. Doing so not only gives us a more concrete sense of what popular adult education programs can do in the name of democracy. It reminds us that, however democratic their internal structure, adult education programs only gain real political leverage when they help create a social movement by joining forces with other popular institutions.

Two of the essays, one by Thomas Heaney and the other by Arthur Wilson and Ronald M. Cervero, provide important insight into the challenges of administering and planning adult education programs democratically, that is, in a way that incorporates the voices of students and staff into curriculum design and overall decision making. Both present cases that don't offer clear cut answers; in fact, they may indeed raise more questions about how, exactly, to structure an educational program democratically – but that may be a good thing. Despite a lot of messiness and seeming inefficiency, administrators need to continually engage all program stake holders, since this is both the best way to run a program in the interests of the students, and the best way to "model" democracy on a broader scale.

But what might that broader democracy look like, and how would adult education get us there? The opening essay, by leading critical theorist of adult education Stephen Brookfield, takes this question on in two ways. First, Brookfield focuses on the communicative practices that, in his estimation, produce and constitute a democratic system. There must be equal access to information, there must be inclusiveness, and the conversation itself must be expansive. In other words, there must be a healthy respect for the different perspectives people bring to the table and a willingness to engage in an "ever-widening" discussion, one that moves toward questions about how best to organize "social, economic and political affairs" (p. 5). Here Brookfield appeals to Jurgen Habermas' notion of the "ideal speech situation," that moment in time when knowledge is evenly distributed, the stakes fairly apportioned, and all voices are heard, even when they are calling on the "gritty, messy details of individual lives" (p. 9). Second, Brookfield rightly insists that democracy has a less procedural, less discursive, more material component. Real democracy also means that "vast disparities in wealth" have been abolished, and "all forms of resources" have come "under common control" (p. 6).

However welcome such an arrangement might be, it is of course rather difficult to achieve in practical-political terms because of how entrenched inequality is in the society we now have. As many of us now know, achieving a critical appreciation of that inequality through participatory dialogue, critique, etc., in an educational setting is one thing (and not always a success, for that matter); garnering the effective power to create the necessary changes in that social world, even if that world is just the city or town in which the students live, is quite another. Brookfield doesn't confront this problem, making his juxtaposition of the "discursive" and the "material" qualities of democracy seem rather loose.

The analytical fissure between, say, an ideal speech situation (or a participatory classroom) and economic justice firmly established is indicative of a similar *caesura* in the work of Paulo Freire himself. "Problem posing education," wrote Freire in *Pedogogy of the Oppressed* (1973), "is a revolutionary futurity. Hence it is prophetic" (p. 72). Here, dialogue-based pedagogy is not only *inherently* liberatory, the kind of liberation being pursued is undefined, as are the political and economic forces lined up against it. As adult educator Rachel Martin has argued, Freire tends to take for granted the relationship between oppressor and oppression, and leaves both sides of the binary pretty much unexamined. This is not to say that there aren't oppressors and oppressed in today's world. It is to say the relationship works out differently in different times and places, and to help students grasp the forces and institutions involved requires both a pedagogical

imagination *and* a sociological imagination. In Freire's later work the picture gets somewhat more complicated, but there remains a strong utopian streak to his thinking. Indeed, it is one thing to liberate a classroom, but quite another to liberate a society.

The difficulties posed by Freire's utopianism, which Brookfield's introductory essay in some ways recreated, animated my reading of the rest of the essays in this volume. How might we conceive of an adult education that aims not so much at "liberation," but at providing specific groups in specific situations the political leverage they need to improve their lives? Or, more bluntly, what if the goal of "progressive" adult education programs was not liberation, but power – political power? Of course these are difficult questions, and they are not necessarily ones that this collection sets out to answer. But other essays in this volume lead to some productive considerations.

In Janise Hurtig and Hal Adams' contribution, as well as in John Gordon and Dianne Ramdeholl's essay, we find descriptions of how an egalitarian educational space was created, one in which students from marginalized backgrounds felt safe to begin to create and share stories of their lives. Moreover, as students gained confidence as writers, as they came to realize they had important things to say, a collective dynamic took over. Hurtig and Adams witnessed an important shift in their Chicago-based writing workshop, "a transitional process by which the role of the educator is increasingly assumed by the group" (p. 19). As the traditional relationship between teacher and student breaks down, the practice of "popular education leaps from being a humanistic, progressive approach to education to providing a vision, however modest, of an egalitarian world" (p. 19). Gordon and Ramdeholl's experience in a New York City adult literacy center revealed a similar dynamic, one that was rooted not only in a democratically structured classroom, but in a program that was itself organized in a way that gave students a real say. Dialogue and collective writing, they suggest, not only "articulated a yearning for freedom," but brought "student voices and their life struggles into the center of the curriculum." Further, these practices were "inseparable from [the program's] commitment to student involvement in decision making, to a democratic community" (p. 32).

But how do we begin to move from the vision to which Hurtig and Adams refer to reality, from democratic classrooms to a democratic society? Not easily. As Hurtig and Adams explain, the program they directed was not planned as "action-oriented"; the goal, rather, was the writing itself. And wouldn't consciously and openly designing a program as action-oriented in itself pose certain difficulties? After all, these programs need funding, and funding might be hard to get, either from government sources or foundations, if the stated goal of a program was, for example, a socialist revolution! And as Gordon and Ramdeholl point out, since the 1990s, a tighter funding landscape has gone hand-in-hand with accountability standards that have become increasingly instrumentalist, more tightly focused on data about how well adult education programs are preparing students for employment. In this context, programs that focus on much beyond job training are an endangered species.

A closer look at Hurtig and Adams' essay, however, shows some room for maneuver, some space for "praxis." One workshop, taught by Adams, was run out of a Chicago public elementary school. The students' children attended the school, and many of them lived with their families in a large public housing complex nearby. At the time, the Chicago Housing Authority, under the direction of the federal HOPE VI program, was dramatically repurposing its public housing stock, a process that included the demolition of some of the city's larger projects, followed by the relocation of the tenants. There was much uncertainty about the program, and since a number of students in the workshop lived in a project slated for demolition, concerns about housing often came up in discussions and in writing.

In the process, they'd discover that there is a range of institutions, from community organizations, labor unions and grassroots political organizations, that are also reimagining that world, and fighting in various ways to create it.

Because housing issues had become a particular focus of the collective effort of the workshop, when the time came, that effort moved seamlessly beyond the classroom. One of the participants faced sudden eviction, and the group swung into action to buy her and her family some all-important time. The principal of the school, along with other members of the community, joined forces with them as they successfully appealed the terms of the eviction. Here was, without doubt, a small, but very real victory. How might the circle of effective struggle be widened still further? It seems to me that, in this instance, the workshop setting was critical in creating a common narrative, grounded in common experiences and concerns about day-to-day life – in this case, about the roof over one's head – that mobilized the group to take action, however small. This represents a kind of leadership, one that needs to be nurtured even further, especially because of the way in which this particular issue – housing – was a "live" one, in that HOPE VI had stirred organized resistance in Chicago and indeed in other cities.

Essentially, timing matters. Perhaps, back in a workshop setting, students could be encouraged to look at the politics of public housing more generally, explore the broader structural context of their own particular struggles, engage the debates that resulted in HOPE VI, and then, in charge of their political education, rewrite public housing policy in their own collective image. In the process, they'd discover that there is a range of institutions, from community organizations, labor unions and grassroots political organizations, that are also reimagining that world, and fighting in various ways to create it. As Mechtild Hart suggested in her contribution to this volume,

democratic learning did not simply validate the experience of the immigrant domestic laborers with whom she worked. Their learning was brought together with that of other kinds of workers, with labor unions, with academic activists and community groups, in a process that had the potential to build a "coalitional consciousness" (p. 39).

All this supports Gordon and Ramdeholl's realistic observation that, absent of a broader social movement, actively struggling for change, we should not expect too much of popular education programs. In the presence of such a movement, opportunity for "praxis" certainly exists, and Gordon and Ramdeholl point to the Citizenship Schools of the civil rights movement as a case in point. The larger point is that adult education, indeed all education, does not take place in a vacuum. It exists "in a sociocultural, political, and economic context" (p. 94) observes Wendy Yanow in the volume's conclusion. Educators and students must work within the constraints set by that context. But just as important, they must be ready to jump at the opportunities created when that context shifts, and the lines of force in the field of power begin to rearrange themselves accordingly.

And when this does happen – and it might now be happening, on the heels of the right's assault in Wisconsin on the working men and women of the public sector unions – it needs to be stressed that creating and maintaining connections to other popular institutions is critical. These institutions have political experience and resources of their own, and can help take the struggle beyond those euphoric, consciousness-raising moments in the classroom. And surely, the writing workshops and other programs described in this volume can, in turn, be an important resource for those institutions, by adding "organic" (in Antonio Gramsci's sense) intellectuals to their activist base. Practical work needs to be done, specific issues must be identified, strategies need to be formulated and carried out, if actual leverage is to be gained. A book like this reminds us that popular education, while critical to the struggle for democracy, cannot go it alone.

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> *"Highly deliberate learning is a pervasive phenomenon in human life. The 700 hours a year devoted to learning efforts are enormously significant for the adult himself [sic.], and for the organization, family and society in which he works and lives. Although 700 hours constitutes only 10 percent of an adult's waking time, surely this small percentage affects his life nearly as much as the other 90 percent. It is during these 700 hours a year, when he sets out to improve his knowledge, skills, perceptions, attitudes, habitual reactions, insight, and perspective, that the adult develops and changes. He resembles an organization that maintains and increases its effectiveness by devoting 10 percent of its resources to research and development."*
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> *Alan Tough,* The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning, *1971, p. 4*

Innovation, Disruption and Higher Education: Is There a Road Map for the Future?

Christopher Whann, Metropolitan Center

A Review of:

Christensen, C. (1997). *The innovator's dilemma: When new technologies cause great firms to fail.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Christensen, C., & Raynor, R. (2003). *The innovator's solution: Creating and sustaining successful growth.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Christensen, C., Horn, M., & Johnson, C. (2011). *Disrupting class: How disruptive innovation will change the way the world learns.* New York: McGraw-Hill.[1]

Christensen, C., Horn, M., Caldera, L., & Soares, L. (2011, February). *Disrupting college: How disruptive innovation can deliver quality and affordability to postsecondary education.* Retrieved from http://www.innosight.org

Innovation is one of the most exciting topics in contemporary academic business research. One can easily lose track of the number of articles and conference papers about innovation, managing innovation, marketing innovation and innovation strategies. If anyone can be considered the leader of this field, Clayton Christensen of the Harvard Business School is certainly among the top candidates. Christensen's 1997 book, *The Innovator's Dilemma,* is a fascinating exposition of how what he describes as "disruptive technologies" can overtake an industry, and how good management is no guarantee of success in the face of massive change. In *The Innovator's Solution,* Christensen follows up on this theme by discussing how firms and managers can sustain an advantage in an organization. Christensen and his co-authors turn their sights on K-12 education in *Disrupting Class,* in order to analyze how their findings from industrial (often high-tech) settings might apply to the controversies surrounding an educational system often described as in crisis. In February 2011, he and his co-authors released *Disrupting College,* a report on innovation in university education.

My goals in this essay are to outline some of Christensen's key arguments in the larger discussion of innovation, and in doing so, to summarize some of his central themes. Within such a context, my hope is that we can start developing some ideas about how his insights might affect adult and distance higher education, which we would all agree is an area known for its claims for innovation. I do not pretend that this essay provides an exhaustive review of Christensen's work, but his insights do offer us some guidance and some warnings about how we might respond to future challenges and opportunities.

In effect, I think that Empire State College, as a networked institution with a significant global and online presence, is an interesting case study of how an innovating organization may have become a "sustaining organization" and thus susceptible to being overtaken in a changing, competitive environment even with good or well-intentioned leadership.

Differences in Degree and Differences in Kind

Christensen has noted that he has spent decades in the halls of Silicon Valley businesses. He has met many excellent leaders and managers whose companies have gone out of business. In *The Innovator's Dilemma,* Christensen describes the trajectories of firms producing disk drives, earth moving equipment, steel, computer printers and motorcycles, among others. He categorizes the technologies upon which these areas depend as either "sustaining" or "disruptive." Technology, in the sense Christensen and his colleagues use it, basically refers to new products or processes that improve speed, efficiency or capability. Sustaining technologies are those that introduce *differences of degree* into a product or a process, so existing users can use the product or process better. Technologies that shave costs so products are more affordable or technologies that are markedly faster or more powerful are thus sustaining. On the other hand, disruptive technologies are those that introduce *differences of kind,* so new users can take advantage of the product or process. Over time, disruptive technologies can themselves become sustaining technologies, once they have been thoroughly and widely adopted. At their point of origin, Sony's Walkman, or Nokia's cell phone or Amazon's Kindle, are examples of disruptive technologies.

Using certain criteria, disruptive technologies are not necessarily as "good" as sustaining ones. Thus, for example, the Walkman was never as good as a high quality stereo system, but users could take it outside when they went for a walk (hence the name). An early Nokia cell phone would drop calls much more often than a Bell Telephone landline, but we were no longer attached to the wall or required to stay within 20 feet of a base while we used it. The Kindle may not be as good as a beautifully bound hardcover book, but it is much lighter than carrying three or four books on the plane during an extended trip. In fact, one could argue that they are likely to be *worse* quality technologies, but they often fill a niche that consumers want or need and are more affordable than sustaining ones.

While companies have an incentive to keep producing a better product for the customers and users they know they have, it is successful producers of disruptive technologies that can identify new consumers who may not need the best technology but need something "good enough" for a different purpose. Many traditional telephone-producing companies could make much better phones than before, and indeed they did, but they

could never serve the market that wanted mobility even at the expense of phone clarity or perfect coverage. So long as the old, existing, "sustaining" technologies were working well, could be improved for existing customers, and were profitable for the companies making them, there was no obvious incentive to try anything fundamentally different. And since the new "disruptive" technologies were usually demonstrably inferior at the beginning, there was no incentive to worry about them when companies knew their existing products and processes were better.

This was and is a mistake. Today we all know many people who do not even have landlines, or home stereos, or who buy only digital format books. Thus, disruptive technologies like Walkmen (now IPods!), cell phones and Kindles – even if many could show how inferior they were to the products they replaced – have outstripped their competitors in the marketplace.

For a traditional firm, serving their traditional customers, making an existing product better seems like an obviously good choice. One knows one's customers and what they "need." One does not know as well, if at all, what noncustomers might want out of the product or service. It is not always impossible to find out, but it is definitely harder. Since these noncustomers are not buying the product or service, it also is harder to convince the marketing department to cater to them instead of catering to the people actually buying and using the existing product or service and improving it to meet their needs. That, as Christensen and his co-authors suggest, is one main reason why companies tend to concentrate on developing sustaining technologies rather than throwing those aside and focusing on disruptive ones. The payoff for developing and implementing disruptive technologies is not obvious, and competent managers miss out on sure-fire opportunities available with sustaining technologies at their peril.

As Christensen and his co-authors pursue their analysis of why companies succeed and fail at adapting to market changes when new products are introduced, they have developed some central ideas about how companies should proceed to make success more likely. The main approach they take is through their analysis of resources, processes and values. As processes and values solidify into organizational culture, the organizational culture restricts the way that companies can identify new opportunities, take advantage of them, and evaluate their potential for successful implementation.

If successful organizations want to implement sustaining technologies, they likely already have the structure in place to do it. (This is reminiscent of the old management adage, "you have the perfect organization to get the results you're getting.") On the other hand, developing and growing through disruption requires a very different approach. This can happen through acquiring or establishing a new organization/company that already focuses on disruptive technologies or services, or through setting up an entirely new unit that can operate more or less unimpeded by the larger organizational culture. From Christensen's point of view, once a company incorporates the disruptive technology into an existing organizational system used to developing sustaining technologies, then the opportunities for growth from the disruption are doomed.[2]

Disruptions at Empire State College

It might be interesting to use the Christensen framework to examine Empire State College. One could argue that Empire State College developed a radically different type of organizational structure than had existed in "traditional" colleges. These included learning centers and areas of study instead of departments, assessment committees for individualized degrees, learning contracts as a new "course" form, and the like. The reorientation of education to privilege the student's goals instead of the professor's goals; rethinking the role of advising, mentoring and teaching; the individualization of entire degree program plans; and the developmental objectives of the narrative evaluations are examples of different, disruptive, processes and values.

The payoff for developing and implementing disruptive technologies is not obvious, and competent managers miss out on sure-fire opportunities available with sustaining technologies at their peril.

Empire State College was an ambitious effort to challenge many orthodoxies of traditional higher education. The college also sought to expand learning possibilities to new audiences of learners, responding to the "nonconsumption" of higher education by adult and other nontraditional students. One might call this a "disruption" of the existing, "sustaining," trajectory of higher education.

In order to optimize the disruptive potential for growth, from the start the college established a decentralized, noncampus-based, network of locations for students and mentors to work together. The college created a "center" and "unit" structure that maximized access for underserved populations (i.e., educational nonconsumers). The college also established venues like the Center for Collegewide Programs and the Center for Distance Learning (CDL). One could argue that CDL was an arena in which "disruption" took place only once individualized student learning became the norm and characterized general college culture. There were obviously many students who needed learning to happen in a flexible manner – flexible in time as well as in space. The Center for Distance Learning provided a way to do that through paper-based correspondence courses and then online learning. The disruption that CDL created was *not,* it seems, in altering the relationship between mentors and students; rather, it was disruption of the manner and timing of the learning. As the use of certain technologies (especially systems like Lotus Notes and ANGEL) became more taken for granted across the college, depending upon online learning strategies and platforms can now be considered sustaining and no longer innovative.

Searching for Nonconsumers

In a follow-up book, *The Innovator's Solution,* Christensen and co-author Michael Raynor investigate strategies to create and sustain growth through disruption. Part of the book revisits the key themes of the earlier work, but the bulk of the book proposes more ideas for generating success. Among the more interesting discussions is a section on the personal digital assistant and smart phone markets, and the specific challenges of a firm like Blackberry-maker Research in Motion (2003: 1076). Since the book was written before the introduction of the iPhone, one can see how prescient Christensen and Raynor were in assessing the issues in the smart phone market.

The authors reiterate a point made in the earlier book: disruptive approaches focus on nonconsumers as a market niche. The problem is that it can be hard to know who isn't using a product while one is actually producing it or plans to produce it; we learn what people need most times from asking our existing customers rather than surveying the universe of people who do not use our product or service. Often, customers are discovered by accident. Christensen recounts the story of Honda management's efforts to develop a motorcycle meant to compete with the classic highway-style Harley-Davidson; in the midst of this work, management discovered that the customers wanted Hondas for off-road use, which was an arena in which Harley was not competing at all. This ensured Honda's success in the new market niche. In the short run, profit margins for the disruptive technologies are lower than they are for sustaining technologies. In fact, there is an inexorable pressure on business to move "up-market" and produce higher profit margin goods and services while happily leaving the low end, low profit margin to others. This is a great idea, that is, until the disruptive producers take over and the top end evaporates. Anyone old enough to recall vacuum tube technologies in radio and television, or gigantic DEC computers with dumb terminals, or eight-track tapes, can see that the introduction of disruptive technologies is a real strategic threat.

The World of K-12 Education

In Christensen's more recent work, he and his co-authors have begun to apply his research to pressing national policy matters – health care and K-12 education. In *Disrupting Class,* he addresses issues that have arisen in the 1983 report, "A Nation in Crisis," the debates over "No Child Left Behind," and the controversy about the value or appropriateness of charter schools. They build on the work of Howard Gardner's "multiple intelligences" to write about individualizing learning (not a new idea at Empire State College), but they also expand on ideas about nonconsumption. Here, the authors focus on the use of online learning not to supplement classroom teaching but rather to provide teaching in areas where courses would or could not be offered. One example they use is teaching Arabic online in public schools where no district could afford an individual instructor (Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2011, p. 2162-2171). They argue that high quality, even student-developed, learning tools and facilitated networks for sharing learning tools might dislodge textbooks and mass-market learning management systems and offer individualized solutions for students who learn differently (p. 2480-2495). In fact, the authors argue, based on their data analysis, these tools may acquire a 25 percent market share and the tide may well have turned by 2014 in favor of digital and/or online learning against traditional classroom-based modes of teaching and learning – that is, the current "sustainable" educational technologies. Insofar as these innovative, disruptive modes of teaching and learning fill a need, even if they are not immediately better or obviously superior, they respond to a market for people who do not now use or do *not* feel as if they benefit from existing modes of teaching and learning.

How have schools ended up in this situation? On one level, it is not a failure of education or educators. Christensen and his co-authors repeatedly argue that schools and educators are consistently improving at the variety of tasks asked of them – test scores are often increasing, special education students are being mainstreamed into regular classrooms, and higher absolute numbers of students are graduating from high school. It is more the case that to continue to improve, they must standardize and routinize how to do their jobs so they can maximize the opportunity for an education and the quality of that education value for the maximum number of students.

If education is a set of tasks to be measured by external criteria like testing, graduation numbers and mainstreaming data, it could be described as successful. If education is a tool to accomplish other life goals as defined by students, like getting a better job, making more money, having enough fun in school so they do not mind being there as opposed to playing sports or shopping, then is it working? Christensen and his co-authors would argue no. Here is how the authors describe it:

We believe that a core reason why so many students languish unmotivated in school or don't come to class at all is that education isn't a job that they are trying to do. Education is something they might choose to hire to do the job – but it isn't the job. While we continue to do our research to understand this crucial issue, we hypothesize that there are two core jobs that most students try to do every day: They want to feel successful and make progress, and they want to have fun with friends … How do schools fare against … competitors as something that students can hire to be successful and have fun with friends? Miserably in many cases. (Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, p. 2886-2903)

Disrupting Higher Education

What about the higher education arena and Empire State College's role in it? If Christensen and his co-authors are correct, and high schools are being transformed in the foreseeable future by the disruptive innovations they describe and which I note above (like online learning, student-developed learning tools and facilitated learning networks), what might that mean for Empire State College and its competitor institutions that seek disruptive solutions: ideas and processes that are new to us. If they are correct that educators are fundamentally misunderstanding why students are "hiring" education in the first place, what could that mean for students who are "hiring" colleges and universities?

Here are a few preliminary thoughts that are certainly open to debate.

Empire State College and many of its competitor institutions were established as "student-centered" places. If college students, like high school students, are "hiring education" to be successful and to have fun, then how well do we meet those goals? If retention data is even a slight indication, the answer is terribly. That is not a reflection on the quality or dedication of the leadership, mentors, teachers or staff – it is a simple empirical reality. There are several ways to address these issues.

As a strategic matter, the college's upper administration would need to determine whether or not it wants to pursue disruptive technologies at all. If so, then the next decision is what should those disruptions be and where should they be housed. For example, the college's decision-makers might determine that, rather than using course management systems, they want to invest in smart phone delivery of education. They might want to serve nonnative speakers of English, either using English language literacy enhancement or teaching courses exclusively in Spanish. They might want to teach courses through Twitter and Facebook or the next new social media platform. In principle, there are many possibilities one might explore; these are only illustrative.

Whether the answer is "yes" or "no," the college could still do much to enhance its strategic position. Organizational changes, reducing the complexity of existing processes, and reducing costs in a way that the organization could do more with its limited resources, could all be beneficial in a sustaining sort of way – doing the things we do now but more efficiently. There would no doubt be pushback from people imbued with an organizational culture committed to existing ways of performing their jobs. Some measure of increasing organizational efficiencies of the sort I just described has a value in itself, but it is not really disruptive. Creating a whole new platform (like a smart phone) on which to teach and mentor students or to measure student success at accomplishing their goals, or serving students who now rarely go to college if at all (like monolingual or weakly bilingual Spanish speakers) would be disruptive. These approaches would be effective ways to compete in a market against other schools that have similar kinds of student populations or philosophical goals. It would throw light on some of the basic assumptions – about technologies, processes and student populations – that we rarely question.

Interestingly, the Innosight report, *Disrupting College,* is less helpful to those of us in adult and nontraditional education than is Christensen's earlier work. His observations about "measuring" success after graduation (for example, using placement rates, salary improvements, retrospective satisfaction ratings, and cohort default rates on loans) are all interesting and useful and perhaps more valuable measures than some of the tools we are using now. In this context, Christensen and his co-authors would define "success" based on students determining when they have accomplished their goals, no matter how instrumental they may seem. At an institution where student goals and wants are so central to defining the terms of an education, what would student and employer input in measuring the "value" of an education be?

While Christensen's team's analysis in the Innosight report is quite good, it is reminiscent of points made in the earlier work. The team's examples of disruption and disruptive technologies for learning apply well to traditional institutions, but less so to nontraditional schools. Online learning is his primary example of a disruptive technology; yet, Empire State College has been delivering learning online for at least 15 years. The issue at Empire State College is less about adopting online learning, and more about how to compete against other low-cost colleges who do it too (especially if we believe that growth in numbers is to our overall long-term strategic advantage). The pressure here, I think, is to move "upmarket" and offer "better" online learning than the low-cost and often for-profit competition.

For example, Christensen describes Western Governors University and its new location in Indiana (Christensen, Horn, Caldera, & Soares, 2011, p. 50). WGU-Indiana is "competency based" rather than "credit based." That is a decades-old idea, but state departments of education and other regulatory bodies pushed colleges to move toward systems that could easily measure Carnegie units (so-called seat time as the requirement for learning). Although competency-based models have fallen out of favor because of pressures to meet Carnegie unit expectations, they could make a comeback in the new circumstance that Christensen describes.

Adult students are no longer an attractive market niche in this sense because many schools are now catering to them … online learning itself is no longer an attractive niche either.

New Marketing Niches

Christensen and his co-authors would propose focusing on nonconsumers of education and concentrating on areas that are not really attractive to the college's competitors. Christensen proposes that schools target student populations that they can serve uniquely. Empire State College has done that for years. Rather than move upmarket and serve those same students "better," it might be more valuable to look for different markets of nonconsumers. Thus, at the beginning of a disruptive cycle, the quality of education may not be as good as other education the college already provides. It may take a while to reach that level. But if it meets the goals of the new students, who were previously not going to college or were having miserable experiences during the limited time in college at Empire State College or elsewhere, then students will be happier and feel their needs are being met. These students will not exactly be like Empire State College's existing students or they may not need exactly what Empire State College is now delivering, but the new consumers might be satisfied anyway.

Adult students are no longer an attractive market niche in this sense because many schools are now catering to them. In this

sense, online learning itself is no longer an attractive niche either. There are giant companies like Blackboard providing learning management systems for large numbers of schools serving all sorts of students, and the processes for offering online learning in this way are quite well developed, routine and affordable. If many schools are doing this right now, is there really anything innovative about Empire State College doing it? No, because we are simply sustaining what already exists. The key to success, then, would be to identify "new" groups of nontraditional students unlike the students other schools are recruiting, or just like those students but finding new ways to serve them. For example, one could look at international students who want American-style educations but are not living in places with significant competition. The college could leverage its skills providing online and blended models to these "less attractive" markets through a new unit devoted to trying new tools for teaching or ways of teaching.

There are large populations of immigrants, many or most not native speakers of English: they need help succeeding in college and could become a large market over time. A program that developed enhanced literacy skills in English or provided non-English language education as a prerequisite or a co-requisite along with college-level learning might open up new educational possibilities for an institution that wanted to develop the resources, the structures and the processes relevant to that new student body.

Educational technology used in new and different ways might work well. Smart phones are one arena for growth possibilities, but they may not be the only one. I have no doubt that other technologies or ways to use these new "learning platforms" will develop quickly.

As I pointed out earlier, throughout their work, Christensen and his co-authors observe that the "profit margins" here may be smaller than in the "upmarket" services, but they can grow to be very large over time. They also point out that there is no incentive to try these new approaches on the part of senior management (or members of the organization) devoted to sustaining existing services. But, a group of faculty and staff who could think creatively about these opportunities, in an autonomous unit with a different organizational design, could well balance its budget quickly and grow fast enough down the road to create a thriving new niche that would serve the college well in the coming decades.

Interestingly, from Christensen's point of view, these new tools and approaches do *not* need to be as good as the existing ones; and, they do *not* need to succeed all the time. They only have to be good enough and offer something new to people who are not using the services now. However – and this is a crucial point for us – from a Christensen point of view, they cannot be integrated into the existing organizational culture; in such a context, evidence suggests they will fail.

In one sense, students are not like transistors, but Christensen and his co-authors do note that the same organizational and market imperatives *do* exist across a wide range of products and services. Empire State College has benefited from disruption in the past and has led a lot of it. But, yesterday's disruptions are today's sustaining approaches. Today's and tomorrow's disruptions mean growth and success in the future. The organizational questions at Empire State College and at other schools are these: What is the new disruption? How could/would/should we organize to create disruptions – whether of structure, of technology or of values, or respond to disruptions when they occur?

I intend this essay to begin a discussion about directions. I fully expect that many readers will disagree vigorously with some of my assumptions and many of my conclusions, or with the premises upon which Christensen has built his argument. Still, I trust that, in a spirit of open debate (in the spirit of disruption!), our colleagues' observations and analyses will help spur the college to be even more successful in the future than it has been in the past.

Notes

[1] The author used Kindle format versions of Christensen's work. As such, citations refer to the locations in the Kindle version.

[2] I can attest from personal experience to the risks organizational culture can create in this context. For 16 years, I taught and mentored in a program similar to Empire State College, Skidmore College's University Without Walls (UWW). Although my former program was located in a separate unit at its college, it was frequently starved for resources by the larger organization, was constantly seen as an outlier in the organizational culture, and eventually was killed off by the administration. UWW officially closed its doors in May 2011.

Honoring George Drury (1917-2010): Reflections From Colleagues

George Drury was born in St. Louis, Mo. in 1917 and grew up in Chicago, where he earned his bachelor's degree at St. Mary of the Lake College, his master's degree from Loyola University, and his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Chicago. For several years in the 1940s, he directed the Sheil School of Social Studies. He later taught for ten years at Loyola University. In 1959, he moved to Detroit to become one of the charter faculty of Monteith College, an experimental small college for working-class undergraduate students within the larger structure of Wayne State University. (David Riesman, Joseph Gusfield and Zelda Gamson wrote at length about Monteith's history in Academic Values and Mass Education: The Early Years of Oakland and Moneteith, *published in 1970 by Doubleday.) In 1972, George came to Rochester to become a founding mentor on the faculty of the Genesee Valley Center at Empire State College where he remained until his retirement in 1987. He was active in center and collegewide governance and as co-convenor of the Cultural Studies area of study group. Throughout his years at Empire State College, he wrote and distributed a series of philosophical dialogues on education as we might practice it progressively at the college. These were collected as* The Prince Street Dialogues *in 1987. He died in Ellsworth, Maine on May 13, 2010 at the age of 92.*

Photo of George Drury with one of his students, taken through the window of the Genesee Valley Learning Center. This photograph appeared on the cover of *The Prince Street Dialogues,* written by Drury and published in honor of the college's 10th anniversary in Rochester, N.Y.

What follows are reflections from colleagues. Thanks to Jim Anderson, Ken Cohen and Lloyd Lill for their words. Thanks, especially, to Wayne Willis for his thoughts, his research and for all of his care and work in creating this opportunity to honor George.

Jim Anderson

For me, George Drury exemplified the role of mentor. I often suggested to my students that they do a learning contract with him. "What does he teach?" they would ask. "Just make an appointment with him," I would say. The student would meet with George and return with a topic for study, often one they never had thought of interest before. They would not have a learning contract with purpose, learning activities and criteria for evaluation spelled out – only a topic and some suggested reading to get started. The learning activities would emerge in discussions between George and the student. The exact direction of the contract would evolve from the exchanges between them. This caused headaches for administrators who wanted contracts filed

before the end of the study, but it was always a unique and engaging educational experience for the student.

George warned us that the college would gradually be absorbed into the traditional methods of higher education and would look more and more like other colleges. He warned us to beware of the three terrible C's: calendar, curriculum and classes. He was prescient. We now have terms, area of study guidelines and group studies. Much of his vision is gone. Yet, in the interaction between mentors and students, his spirit is with us still.

Ken Cohen

The college was four years old when I arrived at the Genesee Valley Center, and many things were in place while others were still developing. The notion of the college as an experiment was very much alive. Before I took the job, an acquaintance advised me that the college was too offbeat to survive, and another said that we would run out of adult students before long. I decided to take a chance that lasted several decades.

The tales that could be told of those early days are many. One early spring day, we were visited by the dean who informed us that we had exceeded our student quota for the year, we couldn't accept anymore, and we should find some other things to do (alas, a one-time occurrence). On another day, sitting with a couple of other faculty examining some weaving from a box that a student submitted for prior learning credits, the following dialogue ensued:

Faculty member No. 1, a biology mentor: "What do think it's worth … maybe 4 credits?"

Faculty member No. 2, a human development mentor: "I think it might be worth 8."

Faculty member No. 3, a business mentor, "How about 6?"

All, "OK."

Good days.

George Drury was a founding faculty member, one of those who carried the torch of humanistic education. He strongly influenced the viability of our college and the work that we perform. My most immediate memory of George is that he was a very gracious, sweet and gentle man, who had a warm, easy smile and a twinkle in his eyes. He took his role as resident faculty philosopher very seriously, and always could be counted on for a narrative at each faculty meeting about the meaning and purpose of our common endeavor. These oral comments were always followed up with a written commentary, *The Prince Street Dialogues* (something that I think would be called a blog in today's argot), where he explored his views in greater depth. Frankly, many of these contemplations were too erudite for me to fully comprehend although I would be willing to try again if any copies of these papers come to light. His students had no such trouble grasping his presence and substance. Feedback from them consistently confirmed his calm, understanding manner, his desire to help them learn and grow, and the success of his efforts in moving them to higher intellectual levels. His learning contracts were never discrete, 4-credit blocks, but instead were holistic documents that would encourage expansive and integrative learning. Several years after I arrived, some faculty got the notion that we should offer small groups as a learning modality. I don't think that George ever ran a group – one-on-one, face-to-face, customized learning was his way. For me, too, with all the changes in the college, the ability to work with students in this individualized mode was certainly the high point of my 30-plus-year career.

The only time I saw George's anger and sadness was when he needed to leave the college because of mandatory retirement-age mandates. He was not at all diminished in his capacities and he very much wanted to keep carrying on the work that he loved and fit him so well. His heart and mind were very much in the right place to provide a strong foundation for the college and to sustain our mission during his many years of service. I miss him.

Lloyd Lill

As one of the founding mentors of the Genesee Valley Learning Center, George Drury was a caring colleague who critiqued and examined the role and direction of centers and the college. George's dialogues and discussions were always in support of mentors and mentoring, creating an atmosphere for students to learn and acknowledging the importance of meeting student needs.

One of my memories of working with George is of co-mentoring a Xerox student. The student was studying the History of Economic Thought with me, and with George, An Introduction to Philosophy. I recalled the student's excitement after meeting with George and how they discussed Socrates' death in Plato's *Phaedo*. George loved his students and they loved him.

Traveling with George was always a challenge filled with many surprises. On one occasion, I was in a car with George, Peter McDonough and Larry Lipsett on our way to an All College Meeting. Our conversation turned to the creation of the universe and a supreme creator. George spent a considerable amount of time describing the Thomistic philosophy, the existence of God, and the first cause of the universe. Larry quietly announced he was an agnostic, and the next minutes were spent in utter silence, which was remarkable, for there were few times I remember George being silenced.

Wayne Willis

I first came to Rochester in the summer of 1977 to interview for a one-year position at Empire State College, an internship in mentoring for newly minted Ph.D.s. I was excited by the possibility of working at a new college that had embraced so many of the ideas and practices associated with the "free school" movement of the '60s and '70s. But I wondered whether I might feel intellectually isolated at an institution where there were no academic departments and where the faculty was divided into small regional clusters. When Bob Seidel, the only Genesee Valley Center mentor in Historical Studies, took me to lunch, I asked him how he dealt with this. Bob replied, "I talk with George Drury."

Over the next 10 years until his retirement, and after that on occasions when he and his wife, Finvola, would return to Rochester from their home in Maine, I learned that George could indeed talk with me on just about any subject that

came to my mind, and also on topics that would probably never have entered my thinking without him. George had an impressive breadth of knowledge, but more importantly, he was a true intellectual who stood ever ready to delve into many, many things. For his students, education with George was a matter of formulating and conducting inquiries, the subjects of which emerged through free and open-ended dialogue that often continued from one enrollment period to another. It was not easy with such a process to break a student's enrollment or degree program into small, fixed components – 4 credits of this, 4 credits of that. As a result, it was often said that George "held on" to his primary mentees, infrequently sending them off to other mentors for their dose of history or psychology or other special fields. Understandably, his colleagues were not always comfortable with this; nor were administrators who often received George's learning contracts and narrative evaluations at the same time, sometimes for several past registrations at once. In response to such concerns, George was not quarrelsome, but he remained tenacious in going his own way.

George's old fashioned gentlemanliness, sincerity and quiet humor were such appealing qualities that at times he seemed to fear that he might be remembered mainly as a loveable eccentric. At his last GVC faculty meeting, after graciously receiving our praise and good wishes, he reminded us that he did not think of himself as any sort of "Mr. Chips." He was, he said, "a radical," and this is true. As a founding faculty member of a college that in the beginning operated under very few restrictive policies, he had turned this formlessness to the maximum advantage and crafted a mentoring practice that defied all pressures from within and beyond Empire State College to retreat to educational conventionality.

It is, of course, unimaginable that George could become a tenured and honored member of the Empire State College faculty today. If most Empire State College mentors had followed George's example, the college would probably not have survived the "normalizing" demands of the New York State Department of Education, SUNY Central, the state legislature, Middle States accreditation, and many of our own students. Still, I think of George as a model of uncaged educational imagination. The impossibility of a new George Drury on our faculty is not for me a source of comfort, but a painful realization of the costs of our successful institutionalization.

Core Values of Empire State College (2005)

The core values of SUNY Empire State College reflect the commitments of a dynamic, participatory and experimenting institution accessible and dedicated to the needs of a richly diverse adult student body. These values are woven into the decisions we make about what we choose to do, how we carry out our work in all parts of the institution, and how we judge the outcome of our individual and collective efforts. More than a claim about what we have already attained, the core values support our continuing inquiry about what learning means and how it occurs.

We value learning-mentoring goals that:

- respond to the academic, professional and personal needs of each student;
- identify and build upon students' existing knowledge and skills;
- sustain lifelong curiosity and critical inquiry;
- provide students with skills, insights and competencies that support successful college study.

We value learning-mentoring processes that:

- emphasize dialogue and collaborative approaches to study;
- support critical exploration of knowledge and experience;
- provide opportunities for active, reflective and creative academic engagement.

We value learning-mentoring modes that:

- respond to a wide array of student styles, levels, interests and circumstances;
- foster self-direction, independence and reflective inquiry;
- provide opportunities for ongoing questioning and revising;
- reflect innovation and research.

We value a learning-mentoring community that:

- defines each member as a learner, encouraging and appreciating his/her distinctive contributions;
- recognizes that learning occurs in multiple communities, environments and relationships as well as in formal academic settings;
- attracts, respects and is enriched by a wide range of people, ideas, perspectives and experiences.

We value a learning-mentoring organization and culture that:

- invites collaboration in the multiple contexts of our work;
- fosters innovation and experimentation;
- develops structures and policies that encourage active participation of all constituents in decision-making processes;
- advocates for the interests of adult learners in a variety of academic and civic forums.

Submissions to *All About Mentoring*

If you have a scholarly paper-in-progress or a talk that you have presented, *All About Mentoring* would welcome it. If you developed materials for your students that may be of good use to others, or have a comment on any part of this issue, or on topics/concerns relevant to our mentoring community, please send them along.

If you have a short story, poem, drawings, or photographs, or have reports on your reassignments and sabbaticals, *All About Mentoring* would like to include them in an upcoming issue.

Send submissions to Alan Mandell (SUNY Empire State College, Metropolitan Center, 325 Hudson St., New York, NY 10013-1005) or via email at Alan.Mandell@esc.edu.

Submissions to *All About Mentoring* can be of varied length and take many forms. (Typically, materials are no longer than 7,500 words.) It is easiest if materials are sent via email to Mandell as WORD attachments. In terms of references and style, *All About Mentoring* uses APA rules (please see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association,* 6th ed. (Washington: APA, 2010) or http://image.mail.bfwpub.com/lib/feed1c737d6c03/m/1/BSM_APA_update_2010.pdf).

All About Mentoring is published twice a year. Our next issue, #40, will be available fall 2011. Please submit all materials by Aug. 22, 2011.

Correction

Dr. Carol Twigg, president and CEO of the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), was mistakenly listed as being located at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in Note #12 (p. 67) of Xenia Coulter's review titled, "Is Higher Education Really Going to the Dogs?" in *All About Mentoring* 38. NCAT is an independent nonprofit organization.

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