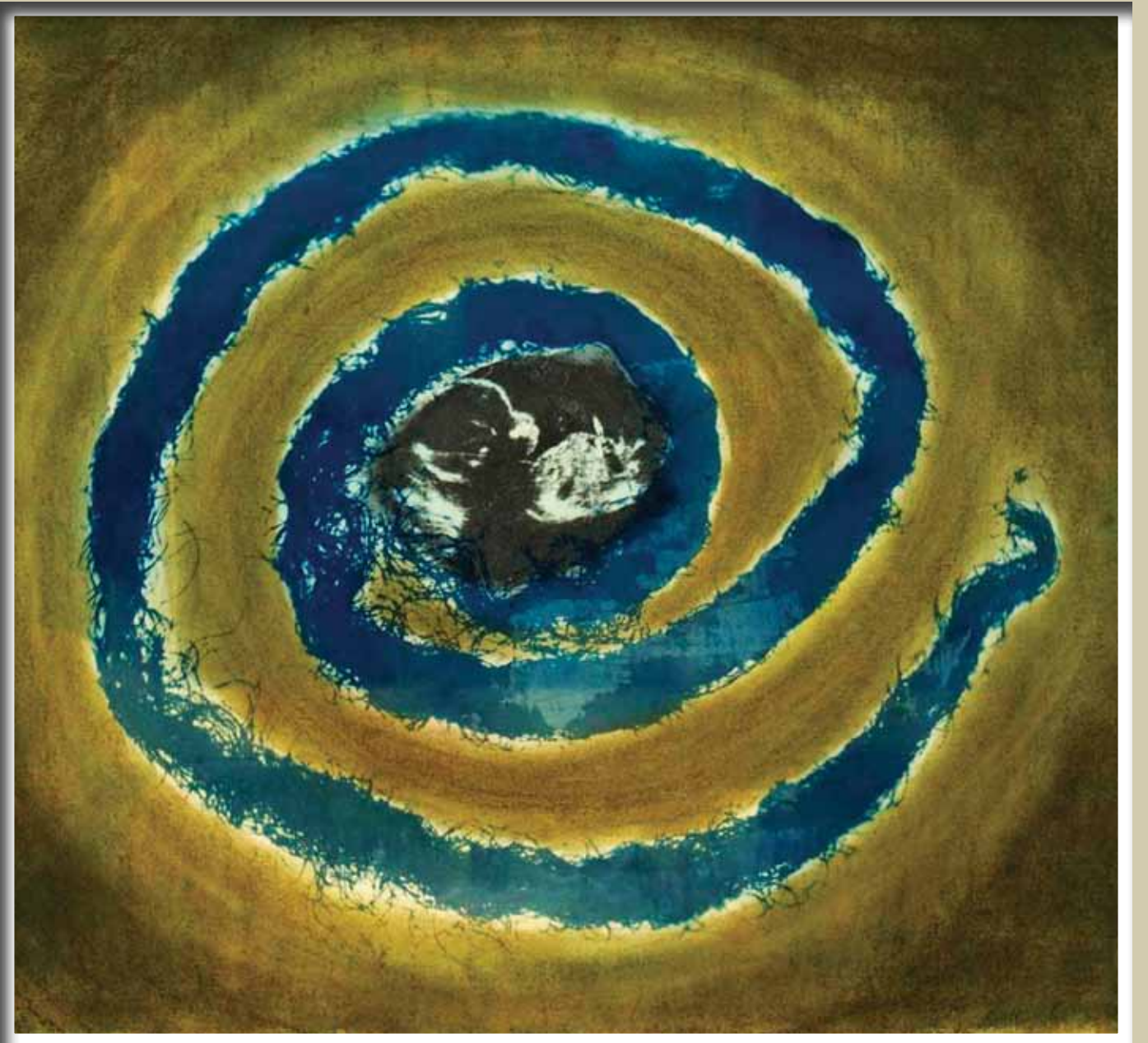


ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

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William H. Maehl: 1930 - 2011

“ ... Innovation in adult program and the new forms and processes with which adult educators have experimented have broken the constraints of older systems that prevented change. By asking questions such as, By what different means can we assist adults to reach the learning outcomes they seek? or, How can we reduce the barriers that prevent adult learners from participating in educational programs? adult education innovators have driven institutions to explore alternative processes to reach agreed-upon ends. The mold of old forms has been broken. The success of so many new forms establishes the precedent for future experimentation.”

– William H. Maehl

Lifelong Learning at Its Best:
Innovative Practices in Adult Credit Programs
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000, p. 282

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EDITORIAL



Big Ed

*“Everyone is always trying to do that.
Why we never succeed, I don’t know.”*

– Gerhard Richter, *Interview with
Gregoria Magnani, 1989*

*“We are all the same, and each of us is
unique, certainly in death but also in life.
May we all stop and notice.”*

– Christopher M. Peterson (1950-2012)
*“Awesome: E Pluribus Unum”
Psychology Today blog, 05 October 2012*

In late August, a number of friends and colleagues asked if I had read a recent issue of *The New Yorker* in which the wonderful Atul Gawande, who writes his periodic column “Annals of Health Care,” used an analysis of The Cheesecake Factory restaurant to describe recent changes in health care (“Big Med,” 13 August 2012). I hadn’t, but after a quick read, I easily recognized why readers were taken by Gawande’s imaginative foray into the parallels between a highly successful food chain (there are about 150 Cheesecake Factories in the U.S. that feed more than 80 million customers each year) and the emergence of “health systems,” like the one in which Gawande himself works, a nonprofit corporation called Partners HealthCare that currently owns eight hospitals and employs 6,000 doctors ... and counting.

I can just imagine why author Gawande must have been thrilled to learn about The Cheesecake Factory. What seems like a rather quirky if not completely peculiar entry into a discussion of the changing face of health care in the U.S., becomes, for him, a way to dive into the challenges of “affordable delivery,” institutional efficiency, waste management, standardization and reproducibility, predictability, coordinated care and that most ominous criteria for evaluation, “scalability.” If, he adeptly slides us into thinking, a food chain like The Cheesecake Factory can provide us with linen napkins, fresh and “delicious” food (he actually loves its quality!) and more than 300 dinner and 100 beverage choices as a result of a stunningly efficient system of meticulous control (from the training of chefs, to menu experimentation, to kitchen design, to prep targets, to food rating, to “guest forecasting”), why can’t a health care chain do the same? And, of course, while he surely knows he’s entered into provocative territory (who would enthusiastically embrace a mass market restaurant chain

that proudly announces its manufacturing plant heritage as a model for health care?), in the end, Gawande concedes that: “The Cheesecake Factory model represents our best prospect for change.”

Could a Gawande of higher education almost write the same piece and draw identical conclusions? What president of a university wouldn’t want a place with a “great reputation,” an accessible system of “start-to-finish standardization,” the “scaling of good ideas,” a culture in which “innovation” didn’t “spread at a glacial pace,” “full-scale treatment protocols” for every action taken, a product that is “reproducible, appealing, and affordable,” and “the ability to monitor the care” (the day-to-day learning of every single student and the every move of every single professor) at a centralized “command center”? Isn’t this the fantasy of a “coherent, coordinated, and affordable” university that shadows everything we do today and that, whether explicitly or tacitly, the contemporary university has embraced? Cheesecake U, our “Big Ed,” has taken over.

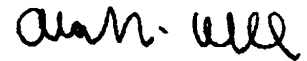
We have a big problem. If the vision of an ever-expanding restaurant chain that prides itself on its factory lineage and on its panopticonish model of control animates our efforts and shapes our designs – whether of health care or of learning – a place like Empire State College and many other experimenting educational institutions will lose their souls. And this will happen *not* because we can ever become oblivious to the question of affordability, or to the dream of access, or to the hope for meaningful (as it’s defined in today’s parlance) “customization” or to the million (on the lower end) open educational resources that are now at our finger tips. It will happen because we’ll forget our own decades of experiential learning – what we have learned about learning: about the voices of students; the shakiness of our expert knowledge; the complex dance between autonomy

and collaboration; the power of asking questions of our students, ourselves and of the institutions in which we work; the insights gained through careful listening; the significance of a student's experience and curiosity; the beauty of the unexpected and the magic of the improvisatory; and the role of a mentor to help shape human interactions and learning relationships around the embrace of what sociologist Kurt Wolff once called "cognitive love."

Cheesecake U, Big Ed – like The Cheesecake Factory, like Partners HealthCare writ large – is *really* tantalizing. As Gawande surely recognized (and this is why his piece

is so fascinatingly relevant to the debate about the future of the university today), it seems so close to touching and even achieving everything we genuinely care about, whether we're thinking about food, medicine or schooling: open access, high quality, flexibility, efficiency, affordable delivery and "scaling good ideas." Come on, aren't all of these characteristics of a Cheesecake U exactly what we want? And yet, we have to "stop and notice" that it's just not it. Our challenge, right now, is to work together to articulate and fight for a very different vision of teaching and learning *and* a very different set of day-to-day processes that can sustain that vision.

(If we pride ourselves on the former, however stunning, and miss the latter, we'll surely blow it.) And, lucky for us, we're not starting from scratch. We've got decades of practice from which to spot the dangers, catch the hopes and stay with the tensions.



"Big Med" can be accessed at http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/08/13/120813fa_fact_gawande.

"As John Bunker, 64, who has spent his life finding near-forgotten apple varieties in Maine, observed: 'Everyone needs a mentor.'"

– Anne Raver, "Green Ribbons at an Organic Fair"
The New York Times, Sept. 27, 2012, p. D7

Thoughts on Openness as a “Political and Social Project”

Frank VanderValk, Center for Distance Learning

This past June marked the end of my reassignment, which had been sponsored by the Center for Mentoring and Learning.¹ I would like to take this opportunity to offer some initial reflections on the work I undertook during this time.

The initiative I was working on became known as the POOL: Project for Online Open Learning. In small part, it was a test of the “connectivism” model of learning promoted by, among others, George Siemens, who is much in the news of late as the so-called “father of the MOOC” (Massive Open Online Course). At the same time, and more importantly, the POOL was an attempt to break open the “iron triangle” of credits, content and calendar by giving students opportunities to pursue learning that were unconstrained by the traditional structures of education. It was my belief that students ought to be encouraged, not just with words but also with institutional structures, to “follow the learning” wherever it leads them. If doing so meant that we had to jettison or revise time constraints, alter credit allotments to appropriately match an evolving student workload or tweak the content of a learning contract to accommodate a budding interest in content that may appear to be tangential to the original learning contract, then students needed an environment in which they felt comfortable making these changes. Furthermore, in the project we embraced, we had to develop a social networking approach to learning so that students could make serendipitous connections with other learners. In short, I was trying to escape from the course model that has become the default Center for Distance Learning method of connecting students with content (which is increasingly freely available) and mentoring expertise (which is sorely lacking in many MOOCs and some other emerging models). Several versions of the project were run in successive terms, each version guided

by a belief that it is possible to use emerging technology to further the Empire State College mentoring model, rather than be forced to alter the model in order to adapt to an evolving technological environment.

In one version of the POOL, students enrolled in CDL courses (and some independent studies) were brought together in a common space, and where possible were given assignments that could result in an exchange of ideas and knowledge across course boundaries. This was a modest first step, although it resulted in the creation of an innovative software environment (based on Drupal) in which students could begin to follow ideas rather than be directed by course syllabi. Subsequent versions of the project moved further and further away from the course-as-starting-point approach. The spring 2012 term, for example, saw a theme-based, team-taught iteration of the project. Students enrolled in anywhere from 1 to 8 credits and were able to choose from among 12 discrete units, each offering a variation on the theme of freedom (e.g., sexual freedom, freedom and property, censorship, religious freedom and so on). Over the past two years, the POOL model has shown much promise: students were very engaged and happy to have the flexibility that the POOL offered; there are strong indications that this model could increase retention rates; the use of open educational resources fits perfectly with this approach (indeed, in the spring 2012 term, we used OERs exclusively); and, the POOL showed that a radical departure from standard operating procedure can result in high-quality learning experiences and superb student work. However, despite the successes of the project, my experience over the last two years raised a series



Frank VanderValk

of questions that are more fundamental than whether or not this approach can, for example, raise retention rates a few percentage points.

The time span of my CML-sponsored work roughly coincided with a push from Empire State College administration to position the college as New York’s Open University. Thus, my little, more or less self-contained project was partially subsumed into a bigger collegewide initiative and the still larger conversation in higher education brought about by a cocktail of technological innovation, concerted attacks on public education (and public unions that often make that education possible), budget crises in state capitals and fundamental shifts in global socioeconomic structures. Treatments of online, open education in the popular press, and in a growing number of professional publications such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, were describing an ideal educational paradigm of the future, an inescapable “tsunami” about to reorder higher education in much the same way that the music and news industries have been dramatically changed by the advent of widely shared digital objects (see, for example, Brooks, 2012). The emerging consensus can be summed up as follows: We should leverage technology to make high-quality content available to

hundreds of thousands or millions of people while reducing the costs of delivering that content. Whether this is accomplished through MOOCs, partnerships like the Harvard/MIT/Berkeley edX project or parallel “universities” like Udacity, the Khan Academy and Coursera, the important move has been to embrace the linked claims that the “traditional” model is unsustainable and that the only viable solution is one that foregrounds technology and treats it as *the* answer, regardless of the question.

An important concept lurking in the background of discussions about the future of higher education is disintermediation. Disintermediation is a neologism from the business world (as our Business, Management and Economics faculty will undoubtedly recognize). It refers to disrupting current processes in a specific manner by cutting out the intermediation and/or intermediaries (i.e., the “middle man”) between a product and consumers. A notable example of disintermediation is Amazon.com. Amazon’s business model is based on the recognition that consumers would trade the perceived added value of local bookstores (e.g., a sense of community, the pleasure of browsing the shelves) for the convenience and reduced expense of buying books online. In this case, the intermediary that is “dissed” is the local bookseller. It should come as no surprise that some supporters of MOOCs see a place for “big data” that customizes student interactions with technology based on past interactions, and based on the interactions of similar students in the same environment. Amazon.com has been implementing this approach for years – it is the foundation for Amazon’s “you also may like ...” feature – and there is certainly much to recommend it. Well-funded initiatives like edX are positioned to generate impressive Amazon-style analytics that would be capable of identifying obstacles to student learning and suggesting study paths and strategies tailored to each student, or, more accurately, to the algorithmic identity that each student generates.² Technology, the argument goes, facilitates the disintermediation of a number of structures and practices traditionally associated with colleges and universities: classrooms; faculty members individually and the entire idea of *the faculty* as a body

of competent, knowledgeable teachers; mentoring and advising; and the idea learning as a process rather than as a series of discrete instances of knowledge acquisition.

It is not clear to me that disintermediation is a concept that should be generally applied to higher education. First, applying this strategy involves endorsing the idea that the appropriate model for education is private industry. This makes the primary set of considerations revolve around business decisions and practices, and the values of commerce crowd out other legitimate contenders (e.g., education as a public good, a moral obligation to future generations, a specifically parental obligation to one’s offspring and so on). This is not to make the silly and obviously wrong-headed argument that educational institutions can ignore the bottom line, only to suggest that using the language of private industry is more than a simple rhetorical move because such a move entails a certain set of values and approaches to institutional organization, staffing, funding and more. Second, endorsing disintermediation suggests that the added value of teaching itself is negligible. It reduces the teaching moment to a transaction in which a dispensable intermediary (such as a faculty member) simply supplies a product (information) to a consumer (student). It equates teaching and mentoring with the discrete *act of selling* a book across a bookstore counter rather than with the *ongoing activity* of reading, discussing, interrogating and contextualizing the contents of the book. In short, it confuses commerce with pedagogy. Finally, disintermediation, at least in the current context, relies heavily on the use of technology as the means of achieving its goal. Technology is presented as incapable of independently transmitting or shaping values because it is offered as subordinate to the value set of the business paradigm. Thus, we are presented with a series of narratives about neutral technologies facilitating a necessary and salutary disruption of the *status quo*.

The future described in these stories, reports, TED talks and other venues looked very much like what we were doing with the POOL – only, it didn’t. *Open. Online. Disruptive innovation.* The words in these

“academic visionary” stories were familiar, but their meaning and the context in which they were used was very different. Of course, a major mistake in this case was in assuming that we (educators, theorists, policymakers, journalists, administrators, etc.) all had a clear idea of what this pending revolution in higher education really means. Even a term as ubiquitous as “open” is contested. In the midst of a recent frenzy of excitement about large scale MOOCs affiliated with prestigious institutions like Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Berkeley and so on, Siemens published a piece that draws important distinctions between the connectivist version of the MOOC that he pioneered and edX-like versions that have a very different driving force. Siemens distinguishes between connectivist MOOCs (cMOOCs) and the recently celebrated xMOOCs being developed by Coursera, Udacity, edX, and other entities. cMOOCs, Siemens (2012) explained, emphasize “creation, creativity, autonomy, and social networked learning,” while the xMOOC “model emphasizes a more traditional learning approach through video presentations and short quizzes and testing. Put another way, cMOOCs focus on knowledge creation and generation whereas xMOOCs focus on knowledge duplication.” That is to say, cMOOCs facilitate learning and learning how to learn. By design, they treat students as individuals who bring to the learning process their particular perspectives, contexts, cognitive schemes and an inherent ability to exercise the type of informed practical judgment thought to be supportive of democracy. xMOOCs, on the other hand, treat students as potential masters of the skills that are likely to be required in a global workplace. To put it crudely, cMOOCs aim to teach and to gain the *capacity* for active citizenship while xMOOCs aim to train and develop workers.³

Siemens is right to note the differences between the varieties of MOOC-ish experiences, but he leaves a number of issues unexamined. For example, regardless of the category of MOOC under consideration, it is commonly claimed that MOOCs inherently promote and enact democratic values. The most obvious problem with the claim that MOOCs and open

education initiatives like edX represent the democratization of education is the fact that they may do no such thing. If we take the definition of democracy to entail the principle that the people who are affected by a decision must participate significantly in making that decision, then high-profile open educational ventures fail to clear that bar. Facilitating the proliferation of educational opportunities is simply not the same as democratizing those opportunities any more than making Coca-Cola available to more people entails a democratization of the Coke formula, advertising strategy or corporate profits. Appropriating the language of democracy in order to buttress the case for expanded online delivery of higher education is not simply a case of committing an innocent terminological error. Rather, wrapping online education in the protective cloak of “democracy” positions anybody who would make a critique of any/certain forms of online education as simultaneously suspect of anti-democratic leanings and vulnerable to the shop-worn charges of academic elitism. It is worth pointing out that bringing more people under the authority (cognitive or otherwise) of a few individuals while refusing to give the former group increased decision-making power – and this is in part entailed with the edX model – is not a characteristic of democracy so much as it is characteristic of empire. And, if the goal is to take from each (academic, intellectual or content expert) according to his or her ability and then give to each (prospective student and/or economy) according to his or her need, democracy may not be the ideology being evoked. Either way, we should not uncritically embrace facile claims that online learning, MOOCs or other such phenomena are nothing more than expressions of purely democratic impulses.

Perhaps this criticism is merely a quibble. After all, the term democracy is often (mis)used to stand roughly for the expansion of participation in any activity (even those that might undermine self-government), and so if MOOC enthusiasts wish to use that term, albeit in a less than precise way, no harm done. But if this rush to embrace a variety of open, online learning is not merely an organic expression of long standing democratic ideals through a novel

digital medium, then what else might be going on? A clue may be found in the mix of socio-economic interests that are most enthusiastic about the emerging consensus: techno-libertarians of the *Wired* magazine variety, venture capitalists and free market evangelists. I would like to suggest the possibility that xMOOCs and some other excursions into online learning have the potential to act as vehicles for a governing ideology that is masked and aided by technological excitement(s).

The emancipatory promise of open education is one of its key selling points. Peters and Roberts (2012) captured a common sentiment about open education (a sentiment and quotation that is echoed in some Empire State College material):

Open education involves a commitment to openness, and is therefore inevitably a political and social project. The concept of openness has roots going back to the Enlightenment that are bound up with the philosophical foundations of modern education with its commitments to freedom, citizenship, knowledge for all, social progress and individual transformation. (p. 4)

Since this type of claim is typical of a certain set of reactions to openness, it is worth interrogating. Does open education foster freedom, citizenship and social progress? Or, to pose the question in a manner more likely to admit of a plausible response, what form of openness is most likely to accommodate and cultivate freedom, citizenship and social progress? I suggest that an uncritical embrace of open learning actually works against the commitments that Peters and Roberts outlined.

I concede that open education is a political and social project, but I reject the notion that this project is *unfailingly* emancipatory, transformative or salutary for citizens *qua* citizens. Like “democracy,” “open” in the current educational context is a word that avoids any attempt to pin it down with a single, widely-shared meaning. Much open learning, especially the xMOOC variety, carries with it the rhetoric of the Enlightenment but the realities of contemporary neoliberalism.⁴ One branch of open learning assumes that education

is something that can exist in a pure, exchangeable and circumstance-independent form. That is to say, education is treated as a commodity rather than a public good or a means of fulfilling individual human potential. This education as commodity form of open learning posits that open education can exist with minimal ideological content or context. This is clearly wrong. Conceived of *only* as broadening access to education and thereby expanding the global pool of skilled labor, either through the provision of opportunities for web-based instruction, assessment and accreditation or by way of providing open educational resources (OERs), one version of open education threatens to unconsciously re-inscribe the very power relationships that other versions ostensibly seek to disestablish.

Open learning as embodied in xMOOCs, for example, abstracts from the concrete individuality of students’ potential units of global, or globalized, labor. Indeed, as Michael Roth (2012) pointed out, the “instrumentalist rhetoric” used by “critics who see higher education as outmoded,” (para. 2) casts students in the role of “human capital” (para. 1). Located in specific geographical environments, individual “disadvantaged” students confront local versions of a global system of inequality generation. Immigration regulations, ethnic affiliations, territorial militias, employment verification requirements, religious factions and myriad other impediments to the free movement of individuals in search in employment work to reinforce the “bad luck” of being born in a country or locale that may lack natural resources, sustainable economic activity or significant opportunities for socioeconomic mobility. As Mark Olssen (2006) noted about lifelong learning (a common target of open learning proponents), if the learning is “concerned narrowly with cognitive and metacognitive skills in the interests of adaptability to the world of work and the constantly changing demands of capital, then it becomes a means of enabling business to minimize or avoid its social responsibilities by offloading the social and educational costs of production in a constantly changing technological environment” (p. 225). Openness, in this version, creates a world with virtual gated

communities, a world in which global populations are digitally sorted into a successful, entrepreneurial creative class (that can generate wealth inequalities at an unprecedented rate) and ... the rest.

Open edX-ism postulates a rational actor who can be (and wants to be, needs to be!) transformed from a member of an economically underdeveloped *community* to an economically valuable *individual*. The development of autonomous individuals, freed from substantial communal or noneconomic constraints or considerations is the very standard of neoliberalism. As Majia Nadesan (2006) observed, “neoliberal forms of governance attempt to divest the state of paternalistic responsibility by constituting individuals as rational independent agents” (Neoliberal Governance, Busno-Power and the Future of Education section, para. 1). Individual members of organic communities – people with deep connections to family, culture, land or other communal identities – need to be recast as discrete and interchangeable components in a (market) society. This change allows for any social problems (e.g., poverty, security or education) to be described in such a way as to be amenable to market-based solutions. As if to prove this point, Brooks (2012) hopefully imagined that open education initiatives like edX or Udacity might establish “a magnetic authoritative presence” (para. 14) and “extend the influence of American universities around the world” while allowing “curricula from American schools [to] permeate” yet-to-be-established institutions in India and China (para. 8). That is to say, open education becomes a political project, not in emancipating individuals in the tradition of the Enlightenment, but rather in authoritatively exporting market values to cultures perceived as insufficiently adopting those values on their own.

Does this mean that the laudable project of truly open education, the project in which I have always seen Empire State College participating, has been irreversibly co-opted by economic and political interests dedicated to the proposition that all human capital is created equal? No, not at all. It simply means that the college’s tradition of contesting claims about the nature, practice and possibilities of higher education will

continue. In this tradition, my sense is that the appropriate response to the rush to embrace a redefined, neoliberal version of “openness” is to undertake a critical inquiry into the ideological structures that support, advance, and favor certain practices and assumptions over others. This may involve a fair amount of work that appears “merely” theoretical, but it has substantial practical consequences. For example, once we work through the implications of various forms of openness, might we, as a college, discover that embracing Version A has the long-term implication of strengthening our institution and the mentoring model it embodies, while embracing Version B amounts to committing slow-motion institutional suicide (e.g., if Version B promotes disintermediation, privatization and commoditization of education)? Ideas have power. Competing versions of open education represent different ideas in action. We should study these ideas – conduct a critical inquiry into them – in order to make better judgments about the course of action we should follow into the future.

Notes

- ¹ I would like to thank Kathy Jelly for her steadfast support of the Project for Online Open Learning. I also would like to thank Alan Mandell, Dana Gliserman Kopans and Eric Ball for comments on a draft of this article.
- ² I take the phrase “algorithmic identity” from John Cheney-Lippold (2011), who argued that the creation of such an identity through extensive digital surveillance constitutes a form of “soft biopolitics.”
- ³ Although I am highlighting the differences between the types of MOOCs in order to foreground some important distinctions, it should be clear that these types are rarely encountered in their pure form.
- ⁴ “Neoliberalism,” both as a term and as a set of governing practices, has a complex history. I mean by the term a philosophy of politics and economics that embraces privatization of public resources; minimal regulation in economic transactions, limited to enforcing contracts and maintaining

monetary integrity; and robust property rights (including the preservation of property across generations). Germane to this discussion, as David Harvey noted, neoliberalism demands market-based solutions and sees a legitimate role for the state in creating markets where none exist (see, for example, Harvey, 2006).

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Feminist Scholarship for Feminist Futures: Critical Thinking about History, Power and US Democracy

Karen Garner, Northeast Center

Karen Garner was the recipient of the 2011 Susan H. Turben Award for Excellence in Scholarship. What follows is a version of the Empire State College Faculty Lecture that she presented to the college community at the All College Conference on 29 March 2012.

These remarks are drawn from my recent scholarly project, a book titled: *Gender and Foreign Policy in the Clinton Administration*.¹ I would like to thank Empire State College for its institutional support, and especially thank Provost Meg Benke, the Faculty Development Fund Committee, the United University Professionals Individual Development Award Committee, and Dean Gerald Lorentz of the Northeast Center for supporting this project over the past several years.

I'm going to circle around my topic, "Feminist Scholarship for Feminist Futures: Critical Thinking about History, Power and US Democracy," and then hone in on some of the history that I cover in the book I've written about the 1990s and the Clinton administration's foreign policy. As I will argue, more than previous U.S. administrations, the Clinton administration considered global women's needs, promoted women's human rights, and included women among the administration's elite foreign policymakers. This had a positive impact on the status of the world's women. But first, the "circle."

In February 2012, the U.S. news media covered a dispute in Washington, D.C. between Republican Party congressmen and senators, and President Obama and Democratic Party legislators. This particular dispute involved the Health Care Reform Bill passed in 2010, and its mandate that insurers must cover contraceptives and other care related to women's reproductive health.

Republican Congressman from California Darrell Issa, who chaired the Congressional Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, called a hearing to examine whether the Obama administration had "crossed the line" separating church and state, and had violated the principle of religious freedom by requiring employers who were associated with the Catholic Church to include coverage for contraceptive and reproductive health care in their insurance plans, when the Catholic Church was opposed to the use of contraceptives to prevent pregnancies (Shine, 2012). The Congressional panel was made up of men, and the witnesses it heard were men, which prompted Democratic Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney to ask: "Where are the women? I look at this panel, and I don't see one single individual representing the tens of millions of women across the country who want and need insurance coverage for basic preventive health care services, including family planning" (Olbermann & Maloney, 2012).

Congresswoman Maloney was told that the panel was not about reproductive care for women; it was about religious freedom, and she also was told that the witness she wanted to call was "not qualified" to speak on issues of religious freedom and conscience, even though, according to Maloney and many other observers: "Of course this hearing is about [reproductive] rights, contraception and birth control. It's about the fact that women want to have access to basic health services [and] family planning through their insurance plan" (Maloney, 2012, para. 7).

But this controversy brought out – once again – the disparity in power between men and women in leadership and lawmaking positions in the United States government. Regardless of where you stand on this particular issue or your reaction to the assertion of reproductive rights for women, this hearing was one of those moments when women's lack of political power was evident.



Karen Garner

Another one of those "aha moments" happened in 1991, when Anita Hill testified about sexual harassment before the all-male Senate Judiciary Committee at the Senate confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. At that time, the U.S. Senate, comprised of 98 men and 2 women, voted 52 to 48 to confirm Thomas, with the majority of votes made along partisan lines – most Republicans in favor and most Democrats opposed to confirmation. For many observers, Anita Hill's testimony given at the hearings and the response of the Senate Judiciary Committee members highlighted widespread

male ignorance regarding sexual harassment, as well as U.S. women's lack of political power (Malcolm, n.d.; Rosenzweig, n.d.).

Women's lack of power in terms of foreign policymaking had become evident to many U.S. women, including one of my favorite quotable leaders, Congresswoman Bella Abzug, back in the 1970s and 1980s, which is the period when my book begins to consider feminist women's impact on U.S. foreign policymaking. Here is one more example of an "aha moment" illuminating women's lack of governing power.

In 1987, Congress was investigating the Iran-Contra affair following the discovery that the Reagan administration had covertly aided anticommunist paramilitary squads in Nicaragua with funds from illegal arms sales to the Islamist regime in Iran. Bella Abzug called attention to the fact that women were not involved in the scandal, other than Fawn Hall, the secretary to National Security Council staffer and Marine Corps Colonel Oliver North, "who shredded and regretted and finally told." And, Abzug further noted, "There isn't even one woman from Congress or the Senate sitting in on this hearing – *and this is 1987*" (Associated Press, 1987).² At this time, there were two women senators and 23 women in the House of Representatives. What would Abzug think about Darrell Issa's committee in 2012?

But what's wrong with this picture? What does it matter that men have been in positions of governing power, and have set governing policy, and have carried it out, and have judged it? What does it matter that women, in general, are missing from this picture, and that feminist women, in particular, are missing as well? Liberal feminists, like Bella Abzug, have answered those questions by arguing that feminist women brought different perspectives to all policy issues, feminists raised women's issues as policy priorities, and feminists acted differently from men who held elected office or who served as government appointees (Jeffreys-Jones, 1995).³ Research conducted by political scientists in the 1980s (when Abzug was making these arguments) confirmed her assertions: there were documented gender differences in terms of political behavior in state legislatures (B.

Reingold, as cited in Paxton & Hughes, 2007; S. Thomas as cited in Paxton & Hughes, 2007).

And these results – that men and women govern differently – beg further questions: Do all women govern differently than all men? Clearly not. Women don't vote as a bloc, and although women voters may favor Democratic Party candidates over Republican Party candidates in most recent U.S. elections, this is not absolute. But do women with liberal feminist views govern differently than men? And does this make a difference in foreign policymaking?

Whether or not you are critical of U.S. foreign policymaking from an historical perspective or in contemporary times also will impact whether you think there *should* be a change, or what direction that changes should take. But in Abzug's view, women added different values and perspectives to global relationships, and those feminist values were needed to make wiser policies.

Bella Abzug was making arguments that theorists of democracy and feminists had been making for many years: that a "true" democracy does not exist if the female half of the adult population does not participate equally in the public realm. Arguments for women's equal representation in democratic states can be based on justice; that is, because it is intrinsically fairer to all members of society to be represented. Or, arguments can be based on pragmatism because women's essential "difference" from men in regard to their world views and their gendered ways of operating in the world provides a value-added component to the governing policies and process, and it "makes sense" to incorporate women's added value (Lovenduski, 2005). But Abzug's arguments in the 1980s, and those of liberal feminists who came before her, did not begin to have a significant "feminist" impact on the U.S. government's foreign policymaking offices until the 1990s when the Clinton administration entered office.

The decade of the 1990s, and the significant differences that liberal feminist perspectives and liberal feminist policymakers brought to bear on U.S. foreign policymaking, are the focus of my book. I argue that the Clinton administration broke many barriers to

challenge global women's unequal status as compared to men, and that it incorporated women's gendered needs into U.S. foreign policymaking and foreign aid programs. More so than in previous U.S. presidential administrations that had been in power since the 1970s when a second wave of American feminist activism moved women's rights and women's empowerment onto national social and political agendas, the Clinton administration interjected feminist aims "into the mainstream of American foreign policy." As President Clinton (1996) asserted: "We cannot advance our ideals and interests unless we focus more attention on the fundamental human rights and basic needs of women and girls" (para. 16).

President Clinton's words provide just one example of how administration officials at the highest levels of leadership in the White House, cabinet agencies, State Department, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) raised the level of feminist rhetoric to unprecedented prominence in their foreign policy addresses. More importantly, the administration enacted institutional change at the State Department and USAID that liberal feminist activists recognized as progressive and "empowering" to global women; that is, institutional change that enabled women's more equitable access to social, political and legal power, and to economic resources and that allowed them to make independent decisions about their own lives (Mayoux, 2005).

During the Clinton administration's tenure, the personnel and organization of the U.S. State Department and the USAID increased the descriptive, or numerical, representation of women in U.S. foreign policymaking. Madeleine Albright, who served as the administration's ambassador to the United Nations from 1993 to 1997 and was appointed the nation's first female secretary of state from 1997 to 2001, was the most visible representative of the expanded influence of women in determining U.S. foreign policy. Additionally, Bill Clinton appointed Alexis Herman, Hazel O'Leary, Janet Reno and Donna Shalala to lead Cabinet agencies, and increased the number and influence of women in high-level positions making day-to-day governing

decisions that had both national and international scope and impact during his two terms in office.⁴

So, with more women holding key leadership positions in the Clinton administration, the U.S. government became “more democratic” and more representative of the entire U.S. population. And, while we know that the presence of even a “critical mass” of women in policymaking positions does not guarantee that the nature of government will change to represent the substantive interests of women as women (McBride & Mazur, 2010), or that women occupying policymaking positions in government can be singled out as the direct cause of any specific policy change (Lovenduski, 2005), I make the argument that the substantive representation of women’s interests in U.S. foreign policy also making expanded during the Clinton presidency. The women appointed by President Clinton increased government attention to gender equity in policy and programs generally, and the female leaders involved in foreign policymaking incorporated “feminist” aims into the content of foreign policy and in determining allocation of U.S. foreign aid.

So how do I define “feminism” and determine what constitutes “feminist policy”? I know these are highly contested concepts, so much so that by the 1980s, many scholars and activists began referring strategically to “feminisms” in the plural (Miller, 1999),⁵ both to acknowledge fundamental theoretical disagreements regarding the sources and remedies for various women’s oppression, and to facilitate political collaborations in order to achieve progressive change among those who could agree, in the most basic sense, “that ‘feminist’ indicates a challenge to patriarchy and ‘contests political, social and other power arrangements of domination and subordination on the basis of gender’” (Beckwith, 2007). That’s the general definition I use here.

In regard to the problem of defining whether government policy is feminist, I found some answers in the work of political scientist Amy Mazur. Mazur (2002) identifies five components that can indicate whether a policy is “feminist” in its orientation. First,

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does a policy address the improvement of women’s rights, status or situation with the goal to rise to the level of men’s rights, status or situation? Second, does the policy challenge gender-based hierarchies or patriarchal power structures? Third, does the policy address changes in both the public and private spheres of society? Fourth, does the policy apply equally to both men and women? And fifth, does the policy incorporate ideas that are associated with a nationally-recognized feminist organizations, movements, or feminist activists? (p. 30-31). So these are the criteria I applied to analyze whether the global gender policies enacted by the Clinton administration could be defined as “feminist.” And even though government actions that occurred the 1990s are very recent history and historic consequences are certainly still unfolding, I also attempt to evaluate whether those feminist foreign policies had a feminist or progressive outcome in terms of addressing the needs or asserting the rights of particular populations of global women.

Let me provide a brief synopsis of the Clinton administration’s “global gender policies,” that is, the foreign policies that specifically addressed the needs of global women and the status of global women, and to suggest some reasons why that occurred.

During Bill Clinton’s presidency, U.S. government foreign policy goals were focused on first, promoting ‘democratization’ and second, on expanding capitalist market economies globally.⁶ These changes were connected to global historical transformations at the end of the Cold War era (1945 - 1989). Beginning in the 1980s, U.S. government leaders grappled with new

international challenges that grew out of these historical developments: the break-up of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact alliance in Eastern Europe; the control and management of the former Soviet Union’s nuclear weapons arsenal; the expansion of NATO, and reconfiguration of other regional military alliances; the eruption of ethnically-driven conflicts in unstable regions of the world; the ever-expanding global reach of a Western-directed neoliberal capitalist economic system that reduced foreign trade barriers and restrictions on private investment also while diminishing public sector protections for workers and cutting social spending; and the rise of “democratic” and pluralistic political systems where political rivals competed in ostensibly “free” elections.

The threats and benefits of all these changes were distributed unevenly between the global north and south, and among different segments of populations within all global regions and societies. “Free” elections put various undemocratic and oppressive governments into power. And bitter civil conflicts and genocidal warfare triggered humanitarian crises that threatened human security in Haiti, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

Consequently, the rise of progressive global social movements promoting human rights, environmental protections and women’s rights, and opposing neoliberalism, also distinguished the end of the Cold War era, as did the rise of reactionary and politicized fundamentalist Islamic and Christian movements that opposed globalizing, modernizing and “Westernizing” historical forces (Cohen & Rai, 2000).

As the Clinton administration took office, it defined what it believed was necessary to achieve its foreign policy goals and promote international security. Recognizing that the international arena had changed considerably since the bipolar Cold War era, the administration focused attention on global issues that jeopardized international security: competition for resources; international wars, civil conflicts, terrorism and other violent acts that displaced populations and abused human rights; preservation and protection of the environment; and

burgeoning global population growth. To deal with these global issues, the Clinton administration State Department created a new bureau: the Office of Global Affairs led by Under Secretary of State Timothy Wirth.⁷ As attention to global issues redirected State Department activities, as well as intergovernmental relations at the United Nations, feminist movement activists, and female and male government leaders alike, often invoked “women” as an untapped human resource whose productive and reconstructive potential was far from realized, or who could serve as a remediating factor in addressing global crises because of women’s supposed peace-loving and nurturing natures and their attention to building civil societies.⁸ Achieving its global security goals required, in the administration’s view, enlisting “the full participation of women in the political and economic lives of their countries.”⁹

Feminist movement activists and a rising number of organizations working outside formal government institutions – the nongovernmental organizations or NGOs who viewed themselves as representatives of “civil society” (Ottaway & Carothers, 2000) – also effectively influenced U.S. national and international gender policy frames in the 1990s by emphasizing the common goals of the decade’s global human rights project, the global environmental movement, the global feminist project to empower women and raise their status, and global security interests. There are important distinctions between social movements whose members share a conscious group identity, and a cause, or a goal to challenge some aspect of the status quo of “politics as usual,” and NGOs, that generally have more defined structures and identified leadership. NGOs enable and mobilize movements, collect funding and other resources, and make demands on governments and intergovernmental institutions on behalf of movements (Stienstra, 1999). Feminist NGO activism that coalesced around a series of United Nations conferences to mark the end of the Cold War era – the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED; the 1993 Human Rights Conference, HRC; the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, ICPD; the 1995 World Summit on Social Development,

WSSD; and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, FWCW – is often cited as the driving force that elevated gender consciousness among governments worldwide and stimulated the creation of government women’s policy offices to address inequalities between women and men, as well as an array of women’s human rights issues.¹⁰

Nowhere was this more true than in the United States where feminist organizations actively lobbied U.S. government delegations to these United Nations’ conferences to incorporate their perspectives, and sought to influence U.S. foreign policies that had a specific gendered impact on global women. The Center for Global Women’s Leadership, Human Rights Watch Women’s Rights Division, the International Women’s Tribune Center, the International Women’s Health Coalition, Women’s Environment and Development Organization, and Equality Now, to name a few influential NGOs whose activism is highlighted in my study, focused the Clinton administration’s attention on global gender policies to assert and defend women’s economic, educational, environmental, human, political and reproductive rights. These organizations represented global constituencies and realized they could not look to individual national governments to achieve global reforms; nonetheless, they were based in the United States and American feminists figured prominently among their leadership (Stienstra, 2000).

Although these feminist NGOs worked in global arenas, they also, at times, collaborated with liberal feminists positioned inside the administration, most visibly with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, but also with other women policymakers in the State Department and other Cabinet offices. Together, feminist “insiders” and “outsiders” convinced President Clinton and sympathetic male government officials that making progress toward achieving their goals was possible. They made strategic linkages that persuaded the White House, State Department and USAID to incorporate women’s human rights and gender equality goals into foreign policies and programs promoting international security, and global women’s needs into foreign aid allocations. Unlike radical feminists who rejected any

collaboration with state systems that they believed perpetuated patriarchy, racism, classism, nativism and heterosexism, these liberal feminists considered the state to be a potential ally.¹¹ They sought to remove legal barriers and reform government institutions that limited women’s participation especially at elevated leadership levels. In order to redirect and utilize state power to incorporate women’s needs and interests and to address the global problem of violence against women and women’s universally unequal political and economic status, feminist goals were connected to post-Cold War U.S. global security goals: to promote the growth of democratic governments and civil societies and to develop the global capitalist economy as the Cold War ended. Consequently, U.S. government foreign relations and foreign aid offices began to address women’s rights and women’s “empowerment” in their rhetoric, policies and programs.

In substantial ways, the Clinton administration transformed its foreign policy and foreign aid rhetoric and programs based on feminist women’s empowerment prescriptions. Beginning in January 1993, when the administration took office, President Clinton reversed U.S. policy that the Reagan administration had established and lifted restrictions that prohibited some family planning organizations from receiving U.S. foreign aid because of abortion-related activities.¹² The Clinton administration’s views on global population policy and women’s empowerment were closely aligned, although not identical, with the positions of feminist activists.¹³ The administration supported U.S. women’s abortion rights as guaranteed by the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, and asserted that abortion, as Clinton described it, should be “safe, legal, and rare.” And, President Clinton reinstated foreign aid to global family planning initiatives and U.N. population agencies.¹⁴ But it did not promote abortion in other countries, as the administration’s critics charged.¹⁵ And even with administration support for women’s reproductive rights well established, during Bill Clinton’s second term in office, the Republican majority Congress cut funding for global family planning initiatives by one-third of the amount that was funded in

1995, and stopped paying U.S. dues to the U.N. population agencies (and other U.N. agencies as well) (The Washington Post, 1997; National Organization for Women, 1998).

During Clinton's first term, at the June 1993 U.N. Human Rights Conference, the U.S. signed the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of *Violence Against Women*. This was not CEDAW, the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of *Discrimination Against Women* that had been signed but never ratified by the Senate, but a specific international treaty that condemned violence toward women, providing moral support and establishing an international agency for global women who were victims of violence coming from governments or private abusers.¹⁶ Also following the HRC, feminist activists lobbied Congress and the Clinton State Department to add appropriations for "women's human rights protection" to the FY 1994 foreign aid bill.¹⁷ This provision led to a significant institutional change at the State Department: the creation of the Office of International Women's Issues in 1994. These emphases on women's human rights (and on human rights, generally) during the conflict-ridden decade of the 1990s, also led to Clinton administration support for punishing perpetrators of rape during genocidal wars that took place in the Balkans and in Africa at International War Crimes Tribunals.

In November 1993, the administration announced that USAID would refocus its efforts on "enhancing 'sustainable development' and 'promoting peace' rather than supporting individual nations" and would include Nongovernmental Organizations in USAID policymaking and program planning processes (Goshko & Lippman as cited in Preston, 1994, para. 26). The U.S. delegation to the 1994 U.N. International Conference on Population and Development exhibited strong leadership by endorsing women's health and reproductive rights outlined in the conference document,¹⁸ earning the praise of feminists who joined in the conference preparations and served on the U.S. delegation (Higer, 1999; Women's Environment and Development Organization, 1994), as well as the Religious Right's and the Vatican's condemnation

(Danguilan, 1997). At the 1995 U.N. World Summit on Social Development, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton announced U.S. support for microcredit initiatives that funded many small businesses started by poor women in developing nations,¹⁹ and new foreign aid resources dedicated to education programs for women and girls in developing nations.²⁰ Vice President Al Gore also announced the USAID's "New Partnerships Initiative," whereby 40 percent of the U.S. annual foreign aid allocation of \$10 billion would be distributed through NGOs with the goals to empower NGOs and small business people and increase democracy in countries at the local levels, with special considerations for directing aid to women.²¹

Prompted and assisted by feminist activists and NGOs,²² the State Department and U.S. delegation to the 1995 U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women also continued to express strong support for women's human rights and reproductive rights that had been incorporated into the HRC and ICPD Conference documents, but that were under attack from fundamentalist religious organizations and predominantly Catholic and Muslim nations (Hillman, 1995; Friedman, 2003). Hillary Clinton delivered a famous address to world governments and NGO delegates at the FWCW in which she popularized the notion that "human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights" (Clinton, 1995). Her speech and repetition of her assertion by feminists working inside and outside government transformed policy language and women's human rights issues gained more prominence in the United States and throughout the U.N. system²³ Feminist activists strongly supported the Australian government's resolution that the FWCW be a "Conference of Commitments" that identified concrete government actions and established monitoring mechanisms to address women's rights and empowerment issues (Abzug, 1995), and the Clinton administration took this charge seriously. It identified 12 commitments in the priority areas of "equality and power sharing; economic security, including balancing work and family responsibilities; the human rights of women with particular emphasis on violence against women; and health."²⁴ In

order to carry through on its commitments to women, the administration created the President's Interagency Council on Women in August 1995, made up of high-level administration leaders who promoted government initiatives in their Cabinet Agencies in consultation with feminist NGOs. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala served as the PICW's first chair, 1995-96; Secretary of State Madeleine Albright chaired the PICW 1997-2000; and First Lady Hillary Clinton served as PICW honorary chair 1995-2000. Foreign Service Officer Theresa Loar, who directed the United States' FWCW secretariat, also directed the PICW secretariat, and, in 1996, Loar was appointed senior coordinator of the OIWI in the State Department's Office of Global Affairs.

J. Brian Atwood, the Clinton-appointed administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development also directed new resources to the Women in Development Office, established in 1974 at USAID, and initiated the practice of "gender mainstreaming," in USAID operations in 1996 (Atwood, 1996). That is, USAID made "women's concerns integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs" in order to promote gender equality (Mayoux, 2005). Following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Islamist Taliban government in 1996, the U.S. government advocated nonrecognition of the Taliban among the international community to protest, in part, the Taliban's repression of Afghan women. The Office of International Women's Issues played a significant role in forwarding information on the Taliban's policy toward women from U.S. feminist organizations to Secretary of State Warren Christopher in 1996, and to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright after her appointment in January 1997.²⁵ With Secretary Albright's Senate confirmation, "advancing the status of women" became an even more pronounced U.S. foreign policy theme that further affected the Clinton administration's global gender policy decisions (Gedda, 1997; Lippman, 2000; True, 2003). Administration rhetoric focusing on women's empowerment also intensified. As Secretary Albright announced in honor of International Women's Day in March 1997 and repeated often, "Let me

begin this morning with one very simple statement. Advancing the status of women is not only a moral imperative; it is being actively integrated into the foreign policy of the United States. It is our mission. It is the right thing to do, and, frankly, it is the smart thing to do” (Albright & Clinton, 1997, para. 4).

In July 1997, the Office of International Women’s Issues coordinated with the Office of the First Lady at the White House, the U.S. Embassy in Austria and USAID to establish the Vital Voices: Women in Democracy Initiative. An original conference program facilitating networks of U.S. and Western and Eastern European women – all specially invited political, social and business leaders – took place in Vienna and became a model for subsequent Vital Voices conferences held in Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Iceland, Trinidad, Turkey and Nigeria, 1998-2000. The Vital Voices Initiative was considered to be one of the “most innovative” of the Clinton administration’s efforts to promote women’s leadership and democratic participation worldwide and Vital Voices programs continued through the end of President Clinton’s second term in office.²⁶ The OIWI also led interagency efforts to create the U.S. government’s anti-trafficking “prevention, protection, and prosecution” policy and programs that were incorporated in the president’s March 1998 Directive on Steps to Combat Violence Against Women and Trafficking in Women and Girls (Loar, 2000). Coordinated by the OIWI, the State Department Bureaus of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Consular Affairs, Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Diplomatic Security, and Population, Refugees and Migration, along with the Department of Justice, all collaborated with Congress to draft the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, and to propose a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children as a supplement to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime that was adopted by the U.N. Millennium Assembly in November 2000.²⁷

At the United Nations Special Assembly to evaluate progress in advancing the status of women held in New York City in June 2000

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five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, U.S. delegation co-chairs Madeleine Albright and Donna Shalala signaled the administration’s continuing commitments to global women by signing U.N. documents condemning global violence against women, encouraging participation of women in peace building and conflict resolution efforts, advancing women’s status and role in civil society, and combating the global HIV/AIDS epidemic and recognizing its gendered impact on women’s health (The President’s Interagency Council on Women, 2000). Secretary Albright addressed the U.N. Special Assembly and focused on the “fairness” of government support for women’s equality. Secretary Shalala (2000) recounted the significant increases in U.S. government funding for women’s health research, women’s reproductive health initiatives that included global family planning programs, and global efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, since the 1995 FWCW. In a popular address where she was interrupted repeatedly by applause, Hillary Clinton asserted the continued administration support for micro-credit initiatives and other measures to promote women’s equality at a symposium arranged by the U.N. Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (Singh, 2000).

In addition to looking at the origins and development of these particular global gender policies that the Clinton administration established and asking, “Why these policies?” Why did “women” become visible to the administration in regard to these issues and not others? My book also examines the outcomes and consequences of gender policy decisions, to analyze whether this extraordinary U.S. government focus affected in a progressive way women’s political and economic status and whether it, in fact, promoted the understanding that “women’s rights are human rights” globally.²⁸

The Clinton administration global gender policy had many feminist detractors, and I examine their views, as well. Certainly, radical feminists believed generally that any state involvement led to a de-politicization or cooptation of feminist movement goals as certain aspects of the movement were professionalized and institutionalized, and they believed that dilution of feminist goals always compromised women’s interests.²⁹ Many feminists based in the United States and in other global locations vigorously criticized administration policies to integrate women into the global capitalist economy, such as the administration’s support for microcredit financing. Critics argued that, “The market economy penalizes women simply for being women ... because women are engaged in reproductive life processes ... that are usually not traded and therefore not systematically priced.”³⁰ Critics also denounced U.S. government policy and programs that had gendered consequences such as the U.S. government’s general reliance on neoliberal economic strategies to bolster its economic dominance internationally and that penalized the world’s poor, whose ranks were overwhelmingly filled by women and children (Runyan, 1999; Stienstra, 1999). As “a major contributor and loudest voice at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund,” the U.S. government bore responsibility for “the ideology of ‘structural adjustment’” that guided these global capitalist institutions.³¹

Many feminists also condemned the U.S. government’s global human rights record and its long-running pattern of funneling foreign aid and military support

to oppressive dictatorships in developing countries that were friendly to U.S. economic and strategic interests.³² In many cases, these expedient “security” alliances were products of the Cold War era and predated the Clinton administration’s tenure in office, but they had ongoing consequences that reinforced global hierarchies throughout the 1990s.

Finally, my book evaluates how well the Clinton administration’s global gender policy endured and in what ways it evolved beyond the 1990s. In 2001, world history moved beyond a perceived “interwar” era – between the end of the “Cold War” in 1989, and the beginning of the “War on Terror” that the George W. Bush administration declared in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States by the al Qaeda Islamist network. Although violent conflicts in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo involved U.S. military operations during the Clinton presidency, Bill Clinton is remembered as a “peacetime” president, and George W. Bush is remembered as a “wartime” president because he committed U.S. military and diplomatic forces to waging war to overthrow unfriendly Islamist governments in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many feminists have criticized the Bush administration’s global gender policy as it was used instrumentally to serve U.S. war policy in the Middle East rather than serving women’s interests. Moreover, in elevating the interests of his political base, George W. Bush directed government funds to NGOs that represented the Christian Right and its various antifeminist elements, rather than funding NGOs that considered themselves to be representative of a global feminist social movement. But in what specific ways did Bush-era global gender policy differ from, or continue, Clinton-era policy?

This book concludes with a consideration of current global gender policy adopted by the Barack Obama administration inaugurated January 2009, as the U.S. government has begun to phase out military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. There is a re-energized focus on women’s rights and women’s empowerment receiving widespread media attention in the United States and in global arenas. For example, a popular book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women*

Worldwide published by *The New York Times* journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn in October 2009, argued persuasively that empowering Third World women through education and employment, and incorporating women into public life is “the human rights cause of our time” (p. xix). In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly established a new office, “U.N. Women,” with the goal of promoting global gender equality and empowerment of women more effectively by merging the work of four former U.N. offices devoted to women’s social and political advancement, academic research on women, advising the U.N. secretariat on women’s issues, and the U.N. Development Fund for Women. Michelle Bachelet, former president of Chile, leads the new office to accelerate progress toward achieving gender justice. In October 2011, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee awarded three women, Tawakkol Karman of Yemen, and Ellen Sirleaf Johnson and Lyemah Gbowee of Liberia, with the prestigious international honor, commending the women’s pro-peace and human rights activism and signaling support for global women’s empowerment. The Prize citation read: “We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society” (Kasinof & Worth, 2011, para. 5).

While this recent attention to women’s rights and women’s empowerment is presented as a “new” phenomenon,³³ the Clinton administration’s institutional transformations had already shifted U.S. foreign policymakers’ focus onto these global gender issues. Therefore, it seems critically important to understand the historical lessons that can be drawn from the Clinton administration’s attempts to revise U.S. foreign policy to incorporate the rights and needs of women, as various global gender policy initiatives originating in the 1990s have been revived and strengthened by some of the key gender policymakers of the 1990s who are now back in power. Former First Lady Hillary Clinton now leads the State Department as secretary of state for the Obama administration. Hillary Clinton’s former White House Chief of Staff Melanne Verveer now leads the Office of International Women’s Issues, which

the Obama administration has re-named the Office of Global Women’s Issues, at the elevated rank of U.S. ambassador. The Obama administration once again publicly asserts “women’s empowerment” is a “central pillar” in U.S. foreign policy (Solis, 2010). In a speech President Obama (2009) delivered in Cairo, Egypt addressing contentious issues that divided the West and the “Muslim world” and laying out U.S. positions, the sixth of the six identified issues was that of “women’s rights.” In his speech, the president publicly committed U.S. global support for women’s and girls’ education and economic rights and opportunities. Government funding for family planning programs that was suspended during the George W. Bush administration has been restored. Has the Obama administration’s global gender policy been revised to address the concerns of both (or either) Clinton and Bush era feminist critics? This is certainly significant, and current policy initiatives should be analyzed in the context of the historical record.

In writing this book, I was focused on determining whether liberal feminist ideas and policy prescriptions impacted U.S. foreign policymakers in the period from the 1970s onward, and what difference that made on global women’s lives. I concluded that feminists made a difference, but also that “the state matters.” Government foreign policymakers most certainly impact the lives of the world’s women. Also, the U.S. government is not a monolithic entity – one branch of U.S. government can “giveth” and another branch can “taketh away.” And one administration policy that benefits global women exists alongside many others that disadvantage and disempower global women. Certainly, this calls to mind our nation’s war policy – not just the current war we are fighting in Afghanistan but our foreign wars of the past that continue to have contemporary (and seemingly endless) repercussions.

But I argue in this book, with much evidence that I can’t recount here, in order to change the nation’s war policy, as well as other foreign policies that have global negative consequences for all humanity, feminist women must fill more policymaking positions at all levels throughout U.S. government. Feminists must be in positions

of power to shape public discourse; and to draft foreign and domestic policy; and to implement those policies in order to replace entrenched patriarchal values that often violate human rights and women's rights. When Hillary Clinton leaves her position as secretary of state, who will be appointed to replace her? Whoever does so will have a strong impact on U.S. global gender policy.

Institutional changes were made at the State Department in the 1990s. For example, the Office of Global Women's Issues was established and it has achieved some institutional stature and a degree of "permanence" within the U.S. foreign policymaking system. However, leadership at the highest levels of government, from the office of the president and the secretary of state, that understands and supports feminist goals to eliminate global inequalities, to promote tolerance and solidarity that values diversity, to reject fundamentalisms in all forms, because that leadership listens to global feminist women who lead social justice movements outside of government, has historically been a decisive factor in achieving the small successes in feminist foreign policymaking in the United States, to date. To transform the U.S. government's values, the need for more feminist women in all U.S. government offices, in elected as well as appointed positions, is more critical than ever.

Notes

¹ Forthcoming 2013 Lynne Rienner Publishers, First Forum Books imprint.

² Opening Remarks by Bella Abzug, Informal Congressional Hearing on Women's Perspectives on US Foreign Policy, Nov. 19, 1987, in "Women's Perspectives on US Foreign Policy," Report of A Women's Foreign Policy Council Congressional Hearing, at National Women's Conference, Washington, DC, Nov. 19, 1987, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives Kristen Timothy Papers (KT), 1990-2000, Princeton University, box 7.

³ Also see: Press Release, Bella Abzug for Congress, 20th Congressional District, "Abzug Reasserts Commitment to Women's Rights," Aug. 18, 1986, Robin Morgan Papers, Duke University

Manuscripts Collection, Subject Files Series, 1968-2000 and undated (hereafter RM), box S18.

⁴ "1999 UpDate: America's Commitment: Federal Programs Benefiting Women and New Initiatives as Follow Up to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women," President's Interagency Council on Women, US Department of State, May 1999. According to the Clinton Administration's self-reporting in 1999: "The Clinton Administration has appointed more women to senior positions in the Cabinet and Administration than any other US President, expanding the number of presidential judicial nominees and nominating the second woman to serve on the nation's highest court. As of April 1999, under the Clinton administration, women held 27 percent of the top positions requiring Senate confirmation, 34 percent of the Presidential Appointments to Boards and Commissions, 40 percent of noncareer Senior Executive Service positions, and 57 percent of schedule C or policy and supporting positions."

⁵ "Feminisms' ... is intended to deny the claim of feminism by any one group of feminists and to signify the multiplicity of ways in which those who share a feminist critique may come together to address issues. 'Feminisms' acknowledged that specific historical and cultural experiences will differently construct understandings of gender at different times and places. 'Feminisms' is meant to create a discursive space in a fraught arena. It is quintessentially historical, resisting homogenization, generalization, nostalgia."

⁶ As articulated by the Clinton Administration: "Budget Priorities for Shaping a New Foreign Policy" Warren Christopher to House Appropriations Committee, March 10, 1993, State Department *Dispatch* 4: 11 (March 15, 1993).

⁷ Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, History of the Department of State During the Clinton Presidency (1993-2001), VII. Global Issues, [accessed 2008] <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/8523.htm>.

⁸ Carol Anne Douglas, "Eastern European, US Women Meet," *off our backs* 24: 3 (March 1994), 17; Susan J. Tolchin, "Women as Policy Makers: They Can Make a Difference," *The Earth Times* 6: 13 (March 7, 1994); USAID, "The Participation Forum, Topic: Participation and Gender" Nov. 17, 1994, Kristen Timothy Papers, Mudd Manuscripts Library, Princeton University (hereafter KT), box 7.

⁹ Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, History of the Department of State During the Clinton Presidency (1993-2001), VII. Global Issues, I. Women's Issues [accessed 2008] <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/8523.htm>.

¹⁰ Scholars note the significant impact of feminist activism in shaping government responses to feminist aims at the United Nations conferences of the 1990s, for example: Peggy Antrobus, *The Global Women's Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies* (London: Zed Books, 2004); Martha Alter Chen, "Engendering World Conferences: the International Women's Movement and the UN," in Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker, Eds. *NGOs, the UN, and Global Governance* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996); Jane Connors, "NGOs and the Human Rights of Women at the United Nations," in Peter Willetts, Ed. *The Conscience of the World, the Influence of Nongovernmental Organizations in the UN System* (London: Hurst & Co., 1996); Elizabeth Jay Freidman, "Gendering the Agenda: The Impact of the Transnational Women's Rights Movement at the UN Conferences of the 1990s," *Women's Studies International Forum* 26:4 (2003); Mary K. Meyer and Elisabeth Prügl, Eds., *Gender Politics in Global Governance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999); Valentine M. Moghadam, *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Jan Jindy Pettman, "Global Politics and Transnational Feminisms" in Luciana Ricciutelli, Angela Miles, Margaret H. McFadden, Eds. *Feminist Politics, Activism & Vision: Local and Global Challenges* (London: Zed Books, Ltd., 2004).

- ¹¹ Julie Ajinkya defines “liberal” and “radical” feminism in the context of the US women’s movement : “Intersecting Oppressions: Rethinking Women’s Movements in the United States,” in Amrita Basu, Ed. *Women’s Movements in the Global Era* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010), 420-21 and 425. Deborah Stienstra distinguishes between groups that practice “disengagement,” that is, “groups [that] remain separate from existing society and provide critiques of an alternatives to these institutions,” and “mainstreaming” groups “that work for change within the context of existing institutions and propose adaptations that would allow for change without transformation.” Stienstra, “Making Global Connections Among Women,” 62-63.
- ¹² “Family Planning Grants” President Clinton to USAID Acting Administrator, Jan. 22, 1993, State Department *Dispatch* 4: 5 (Feb. 1, 1993).
- ¹³ Warren M. Hern, “The Role of Abortion in Women’s Health and Population Growth,” paper presented to the NGO Forum 94, [ICPD], Sept. 5-13, 1994, RCD, Accessions 1998-0350 and 1998-0372, box 2. “During the election campaign of 1992, Bill Clinton actively sought the support of pro-choice groups and strongly supported reproductive freedom. Hillary Rodham Clinton was highly visible in these efforts. By Jan. 24, 1993, Clinton had reversed a wide variety of Reagan-Bush administration domestic policies that had been aimed at restricting reproductive choice, and he nullified the Mexico City policy. He appointed US Senator Tim Wirth as a Counselor in the Department of State with a portfolio to include population policy. Wirth had a strong record of outspoken support for reproductive freedom as a member of the House of Representatives and as a Senator. Subsequent policy statements by Wirth and Clinton have consistently expanded this support, including a recent statement by Wirth that the goal should be the availability of fertility control methods to every couple on the planet who wants them.”
- ¹⁴ US Statement on Population and Development, Timothy Wirth, Counselor, to UNICPD Second Preparatory Meeting, May 11, 1993, State Department *Dispatch* Vol. 4 No 22, May 31, 1993. Also see: Warren M. Hern, “The Role of Abortion in Women’s Health and Population Growth,” The George H. W. Bush Administration had opposed funding for the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) “because of the controversy concerning China’s abortion policies, and the House of Representatives repeatedly refused to appropriate \$15 million for that program.”
- ¹⁵ The Cairo Conference: Defining an Agenda of Hope, Opportunity, and Progress Vice President Gore Address before the National Press Club, Washington, DC, Aug. 25, 1994 US Department of State *Dispatch* 5: 35, Aug. 29, 1994. Also see: International Conference on Population and Development, Vice President Gore, Remarks at the opening session of the UN International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt, Sept. 5, 1994, US Department of State *Dispatch* 5: 38, Sept. 19, 1994.
- ¹⁶ “Violations of Women’s Human Rights,” John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Statement before the Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations, and Human Rights of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, DC, Sept. 29, 1993, US Department of State *Dispatch* 4: 41 (Oct. 11, 1993).
- ¹⁷ Foreign Relations Authorization Act, 1994, Section 137 “Women’s Human Rights Protection,” Congressional Record, 2 Feb. 1994, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord/search.html>.
- ¹⁸ US Statement on Population and Development, Timothy Wirth, Counselor, to UN International Conference on Population and Development, Second Preparatory Meeting, May 11, 1993, State Department *Dispatch* 4: 22 (May 31, 1993).
- ¹⁹ “First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton Remarks at special event, Copenhagen, Denmark,” March 7, 1995, US Department of State *Dispatch* 6: 13 (March 27, 1995).
- ²⁰ “First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton Announcement of US Initiative to Expand Girls’ and Women’s Education in the Developing World,” US Department of State *Dispatch* 6: 13 (March 27, 1995).
- ²¹ “Vice President Gore Remarks at UN World Summit for Social Development,” and “Fact Sheet: The New Partnerships Initiative – Strengthening Grass-roots Political and Economic Institutions,” US Department of State *Dispatch* 6: 13 (March 27, 1995).
- ²² “US Gears Up for UN Conferences”; Bella Abzug, WEDO, to President Clinton, May 16, 1994, Center for Women’s Global Leadership, IV World Conference on Women, Beijing, China 1995, Rutgers University (hereafter CWGL), box 6; “The UN Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace,” *On the Road to Beijing* (April 1994), International Women’s Tribune Center (IWTC), Sophia Smith Collection, Acc. #95S-69, box 11. The Women’s Bureau, US Department of Labor and the US Department of State convened 10 official preparatory meetings across the nation with NGOs, and the government produced a national report on the status of US women based on information from government agencies and NGOs. Also see: Sharon Kotok, Global Conference Secretariat, US Department of State, “Development of the Platform for Action,” *On the Road to Beijing* (October 1994), CWGL, IV World Conference on Women, Beijing, China 1995, box 1.
- ²³ On the significance of discursive politics, see Karen Beckwith citing J. Jenson (1987) in Beckwith, “Mapping Strategic Engagements: Women’s Movements and the State” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9:3 (2007), 326.
- ²⁴ US Department of State, “United States Commitments Announced at the Fourth World Conference on Women,” Beijing, China, September 1995.

- ²⁵ Secretary Albright, "Advancing the Status of Women in the 21st Century," Remarks Upon Induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame, July 11, 1998, US State Department *Dispatch* (August 1998).
- ²⁶ In the State Department's own "History of the State Department during the Clinton Presidency" the Vital Voices Initiative was remembered as one of the State Department's "most innovative programs" for "promoting democracy." Office of the Historian, "History of the Department of State During the Clinton Presidency, Empowerment of Women, Vital Voices," [accessed 2008] <http://www.state.gov/t/pa/ho/pubs/8523.htm>.
- ²⁷ Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, "History of the State Department During the Clinton Administration, Combating Trafficking," VII Global Affairs I. [accessed 2008] <http://www.state.gov/t/pa/ho/pubs/8523.htm>.
- ²⁸ "Women's rights are human rights" was a slogan commonly used in the 1990s. It also was included in Hillary Rodham Clinton's "Remarks to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, Sept. 5, 1995," http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/China/plenary.html.
- ²⁹ Julie Ajinkya, citing Angela Davis at a conference on "The Color of Violence: Violence Against Women of Color" in 2000, 435.
- ³⁰ "Beyond Beijing: After the Promises of the UN Conference on Women, Who's Doing What to Turn Words Into Action?," *Issues Quarterly*, National Council for Research on Women 2: 1 (Fall/Winter 1996) IWTC, Acc. #00S-8, box 8.
- ³¹ Susan T. Fried, "Women's Human Rights at the World Summit for Social Development," *AWID News* 9: 4 (August 1995), KT, box 5.
- ³² For example, Patricia McFadden, "Interrogating Americana: an African feminist critique" in *Feminism and War: Confronting US Imperialism* Robin L. Riley, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Minnie Bruce Pratt Eds. (London, UK: Zed Books, 2008), 62. "Central to the US strategy of warmongering in Africa has been the strategy of creating and using 'proxy armies' – bandits who rampage across the landscapes of our worlds, specifically countries considered 'essential to US or European strategic interests'; thugs who are trained, funded, and protected by the USA in particular, within the global arena. In this regard, US presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton were kindred spirits in the furtherance of and imperial project that exposed the myth of 'difference' between them and their respective political parties, and the claim that this society engages in a diverse and pluralistic politics."
- ³³ See themed issue, "Saving the World's Women," *New York Times Magazine* (Aug. 23, 2009).

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Mutual Aid: Creating Communities in Study Groups

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What is Group Mentoring?

Over a recent lunch, a colleague and I debated about mentoring in groups versus mentoring on-on-one with an individual student. We raised questions that, in the moment, were hard to answer. For example, how, at Empire State College, where independent studies are the signature pedagogy, can mentors approach study groups in ways that are consciously in-tune with the college mission? How can the mentorship role, with all of its nuances, be translated into study groups, without sacrificing unique student learning needs, a hallmark of Empire State College? What does group mentoring actually look like?

I tackle these questions here, by illustrating how I understand teaching and how I mentor in my Community and Human Services (CHS) study groups (I use “teaching” and “mentoring” interchangeably because for me, the words have the same meaning in practice). Obviously, there is no prescription for group studies, just as there is no one “Empire State College way” to facilitate independent studies. My goal is to share one approach to thinking about study groups as a way to initiate a longer conversation about how we, as a college community, think about and experience mentoring, in all its delightful and complicated manifestations.

After only one year at the college, I know that group mentoring can easily reflect the values and mission of Empire State College, a college (as the “mission statement” describes) dedicated to “innovative, alternative and flexible” approaches to education. That Empire State College values a “healthy democracy” in approaches to teaching and mentoring is at the core of how I envision and facilitate my study groups. I incorporated these specific elements – democracy, innovation and flexibility – into how I taught long before I came to Empire State College, but I wonder if I have

changed my approach enough now that I am an Empire State College mentor. The same ingredients that make independent studies successful and meaningful for students, such as beginning with student needs and interests and negotiating the learning contract over time, are essential for study groups. But how does the mentoring role change, if at all, from working individually with students to engaging them in a group? It seems important to ask questions about mentoring and teaching in a group, and to explore how mentors consciously use ourselves across



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various learning opportunities. I have never wanted to replicate “traditional classroom” teaching and I know that at Empire State College I have an opportunity to teach (and mentor) differently. But what does “teaching differently” actually look like for me?

Social Work Influence

Before entering full time academia in 2002, I facilitated many groups in my job as a social worker in a sexual assault treatment center. Although group work was scary at first, I came to love it as a dynamic

approach to helping people in need. My group work experience helped tremendously in shaping how I think about my teaching and my role in mobilizing groups of people in whatever capacity. I learned that groups offer members amazing opportunities for self-discovery, friendship, support, guidance and learning. I also realized, through trial and error, that dynamic and meaningful groups don’t just magically happen. There is a theory, a mindset, a particular practice. And mistakes.

After years in direct practice with trauma survivors, I started adjunct teaching in social work. I immediately felt my group work skills spring into action to guide me in the classroom. A remarkable realization for me was that groups are groups, whether comprised of students or people receiving counseling. As my teaching philosophy developed, I saw myself in the words of progressive educators, for example, in this bell hooks (1994) quote, which I have hanging up in my office:

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices; in recognizing one another’s presence ... the professor must genuinely value everyone’s presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences that classroom dynamic and that everyone contributes. (p. 8)

I recently read an essay in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* by Darryl Tippens (2012), a provost at Pepperdine University. In stressing the value of communities of learners, he said: “No PowerPoint presentation or elegant online lecture can make up for the surprise, the *frisson*, the spontaneous give-and-take of a spirited, open-ended dialogue with another person” (para. 11). This *frisson* especially excites and motivates me. The spontaneous excitement

and interaction that happens in groups of students is endemic to my approach of what I call democratic teaching.

Lending a Vision

Without clear guidance from me, a democratic learning environment that is consciously group oriented, confidential and safe, is a leap of faith for some students who may feel skepticism and fear that “real work” is not happening amidst the different voices and perspectives. It is important to ask what needs to be put in place for study groups at Empire State College to be successful. What I have always done is to first believe in the democratic and engaged process and then I “lend a vision” of the powerful learning potential in a democratic group study (Glassman, 2009). I have seen over time that students begin to believe in the process if there are a few elements present; for example, a mentor who has a vision of the benefit of the process; skillful facilitation where goals are met, everyone is included, and real concerns are addressed. I sometimes ask myself how “lending a vision,” as a deliberate teaching strategy fits into Empire State College. A mentor guides and directs, but does not give all the answers. A mentor is a role model perhaps to an unfamiliar learning process, but should the vision originate with the students?

This is what I always say to welcome students and begin the process of creating a community in my study groups:

I want to talk about how we will come to work together as a group. I like to call this, “establishing a classroom community,” which means we consciously work together in the spirit of democracy. In this class, all of your voices and perspectives matter and will be an integral part of this class. The first expectation I have is mutual respect. This means that we will work together to respect each other and our unique learning process. The second is confidentiality, meaning what is said in here, stays in here. This will help facilitate mutual trust. What else might be important?

Organization and Flexibility

Truth be told, my favorite moments are the messy, chaotic, unexpected ones; however, I know my careful planning and organization goes a long way in providing students with a safe, predictable structure to support them as they spread their wings and take risks in their learning. I am always balancing content (the concrete material of the study) with process (the interactions among the students, the group behaviors, even the silence). At the start of every class meeting, I write a simple “class plan” on the board:

*Fall 2012: Counseling Skills Study Group
Class 1, Class Plan*

- 1) *Welcome and introductions*
- 2) *Creating a classroom community: Introductory Stem Sheet Exercise*
- 3) *Beginning Skills overview*
- 4) *Study Group Expectations (yours and mine)*
- 5) *Role Play demonstration*
- 6) *What else?*

Over time, I started adding “What else?” to the list. Students like to see the “What else?” One week I forgot to add it and this omission was quickly pointed out to me by the group. I swear by my “class plan” as a concrete, but flexible strategy to keep the class community all on the same page (more or less) and to be clear about the general direction of the specific meeting. Sometimes I wonder if I am being too directive for Empire State College. Should students generate their own “class plans”?

Mutual Aid

Mutual aid is an important social work concept and CHS mentors will no doubt be familiar with it. Originally conceptualized for social work in groups, the process of mutual aid happens when students grow and change through their shared experience of giving and receiving help. Mutual aid is as relevant to groups of learners as it is to groups of clients. In my teaching and social work practice, I have learned that successful groups take planning, patience, organization and flexibility. They also need a “group mindset”: a genuine belief in the power of students to come together and create something uniquely different from a one-on-one mentor-student learning relationships.

Mutual aid is an umbrella term that describes the dynamic “back and forth” of student interactions common in certain groups. This interaction is based on the belief that members join a group to give and receive help or guidance of some kind. There are several key elements of the mutual aid process; these develop as the group gains momentum over time. I will give examples from my groups of three specific mutual aid elements, which were adapted from Shulman (2009).

The first element that I put into motion in my groups is something called **Sharing Data**. I think of this element as the idea behind student introductions: What do I ask of students as they introduce themselves to each other? As students share nonthreatening facts about themselves, the community grows a little. Because introductions can sometimes feel unstructured and tedious for the students rather than motivational, I developed an exercise called the “Introductory Stem Sheet” that gives students time to write answers to fill-in questions (stems) and share these responses with the group. Here is an example:

*Fall 2012: Counseling Skills Study Group
Introductory Stem Sheet*

Directions: Please take a moment to complete the following “stems.” Your responses will help us get to know each other. You will be asked to share something from your sheet.

- *Something I wonder about this study ...*
- *Something I would like to accomplish in this study ...*
- *Something I want the group to know about me ...*
- *Something memorable that happened over the summer ...*
- *Anything else I want to say ...*

I ask students to write the stems quietly. As students write in silence, they are thinking and processing what they want to say. The writing usually takes about five or six minutes depending on the number of students. I give them a one minute notice, and after that passes, I ask: “Would anyone like to share something from your Stem Sheet?” I purposefully don’t select someone to begin introductions. I want students to

decide for themselves. There are always several students who are eager to go first. Sometimes the students who speak early, as well as how and what they say, will give me information on their personalities and the roles they will play in the group.

As the momentum develops, students are usually eager to talk. However, there are always two or three students who dread this sort of thing. I recognize them right away. I acknowledge that introductions can be hard. I don't pressure anyone, but I don't want students to "pass" either. A particularly shy or reticent student will usually say her or his name and one other thing and then we move on. My role here is to make sure no one is talking too much, to make sure everyone participates in one way or another, and to keep the focus on introductions. Inevitably, a student will ask something of me during this process, for example, "How will we be graded?" As tempting as it is just to answer this question in the moment, I don't. I will say that I want to hear all the questions and comments first, and after everyone has shared, I introduce myself, and then answer questions that have been asked in the process. (I find it helpful to jot a few things down as students go around). Although I am famous for forgetting this last step, I try to remember to ask a student to collect the Stem Sheets for me. I regularly refer to the sheets outside of class as a way to get to know the students.

The second mutual aid element that I facilitate is referred to as **Discussing Taboo Areas**. In my groups, I am aware of how difficult certain things are for students. For example, they may feel unsure about returning to school after many years, they may have experienced racism, homophobia or sexism in their past forays into school, or they may worry about not being smart enough. If these worries are experienced in silence, without recognition from me that these taboo subjects are "allowed" to exist in the group, students may feel less free to take risks in their learning. If they know that they are not alone in their experiences and they can share important aspects of themselves, then they are more likely to feel safe in the group and able to learn more freely. This takes time. Most students do not open up about these challenges right away (nor should they). My role is to say

that "nothing is off limits," in the first class meeting, so students know, in time, they can be as honest as they wish. Of course, I need to always be mindful to keep to the learning goals of the study group. So, when students open up about taboo topics, they do so with an educational objective. In a study group last January, we were discussing ways to use activities in counseling groups and I used a writing exercise called "Just Because." Similar in form to the Introductory Stem Sheet, this exercise asks students to create and read aloud a poem using these prompts:

*Just because I am ...
I am not ...
I am ...*

These examples show how two students revealed aspects of themselves that are not openly talked about.

*Just because I am a West Indian
I am not an alien
I am not a "coconut"
I am not without a voice
I am an American citizen by choice.*

*Just because I am gay
I am not about perverseness
I am not an abomination
I am not a child molester
I am a caring person and a loving
parent, sister and friend. My spirit
is light.*

(January 2012, Group Work in Human Services Study Group)

The Strength in Numbers Phenomenon is the third mutual aid element I will discuss. Being alone has its challenges. Sometimes it is easier and less daunting to do scary things in a group than it would be to do them individually. For example, I often have shy students early on in the term who "find their voices," by the end. Last spring, in my Counseling Skills study group, I had a student ("Terry") who, in the first class identified herself as "very shy and quiet." This happened to be a study where role plays were a major aspect of the learning process. As the weeks progressed, I noticed that, at the encouragement of the other students, Terry was participating in more role plays. On the last group meeting, she volunteered to do the final role play. During wrap up, Terry's comments revealed the importance for her of taking risks in a group:

I was always the student who said nothing. I never knew I could be in so many role plays and talk so much. It really helped that everyone supported me.

Group Skills

For me to successfully mentor in mutual aid-based study groups, I need a set of skills (or a "bag of tricks," as I often say to my students). There are many skills that I use in my teaching. I discuss three here in detail, which were adapted from Kurland and Salmon (1998).

One of my favorite group work skills is **scanning**, which means to "take in the group with one's eyes." Setting up the room so that everyone can see each other sends the message right away that the group is important and each student matters to the group community. I use my eye contact to communicate the "us" in the group and I encourage students to do the same.

A second important skill that I use in every group meeting is **verbalizing norms and expectations**. Part of this skill is addressing students directly about what is likely on their minds: "How will I be graded?" "What if I miss a session?" However, this skill also embraces more group-like expectations, such as confidentiality, mutual respect and risk taking. I always say to my students "What is said in here stays in here." Particularly for a CHS study, students need to be able to feel free to take risks and expose themselves without a fear of being talked about outside of the group. I usually begin the discussion about the expectations I have for the group and then I ask for students to contribute what matters to them.

The third and perhaps most important group work skill is inviting full participation. As a group mentor, it is my responsibility to create opportunities for students to participate in some way that is meaningful for them and for the group. The idea is that, as the community develops, students encourage and value participation from each other. I learned the hard way not to push students into participating verbally if they are not ready. What I often do is to figure out who might be quiet or reserved and to give that student opportunities to participate that are less threatening. For

example, as I mentioned earlier, I often use role plays in groups. For the quieter student who is not ready to “perform,” I may ask him to be the observer and to take notes on the role play. I might ask another quiet student to be the time keeper. These are not meaningless tasks, but strategies that I use to get everyone involved and to not privilege the talkers over the listeners. In my groups, there is ample room for both, but it takes some thought and creativity on my part.

Reflections and Strategies

A democratic learning community develops over time, with the twin influences of a group mindset and a group skill set. As I enter my second year at Empire State College, I am tweaking my approach to

study groups here and there, but my guiding philosophy remains the same: Groups at Empire State College offer students and mentors opportunities to become members in vibrant learning communities. Although groups don’t magically happen, magic happens when they do. This magic – part vision, part spontaneity, part innovation – is at the core of Empire State College’s mission.

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“An existentially credible educator who has had a chance to feel, dream, appraise, and practice tactfully in her or his educational craft may be well equipped to invite learners to explore a similar range of learning opportunities.”

*– Peter Willis, “An Existential Approach to Transformative Learning” in Taylor, Cranton and Associates, editors
The Handbook of Transformative Learning:
Theory, Research, and Practice
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012, p. 225*

Afterward

Robert Congemi, Northeast Center

When Swann's wife had been dead for about two weeks, and he still could scarcely think straight, his daughter Jenna visited him at his townhouse to see how he was doing. Shortly before she left, they had occasion to look for a blouse his daughter wanted to have as a memento or something – which was when it all started about the clothing:

“Dad, look at all these things.” They stood before his wife's closet filled with clothing. His daughter flipped through hangers of blouses, skirts, slacks, coats. “What are you going to do with them?”

Actually, when a person thought about it, it was vastly more than the one closet or the clothes. Regarding clothes, there were the closets on *each* floor – for instance, the one on the top floor where he and his wife had stored neglected or discarded clothing, especially shoes, hats, sweaters, scarves, etc., famous for the jumble of his clothing and hers mixed together. Also, on the first floor were the coats, jackets and gloves they used for going outside when the weather grew cold or became snowy. Beyond clothing, Swann could go on forever. How about the bathrooms? In the medicine cabinets awaited her makeup, perfumes, medicines; behind the shower screen door, on a bar affixed to the wall leaned her shampoos, conditioners, scalp treatments. Or the little, city garden behind the house? Swann could enumerate forever. Over the years, Cynthia had planted hydrangeas, clematis, roses and, even this spring, morning glories and hibiscus. A month ago, in August, when she was still capable of thought, she reminded him:

“Swann, when you get a chance, buy mums from the nursery. Autumn is not autumn, at least for us, without them.” He had taken her outside for a bit of fresh air, not really carrying her but holding her firmly, for she hadn't been able to walk unaided for weeks.

“All my life, impatiens and mums have not let me down. The great flowering seasons of spring and summer are over, one is exhausted from gardening and triumph, but yet there is still the fall. Thank God for impatiens and mums. Impatiens need no care and flower endlessly. Mums are like sturdy soldiers – plant them, forget about them, and they will serve and please you until the advent of winter.”

Swann tried to explain this to his daughter, who was a reasonable woman, it had to be admitted. Jenna wasn't asking anything the rest of the world would not ask. They were at the top step on the stoop of the townhouse.

“What are you going to do with all Mom's things?”

Looking out, Swann was comforted by the poetry of his street – the Victorian houses, the iconic overarching trees in full leaf. His neighbors were good, hardworking, professional people or young adults who preferred to rent available rooms from them, rather than live farther uptown or even beyond the city proper.

“What am I going to do?” He saw his beautiful wife in his beautiful daughter. “Why ... why, I guess I'm not going to do anything.”

“Dad,” Jenna protested, the voice of common sense.

“But she was your mother, dear. She was my wife.” The last thing he wanted to be was difficult. “I loved her so much.”

Thank goodness he and Jenna hadn't gotten to discussing the summer place. That was the really big one. It had been a gift from Swann to Cynthia several years ago. He



Robert Congemi

had been taken overwhelmingly to present a great gift to her. It struck him the night she staged a surprise birthday party for him, when he was 50. Later, she had gone upstairs to bed, and the thought descended upon him like an illumination.

“My God, was there ever such a woman? What she has brought to my life. For years and years.”

Swann got the idea from what he had always known about Cynthia. She loved the water, and when it came to him that he could now afford to buy a summer home for her by a lake in the mountains 30 miles to the east of the city, he did so, with alacrity and joy. One day, Swann drove her outside of the city until they made their way through a suburban area into a rural one. After a crossroads, he drove her up a small mountain for a few, meandering miles, finally turned onto a dirt path, drove another few hundred yards, and ... there was his gift – a charming log house with a lake about 100 yards away that could be seen from the house.

Cynthia was transported. Always an indisputably splendid-looking woman in his opinion, she was made even more beautiful by what he had done.

They went to the mountains and the lake whenever they could, especially Cynthia, particularly in spring and summer, which was a luxury so different from when they were younger. At best then, vacation time was the east coast shore somewhere – a rented room, crowded beaches, tired boardwalks of bars, fast food places and stalls to play games of luck for inexpensive prizes – though Swann did make one of the most important decisions of his life there.

One early afternoon on a beach under a blazing, unforgivable sun, Swann told Cynthia he wanted more than to be a civil service functionary, as he put it in his unhappy state.

“I want to do something else.” In their late 20s, they sat on a blanket spread out upon the hot sand, gazing at the ocean, watching Jenna play at the water’s edge with a pail.

“Then do it,” Cynthia told him.

“I may fail.”

“You may not.”

“It’s not fair to you.”

“Anything *else* is not fair,” she had observed back then.

Whenever they arrived at the summer home, they pretty much always followed the same routine, something they never spoke of, but understood, and silently rather delighted in. After stopping their car on the little gravel parking space, they sighed happily, away from the world, and carried food, country clothes, books into the house. Swann turned on the electric power, and Cynthia began freshening up the small rooms and scrubbing down kitchen counters. Then while he tidied up the grounds of fallen leaves, twigs and branches, she began to cook dinner in the house, or they barbecued together outside, Swann building the fire, Cynthia carefully placing chicken or hamburgers on the grill, red from the glowing coals.

“Did any bugs get on our counters?” he asked her, as they ate, teasing, feeling luxurious on their plastic chaise lounges.

“Talk about being fastidious,” she countered, handing him a cup of coffee or a cold beer. “The city boy in the country.”

“Why are women crazy about being near water?” he countered back.

After eating, hand in hand they walked the path to the lake, sitting on solid wooden benches placed to provide them a jewel of a view – the lake, the few other homes across the lake, the endless trees surrounding. Even for a city guy like Swann, the view, the scene was a kind of perfection.

“An ideal,” he told Cynthia, who only squeezed his hand and leaned toward him to kiss him. “How can it be better?”

“It can’t,” she said.

After his daughter Jenna’s visit, Swann went back to work and was even more at sea. He didn’t stay in his office more than he had to, but toured the building, checking the progress of jobs, saying “hello” to employees, noting possible upgrades to the premises. On his desk in his office, Cynthia’s picture looked back at him, smiling, the ability to think coherently still in her eyes and on her face. No matter how Swann absorbed himself in his work, she was still there in front of him, just above reports he read, papers he signed, phone calls he made.

Should he place her picture to one side?

One day, as he went for lunch at the small mall down the road from his building, Swann was certain he saw Cynthia walk into a drug store. Stunned, he rushed to the store and went inside after her. She had her back to him, talking to a young clerk behind a counter. Swann was certain it was she.

“Cynthia?” he spoke out, though mostly whispering. “Cynthia?”

She turned around. The woman could have been Cynthia’s sister. “I beg your pardon,” she asked. “Are you talking to me?”

“I ... I’m so sorry,” Swann tried to explain. “You looked just like my wife. I could have sworn you were her.”

The woman continued to stare at Swann for a few moments, and then turned back to the young clerk.

“You see. She died last month. ...” Later, he couldn’t believe what he said next. “I thought somehow she had come back to me. That there had been some kind of mistake.”

The woman didn’t turn back to him, while the clerk slowly rang up her purchase of disposable hankies, as if prepared to confront and deal with a possibly dangerous incident.

But it was Swann’s conversation with his senior designer that intensified everything and tended to chart his next days and deliver him from pain. A brilliant employee still only in his mid-20s, Chad had worked for Swann since graduate school and his professional licensing exam. The young man was quite outrageous at times, but indispensable, and Swann looked to him for ideas and opinions.

“How do you young people say it these days? Out of the box? Over the top?” Swann asked him once, during happier days.

“You’ve got it, Mr. Swann,” Chad answered, looking up from his desk and board. “Nothing like being *on trend*.” Chad raised an eyebrow. “Or *au courant*.”

“What does that mean?”

Somehow, Swann talked to Chad about Cynthia’s seeming to be present in all places. It could hardly be avoided. He and the outrageous young man worked so much together.

“I see her everywhere,” Swann told him, half-pretending to look at Chad’s latest drawing. “I chase women down the street I think are her. I make a fool of myself. I can’t wash in the morning, put on coffee, go into a room in my house, *dress* myself, and I am surrounded by her clothing, her scent, her memory. Sometimes I don’t know what I am going to do.”

Chad put down his pencil and looked up at Swann, who was beside him at the desk.

“I’ll tell you what my dad did when my mother died,” Chad said, surprising Swann.

Swann listened, so obviously in need.

“The day after the funeral, my dad took all my mother’s things that could be burned and burned them in the backyard.”

“What?” Swann said, astounded.

“That’s right. He burned everything, and then gave away whatever else was left. He did it as quickly as possible. He said that

was the only way to do it. To burn, get rid of everything, and then sell the house and move far away.”

“Sell the house and move far away?” Swann felt spellbound. “He sold the house and moved far way?”

This time Chad only nodded.

“Where did he move to?” Swann asked, rather idiotically.

“To the west coast. To be *very* far away.”

“My goodness. And did it work?”

“It did.”

Swann almost reached out and touched his young assistant on the arm. “But wasn’t he sorry afterward?”

“Not as far as I know.”

“Burned his wife’s clothes?” Swann repeated.

“For starters.”

“That was a pretty drastic thing to do.”

“Apparently it worked.”

Chad looked at Swann as if he had solved his boss’ problem.

It took Swann another week or two for him to decide he would imitate Chad’s father in some way, since Cynthia’s ubiquity hurt so much. Especially her dresses and blouses and coats and shoes: that was what he could deal with for “starters.” At first, he thought he would merely give her clothes away. But to whom? Certainly not Jenna. One of Cynthia’s friends? That wouldn’t do. Then he thought just to bundle them up and put them out – Dare he say it? What else was there to do? – as refuse. In a moment, he decided that such an idea was hideous. Next, he thought of the Salvation Army, even carried many of her clothes to his car and drove to the Salvation Army yard, which he learned was on the other side of the city. Parked in front of the yard, which was busy with men tossing bundles of donated clothing onto huge piles, or driving fork-lifts burdened with old furniture over pavement in ill-repair, the yard littered with paper and presumably other discarded gifts, Swann could not make himself even exit his car. He merely watched the yard activities

for several moments and then drove home, leaving Cynthia’s clothing in the back seat of the car.

“My father simply went out into the backyard of our house and burned everything he could’,” Swann thought he remembered Chad saying exactly.

“But I can’t do that,” he said out loud, as he opened his house door. “I have only our little kitchen garden, and in this neighborhood, the city does not let people burn their clothing in a barrel in front of their house.”

The idea of burning Cynthia’s clothes at their summer home came to Swann on one of his walks through the city, an activity he had taken up since her death. Sometimes he visited mutual friends of theirs. But usually, he walked to the Hudson River, the most interesting direction, whose mystery brought Cynthia’s memory back to him, and upon an early evening acceded to the thought to journey alone to their country house.

“You really should go up there,” he said to himself. “You must sooner or later, why not now? That’s the big one.”

So, after work, another early evening, without reflecting greatly upon what he was doing, Swann retraced the route out of the city he had taken with Cynthia so many times, trying to remain relatively numb. The log house, the view of the lake, the surrounding trees, the ever-present memories, however, overpowered him. If nothing else, the property was simply stunning.

“Perhaps I *should* burn her clothing here,” he thought again. “A few pieces, at least. To begin the process. As a symbol.”

The attempt to burn did not happen that night, but it did a few days later. Parking his car after a second trip alone to the summer place, Swann exited his car, waved to his neighbors burning leaves on their property next to his, and entered the summer house to first turn on the electricity, as always. After the lights suffused the log house with a warm feeling, Swann meant to return outside. But he lingered in the family room – replete with stone fire place and the drapes Cynthia had put in front of the huge picture window that looked down upon the lake.

Swann took care not to linger in Cynthia’s kitchen. Once back outside, the pleasant smell of burning leaves descended upon him, struck in him a familiar nostalgia.

“Swann?” Marge Tolliver called to him from her property, beside a mound of burning leaves. “Swann, it’s good to see you.”

“Yes,” her husband Lyle accented, waving and smiling. How many times did they and Swann and Cynthia swim together in the lake, spend a pleasant evening in the community club house, share each other’s hospitality?

“Gotta clean up the place before it’s too cold,” Lyle explained, needing not to explain.

“The leaves stick frozen to the ground,” Marge added.

“Of course,” Swann agreed.

They all scrupulously avoided mention of Cynthia.

When they each had smiled and waved enough, Swann returned to his task. He went to the shed and dragged out the big, old barrel he used for safe burning, and after some searching among rakes and shovels, found a box of wooden matches on a small shelf above the garden tools. Closing the shed door, he carried the barrel to the middle of the back lawn, the box of matches stuck in his pants’ pocket. Once again, Swann glanced in the direction of the Tollivers and would have waved and smiled again, but they were busy supervising their fire, careful not to let the fire grow out of control from too many leaves burning at once. For a moment, Swann thought Lyle Tolliver was about to leave his burning leaves and wife and cross his property to visit with him, but that did not happen. Instead, on a whim, Swann called out to them, pointing at his barrel and explained:

“I’m burning leaves, too.”

“Oh, good,” Marge called back.

“You are simply too absurd,” Swann observed about himself.

That done, he returned to his car, trying to decide exactly what he would do next. As he looked in the back seat of the car, Swann

suddenly decided he would start by burning just a few of the clothes in the car, as a kind of trial. It was not difficult to conclude that a few pieces of Cynthia's most ordinary clothing would do – a few inexpensive blouses, a light pair of cotton slacks, a sweater Cynthia used only to work in or to keep warm with on a cold, winter night. Carrying the clothes partially hidden on his side farthest from the Tollivers, Swann made his way quickly back to the barrel, which stood rather forlornly in the middle of his lawn, and precipitously dropped them into the barrel. Before proceeding, he drew away from the barrel and thought to procrastinate by walking back into the log house or even taking the path down to the lake.

"Maybe there's something valedictory I should think or do?" he asked himself.

Finally, Swann approached the barrel again and took a wooden match out of its box. The match looked old and damp, perhaps unable to light. Still, the scent of burning leaves from the Tolliver fire embraced him, which made Swann look over at his neighbors once more.

"Leaves are beautiful in the spring and the summer," Marge called over philosophically, realizing he was looking in her direction. "But they are such a nuisance, an annoyance in the fall and the winter. Don't you think so, Swann?"

Hearing Marge Tolliver's words, Swann continued to hold the wooden match against its box, ready to try and strike it into life. He was now looking down at the few pieces of clothing inside the barrel.

"Such a nuisance and annoyance," she said again.

To his surprise, the refrain of that observation commingled strongly with the opinions of his daughter Jenna and the pyrotechnical story of his architect Chad. Gazing into the barrel, Swann stared at the nuisances and annoyances of Cynthia's clothing – the blouses that had covered her breasts, the pants that had accented the beauty of her legs, the sweater that had comforted her shoulders.

"Nuisances and annoyances ... nuisances and annoyances. ..." The phrase clattered incessantly in his mind.

"*Indeed,*" he said, at last. And stepping backward, he retreated from the would-be pyre. What had he been thinking!

"Forgive me, Cynthia," he told her. "This will not happen. Forgive me."

Thus, as if rescued from temporary madness, Swann returned the box of matches to his pocket, and, delicately, reached in and retrieved Cynthia's clothes. They had been dirtied somewhat in their fall past the

sides of the barrel and as they rested on its bottom, which Swann regretted. But he resolved to wash the clothing as soon as he returned home.

In the years that followed, little by little those things that had belonged to Cynthia or reminded him of her, gradually lessened in number and even disappeared, though some remained, much of which Swann moved over to less frequented parts of the house. When Chad got around to asking Swann if he had burned his wife's things, Swann told him firmly that he had not. When Jenna referred to them, she was observant enough to understand and say little.

With conviction, Swann tended Cynthia's garden every spring and summer, and was always careful to plant mums every fall.

"Your mother's garden is in full bloom just now," Swann thought to mention to Jenna at some point.

"I survive somehow," he announced to his brilliant employee.

And from time to time, at ever-lengthening intervals, he continued to believe he saw Cynthia on the street, or going into a building, though he did not chase after her.

Perspectives and Contexts: Higher Education in a Balkan Nation

Judith Gerardi, Center for International Programs, in collaboration with Kostantinos Giakoumis, Elona Garo, Brikena Kazazi and Aida Hasanpapa, University of New York Tirana

My experiences with Empire State College's International Programs highlight the many ways in which national contexts affect student expectations and behavior and, accordingly, faculty concerns and actions. The geographic, economic, historical, national



Judith Gerardi

and cultural circumstances of a life form the context for individual experience. Their effects are seen in attitudes, expectations and behavior. As mentors, our earliest interactions with students require us to learn their goals, perspectives on learning, and beliefs about the world around them and their place in it. Our academic work with them is based on these student particulars. Balancing individual and external contexts reflects Empire State College's approach to offering students what best would serve their needs.

The details of these various contexts undergo variations for programs outside of the United States. Specifically, the mentor must be attentive to external contexts that often differ significantly from those in the U.S. We cannot serve students without awareness of the external contexts in which they live. We must educate ourselves about

a nation's history, mores, social and cultural expectations, educational opportunities and goals for children and adolescents, and the structure, practices, and vision of higher education. For example, recent political upheaval was a dominant contributor to an understanding of student behavior by our colleagues in Albania who contributed to this article. Their comments will show considerable focus on helping students adjust to assuming more personal responsibility for their own learning than had been required of their own parents. The contributors argued that this was part of adjusting to political change. This point will be revisited at the end of this article.

When I joined the Center for International Programs in 1991, Dean Ken Abrams began his orientation of new faculty by introducing us to the history and current circumstances of the partner nation. He sent maps and a brief history of Cyprus, my first assignment. This was a clear demonstration that partnerships were just that; they were not impositions. From the perspective of context, it was made clear that creating a program with an institution in another nation meant creating a hybrid that would meet the priorities, perspectives, and goals of both traditions. Faculty and administrators of both institutions rely on each other's flexibility, openness and respect as they become immersed in the joint endeavor. We adjust to each other as we work to meet a set of shared goals created during the planning stages of the collaboration.

Twenty years after my first experience with the Center for International Programs, I joined the faculty team in Tirana and would learn about Albania. As products of



Kostantinos Giakoumis



Elona Garo



Brikena Kazazi



Aida Hasanpapa

their culture and their nation, our students would have particular expectations of the university, personal goals and a set of assumptions about how those goals would be met. My focus on such student perspectives complemented my goal of creating a professional development opportunity for colleagues at the University of New York Tirana (UNYT). Some Center for International Programs partners use "American" or "New York" in their name, which is jolting to some ears, but we avoid assumptions and understand that it is the host nation's regulations that govern the chosen name, not those of the United States. The place names, American or New York, communicate the partner's commitment to our style of higher education, including small classes structured to allow active discussion, accessible faculty and a liberal arts education characterized by the open examination of competing ideas and

theories. I invited my UNYT colleagues to join me in a collaborative writing project involving discussion of international higher education. What I found was that the discussion reinforced the importance of context.

Within our discussion of educational traditions, student career opportunities, and goals and challenges, four colleagues provided social, cultural and political contextualization and analysis of student learning and behavior. Creating a new university, participants considered the ways in which student learning, attitudes and behavior were influenced by cultural traditions and recent history, primarily the transition from communist to democratic rule in Albania in the early 1990s. UNYT was established in 2002 and is forging new ground for higher education in Albania. Deputy Rector Konstantinos (Kosta) Giakoumis, Finance Head Brikena Kazazi and Dean of Students Elona Garo have been at the university from four to 10 years. Lecturer Aida Hasanpapa was in her first year at UNYT, having taught elsewhere, including colleges within the City University of New York. Each of the four taught at the University of New York Tirana. The students were traditional age, and the primary model was classroom based.

The transcript excerpts that follow illustrate the ways in which educational goals and practices are formed by and responsive to social, cultural and political history. Whom does the organization serve? How do the needs of those served influence academic goals and decisions? How do those served represent the past, present and future? These issues became central, rather than background or tangential, to our collaborative writing project.

We had arranged the session prior to my February 2012 arrival in Tirana and then gathered for lunch and conversation early one afternoon. I introduced topics concerning international education, including the composition of the student body, participants' views on international education at UNYT, ways in which they saw themselves as providing an international perspective and an Albanian perspective, and particular goals and challenges.

Participants

Elona Garo. *Adjunct lecturer and dean of students. M.A. in public administration, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University (Fulbright). M.P.A., Harvard Kennedy School.*

Teaches Management, Project Management, Organizational Behavior. Created and coordinates internship program, manages career office and student affairs, established connections with the Albanian workplace, and helps students make a successful transition to different sectors and become leaders.

Aida Hasanpapa. *Lecturer. Ph.D. candidate in political science, City University of New York). M.A. in political science, CUNY.*

Worked for USAID for three years before deciding to go to the U.S. to study law. Once in the U.S., she switched her area to political science, ultimately to theory and philosophy of politics. She finished doctoral course work at CUNY but returned to Albania in 2010 for family and immigration reasons.

Konstantinos (“Kosta”) Giakoumis. *Professor and deputy rector. Ph.D. in Byzantine, Ottoman and modern Greek studies, University of Birmingham, U.K. Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham, UK.*

Brikena Kazazi. *Adjunct lecturer and head of finance. Ph.D. candidate in economics, University of Thessaloniki, Greece; M.A. in economics, University of Thessaloniki.*

Shaping a University

Elona Garo: When I returned to Albania from the [United] States after earning degrees there, I sought a position in reforming the governmental sector. I applied to a project with the U.N. but found it to be very bureaucratic; not a place where you can create and be treated as a partner.

During that time, I met Kosta, the deputy rector here (UNYT) in a workshop, and he asked me if I was interested in teaching. I did that before in university. I sought a combination of hands-on and teaching. When I'd started teaching here

in the summer of 2007, I had a discussion with Kosta about this being an American university which, in the U.S., has student affairs, sports, facilities, activities. Kosta said: “Very good ideas, we are trying to do something like this.” I was exposed to this kind of service in America at Harvard and what I realized is that it's very important for students to study, have that information and knowledge and, other than that, they also need to have the social network and know what is going on in the workplace in order to really make a connection between learning and employment. Leadership skills prepare them to enter different sectors.

I wrote a proposal on this and received support. I said: “I will try this. In this setting. Is it possible for us? Even though the environment or the culture is not supportive. But let's get beyond that.”

Elona's comments give a day-to-day sense of what was involved in shaping a new university. Her individual vision, welcomed and supported by UNYT administration, was essential to taking the risk of creating something that was unknown in existing higher education institutions in Albania: The range and reach of university education would address career development. She and her colleagues identified and prioritized goals and actions that would match their vision for students in this emergent nation. Those goals centered around career preparation and a strong and broad liberal arts education.

Judith Gerardi: *Let's talk about that. Tell me what it is that the culture does not support.*

E. G.: There's not initiative. Sometimes students don't understand that career orientation and career support is a complement to the education. They come sometimes to say “thank you very much for what you are doing for me.” They consider it a personal favor because this is how people have dealt with career here in Albania. They ask people whom they know, some cousins, relatives, parents. Previously, this had been done by the state, but after the government changed in the 1990s, there was a big vacuum. They were not sure and still are not sure that the university can play this role. I told them that this is part of the package: “You are paying for education plus the other services, and I am here, paid

by your fees, to serve you.” I began by talking to students in the library and the cafeteria. I’d say, “I am the career office representative.” I put posters on the wall. I trained assistants to counsel other students about careers.

Konstantinos Giakoumis: Setting goals for students is definitely key to their success and the success of the university. It is part of the university’s mission to prepare students to become accomplished professionals. To become leaders, they need to acquire and develop a number of skills that are both generic and diverse, such as communications skills, aptitude in communicating in foreign languages with ease, adjustment to diverse audiences, the ability to speak in public or in smaller groups, to work as a team player or as a leader of a group. Developing such skills requires contextualized and integrated multiple intelligences. Hence, students need to be immersed in the diversity of a variety of disciplines, through their general education cycle of courses, which help them develop insights that could later be applied to multiple contexts. The most important goal set for students, however, seems to be the development of confidence that they are able to apply what they learned in theory to a variety of practical settings; not to be afraid to take their own initiative.

How can students achieve this? I suppose this proceeds from learning things that go beyond our little world, “thinking globally.” It is therefore necessary for the university to provide an international faculty team and shift its focus from a local to a global setting. Even when these are in place, it is difficult for students to realize what it takes to set goals that will lead them to success in any setting. Students are not always conscious of what they want, let alone how they can meet success. For example, at entry level, we ask them what they want to study and many respond: “finance”; then, we ask simple questions, like “why?” And more often than not they respond emotionally; some say, “because this is what I like.” And when we counter by asking: “Yes, but why do you like it?” they often find it difficult to provide a rationale for their choices. Setting goals for success, beyond the degree, starts from helping students better understand

themselves, before trying to understand the world around them and what could lead to succeed in it.

Kosta, the deputy rector charged with the daily responsibility for academic programs, reflects upon and describes a specific and targeted goal, that of preparing students for a world beyond Albania, a world that has been known to them only in an indirect and superficial way. He wrestles with representing the wider world to his students within the context of individual and group histories that created lenses through which knowledge is gathered and constructed. He explains the importance of self knowledge to achieving world knowledge.

Brikena Kazazi: Students show interest in how earning a degree at UNYT will make a difference in the job market. The majority of our students have chosen to major in either finance or business administration, and they do need to ensure that their investment in choosing this university will be paid back in the job market. When we say “payback,” it is that they will have job opportunities. They will be the ones most hired, most requested in the market, most highly paid in the market.

Of course, we have discussions about certain priorities provided by this university. It’s a very simple thing, even starting with things that sometimes look insignificant to working as an accountant for a company, for example. The very first thing that is going to be required is foreign language, English language. The requirement for a potential accountant in a company is to finish his studies in this field, in English – in English because sometimes the terminology is not quite equivalent in Albanian.

E. G.: The other services are integrated here. I make students aware that it is the whole package, not only the education. That we will keep them with us, UNYT, for the rest of their lives. That this university has a very good reputation. You have a very good reputation, and this is written on their back and on my back, my CV, my resume. It’s on their resume for the rest of their lives. I tell them that this – your work out there – it makes this institution have a very good reputation. It’s a circle. From us to you, from you to us. It is the whole package.

Political Contexts of Higher Education in a Developing Nation

When she described establishing a career services office, Elona referred to a vacuum left in Albania after the 1990s. After World War II and into the early 1990s, the communist government had been restrictive. When communism fell, the democracy movement gained power but had little experience and created what some refer to as a vacuum, a period of being unprepared to rule. Here and elsewhere during our session, participants reflected upon student expectations and behaviors in terms of the political structures that were put in place after 1945 and after the fall of the government in the early 1990s. Aida, a political scientist, and Kosta, a historian, comment on this, as well.

Aida Hasanpapa: I’d like to refer to this in a different way, though. There exists such a thing as growth in the body of students. When they come in the first year as freshmen, they want to play, they don’t want to bring their homework, and I think they are less responsible. This behavior is due to both the political transition period and to prior education; the education system in Albania. I want to be clear about these periods in discussing this. During the communist regime, education was rigid and tough and very good, but it completely relied on the teacher’s lecture and a student giving back what the teacher said. The generation of parents of these kids that we are teaching now is totally accustomed to such level and style of education. Education in this particular manner makes sense to them and nothing else. During the political transition and regime change of the 1990s, a lot of ill practice was introduced in Tirana. The education system totally started to fall. I think everything counts: physical circumstances, social circumstances, economic problems. Immigration. Intelligentsia is leaving. There were a lot of fights between the parties. Political unrest. Everybody’s unhappy. And this is something you do find in Eastern Europe because there’s a chance the small balance will be disturbed and people are just confused. It’s necessarily so that the education system suffers the consequences of all this, socioeconomic and political circumstances. It’s inevitable. Part of the reason is all that’s

going on. The political system, all the civil unrest. Part of the reason is the brain drain. We all have to mention it. Albania does suffer from lack of intellectuals nowadays. They left, and they keep leaving.

K. G.: We face the challenge of instilling the culture of critical thinking. Many of our students were educated by teachers intellectually nourished in times when questioning matters taken for granted was banned. People were accustomed to think and behave the way they were told to and to refrain from examining the critical doubts that are necessary for generating new knowledge. Uncritical reliance on already generated knowledge “pre-approved” by the regime as “expedient” has regrettably left a trace in secondary education. For example, in high school, students asked to present a topic of interest to the class can translate an Internet source, read it before the class and be congratulated for uncritically reproducing plagiarized knowledge with a round of applause.

Another challenge is that students would do everything, ethical or not, to get high grades. During communist times, there were two ways in which someone could ascend socially. One was having strong strings to pull for support. The other was through excellence, measured solely on the basis of grades. As a consequence, students would do whatever it takes to get an A – they would plagiarize or they would cheat. It is a major challenge for us to convince students to do their own work and get the grades they deserve and when I say “to convince,” I do not mean to force by the control mechanisms in our disposal (e.g., the Turnitin software).

Political scientist Aida and historian Kosta think about university students in terms of group membership, specifically referring to the political, historical and educational contexts of their life experiences. It is interesting to think of student passivity, lack of initiative and failure to assume responsibility for their learner behaviors, as an outcome of a political context in which critical thinking is devalued and knowledge is seen as static.

Cultural Contexts of Higher Education in a Developing Nation

E. G.: My dream was to study in America because of information that I had about education in America. Education is more than academia, and this is what I wanted to bring here. I never thought about creating a life in America. I always intended to come back here. I like to introduce people to new ideas, especially ones that are working in other cultures, as in the case of America. When I bring them here, I try to see how they are fitting with our culture. But we also need to adapt them to the group that we are working with. Making those ideas work here in Albania; that is the difficult part – to make new and good ideas part of the system.

J. G.: *Tell me about the student body.*

E. G.: It is a 96-97 percent Albanian student body. A small number are from Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia; there are a few Americans whose parents are in the region.

What we have is a piece of America here but with an Albanian flavor. English language professors and textbooks. We use American characteristics of university study. Philosophy, case study, guest speakers, textbooks – this is comparable to what is seen in the United States. The environment is not as appealing to students as I’d like it to be. I would like to see students studying in groups and using the library. Instead, they gather for coffee; they smoke. Sometimes I ask them about this, and they say that there’s nothing to do here: classes and that’s it.

A. H.: I explored teaching possibilities here, having taught at various CUNY colleges, and found out that there were only a few universities that had a good reputation in Tirana, that UNYT was one of them and had one of the best reputations in Tirana.

Regarding Elona’s statement: It’s difficult to say what I think about student behavior and expectations. In terms of classwork, I have seen what my colleagues do here in the Political Science and English Departments. I see how much effort the English Department puts in to see that students learn the language, to prepare them to write papers in their respective programs. That department

would not be any different from any school. In the U.S., I always worked in universities. As an international student, by law, I could not work outside of universities. I was teaching at Lehman and Baruch (CUNY colleges). I know what goes on in U.S. universities. I taught political theory.

In the Political Science Department here, we have a syllabus, and always adhere to the syllabus. We get the literature, order the literature from the United States. It is a practice of the students that somehow has to do with the culture. The education system in Albania has taught them not to be responsible enough. Thus, we as professors, we come here with higher expectations for student practice. We prepare packages for the students – they are reluctant to buy books, which are pricey – too expensive for them to pay school fees and buy books. So we try to facilitate this, making a collection of readings so that students have literature on the first day of class.

In terms of comparability to a U.S. university, I think that students are mixed everywhere. My political science students were mixed at Baruch College; I had excellent students, I had uber-A students, and they adored the literature. And I had students who hated Plato and Machiavelli. But by mid-semester they acquiesced when we read literature by Camus and Kundera and Kafka. Students are mixed everywhere, and so are they here, as well. (*She names some excellent students, excellent papers.*) But some of them are lazy and their presentations are lousy. Always have that.

Student Responsibility, Initiative, Critical Thinking

E. G.: In terms of philosophy of education, we see that students don’t take part in debates. We have to educate them to that. Also, since I do the job of student affairs, I sometimes expose them to new ideas, and they always seem enthusiastic about new ideas, but they don’t go beyond them. They don’t take responsibility. We see that the family here did not really teach them to be responsible; some students start to focus at the time of the final exam. Some classes are responsible as a group, and some not. They make excuses: “I just came from work.”

B. K.: This is the most common that we all see: the student failing to take responsibility. We do see a change. From high school to university, it is a transition for them. And I think that this transition, for some, this is easy, but for some, it is not. Of course, there are requirements, new requirements. This cultural environment is, of course, something that influences their life, their studies. So, for those whose position is not so easy as the others, this is the role of the university.

K. G.: Students at entry level more often than not lack independence. This is related to the way they are brought up. Albanian families traditionally maintain strong ties. While this enables students to grow in a safe environment and learn to trust themselves and others, on occasion, such traditionally strong family ties go beyond the age they are needed and extend into the age in which the youngster needs to acquire independence and learn how to handle it responsibly. In the name of such ties, sometimes overprotective or, even worse, authoritarian parents bring up their children in a “sterilized” environment; as a consequence, at the age of 18, these children lack requisite independence and critical awareness of the responsibilities that independence requires. At the age of 18, lack of independence and lack of awareness of the responsibilities that this independence necessitates both lead to some of our incoming students abusing their new freedoms. Especially students brought up this way and repatriating from immigration abroad – this is relatively more evident with students coming from Greece – they take on the external manifestations of independence that they see here but abuse them, being away from strict family control (e.g., spending more time for recreation than studying).

Albanians had gone to Greece, and then came back; young people are now immigrants who don't know the language.

Having not internalized their independence and feeling insecure to act on their own, they seek self-affirmation through friends, finding it hard to say no when invited for coffee – coffee is a ceremonial practice here, lasting two and three hours – at the time they should be studying. Teaching

students how to internalize and manage their independence is definitely one of our challenges.

E. G.: It's very difficult to judge students' perspectives. We always try to make group work or teamwork part of the curricula, and they want always to be part of the project in the classes that we are teaching. We give them the message that you cannot plan anything alone, you always need to work with other people. It's part of our teaching philosophy, team, social group. It looks like it is a very connected society, but people don't know how to work together.

A. H.: I just want to address the point of group work a little bit since I have been teaching students from the lower to the upper level. Again, I'd like to refer to this idea of good and the university. And I can see it in the year that I've been here. Students who come here initially, of course, are younger and have less sense of responsibility since their parents are taking care of them. However, I have observed that in the upper level oftentimes, not to say always, they study in groups for their final exams and that's a fact. The school provides all the necessary environment here: the library, student access to study areas into the evening. I get out of my late classes at 9. My poli sci students literally take the key at 9:15 in the evening to study until midnight in group work, to take an exam the next day or soon after. So that culture does develop. I have seen this happen. And again, I see this at all levels – ESL levels and upper level – and I know that this culture of teamwork does develop.

Repatriation

B. K.: Sometimes cultural transition is not so easy for everyone. We have some students who are Greek. They used to be Albanian, and now they are coming back.

J. G.: *This transition is difficult for students whose families repatriated from Greece back to Albania. Is it something that you as individuals keep in mind when you talk to a student or is something else involved?*

E. G.: Last year we studied student orientation. We held an open day to introduce professors to candidates and make presentations describing what the university

offers. And we have to think even further about these issues. Albanians coming from Greece – that is an issue right now. This will be part of orientation next year. Kids were born there, studied there, and now have returned to Albania. Sometimes it is hard for them. They know English, studied both English and Greek language, but not Albanian. In the orientation programs, we now address key issues like what are the policies of the school, how to manage time better, how to plan, how to learn in different ways.

B. K.: We try gradually to make them aware of procedures, rules, steps ... that they should follow here. This is a gradual shift from a kind of shock of moving from one country to the other. Students start being familiar, start to be able to manage things for themselves and finally to be integrated with the rest of the students.

J. G.: *Do they see returning Albanian students and Albanian students who had never left as separate groups? Or is it seen as just one group?*

B. K.: Initially, some first year Albanian heritage students who have come from Greece associate only with each other. They gradually start to join the rest of the students. I don't know, what are the experiences that. ...

E. G.: I don't see that as a separate group. At the beginning, because of the language barrier, I see them in the cafeteria talking in the Greek language. You see part of the culture that is in Greece. But later on, they are part of the whole community. From that perspective, the university offers a very unique environment, to take everybody that is coming here to be a UNYT student, rather than a separate group.

J. G.: *Do you have an idea of how the students view the education that they're getting here at the University of New York Tirana?*

E. G.: I talk with them about this from time to time. They come to my office and say that they are studying in the public university. Some are getting dual degrees, studying here and studying law in Tirana University. One professor who is teaching here and is teaching there is doing an excellent job there, and she is doing an excellent job here.

But again, students see the difference in how they are treated here. How they are treated there. It is crowded there. It's public, and their issues or concerns cannot be addressed because of the size of the university. But, again, they can come here, where our offices are open to them. We are available to the students.

International Education in a Local Environment

J. G.: *Tell me other ways that students are treated differently compared to the University of Tirana.*

E. G.: An example is their coming to my office to share something and then going beyond that. They can stay one hour and even tell me about their personal problems. We have a counseling center and a health center for vaccinations and other issues. And also what I see, especially the courses that we have in the first and the second year, related to biology, history, foreign language, and fairs that are taking place here, that really introduce them to the markets. They are students who have a broad perspective on what is going on and through their course work have established knowledge of subjects such as art history and photography.

J. G.: *So that's a more broadening degree.*

E. G.: Something that makes them, tomorrow, people that can discuss any issue.

J. G.: *Is this is your observation or do they recognize this?*

E. G.: They recognize that this is what we have. The textbooks. Most of the professors studied in America or the European countries. And that makes a difference, and they understand that. Some of them even mention that if you go around, you see that this is a separate, unique place. It's apart from the other reality. From that perspective, I see it as international education.

K. G.: It is part of our mission but also who we are to welcome and celebrate diversity. We treat the students with the dignity and respect they need to feel confident to unfold the most creative and innovative aspects of their personality. Unfortunately, other universities, especially private, treat students as clients.

Commentary: National Contexts of Higher Education

Four colleagues in Albania described and reflected upon their experiences, goals, actions and challenges in bringing modern Western heritage higher education to young people whose nation had undergone significant political change in the past 20 years. Their small private university was founded in 2002. Some challenges match those faced by university students elsewhere as they gain independence and experience their developing autonomy. Some of the preceding excerpts sound familiar as we think about the traditional-age university student's quest for freedom from family restrictions, excitement in moving closer to adulthood and delighting in the company of peers. At the same time, student behavior that might be seen as ordinary and go unexamined in the United States elicits analysis by the international faculty members whose thoughts are presented here. They considered the effects of external contexts.

Two ways in which external contexts are central to the goals and structuring of an organization are needs assessment and options for meeting those needs. This discussion of the creation and establishment of a new institution of higher learning in the Balkans addressed the complexities of these contexts. Past, present, and future interacted as one considered the operation of approaches to student learning. For example, the typical university goal of developing student critical thinking skills was affected by both educational history and political values. Historian Kosta Giakoumis and Political Scientist Aida Hasanpapa described these influences.

Kosta specifically outlined the way in which communist era secondary education worked against the development of critical thinking in university students.

Aida spelled out the ways in which political history and change influence particular student behaviors that affect learning. Describing Albania's political transition from communism to democracy in the early 1990s, she posited that learning to be a student and a critical thinker was undermined by external confusion, unhappiness and a sense of uncertainty.

Such analysis was brought to bear on the ways in which instructors worked with their students, finding ways to help them develop study skills and a sense of agency and efficacy.

Students needed a set of both learning and career skills that would provide access to private or public sector careers in their emergent nation. Elona Garo and Brikena Kazazi were devoted to expanding student life choices, primarily access to career opportunities in Albania. Brikena emphasized the importance to finance students of mastering English. Elona focused on increasing effective student behaviors that were foundational to a successful career, such as time management and teamwork. She also created internships and established career advisement, services new to Albanian students. The novelty and importance of these specific ways to move students toward skills and career may be striking to us, who see it as ordinary. It not being so in Albania speaks to the range and extent of what must be done to fully serve students in an emergent nation.

The influence of national context was seen in the ways in which students reacted to Elona's establishing of career services. In Albania, family and friends provided jobs or connections for university graduates. The possibility that the university would take that role in an objective way had seemed alien to students. This illustrated the development of new attitudes, specifically the ways in which skills and self-reliance can substitute for personal connections in providing access to a desired career. Kosta also referred to the ways in which the personal world affected student behavior. He described cultural patterns that promoted dependence upon family, albeit caring, as a contributor to students both failing to take responsibility as learners and being particularly distracted by the freedoms of university life, especially for those whose families lived elsewhere. This illustrated the ways in which effective learner behaviors can be compromised by cultural attitudes.

The children of some families who had emigrated to Greece now returned to Albania for their university education. The context of having been an expatriate family may have influenced students. Brikena

described the cultural adjustment required of the Greek-reared Albanian students as an additional shock for them to absorb.

Throughout the discussion, these four colleagues considered the ways in which cultural, national and political contexts

affected learner behaviors. First year students, in particular, faced major adjustments to the university's efforts to balance the culture of the emergent nation with the educational expectations of the university. Against the background of recent

history, these sometimes were in conflict. The comments of the faculty revealed acute awareness of this tension as they thought and talked about how to help students with the transition from secondary school to university and then to career.

“I hope to draw attention to something invisible and wounded, something at the center of our existence that has been pushed to the periphery. I think of the student at the back of the room who likes to observe and think. I think of the courage it takes to leave the computer and go somewhere with a book or take a quiet walk. To find one’s own words and thoughts is always a challenge; it is even harder when one’s job is filled with rush, busywork, and jargon. So I hope that, by bringing up the subject of solitude, I will help make room for it. Many are concerned about raising workers’ ‘quality of life’; we could be equally concerned about quality of thought.”

– Diana Senechal, Republic of Noise:
The Loss of Solitude in Schools and Culture
Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012, p. 18

“The Mentor Is In”: Human Services Skills in the Mentoring Relationship

Rebecca Bonanno, Michele Forte and Thalia MacMillan, Center for Distance Learning

Unlike more traditional institutions of higher education, Empire State College situates the mentoring relationship at the center of almost all organizational and pedagogical decisions. As Empire State College mentors know, our role goes beyond that of the college advisor who informs students what courses they need to take to fulfill requirements. The mentor-mentee relationship is complicated by demands on time, assumptions about what counts as academic activities, race, class, gender, prior learning experience of both mentor and mentee: the list is endless. Sometimes, the complexity of these relationships gets overwhelming, since presumably we have a unique relationship with each unique student. In this essay, we propose that skills learned by social workers and other human services professionals can positively add to how mentors go about the business of advising and guiding students. We specifically focus on approaching the mentoring relationship from a “strengths perspective,” using key elements of reflective practice.

Focus on Strengths

In the last two decades, the strengths perspective (Saleebey, 1992) has become a cornerstone of social work practice and education. Rather than focusing primarily on the problems an individual presents, in this approach, the helper works to draw out and build upon the individual’s strengths. Strengths can be any personal or environmental assets that the individual can use to work toward goals; for example, motivation, talents and skills, familial and social support networks or a strong spiritual life may all be useful strengths. By beginning the helping process from a strengths perspective, we acknowledge that human beings are resilient and have the capacity for phenomenal growth and change. These are powerful and empowering beliefs.



Rebecca Bonanno



Michele Forte



Thalia MacMillan

We believe that a great deal can be learned from the strengths perspective with regard to mentoring at Empire State College. Like clients in a human services setting, our students often come to us with a sense of needing something, of looking to fill a perceived hole or striving for something yet unreachd. But they also bring with them their own unique stories, success and assets. Part of our job as mentors is to help them identify and address their particular needs while building upon and bolstering their strengths.

One way to go about this is to help students *reframe* their perceptions; that is, to propose a new, strengths-focused lens through which they might view a situation. Reframing is a basic yet powerful skill used by human services workers. To illustrate, let us imagine a student entering college reluctantly, feeling forced by a poor economic climate to seek a degree. A strengths-based reframing of this would help the student focus on the fact that, while perhaps having felt pressured by a poor economy to attend college, she has nevertheless made an important *choice* in enrolling in college, a choice that required personal strengths like forethought and courage.

Another example is the student who has come to Empire State College with transfer credits from several institutions. Instead of viewing these credits as advanced standing that place her that much closer

to graduation, the student may view them as evidence of past failed attempts at completing a degree. Mentors can help point out the strength of this position by helping the student to view the transcript, not in terms of which courses weren’t taken or what knowledge is missing from her education, but as a foundation upon which the degree can be built.

Similarly, we may meet a student who feels disappointed and frustrated that it has taken so long for him to return to school. We have probably all heard students bemoan that “life got in the way” of their higher education. While the student may see years spent working and caring for others as wasted time, mentors can reframe those years as time spent acquiring knowledge and skills, creating the potential for PLA credits.

The strengths perspective can help the student feel empowered to make change and pursue goals. But it also can empower the mentor to work with challenging students. In looking for the student’s strengths, we can avoid the all too common trap in education of trying to fill the deficits only, without looking at what students are already bringing to the table.

Collaborative Helping Relationships

Another foundation of social work and human services practice is the collaborative relationship between the helper and the

individual seeking help. A challenge to the traditional hierarchal arrangements of “doctor and patient” or “expert and novice,” the human services relationship acknowledges that the individual is an expert in his or her own life and should be an equal partner in the helping relationship. This concept is likely to resonate with many Empire State College mentors who view their relationships with students in the same way. Helping to develop independent learners is a key task with which we are charged and we cannot accomplish it by taking the conventional professorial role of the “dispenser of knowledge.” We must work collaboratively with our students in a balancing act of providing support and encouraging independence.

Nevertheless, as busy mentors with multiple pressures and responsibilities, it is easy to fall back on our own expertise and to find ourselves being too prescriptive with our students. We may think we know not only the answers, but the questions our students will ask before we even hear them. This leads us to provide answers that are “templated” rather than tailored to the particular student’s circumstances.

For some of us, developing and maintaining a truly collaborative relationship with our students may mean talking less and listening more. In the human services, we practice “active listening,” which involves demonstrating attentiveness through verbal and nonverbal cues, feeding back to the speaker what it is that we hear and understand, and encouraging the speaker to expand and clarify. We can use this technique to communicate to our students that their role is crucial, that they are not simply on the receiving end of information but are full collaborators in the mentoring relationship.

This collaboration, however, is not without its challenges. In the human services, individuals who become overly reliant on our support or who begin to imagine the helping relationship as extending into a personal friendship may strain the process. As helpers, we may have difficulty navigating where our responsibilities end and a client’s begin, and find ourselves overextending and feeling burned out. In an attempt to establish rapport, helpers

also may share too much about themselves, potentially making the client uncomfortable or creating confusion about the nature of the relationship. These are challenges of setting boundaries. At some point in their careers, all human services workers struggle with how and where to set appropriate boundaries with those we help.

Similarly, mentors are likely to struggle with boundary issues such as:

- how much to do *for* the student (as opposed to doing *with* the student)
- listening and providing support when the edges between students’ academic and personal difficulties begin to blur, and
- adopting a communication tone (in person, by phone or in emails) that is both professional and appropriate to the mentoring role and warm enough to not be intimidating to the student.

Negotiating these boundaries will necessarily involve some missteps. It’s not uncommon for mentors to take on tasks that are outside of their expertise, like helping a student to

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navigate the financial aid system or teaching them basic writing skills when we are not competent to do either. Doing these things on top of the weighty work of educational planning, we end up feeling like we must be “all things to all students.” Part of creating good boundaries is recognizing that students may need to seek help elsewhere. Making referrals in this way is part of a broader group of human services skills called case management. Case management is the coordination of an individual or family’s multiple needs across various service

systems. More than just telling a client to go to the social services office or passing along a phone number, case management involves assessing the individual’s needs, making a plan with the individual to have those needs met, following up on the provision of services and assessing how well the needs have been met after services. A mentor may engage in a similar process of getting to know a student’s strengths and needs and helping to connect the student with services like tutoring, writing center help, career counseling, or even personal counseling. And, as human services workers find, it is often not enough to make the referral – follow-up is usually required. But in the end, the students benefit from the services of experts in their specific areas of need and mentors are released from the burden of trying to “do it all.”

Reflective Practice

According to Donald Schön (1983), “reflective practice” is the ability to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. In other words, we must pay attention to the values, attitudes, and assumptions that guide our work if we are to improve and grow as professionals. Reflective practice also involves going beyond technical know-how and examining the tacit knowledge, practice wisdom and even intuition that professionals use every day (Papell & Skolnik, 1992). To implement any change in practice, such as incorporating the strengths perspective or working toward a collaborative relationship with those we help, it is necessary to spend time thinking and talking about what we do and why we do it. Reflection is especially useful when we face a new challenge or a practical or ethical dilemma. Certainly, Empire State College mentors are no strangers to reflection, as evidenced by the existence of this very publication. Let us now look at some of the issues that are ripe for reflection in the mentoring relationship.

Human services workers and their clients often do not share similar backgrounds. Similarly, mentors and students might not be a “perfect fit” in that they come from different backgrounds (geographic, age groups, interests and so on), but it is in these differences we find both strengths and challenges. We seek to establish good

working relationships across or despite these differences, and learn that differences in perspective often bring fresh approaches. Like human services workers who routinely reflect on issues of difference and diversity with supervisors and colleagues, mentors can benefit from thinking about and discussing how difference might affect their work with students. Aside from difference and diversity, mentors may benefit from reflecting on other aspects of their practice, including:

- *Expectations and assumptions.* As we have all been in the student role ourselves, it is easy to assume that students should demonstrate commitment to education and motivation to succeed in ways that are familiar to us. In such a situation, we can ask ourselves, “What assumptions am I making about the role of the student and are these assumptions fair and accurate?”
- *Past successes and mistakes.* The most valuable insights can come from past experiences, when we ask ourselves, “What did I do well and what could I have done better?”

- *Triggers in challenging situations.* When we find ourselves reacting strongly (especially negatively) to a particular student or situation, it is helpful to take a look at what might have triggered such a reaction. For example, was it the student’s tone of voice that made me so angry? Or am I feeling overwhelmed with work and this student’s last email was the last straw before I lost my patience? Sometimes it is important to step away from what another person did or said and reflect specifically on one’s own thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

Conclusion

Human services professionals and Empire State College mentors face similar challenges as they work closely with diverse populations with complex needs. Of course, mentors of various backgrounds and disciplines bring with them important skills and perspectives that enrich the mentoring relationship, and one need not have experience in human services to make strong and helpful connections with students. However, the social work and human

services fields have long histories of helping the neediest among us and developing ways to do so sensitively and humanely. We believe that the strengths perspective, the collaborative, nonhierarchical helping relationship and reflective practice are some of the most significant contributions that these professional bodies of knowledge offer us as mentors.

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Playing Beyond the Rules

Justin Giordano, Metropolitan Center

In what has been widely termed an historical and unprecedented punishment handed down by the National Football League (NFL), Commissioner Roger Goodell, in March of 2012, suspended New Orleans Saints Head Coach Sean Payton without pay for the full 2012 season. In addition, the commissioner also suspended for an indefinite period of time Coach Gregg Williams, the former Saints defensive coach who is now with the St. Louis Rams football club. Mickey Loomis, the Saints general manager, also received a substantial, albeit lesser,



Justin Giordano

punishment than Payton, consisting of a suspension without pay for eight games or half the regular 2012 NFL season, excluding playoffs. Saints Assistant Head Coach Joe Vitt did not escape punishment either, garnering a suspension for the first six regular-season games without compensation. Lastly, the New Orleans Saints as a team and an organization were fined \$500,000 and are required to forfeit their second-round draft picks in 2012 and 2013.

All of the aforementioned penalties and punishments stem from what has been widely referred to in countless media accounts as the “bounty” scandal. In essence, under these so-called bounties, the

team provided incentives in the form of cash rewards for knocking players from opposing teams out of a game. “Knocking them out,” it was understood, entailed causing serious enough injury on any given player to disable them to the point of that individual being unable to play any longer. Naturally, injuries that resulted in a player having to leave the field under his own power or most likely with the assistance of medical staff could ultimately be deemed severe enough to be career ending or even permanently injurious to the player targeted through a “bounty” incentive.

The New Orleans Saints senior management issued a statement, following the handing down of the fines and punishments, in which they apologized and took full responsibility for “these serious violations.” According to the official website of the New Orleans Saints (2012), the club statement went on to say that: “We recognize our fans’ concerns and we regret the uncertainty this episode has created for them.” Addressing the bounty issue directly, they also added: “There is no place for bounties in our league and we reiterate our pledge that this will never happen again.”

It would seem at first glance that the Saints organization said all the right things based on their official statement cited above. However it’s worth pointing out that the NFL investigation had found that the team had an “active bounty program” during the 2009, 2010 and 2011 seasons, and during the course of these seasons, “bounty” payments were given to players for “knock-outs” and “cart-offs”: plays in which an opposing player had to leave the game (NFL, 2012). The bounties even identified specific players as targets, according to the NFL statement. The NFL (2012) further noted that their investigation also found that the Saints showed “a deliberate effort to conceal the program’s existence from league investigators, and a clear determination to maintain the program despite express

direction from Saints ownership that it stop as well as ongoing inquiries from the league office.”

Based on all of the above, it is quite evident that the Saints management on the field, starting from the head coach on down, showed total disregard for the safety of players, and in fact, their reckless and intentional actions should hold them liable for serious injuries that may have resulted from their “bounty” program.

Legal and Moral Implications Above and Beyond the Playing Field

The legal ramifications that accompany this kind of activity are clear. The NFL could be held liable for serious and permanent injuries such as brain damage, permanent disability and other such debilitating injury. In fact the NFL is currently facing class-action lawsuits from former players of various teams who claimed that league play led to concussions, head trauma and chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a dementia-like brain disease. Consequently, the league has to be seriously concerned about lawsuits that are a consequence of serious injuries sustained by its former or retired players. Some were forced to leave the game due to sustaining a severe injury while others only started feeling the full effects of their injuries after a number of years away from the playing field.

There is little question that injured players deserve the latest and best care that medical science can offer, and the NFL should bear the financial responsibility for its associated costs. There are, however, even broader and far-reaching implications at stake in the situation at hand. The most pressing issue is whether these “bounties” violated the law beyond just NFL rules. The question that beckons is whether paying people for deliberately injuring another player is “legal” under our criminal justice system. Were these actions taken outside the bounds

of the NFL, (that is, outside professional sport), such actions would be deemed criminal, pure and simple. More specifically, said actions would constitute criminal assault and battery and the perpetrators would face the criminal penalties that accompany such charges.

Some who have opined that the penalties handed down by the NFL were too severe and even unwarranted try to excuse the perpetrators' actions by pointing out that football is a very physical sport. By its very nature, the game, especially at the professional level, often entails bodily injuries and those who play the game freely accept these risks, they will correctly argue.

This argument may seem plausible at first glance, but upon further analysis, it is a poor and unconvincing defense for the perpetrators. All professional sports are licensed and regulated in this and, to my knowledge, any other society that calls itself civilized. A primordial regulation is that the aim of sport is not to cause serious or permanent injury or death. Yes, that may at times be the unfortunate consequence, but never the "aim." Therefore, whether it's football, car racing or hockey, the respective objective in each of those sports is to carry the football across the opposing team's goal line, cross the finish line ahead of all the other racers, or place a puck in the opposing team's goal net. Even in combat sports, most prominent among them being boxing and mixed martial arts, the objective is to defeat the opponent, not to cause debilitating injury or death. That is why there are rules and referees.

If this were not the case, then utilizing boxing gloves made of steel or any other lethal material would be acceptable.

Intentionally ramming a competitor car in a racing contest or striking a player from the opposite team in the head with a hockey stick would be considered the norm. But it's widely known that even if the participants consented to the aforementioned insanity, this would still not be acceptable and obviously not legal. To further emphasize and contrast the gravity of the Saints' behavior, imagine a spectator or a party outside the field of play physically interfering with the players on the field. Said individual(s) would be immediately subject to arrest and criminal charges. To top it all off, in the case at hand, it is evident that the bounty targets did not even remotely consent to being targeted under some guise that this was an expected consequence of playing the game, as those making excuses for the Saints' conduct would have us believe. Playing football should not be equivalent to the Roman gladiatorial game of old. And even there, contrary to the Hollywood depiction, rules were in place and matches were in the majority, not contested to the death.

Conclusion

Our legal system aims to reflect the will of the society it serves. It is unequivocally true that in many societies throughout the course of human evolution this has not always been the case, as more often than not nation-states have been ruled through force and monarchies, dictatorships and other such forms of government. The legal systems of these societies, such as they were, provided relatively little if any protection to the average individual, and "life and limb" were typically not highly valued. American legal tradition touts how highly it elevates the individual, and the function of

its criminal justice system is to underscore this ideal. In the case at hand, simply leaving the matter at the level of financial penalties does not send a clear enough message to the American citizenry. The egregious conduct in the New Orleans Saints case calls for a criminal investigation, and if said investigation yields the needed evidence, criminal charges should be levied against all the perpetrators penalized by the NFL as well as any other(s) closely involved with these activities. No individual is above the law or should be outside of its reach under the guise that otherwise criminal activity was undertaken within the confines of professional sport.

Note

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Embodying Mentoring

Dana Gliserman Kopans, Center for Distance Learning

I knew, when I began my last year of teaching at a small liberal-arts college, that I was pregnant. There was no reason for me to disclose this intensely personal fact to my classes: I was not scheduled to deliver until the semester was safely over. I told my chair, prepared my syllabi and got to know my students without letting them know too much about me.

While my strategy of keeping the focus on the course materials rather than on me worked initially, a flaw in the plan quickly became apparent. I was carrying twins, and the pregnancy became obvious as the semester progressed. What had begun as a good-faith effort to keep my personal and professional lives separate – out of an attempt to do my job well, rather than a sense of prudishness – had created a culture (albeit a very small culture) of failed secrecy. It was clear that I was keeping something from my students, and they were not really sure why. My body had produced public, visual evidence of its condition. Even if I had been one of those women who carries her pregnancy in such a way that it looks like undramatic weight gain until moments before delivery, I was teaching at a very intimate, friendly institution. I shared students with colleagues who mentioned my pregnancy, unaware that I hadn't acknowledged it to these same students. My pregnant body became, in so many ways, the elephant in the room.

The story has a happy, albeit a pedestrian ending: I decided that my refusal to openly acknowledge my condition was more distracting to the students than my talking about this aspect of my personal life. I worked in my announcement – such as it was – as best I could into the content of the course. It was entirely fortuitous that I had, prior to becoming pregnant, decided to teach *Little Women* in one course and “The Fall of the House of Usher” in the other. Each narrative, as luck would have it, has characters who are twins, a boy and a

girl.¹ During the class in which we discussed these works, I told the students that I was having a set of boy/girl twins, and allowed a full five minutes for a discussion of that fact before turning back to the text.

The point of the story is this: in a traditional setting, I had assumed that information of a personal nature about me, the teacher, was irrelevant, and ultimately distracting from the pedagogical purpose of the class. As my students made clear, however, being present in a traditional classroom means that we must acknowledge the embodied nature of our knowledge and its pursuit.

About six months after I had the twins, I came to Empire State College and to the Center for Distance Learning. In my first term as a mentor and teacher, I came to realize that the embodied nature of my teaching and learning practices, which had inconvenienced me in a traditional setting, was missing. I had to figure out how to translate what I had done in person – by virtue, often, of personality – into an online, disembodied setting.

The danger, as I've laid out the narrative so far, is that I've made a fetish of the body and of physical presence. I taught actual students in actual classrooms for long enough to be uninterested in sustaining any argument that mere presence is sufficient to ensure learning. I don't arrogantly assume that students will, by virtue of proximity to me, learn. But the traditional classroom – with synchronous discussion, absent technological mediation – does present the opportunity for spontaneity, for unplanned, even incidental (or accidental) learning. Online learning requires an active pursuit, an act of volition.

Online teaching required me to rethink my notions of the embodied nature of knowledge in fairly radical ways. I knew, of course, that I needed to work to establish a sense of community that could transcend the constraints of asynchronous contributions made by geographically



Dana Gliserman Kopans

dispersed members. The need to create this community responds not only to pedagogical and institutional considerations (prevailing wisdom suggests that students perform better and tend to complete studies and degrees when they feel that they are a part of a community of learners) but also to hermeneutic ones. Stanley Fish, famously, suggested that meaning is created, and not only deciphered, by interpretive communities.² As challenging as it was to translate my teaching practices to an online environment, however, embodying distance mentoring proved a formidable challenge as well. “Meaning,” and its creation, was no longer confined to the realm of the textual. I needed to establish meaningful relationships with mentees, and these relationships had to be forged quickly. Whereas my prior advising relationships had the foundation of a shared set of interests, a history of meeting in person and clear departmental structures, I felt that I was trying to build these relationships from scratch.

The centrality of the mentoring relationship was an attractive feature of the college for me, and a key reason for my taking the job. But online relationships, I quickly learned, were different than relationships that develop in face-to-face contexts. Rather than being less personal, mentoring relationships

at a distance became more personal; they became more, rather than less intimate. Without the signifier of the body, I had to share more about my personal life in order to reassure my mentees that they were, in fact, dealing with a real person. In the absence of shared disciplinary interests and expectations, I had to share more about my personal life in order to establish a sense of experiences in common. Much work has been done (some of it by my Center for Distance Learning colleagues) on the translation of the person into cyberspace, on the avatar, on conferencing tools.³ But this is not the work that I am trying to do here. At least a part of my work has been about questioning the boundaries I had carefully established and policed, and working against my deeply-held discomfort with establishing a sense of intimacy with mentees. This has not been an anarchistic process of tearing down all walls and removing all barriers. Intimacy with students and mentees, and intimacy online, needs clearly demarcated borders. And the borderlands are tricky places: even while the online mentoring relationship obligates me to be more “open” with students, it frees them to be more open with me. The close sort of mentoring relationships our institution fosters leads many students to project the role of friend, parent or therapist onto the mentor, and the simultaneous sense of the intimacy of the relationship and the anonymity of its cyber structure can be a heady combination for students. Just as I (very frequently) remind

students about issues of audience in their writing – while online courses may share features of social networking sites and they may be accessed using the same technology, the latter allows far greater latitude in the use of language – I also try to establish the norms of a relationship that is personal but also professional; intimate but also academic.

Each of my relationships is, of course, different, as are each of my mentees and their needs. Not all of my mentees want a personal relationship. Some are reluctant to communicate by anything other than email. Some want me to play the role of a traditional academic advisor. Some want whatever is most expedient. But most want me to know about them – their academic goals, certainly, but also their life stories and circumstances. And they want to know mine. Letting my mentees know that I, too, work at balancing the obligations of family and career, that my academic trajectory was sometimes fraught, that I sometimes compulsively check email at 4 a.m., seems to reassure some of them that I understand, and can empathize with their circumstances.

Sympathy – or empathy – relies, at least in my own field of British 18th century studies, upon the body as the seat of this moral sense (which is often referred to as an organ). Creating meaningful, productive relationships at a distance, in the absence of the physical body and its helpful signifying systems, is no less possible, though it can

be more difficult. And this is where the body, repressed, returns: being present for the student in a mentoring relationship can be exhausting work. But the body, which I had thought of as a liability, a distraction from the intellectual labor in which I was invested, now guarantees, for my mentees, the possibility of a genuine relationship, despite its technologically-mediated nature.

Notes

- ¹ It may not have been as lucky as I’ve made it out here. In Louisa May Alcott’s (1868) *Little Women*, Meg, the eldest of the eponymous quartet, gives birth to Daisy and Demi Brooke, truly two of the most annoying infants in the English canon. Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “The Fall of the House of Usher” features the creepy twins, Roderick and Madeline Usher. Most critics speculate that their relationship is at worst incestuous, at best, pathological. They both end up dead.
- ² See, for example, Fish, S. (1980). *Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretive communities*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.
- ³ I was thinking particularly of Donna Haraway’s 1985 “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” but she doesn’t cover all of these issues, clearly.

Policy Work(s): An Interview with Joyce Elliott, Part II

Ed Warzala, School for Graduate Studies

This interview continues a discussion between Ed Warzala and Joyce Elliott that was part of All About Mentoring, 41. Joyce Elliott has been at Empire State College since 1988 in a variety of roles: associate dean, dean, vice president for academic affairs and provost, and, in 2007-2008 as interim president. She is currently mentor and area coordinator in Social Theory, Social Structure and Change at the Center for Distance Learning. We note that in the interval between parts I and II of this interview being published, President Alan Davis resigned his position at the college. Some topics were revisited in light of this change. Thanks again to Joyce Elliott for her time and patience and to Ed Warzala for his dedication to this project.

Ed Warzala: Shifting a little bit, let's open a new area of discussion. How did the Office of Academic Affairs interact with the Office of the President during the [Joe] Moore years and during the start of the [Alan] Davis years? How did the responsibilities of the provost coexist with the responsibilities of the president? And, perhaps, how should they?

Joyce Elliott: One thing to keep in mind is that we start with an institution that is almost entirely focused on academics. The president-provost relationship here is probably not quite like it is in places where you have a residential campus or you have other functions of the institution besides providing an education and helping people get degrees. So I would say there's probably more overlap in the concerns and focus of the president and provost here than in other places, and I think that's been true for me working with both Joe and Alan. Both of them also came from provost positions into the presidency and that's also been an influence.

This is a place where a partnership is pretty important between the president and provost, and it is probably more of an

academic partnership than you would find at other places. I think there needs to be a closer understanding here by the president of what is going on in the academic program and what the needs are than I observed in the provost-president relationships at other institutions in the system. Our presidents have to be better informed about our academic programs, and our provosts have to be better informed about our budgets and external developments than is the case in other institutions in our sector of the university.

E. W.: What is the ideal balance here at the college then, because you said it is by nature a different relationship than most places?

J. E.: Well, the provost and president need to establish a strong partnership, with knowledge of each other's commitments and abilities and a shared agenda. Then if the president looks more externally and the provost looks more internally, that's appropriate. It does shift depending on particular developments. If there's some kind of external challenge that's hugely important, then both will be engaged. Overall, Joe and I worked very closely together on policy and programs, as well as personnel matters, in the early going. As we developed a solid working relationship and shared agenda, I functioned more autonomously and moved things along and took on things that I thought were important.

E. W.: For both Joe and Alan, you had to educate them to a degree about the internal workings of the system and about the history and traditions that a president needs to know about. Was the process similar or different?

J. E.: There was definitely a difference.

E. W.: Evidently Joe Moore really felt that he needed your input and wanted to be educated and socialized into the system. Was it different for a second as opposed to

a third presidency? Was there a different desire in terms of maintaining continuity with the past?

J. E.: I would not say that Joe needed me to educate him about the college, though he did value my experience and perspectives. He did set about to learn the college in a very deliberate way. I found that Joe and Alan had different orientations to the college's history, setting an agenda and moving us forward into the future. These were different presidencies. Joe was the second president; Alan was the third president with interim appointments in between. Though I can't speak for Joe, I suspect he felt a particular



Joyce Elliott

need to figure out how founding president Jim Hall had brought the college to where it was, because it's a delicate thing to come in after such a president with such longevity and move the college forward. Whether he felt it or not, I felt he was perhaps obligated in a special way, as the second president, to figure out how to honor the legacy of his predecessor and what people had built here.

E. W.: Was there more of a commitment to the tradition – to the past – in one or the other of these two presidencies, do you think?

J. E.: I think that both valued the founding set of elements. I think Alan was not as political as Joe and there also was a difference in Canadian and U.S. experience. Joe placed this institution in historical-political context within this country around movements for social change, and I guess maybe his own personal politics to a degree. I did not see Alan contextualize it that way.

E. W.: The institution is relatively new in terms of organizational history and culture – quite exceptional – so perhaps we’re still so close to the founding and to the founders that we’re more sensitive to change than might be the case elsewhere in higher education.

J. E.: People have devoted themselves to this place because they believed in it: they believed in what we were doing as something that made a difference in people’s lives. In a broad way, Empire State College engenders caring about justice and opportunity and access and that it’s possible for people to better themselves and make a life, and that is deeply felt by a lot of people in the place. I think people want to be engaged on that level.

E. W.: This explains a great deal. It’s a very compelling tradition and it’s easy to get great personal satisfaction from our particular brand of teaching and learning.

The Moore presidency began a process of elevating the presence of the college within SUNY. Was there an effort in previous years to stay below the radar and stay small? Did we want to not let SUNY look too carefully and too deeply into what we do and how we do it?

J. E.: I don’t think so. I wasn’t part of the top level of administration before Joe. There was always encouragement of growth. There was always an interest in expanding opportunities for learners across the state and through the Center for Distance Learning, and that was in place before Joe. We were certainly very involved with the beginning of the SUNY Learning Network and we were players in that. Jim Hall held an appointment at SUNY in relation to educational technology for a period of time. I don’t think there was a deliberate inclination to stay small or below the radar.

E. W.: Let me try to clarify what I’m trying to get at with the question. The first new area of study [AOS] that I think the college has put forth (since forever!) is the new Public Affairs AOS.

J. E.: The ground work for that happening the way that it did, as easily as it did, was laid when we established the MAT program and the nursing program. We had great relationships with staff in the SUNY provost’s office for these programs. When Jane Altes was provost and Jim was president in the ’90s, Empire State College pursued a bachelor’s degree in teacher education, both elementary and secondary, and we were vigorously opposed by other SUNY institutions. There was a lot of opposition and we did not get it through. We had a fairly high profile in that effort and a very discouraging outcome. We were seen as an unwelcome competitor.

E. W.: So it wasn’t about our unique models of mentoring, prior learning assessment, educational planning or alternative instruction? It wasn’t about those practices?

J. E.: There was some of that with the State Education Department, perhaps not so much with SUNY System administration. We had some doubters at State Ed, and Jane had a real challenge in working her way through some of their views. We had an occasional student who would come through here and present themselves for individual teacher certification to the State Education Department, and staff believed we were misrepresenting our ability to prepare people for teacher certification. It was possible to do, but you had to do it in a certain way. We had a few problem cases. Even with those concerns, Jane made some very good friends for the college at State Ed.

Some folks seem to have the notion that we had made a very early agreement not to pursue capital facilities, and that may have been raised when Joe was first broaching the facilities issue with SUNY. In any case, between 1971 and 2000, we had entered a very different world and the need for facilities was totally different.

E. W.: I ask because “telling our story” is a major component of the 2015 strategic plan, and quite a bit has been done in the Davis administration to emerge fully within

SUNY and as a model for higher education. And the 2025 plan goes quite a bit further in the concept of New York’s Open University, which is designed in part to raise the profile of the college to try to garner more resources to address unmet needs and supplement the declining contribution from the state. Can we stand up to the scrutiny?

J. E.: We have no reason to be cautious about raising our profile and increasing understanding of what we do for adult learners in this state. If there’s a sound, feasible outcome to be accomplished that furthers our mission, we should go after that. If there is a reason to be cautious, for me, it is more about resources: it’s about what I’ve seen in the last few years in state and SUNY finances and the way that SUNY is dividing resources among different sectors. And, the long-term disinvestment in public higher education continues. I don’t see that changing regardless of how bold our plan might be. I’m not privy to all the details of the 2025 plan. From the vantage point I have, it does look like a reach to me around resource issues.

E. W.: I did ask Bill Ferrero [former vice president for administration] about the depletion of the reserves, and he was willing to say that the last few years amount to a crisis situation in terms of state budget cuts, and therefore, the “rainy day” for which the reserves were stored is upon us. Are you concerned about the depletion of reserves?

J. E.: I agree that external budget realities made it impossible to sustain the level of reserves that we had. I also think we recently invested reserves based on overly aggressive growth projections, and that’s a problem. I’ll go back to what I was saying earlier about the importance of the reserves for the college. Having that reserve enabled us to make strategic investments in the academic program. It also enabled us to weather enrollment dips that were sometimes fairly widespread across the college and sometimes more pocketed. It meant that we could assure stability if a particular center experienced an enrollment drop. It meant we could carry them for a year and make investments to recoup those enrollment losses, and not have to reduce staffing at a time when you needed staff in place to serve the students you were trying

to attract. So, the reserve made it possible to sustain academic personnel and invest a little bit to bring things back to where they needed to be, and we did that in a number of places at various points. If you have no reserve, it is a lot more desperate. You don't have the cushion of being able to say, "OK, we can invest here for a year and if it's not moving in the right direction we're going to have to make some other kinds of decisions."

E. W.: I'm concerned that we may be dangerously close to that now. The years of legislative budget cuts have racked the sector, and not just us. Paul Tucci [current vice president for administration] describes the situation as a "perfect storm" of sorts – a failing economy, declining enrollments and the need for some necessary investment in the infrastructure.

J. E.: One of the values of really listening to people who've been around the institution a while is that you get some practical history. We've been through enrollment debacles before. We've had enrollment dips before and they've been painful. We've worked hard to have what we need in place to weather them if we have to. You don't want to have to weather them, but they do happen for reasons that we don't always understand. You don't want to overreach in your enrollment projections. Sometimes I think when we've had periods of very dramatic growth we have a kind of a readjustment period. It may be that we overreach the service quality that we can deliver for a period of time, and we lose some folks and then we pick it up again. There is something important to learn from historical experience.

E. W.: Redirecting once again, and this is an interesting area ... you were really directly, intimately involved in the formulation of the last set of core values. In light of the college senate's actions to do away with narrative contract evaluations, what weight do you think the core values have these days? If you had your way, what changes would you make to the core values in the current context?

J. E.: I like the core values as they're stated. I don't see a reason to change them. I think they still stand as an expression of what we hope to be about. But I have to

contextualize that by talking about the original core values that emerged from an All College meeting. We had an All College Conference in 1993 with four discussion strands that people wove through over three days. Out of one strand came the earlier core values statement. It had 11 points in it, and it was a very passionate statement. Though it was never shaped into a really coherent reflective statement, it was then embraced by the college community as the statement of what the college was about. [Note: The 1993 and the 2005 Core Values statements can be found on pages X and Y of this issue of *All About Mentoring*.]

I think it rather quickly became a vehicle for disagreement. It was easy to say, "This isn't consistent with the core values" or "You're violating the core values." It didn't matter much which leadership team was in place. I think it was important to revisit them, in part because they needed to be stated in a way that more thoughtfully integrated them with the whole of the college and its programs and our ways of working with students and what we hoped the institution would be. I think the core values in 1993 were problematic; they were overused, and there was too much energy and power assigned to them for the substance of them. I think the 2005 Core Values document is more substantive and stand as a good statement of what we care about.

Particular things like the calendar change, the mentor "OK button" in the registration system and the ending of narrative contract evaluations are not the death of the core values in my view. What would be, would be the loss of individualized degree planning, which encompasses prior learning and the openness of our curriculum. To me, individualized degree planning is the touchstone for everything else in the college.

E. W.: The discussion to offer more structured degree programs doesn't necessarily mean the death knell of individualized degree programs everywhere in the college, but it begins a discussion that makes many in the college uncomfortable.

J. E.: Having pre-structured concentrations has been a big discussion here in CDL and I've been distressed about it.

E. W.: Assuming this happens, and I think it may, where do you anticipate we will find ourselves then? Are we like everybody else?

J. E.: I have that concern. This also goes back to the concern I expressed in part I of the interview, when I was talking about the increasing content-centeredness of the culture. The pre-structured concentration is a way of saying, "This is the content you need for this degree. We know what that is, and we'll tell you so you don't have to understand it or learn about it or make it yours. You just have to do this."

E. W.: So that is for you the bottom line and determining value that would end the journey?

J. E.: Yes, because it encompasses the other elements of student-centeredness – the respect for the student's own experience, the respect for the student's idea of what she or he wants to learn, the willingness to engage in a dialogue with students about what they want and need. It's not just saying, "This is what you need to learn," but having a dialogue about the learning. It all comes together in the context of individualized program design.

E. W.: Could you imagine the institution not having educational planning as we know it in the Center for Distance Learning, while maintaining it in the regional centers and units?

J. E.: I could imagine that, but do not want to see it happen.

E. W.: The pace of change and some recent college senate recommendations lead me to think we may soon see pre-structured degree programs in areas of the college where they currently do not exist.

J. E.: I imagine what we're talking about now is not pre-structured degrees per se, but pre-structured concentrations. The student still would have to do educational planning and design the overall program. One point that's been made is that this assures students and mentors that if you do a concentration designed in this particular way, the concentration will be approved by an assessment committee. But that doesn't actually assure the student that the whole degree will be approved. Another issue that leads some people to advocate

for pre-structured degrees has to do with concerns about how some assessment committees look at programs. So let's work on *that*. I know we've been working on this forever, but we still need to get assessment committees to look at programs in a less conventional way. To me, solving that problem is not accomplished by making the overall academic program even more conventional.

E. W.: Is educational planning, as we know it, more important for the faculty and for the culture of the college than it is for the students?

J. E.: It may be in relation to some individual students, but what's at stake is a bigger thing that matters to all our students, and that is the kind of degree authority that the college has. People don't fully understand the connection. We have degree authority in broad areas of study that allow us to design a variety of concentrations within those areas of study based on the premise that these are individually designed by the student working with the mentor in a close relationship and based on research and investigation. Letting go of individualized degree design and educational planning would call into question the whole premise of our degree authority, which is based on individualized degree planning.

Now, we could decide to move away from that and seek a different kind of degree authority like what we have for the nursing program. Nursing has a structured curriculum approved by the State Education Department. We could do that more broadly. We could go to State Ed and get authority to offer a pre-structured degree in business administration and have that alongside nursing, and then do that for history, community services and so forth.

E. W.: I hadn't really quite seen it in this light. I think it's incredibly important that our flexibility in program design is granted by State Ed and SUNY; we don't want to jeopardize that authority. It would have a closing rather than an opening effect. Have you made this argument around in your building?

J. E.: I have made this argument and it's clearly articulated in the policy on educational planning as one of the reasons

why we do it. There is a high stakes end game here. We certainly could pursue specific, pre-structured degree authority, which means having regular curricula like other places do.

E. W.: No one else in SUNY has the flexible authority we do to the same extent.

J. E.: Some places have programs where you can do interdisciplinary, individualized degrees, but only a small number of students do that.

E. W.: And it probably doesn't include any prior learning.

J. E.: That's another element of how individualized degree planning makes us a preferred alternative for adult learners. It gives us room for the student to incorporate prior learning from a wide variety of work and life experiences as well as substantial transcript credit.

If we didn't individualize degree planning and we had prescribed curricula, then students would do as they do elsewhere: they would fit themselves into the conventions that we establish. Prior learning assessment, I think, would end up based much more on a course-match model, less open to the more creative ways of defining what is adult learning and what is college-level learning that Elana Michelson talks about so eloquently. I think that it would actually reduce students' access to a college degree because we would offer fewer opportunities to integrate prior learning.

Some recently discussed CDL procedures for proposing certificate programs included a provision that if you want to use any prior learning credit or any transcript credit, you have to make a special case for that. My question is, why? So you took a relevant course at a community college, or you have potential prior learning credit based on your experience as an environmental educator. Why would we treat advanced standing credit for a certificate any differently than we would for a degree? Do we think that PLA [prior learning assessment] is inherently suspect? Do we think that accepting transcript credit is not academically sound? I think this, again, is part of an increasing conventionality. It seems increasingly OK here to suggest that 96 credits of advanced

standing is way too much. Those credits aren't ours. But haven't we and our students seen enough of that at other institutions?

E. W.: I wish I had seen this perspective previously – the perspective of “degree authority,” that is. If this was more broadly understood – the fact that we have legal authority to grant certain kinds of degrees – I think the momentum toward more structured concentrations and more structured degree programs might be debated with much more detail and sophistication.

J. E.: Maybe so. I hope so.

E. W.: The tricky piece of this idea about degree authority is that it's already granted and you really risk giving something away that you couldn't obtain today if you asked for it probably.

If we didn't individualize degree planning and we had prescribed curricula, then students would do as they do elsewhere: they would fit themselves into the conventions that we establish.

J. E.: You can theoretically have individually designed degrees alongside pre-structured degrees. Though I used to hate it as administrator when faculty made slippery slope arguments, I would call this one a slippery slope.

E. W.: Interesting, now as faculty you're using the “slippery slope” analogy you hated as an administrator. It's also interesting that the notion of “degree authority” is the bottom line and the connective tissue to our organizational values.

J. E.: I have always thought that the individualized program was the core feature of this place that mattered most.

E. W.: I think with prior learning assessment, I think so, too.

Not that I'm an advocate for structured programs and I'm not for doing away with educational planning, but personally, I would think there would be a way to preserve the practice and value system by creating a center for educational planning that would preserve the old while experimenting with some new aspects of the process that we could agree upon. My whole approach has always been to figure out what you really hold dear and find ways to preserve it, because if you're not clever and you don't find ways to preserve, I fear what we value could disappear, and that may happen and maybe is happening.

J. E.: Frankly, there also is a growth or numbers angle to this, which came up recently in the Center for Distance Learning. There are a lot of degree-seeking students in CDL and there aren't enough full-time faculty to serve as primary mentors. So we have part-time faculty doing that, which is true at other centers, and I have always thought that was fine. CDL also has adjunct faculty mentoring students and I've been raising concerns about this for a number of years. I find this problematic, not because of any criticism of our adjunct faculty, but only because I think this is a very complex kind of work to do with students that requires an intimate knowledge of the college's philosophy, policies, procedures, learning resources – all of those things – and I think an adjunct person who is really very part time with us is not in a good position to have that knowledge.

E. W.: As provost, you didn't really prevent centers from using adjuncts in that capacity. Did you allow deans to do that?

J. E.: The only part of the college that I've been aware of that does this is CDL. To my knowledge, none of the other centers do that. The smallest appointment that people have who are primary mentors has been a quarter-time appointment.

E. W.: I see, so you don't believe adjuncts have ever been involved in mentoring in that way outside of CDL.

J. E.: Not to my knowledge. A fair amount of CDL mentoring is done by adjuncts. I don't know the proportions at this point. One of the big regrets that I had in leaving the provost position when I did was that

we were in the middle of working on some possible models for CDL that would have increased the proportion of mentoring and instruction that would be done by full-time faculty and part-time faculty on substantial line appointments. It required a very substantial change in how the college looked at the budgeting model in relation to instruction and mentoring. And we just weren't able to get that finished, so that's a regret.

E. W.: Since you raised the "regret" word and not me, are there any other regrets?

J. E.: That's the biggest one. Another one is not getting somewhere on New York state financial aid policies for adult and part-time learners. That's a more externally-oriented issue, which is very important to our students and to us as a college. A third one is that we had started work on salary equity within each division, and on benchmarking and improving faculty salaries in the college, and we didn't complete those projects. The budget model, salary equity and rebalancing faculty responsibilities in CDL would have required a significant investment of reserve funds. Given the timing, I think at this point those are lost opportunities. The likelihood of revisiting them isn't great.

E. W.: And there may not be the interest at this point, either. I don't know who else might carry that discussion on.

So, you've returned to teaching here at CDL. What has this meant to you – to assume a faculty position, to work directly with students and faculty colleagues – and how have you taken to online teaching?

J. E.: I was worried about whether I was going to be able to do it, not whether it was worth doing. It turns out to be challenging and fun. I have good colleagues. I love course design. I completely overhauled the Quantitative Methods course in 2011 and have taught it several times, tweaking it as I go along. And some of the teaching is a lot of fun. I'm not fond of evaluating student work – I never have been – but in some ways it's less tedious online. I can sometimes provide feedback and guidance to the group and then tailor comments to each student's work.

I also do have more room for community service now. I serve on the board of the Mohawk Hudson Planned Parenthood affiliate, and I've also been active with my partner Cindy Swadba in the local gay and lesbian community and in electoral politics.

E. W.: What is your thinking about the tension between the different forms of teaching at the college? I'm getting at the one-to-one versus web-based learning question. Can all of these models and all the faculty who employ them exist together harmoniously in one college?

J. E.: Yes. I don't have any concerns about that. I think increasingly there's a convergence that's been developing over the years. We have more and more faculty who are blending learning technologies and face-to-face. We're doing residencies and different kinds of special study groups and integrating real-time interaction into online courses.

E. W.: Technology-assisted study groups are not very different from online courses.

J. E.: I agree. There are several people in CDL who are doing amazing work on very individualized ways of doing courses. They are individually tailored and students can navigate them in accordance with their interests. I think of Frank Vander Valk's work on the Freedom Project, and Eric Ball has done some very interesting things in his courses. There are people across the college who are experimenting in ways that are as consistent with the founding principles as anything that people have done before at this college.

E. W.: Do you think the CDL student knows that he or she could take independent studies? Do you think that's widely enough known and advertised?

J. E.: Probably not. I think they're not as clued in to that as they could be.

E. W.: Do you think they even know, CDL students, where our centers and units are? Or that they even exist?

J. E.: I think, increasingly. I'm working with a couple of mentees now who on their own started going into centers and talking to academic support persons or using a computer. Over time, I hope that will become much more developed. The direction of the college toward more integrative

engagement between CDL, Graduate Studies and the regional locations is a long-term win for the college and our students.

E. W.: Have you done any independent studies, any one-to-one studies recently?

J. E.: No, I haven't. I've been really doing this for just over a year now and I've been trying to get my feet wet learning the ANGEL platform, course revision and development, and taking on area coordinator responsibility for more courses and doing educational planning. I've been redesigning the educational planning template so it fits what I want to do with it, and I have some really active students in that. Next I get to learn Moodle. The hundred-mile high look that you get as a provost is very different from what it actually takes to do the job as a faculty member in this setting or another setting, and I've had to learn the ropes.

E. W.: That's a question that should be on this list, but isn't, so I'm glad you brought it out. It sounds like SUNY has contracted with Blackboard though, and we've gone halfway down the road with Moodle. I mean that's going to be a problem, isn't it?

J. E.: Probably not. I know that there's a SUNY initiative for people to be using consistent platforms for what they do. At least in my lifetime, I don't see them likely to succeed with that. Even with just the student information systems, it would take an enormous investment of resources to transition the outlier institutions to the same student data system across the system.

E. W.: Unless it was offered for free by the SUNY system.

J. E.: There's nothing free about it. It takes so many person hours and so much planning time and institutional time to make that kind of transition – it's huge. The same thing is true with the learning management platforms, but in this case, we don't have a choice but to make a change from ANGEL because it's going to be nonexistent. I do think Moodle offers some plusses, including its integration with other open source tools.

SUNY's interest in consistent platforms seems to be related to the transfer project and the idea of a SUNY pipeline from different levels of education to higher

degrees. They would like to be able to track transferrable credit in one system and make it easier to transfer credit. Still, I don't see SUNY succeeding in moving everyone to the same platform because it will simply cost too much. You could argue that it costs too much not to do it, but I just think the resources are not there.

E. W.: The chancellor would like Empire State College to provide prior learning assessment services for the entire SUNY system. Have you given any thought to that?

J. E.: Well, we made a foray into that in the late '90s with SUNY Brockport and a couple of other institutions. It proved to be very difficult to pull off well, and not particularly well received by the other institutions. The faculty of more conventional institutions are not highly receptive to prior learning assessment. So I don't think it has legs, in that respect. In 2000, we also were some ways down the path of establishing a kind of credit bank service for other institutions, including but not limited to SUNY. One of the first decisions that Joe and I made was to step away from that, for a lot of reasons. One of them was we wanted to focus on our own degree-seeking students as a priority. We also thought we had work to do on our prior learning procedures and results.

E. W.: Do you still think we need work on PLA practice?

J. E.: I think we've come a ways. I think there's room to do it better. We're still not where I'd like us to be.

E. W.: This brings us really pretty much to the historical and really the last question. You've been very influential in shaping the college for quite a long period of time and will continue, I suspect, to be so in the future, too. When Richard Bonnabeau pulls these things together and writes the next volume of the college's history, how do you want to be remembered?

J. E.: I would say that I'm an integrator, or synthesizer, or bridge. I'm a middle child and I'm a bridge of perspectives and vantage points. That's who I am by nature and I think that's key to the role I've played in the college. It's been important to me to show how something new that we're doing does honor the core values and founding mission. The nursing program and the MAT program

are examples. They look terribly structured and like everything fits into little boxes, and yet they express very well our commitments to access, flexibility, individualized study and experiential learning. It's been important to me to articulate how something new or different is an expression of what we most care about, as well as how something else is not.

I also have worked to articulate how faculty concerns and administrative concerns are shared in some cases. I'm genuinely governance oriented, and came out of a strong governance role as a former faculty member elsewhere. I think it matters that governance and administration work together and find common ground in terms of what the institution is about, its alignment, its integrity, its direction.

One thing I care about deeply is keeping the college centered. Somehow we have to be about the same agenda, not necessarily exactly in the same way, but in ways that enable us to communicate with each other.

One thing I care about deeply is keeping the college centered. Somehow we have to be about the same agenda, not necessarily exactly in the same way, but in ways that enable us to communicate with each other.

This is a place where it's easy to spin out because of the geographic distribution and the diversity of practice and program. It's hard to figure out where we really *must* have common cause and when and where it's OK to spin out.

Joe talked about this at perhaps his second governance retreat. He pointed out that some things have to be tightly coupled and other things can be loosely coupled. He said,

“I don’t think you want your payroll system to be loosely coupled; you want everybody to know no matter where they are at the college that they’re going to get paid accurately every other Wednesday and that this is a centralized, tightly coupled function that we can be sure is correct.” There are other things where the stakes are not so high or where we need to ensure plenty of room for creativity. I’ve thought about that a lot over the years.

There are still things we need to couple up better than we have, to get things to work right for our students. And, our purpose in being here is our students. That’s another key question: What does any practice or proposal do for our students? Is it OK for students if they complete their last learning contract and their degree is awarded 18 months later because there were a couple of incompletes in prior studies that never got resolved, or the program never went to committee? Is that OK? It’s not OK. It

can’t work that way – it means we’re not working for our students. So that’s the other thing: trying to make the place work better. I’d want people to know that I really care about this place and our students and our employees and that I worked to make it better.

E. W.: I appreciate very much you doing this, and know lots of people who are really interested in knowing what you think and what you’re doing. It’s been fascinating, and for me, a privilege. Thank you.

“There are three ways to perform a repair: making a damaged object seem just like new, improving its operation, or altering it altogether; in technical jargon, these three strategies consist of restoration, remediation or reconfiguration. The first is governed by the object’s original state; the second substitutes better parts or materials while preserving an old form; the third re-imagines the form and use of the object in the course of fixing it.”

– Richard Sennett, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*
New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012, p. 212

Use of Games to Promote Active Learning

Thalia MacMillan, Center for Distance Learning

It seems that every year, newer, faster and smaller forms of technology emerge. All have the same goal of making life easier and more convenient: a goal that has resulted in increased access to education for many. At Empire State College, many would speculate that we have the same goal in mind: to increase access to education via independent studies, group studies, residencies, online and blending learning. Students are now able to study in new ways that enhance their learning experience through customization to their individual ability levels. One problem, though, is that not all students have access to this new, exciting technology. These types of disparities of access within a course, whether it is online or face-to-face, have the potential to create a technological divide that may impact students' learning and collaborations with others. We often assume that students have access to technology if they are attending Empire State College. However, the question remains for all of us: What can we do to level the proverbial playing field of technology so that those who have and those who do not have such tools can still enjoy learning and develop lasting connections with other students?

When I think of the courses that I have taught face-to-face and online, both here at Empire State College and at other institutions, one basic fact comes to mind: Learning about research, statistics, social policy and/or the *DSM-IV* (the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*) – my areas of interest – is “not for everyone.” When I was teaching research courses at Fordham University and Columbia University, I even had to work that phrase into our first class just to “lighten the air” if you will – to normalize the potential anxiety and fear that may have been present about taking the course. At Empire State College, one thing that appeals to me is that we view each student as unique; as a result, we

regularly acknowledge and try to respond to the reality that people grasp material in different ways and may ultimately choose a mode of learning (e.g., online or face-to-face) that accommodates their learning style. While this is not a new concept in any way (many institutions have sought to respond to student uniqueness), it is one of which I like to constantly remind myself. In my time here at Empire State College and while I was teaching at Fordham and Concordia University, like many instructors, I've looked for ways to improve student learning, participation and active engagement with the material, all the while remembering that my students bring with them different learning styles. At present, keeping in mind the technological divide, one way to achieve all of these lofty goals is to embrace, celebrate and value low-technology options.

While I was teaching at Fordham, Concordia and Columbia, the best type of “low-tech” option I discovered and utilized was the use of *games* within the online and face-to-face courses. I've tried to continue these “gaming” efforts while here at the college. At Empire State College, I truly believe that the use of games is one strategy for learning that many students would value and embrace. Games can be traditional board games, such as *Trivial Pursuit*, or other games that many know, such as *Wheel of Fortune* or *Jeopardy!* No matter the game or the college in which I carry them out, though, I follow the mantra that games should supplement and enhance traditional learning methods, not replace them (Cervantes, 2009; Chavez, Gilliam, Pathak, & Volino, 2012; Fouché & Visser, 2008; Thomas & Austin, 2005a). The use of games represents a creative and effective way to improve knowledge, skills and learning of material (Chow, Howard, & Lambe, 2008; Fouché & Visser, 2008; Thomas & Austin, 2005b). Games represent an additional way – and a low-tech way – to actively learn the material being reviewed.



Thalia MacMillan

In my current and previous teaching experiences, over 95 percent of my students have been over the age of 25. My experience in all locations at which I have taught – consistent with the literature in the field – has been that games provide a fun way for students of any age to engage in their studies, review material, collaborate with others and to simply enjoy learning. We may think that the adult student does not want to engage in games; however, I have found the opposite – adults *love* to engage in games because they are different than a conventional lecture or simply reading through materials. In one of my online courses, Survey of Social Science Research Methods, for example, students loved it when I played *Jeopardy!* with them using Elluminate; it was different, new and kept their attention. That's one thing we tend to forget and of which we need to remind ourselves: When students enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to embrace the content and participate. When something is enjoyable, anxiety and fear about the content lessens. For example, during a rousing game of bingo in a research course at Fordham, several of my research students, who had participated only minimally throughout the course, were those who not

only led with answers during the game, but who also began participating more in the class afterward.

Games also have the potential to represent new forms of assessment. Instead of utilizing a quiz, journal reflection or other kind of writing assignment, I have, at times, used a game to determine how well students were grasping the material. As I am creating the game, I can vary the level of difficulty. The beauty of a game to assess learning is that it can be done individually, such as with crossword puzzles, or in groups, such as with bingo or *Jeopardy!* One great example of this is the *TV Guide* crossword puzzle. Most people like to fill this out because we can easily complete the puzzle without having to look up answers. Once you are able to complete the puzzle, you may end up trying to find other crossword puzzles to complete, thus trying to increase the difficulty level, however slightly. The same principle is at work with students: the game bolsters their self-esteem; it reflects the fact that they do have the knowledge and are able to recall it. This then propels students to want to learn more to see if they can keep challenging themselves. While teaching program evaluation at Columbia, I utilized a crossword puzzle to review the theoretical concepts that we were discussing; my students loved doing this because it wasn't a formal quiz; rather, it represented an informal way to review material. In one of my Empire State College online courses, Disabled in America, that included a discussion of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I gave students the options of replacing a journal essay with a crossword about the ADA. Over 75 percent of the students in the course took this option, as it was something other than yet another writing assignment.

As noted above, whenever possible, I also have tried to utilize group participation in the game. I find that it develops and fosters meaningful, lasting collaborations among students. For example, during the second meeting of my research course at Fordham, I'd have students form groups for a game with only one rule: they had to be in a group with people they *didn't* know. As the students didn't know each other, they were able to introduce themselves and work together for a common goal of winning the

game. At the end of course, students told me that this objective was highly beneficial. Typically, they had not known anyone in the course and those in their initial group were now friends and/or study partners.

When deciding if a game should be conducted within an individual study or a group setting, it also is necessary to determine how you want this to be done. Do you want students to participate all at once and at the same time (i.e., synchronously), or can they do this independently, all at their own pace (i.e., asynchronously)? At Empire State College, we may question if this could or should be used in the context of an independent study, a group study, residency, blended learning or online course. For the independent study, group study or residency, we may assume that this holds an advantage as these are face-to-face. For the online course, you would automatically think that conducting a game in a synchronous manner (such as during an Elluminate session) is ideal. However, this raises a question about the very point of the game. Is it to assess learning, reinforce material, promote collaborations or is it only a way for you to try out a game? If the point of the game is just to try something out because you want to try something out – not to promote active learning or increase collaborations in some capacity – then I find it may not be worth putting a game together. If your goal is to promote active learning or to create a co-constructed learning experience, then it is necessary to determine if a student can do this independently or if a group context is more advantageous.

Finally, similar to a traditional board game, such as checkers, the object of a game in a course, whether you are doing this individually or in a group, is to win. You are probably asking yourself, "What is the point of winning? What do they win?" I have found that knowing you can potentially win *something*, albeit a token prize, increases how engaged students are in the game. In the past while at Fordham and Columbia, I have used small incentives, such as candy for the winners or fun trinkets from the dollar aisle at Target. In the online courses, such as the ones I've mentored here at Empire State College or at Concordia, I have used the incentive of an extra day to submit an

assignment or a small number of bonus points. While these may seem small, they represent something of value to students.

Over the years, at all locations at which I've taught (including here at Empire State College), my students have all told me that, win or lose, they truly enjoyed my use of games in a course. And one thing I will admit is that I also truly enjoying conducting a game in a course. I've always enjoyed seeing students' faces light up during a game and reach that "ah-ha" moment when they understand the concepts we are discussing and realize that they do, in fact, understand them. Below are samples of the games that I have utilized (and am always willing to share with others). All can be utilized in online or face-to-face studies, and can be conducted with individuals or in groups. The bottom line is that games represent a way to have fun with your students, while learning and collaborating at the same time.

- **Bingo.** You can create bingo cards with terms or phrases. There are many websites that allow you to create the cards for free. Here's an example of one: http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/materials/bingo/5/. I like to create enough cards so that each individual or group gets a different card (just like with regular bingo). The cards can then be saved as a PDF and distributed to students. I have all of the terms in a bag; I reach in and grab one, make up a clue to go with it (or you can have the clue written on the scrap of paper with the term), and the students mark off on their card if they have that answer.
- **Crosswords.** Once I have given crosswords to students, they have continually asked me for them – they love them! Websites will build the crossword for you – for free – when you supply the terms and clues. Here's one that I like: <http://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/crossword/crossword-puzzle-maker.php>. The crossword can then be saved into a PDF file, which can be distributed to students. There are many different free templates available on the Internet, so I always recommend taking a look at the options.

- **Word Search.** Perfect for those who commute, but don't like crosswords, these appeal to many students. Similar to crosswords, websites will build the word search puzzle once they have the terms and clues. The word search can then be saved into a PDF file and distributed to students. Here's one website that I like: <http://www.puzzle-maker.com/WS/index.htm>. As you will see, you can customize a lot of the different components, such as the background.
- **Jeopardy!** This game is one in which everyone in the course gets involved and loves playing. Unlike the TV show where you may recognize only some of the categories, many students identify with this game since all of the categories are recognizable. The game is based in PowerPoint with music and a mini-Alex Trebek. It is set up so that when you click on a dollar amount in a category, it "jumps" you to the answer – just like the TV show. Students can then work together to determine the question. I have downloaded it from this website and found it's a great resource: <http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/ppt-games/jeopardy.ppt>.
- **Wheel of Fortune.** Many students love this game, too; it's an adult form of "hang-man." When they are in groups, each student spins the wheel, which is based in PowerPoint. The wheel spins for a dollar amount. I usually generate the puzzle and put it on the face-to-face chalkboard or Elluminate white board. Similar to *Jeopardy!*, a great resource to download this game is: <http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/ppt-games/>.
- **Who Wants to Be a Millionaire.** This game also is another that I have found students love, as they all try to get

to the million dollar question. The game is based in PowerPoint, and like *Jeopardy!*, is linked with music. When you click on a dollar amount, it brings you to the question/answer choices. Just like the TV game, there are even options for "Phone a friend," "50/50," etc. This can be downloaded with or without music (depending upon your preference): <http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/ppt-games/>.

- **Trivial Pursuit.** My new online version of the traditional game is to ask students to find answers to questions using the Internet. (Clearly, students would need such access; in a face-to-face context, the textbook would be sufficient.) I supply the students with questions about the course material for which they need to find answers. In some cases, I give a time frame that they have to stick to (such as during one group session).

I know many of you reading this essay are asking: Can we regularly and imaginatively utilize these learning tools at Empire State College? I believe we definitely can and should. Each has the potential to bring value and a level of individualization to independent studies, group studies, residencies and online courses. Independent studies can bring together the mentor and student for a shared experience, and more to the point, to have a relaxing moment of fun with a game that can be tailored to the student's unique interests and learning styles. Group studies or residencies have the advantage of slightly larger numbers of students; this suggests that students can be grouped into teams to play a game, with all different learning styles being reflected in the choice of the game. For online studies, games can definitely be utilized; they do, however, require thinking ahead about the manner in which they are

delivered – asynchronous or synchronous. No matter the learning mode here at Empire State College, games have the potential to span them all, thereby creating a shared, co-constructed learning experience among the student(s) and with the mentor that is unique, accessible and enjoyable.

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Transformational Leadership: A Powerful Concept for Education

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This paper began a couple of years ago as an inquiry into the value of transformational leadership in fostering cooperation and shared vision between different, often competing, divisions of organizations. Though the original aim was to explore a business topic – and indeed the original paper was presented as part of a larger paper written with colleagues for an international business conference – I became convinced that the application of transformational leadership to our practice as academics, especially to our practice as Empire State College mentors, could improve our teaching. It was this inclination that led to my interest in transformational leadership as it might apply to education.

In order to place the concept of transformational leadership in context for those not familiar with it, the first part of the paper briefly explores early management studies that define and describe transformational leadership so the reader will understand its possible applications in education. Then, the paper addresses transformational leadership in education and the growing recognition of its value in that context. I conclude by suggesting that transformational leadership is a concept that we, as educators, should purposefully consider.

Transformational Leadership in Business

Transformational leadership is grounded in communications, psychological, management and change theory. It complements leader traits theories, leader behavior theories, path-goal theory, group maintenance theories and participation-in-decision theories. It also dovetails with the competing values framework, a powerful paradigm for organizations that face tensions between internal and external needs, as well as tensions between the need for stability and the need for creativity. Transformational leadership must be an

element, possibly a major element, in any attempt to change behavior in and between organizational functions.

According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders appeal to the higher values and aspirations of followers and focus attention on commitment to shared purpose. Their leadership is characterized by three traits: charisma, individual consideration (of their subordinates) and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). There is mutuality in their relationship with subordinates that supports higher levels of motivation and morality, as well. Transformational leadership is participatory in nature and involves awareness and self-reflection (Treslan, 2006). It is directed toward a change in the existing order, and empowerment more than control (Conger, 1999).

By contrast, transactional or managerial leadership is instrumental and directed toward getting the job done (Conger, 1999). According to Lussier and Achua, transactional leadership focuses on stability and the achievement of the individual goals of leaders and followers, not necessarily shared goals, and not change or transformative growth (as cited in Butcher, Bezzina & Moran, 2010). Transactional managers use or withhold rewards to motivate their subordinates (Conger, 1999).

Regarding the effectiveness of these two approaches, though there may be a place for transactional elements in a leadership situation, transactional approaches appear to be limited in their effectiveness. Tyler (2002) cited the limitations of rational motivation approaches in fostering cooperative behavior. While incentive systems are marginally effective in changing behavior, they encourage a limited view of one's behavior, a view related to the rewards associated with the behavior. Similarly, evidence on the effectiveness of social control and deterrence in motivating behavior also is



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mixed and does not work as well in the real world as it does in experiments. Put another way, while deterrents against certain behaviors may be necessary, people don't always respond in anticipated ways to the carrot and stick approach. Alternatively, Tyler (2002) noted the importance of intrinsic motivation, and that a focus on attitudes and values is likely to be more effective in promoting cooperation than the use of incentives or sanctions.

Transformational leaders change visions into reality. In contrast to transactional leaders who use reward and coercive powers, transformational leaders get people to rise above their personal interests, values, fears and perspectives in favor of group or organizational objectives. In other words, they create a sense of shared purpose (Bateman & Snell, 1996).

While Howarth and Rafferty (2009) pointed out that we know very little about the behaviors that make transformational leaders successful, they concluded that there is a significant relationship between the trust that employees have in their leaders and the extent to which they embrace change. According to Atuahene-Gima (2005), trust is highly associated with the perception of fairness on the part of the leader. People need to get beyond the passive resistance

and other obstacles to change; they need to trust the process in order to believe that they will be treated fairly. Logically, this means that leaders are more apt to be successful when they treat people fairly on a consistent basis and when they behave in a manner consistent with the values of others.

If, in fact, transformational leadership is the “value-added” proposition it seems to be in the business setting, it should be beneficial in schools and colleges, as well. Indeed, a number of studies concluded that, in terms of leadership and change, the teacher-student relationship has marked similarities to the manager-subordinate relationship. Just as employees must trust their managers in order to achieve a high level of motivation, students make an act of faith when they embrace the teacher’s agenda that their needs will be served and they, too, must set aside fears, biases and short-term interests.

Transformational Leadership in Colleges and Schools

Though various studies have addressed transformational leadership in the business setting, it has only recently begun to work its way into the dialogue on education. In an application of this theory to institution-community relationships, Butcher et al. (2010) argued that, for genuine civic engagement and social inclusion, university partnerships must transcend the “quid-pro-quo” transactional leadership described by Burns (1978) in which parties enter an agreement for their individual reasons and, instead, should cultivate transformational leadership. As a way of applying transformational leadership theory to training leaders in education, Brown (2010) showed that, because of the negative treatment students often receive and because of social inequality, education’s leaders must be trained to affect social change and, as part of that process, “to validate and incorporate adult learners’ personal knowledge and experience. People rarely change through a rational process of analyze-think-change. They are more likely to change in a see-feel-change sequence” (p. 350).

Although transformational leadership has apparently not been extensively studied in connection with the teacher (as leader)-

student relationship, there have been some critical and promising studies. These studies suggested that mutually beneficial relationships between teachers and their students incorporate leadership behaviors and traits that distinguish transformational from transactional leadership.

In a study of college business teachers and their students, Pounder (2008) found a positive relationship between students’ perceptions of transformational leadership on the part of the instructor and the student’s view of the relationship with the instructor, with the effectiveness of the instructor and motivation to expend effort on course requirements. Harvey, in a similar vein, concluded that individual attention given to students and to intellectual stimulation, both important aspects of transformational leadership, were important predictors of student participation in the class (as cited in Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009).

Noting that several studies in the early to late 2000s established a positive relationship between transformational leadership and *indirect* measures of student performance such as those just cited (effort spent on studies, student satisfaction, student perception of effectiveness), Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) studied the relationship between transformational leadership and more direct measures of student achievement, namely, cognitive learning and affective learning. They concluded that students’ perceptions of their instructors’ transformational leadership was positively associated with their assessment of their learning. That is, while there was a positive correlation between various elements of transformational leadership and commitment by the student, there also was a positive correlation between transformational leadership and more traditional outcome measures of student success, i.e., what the student actually achieved.

Citing Waldeck’s 2007 study, Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) suggested that this positive relationship may be explained by students’ perceptions that they are getting a personalized education. If this explanation is true, it would be consistent with the view that transformational leaders tend to eschew institutional structures and the carrot

and stick associated with transactional leadership in favor of a more “follower”-centric approach that relies more heavily on individual values, needs and intrinsic motivations.

Besides the vital role that transformational leadership may play in learning outcomes, it also may have an impact on ethical conduct. Since many educators, their disciplinary areas notwithstanding, would probably agree their role involves, in part, leading their students to reflect carefully upon making responsible moral decisions, it is important to note that a number of researchers believe that transformational leadership is strongly correlated with ethical behavior. Pounder (2008) said that transformational leadership leads more than transactional leadership to ethical behaviors and traits. Carlson and Perrewe (1995) also suggested a strong relationship between transformational leadership and students’ ethical behavior. In fact, they suggested that, “transformational leadership is viewed as the best approach for instilling ethical behavior” (p. 5).

Although some studies on transformational leadership raise questions about its efficacy and application (for example, “Is everyone as equally endowed to be a transformational leader?” or “Is transformational leadership merely another form of management manipulation?”), it is a powerful concept

“Is everyone as equally endowed to be a transformational leader?” or “Is transformational leadership merely another form of management manipulation?”

with implications for behavior in all organizations, as well as relationships between teachers and students. It deserves consideration.

A Final Word

Many American schools and colleges have remained stubbornly loyal to instructional models that have failed to keep pace with advances in learning theory, the neuro and information sciences, technology and major cultural shifts. Because of the consummate importance of education, this failure comes at a great cost. Even as we learn more and more, so much so that we can barely manage what we learn, we are leaving many in society behind. According to many measures, our leadership position as a literate, educated nation is slipping away. It is time for academic leaders and for individual faculty members to acknowledge the problems we have wrought and embrace needed changes.

On a positive note, student-centered colleges like Empire State College offer a bit of hope that things can be turned around. For one thing, even though these colleges often fall into the same trap as traditional colleges as they strive to fine tune their business models, they are more receptive to new, experimental models. Empire State College, with its mentoring model and other innovative practices, seems to be in a unique position to harness the power of transformational leadership as a means of customizing education in a manner that prepares each student to face the increasing demands of the world. No doubt, many mentors and the college itself are transformational in their behaviors but may not recognize it as a way that allows for its cultivation as a specific, powerful approach to education.

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Science, Serendipity and Student-Centered Scholarship at Empire State College: Citizen Science and an Invitation for Collaboration

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Science

When I arrived at Empire State College in the summer of 2010, I was warned:

You'll have "to do science" differently here. You'll have no labs. Few students major in the sciences. Most of the studies on which you'll work with students will fulfill a general education requirement. No more Soil Science ... no more Advanced Topics in Geology.

As a scientist trained in geology and biogeography, the lack of a laboratory did not concern me as much as one might expect (I actually cannot remember the last time I wore the traditional white lab coat). The surrounding environment, natural or modified, has provided me, and the students with whom I have worked, with a living laboratory (there are always soils to sample, trees to core, habitats to explore and disasters to monitor).

I also did not view the shift in student demographic from majors to nonmajors (or from those concentrating in science to those not concentrating in science) negatively. At the university I had left to come to Empire State College, I was given the opportunity to develop an Earth Science course which would fulfill the physical science general education requirement set by the state. I enjoyed the challenge of generating excitement for science and the environment in students who felt that they "could not do science" or thought that they had "no interest in or relationship to science or the environment."

One of the reasons I was attracted to Empire State College was that I recognized that there would be unique opportunities to work with students, both "budding scientists" and self-proclaimed "definitely not budding scientists," even though they would not have immediate access

to laboratory facilities. The unique opportunities that I perceived at Empire State College complemented a movement in science education, which has grown over the past decade, aimed at making science more accessible to students and to increase interest, retention and graduates in science

At the heart of this movement are student-centered modes of learning, like POGIL and JiTT (POGIL, 2012; Rozycki, 1999). In these modes, students are not solely evaluated on what they have managed to memorize for the sole purpose of performing well on an exam (during a few evenings



PHOTO: JOHN HUGHES

(l-r) Linda Jones and Jim Merola: Studio editing of instructional videos.

disciplines (STEM education). Part of this movement has included a shift in the way science is presented and practiced in the classroom. The shift has been from lecture-dominated dissemination of knowledge and information toward student-centered active learning. More emphasis is placed on the learning students do outside of the classroom and the demonstration of their understanding through active discussion and mentoring of class peers – familiar practice at Empire State College.

of frenzied studying of terms and concepts presented in a textbook). Instead, they are evaluated on what they have come to understand by actively engaging with terms and concepts through self-guided learning activities, group interactions, and open-ended laboratory and field projects. They are asked to model the scientific method as they observe, hypothesize and draw conclusions during experiential learning activities.

At traditional institutions, however, student-centered modes of learning can be challenging to implement due to large class sizes, established curricula of traditional science offerings and an established culture that equates exposure to large amounts of information with student understanding of that information. At Empire State College however, this alternative, “new way of engaging students in science,” is a natural extension of the way in which mentors work with their students.

But, it is about more than having the ability to adopt and adapt innovative and interactive pedagogical methods at Empire State College. Because mentors have the ability to create studies that appeal to the nontraditional learner, content can be used as a powerful motivator (“a great attractor”) to engage students in science. Two of my more popular studies since coming to Empire State College have been U.S. National and State Parks: Geology, Ecology and History, and Natural Disasters. Both studies appeal to “STEMers” and “non-STEMers” alike because they cover topics that they can relate to their lives. In both, however, I have hidden traditional “intimidating” sciences like physics, chemistry, biology, geology, ecology, climatology, hydrology and geomorphology. (How many students actively seek a study in something called “geomorphology”?) In this way, science content is not sacrificed to lack of experience and/or confidence, and more content is potentially retained because it is experienced in memorable contexts.

To illustrate the flexibility of thematic science studies, I offer two recent experiences. Near the beginning of a national parks study on which I was working with a history student, the student revealed to me that he was not really interested in the “science stuff” related to the parks. He indicated that he was much more interested in the history and politics that led to the designation of the different areas as national parks. Yet, later in the study, this same student was able to describe the geologic processes that have formed (and continue to form) the Hawaiian Islands and discuss the ways isolation and climate contribute to endemism on the islands. He also expressed his amazement of the “very active” tectonic processes that continue to

shape the earth’s surface (an amazement he indicated that he shared with his wife). An environmental science student taking the same study had the opportunity to deepen her understanding of tectonic processes operating in the Pacific Northwest. She was able to reconstruct the complex geologic history of tectonostratigraphic terranes that have come together to create the mountains of Alaska (a history she shared with her parents who annually vacation at national parks).

Another positive aspect of “doing science” at Empire State College is that students are encouraged (as they are in studies in other disciplines) to explore the world around them as they participate in their studies. Students studying natural environmental systems are encouraged to “get out” into their surrounding environment to observe, collect data and formulate their own hypotheses. They are able to “see” the processes and dynamics typically described in a textbook, and through hands-on experiences, they come to understand the processes and dynamics more fully. Science becomes more concrete and comprehensible and less ethereal and abstract. Students also have the opportunity to work on aspects of environmental change that are directly affecting them. Investment in a topic is another powerful motivator for learning and understanding. It is this aspect of science at Empire State College that made possible the Beetle Project and larger Citizen Science Project, which I describe below.

Returning to the original theme of “doing science” at Empire State College, I did have one concern (and I think it is a common concern for many new assistant professors – no matter what their discipline – beginning their careers at a college or university that stresses the importance of mentoring and teaching). My concern was finding a solution to the age-old challenge: “How do we find the time and resources to meaningfully mentor our students and engage in meaningful scholarship?” The nearest I have come to addressing this challenge of effectively balancing mentoring/teaching and scholarship, especially at teaching institutions, is to coordinate scholarly activities so that they support and complement the work that I do with

students (and in return, work so that the projects I do with students support and complement scholarship activities).

There is nothing truly novel about this approach. Prior to coming to Empire State College, I worked with students on environmental monitoring projects for the local county, which provided students with valuable experience in data collection and analysis and provided me with an opportunity for scholarship. The projects on which I had participated as a graduate student also had followed this model. For example, the forest characterization that served as the foundation for my master’s thesis was directly connected to a local county’s need to assess the effectiveness of its use of prescribed burning to restore and conserve a Midwestern oak woodland.

The challenge to such an approach, however, is making community contacts and creating collaborative projects with mentors, administrators, professionals and students, which allow for the experiences and research to occur. Coming to a new region of the country and to a new college, I knew that it could take time to establish contacts and identify projects for students.

Serendipity

The area of study meeting in November 2010 provided me with an unexpected opportunity for collaboration, an opportunity that resulted in the initial conception of the Beetle Project. The meeting itself was invaluable. As a new mentor, it provided me with a more complete picture of the college and its extensive educational network across New York. I was able to attend workshops facilitated by mentors and faculty across the college who offered advice on effectively mentoring primary mentees, who might not be pursuing a degree in my area of expertise, and suggested strategies for balancing the demands of primary mentoring, instructional mentoring, college commitments and scholarship.

I also was able to meet with members of the Science, Mathematics and Technology (SM&T) area of study and was introduced to the science community at Empire State College. It was after the final SM&T session that I found myself in the hallway of The

Saratoga Hilton/City Center discussing possibilities for science scholarship at Empire State College with Nikki Shrimpton, then interim dean of the Central New York Center. I remember asking her advice related to the question: “How does one coming from one teaching institution to another start anew in terms of scholarship?”

I found the beginnings to an answer in the events that happened next. I told her of an idea mentor Wayne Ouder Kirk had offered during a discussion we had at the Saratoga Springs Unit the week before. He had come to my office and said (something like): “I think you should come up with a project in which faculty and students across the college could participate. Since we have centers and units across New York, wouldn’t it be neat if we could all be collecting environmental data on similar parameters to study aspects of environmental change?”

As enormous as such a project sounded, there are aspects of it that were quite appealing: collaboration (I would not be “going it alone”), field experiences for students, the creation of an online science community and the potential of documenting aspects of environmental change across the state. When I shared this seemingly fantastical idea with Nikki, she said that she had been thinking of developing a similar project at Empire State College for a while. She invited me to have lunch with her and Sadie Ross, the director of environmental sustainability, where she and Sadie were planning to discuss ways of increasing environmental awareness at the college.

One of the ways we thought this awareness could be achieved would be through the development of curricula that encouraged students to venture into their local environments and observe the physical and biological characteristics of their surroundings. We could develop a project in which students across the college would learn how to characterize atmospheric and soil conditions, identify vegetation and follow the life history of a readily identifiable organism. Sadie suggested the Japanese beetle (which led to the name the “Beetle Project”) because it is an organism that is readily recognizable and commonly found in lawns and gardens (the local

environments of our students). Because there appears to be a growing interest in invasive and nonnative species, and Japanese beetles have an appetite for vegetation that we would prefer they did not, we thought that the Japanese beetle would be an organism that many students would have an interest in monitoring.

But the individual experience of fieldwork and data collection and analysis was only a part of a larger project that would introduce students to “citizen science.” A geographic information system online platform would be created by the fourth member of our team, Kent Stanton, who recently left Empire State College and whose role has since been filled by Jeremy Stone, instructional technologist. Since students



PHOTO: GOOGLE IMAGES

Japanese beetle.

from across the state would be collecting data, we wanted them to be able to see how their observations compared with other participants. The online community would enable students to share their observations by uploading their data to an interactive map of New York. Then, they could begin to see spatial and temporal patterns of different environmental parameters and organisms and consider reasons for similarities and differences in patterns.

They also would have the opportunity to discuss their experiences in an online citizen science community group.

By the end of the lunch, we had outlined the foundation for a STEM Education/Citizen Science project. Over the next month and a half, we met informally as a group, outlining curriculum, identifying protocols that

would need to be developed and designing a conceptual framework for the website and GIS (geographic information systems) platform. In late December of 2010, Sadie identified an ideal grant to support our project and with the help of Lorrie Anthony, director of grants and contracts, coordinated its submission.

In August 2011, we received a grant from the USDA-NIFA-HEC (United States Department of Agriculture-National Institute of Food and Agriculture- Higher Education Challenge) for the project we had titled “An Undergraduate Research Experience: Using Technology and GIS to Monitor Spatial and Temporal Patterns of Japanese Beetle Populations, Related to Changing Climate Conditions, Across New York State.” The grant has provided us with the resources to purchase environmental monitoring equipment for students, to support the development and management of the online GIS Beetle Project/Citizen Science platform, and to create a learning module and sampling protocols that can be adapted to a variety of science and nonscience studies offered at Empire State College and the wider SUNY community.



PHOTO: ALLAN VARCOE, NORTHEAST CENTER

Student displaying the impacts Japanese beetles can have on local vegetation.

Student-Centered Scholarship – Citizen Science and an Invitation for Collaboration

This October (2012), the website and GIS platform was made available to mentors and students across the college. Students participating in pilot studies and in the

plenary sessions at the ADK/Environmental Studies Residency have access to background information related to ecosystem dynamics, nonnative species, climate and climate change and instructional videos (produced under the patient guidance of John Hughes and Jim Merola, audio visual team) that guide them through the sampling process. They also have the opportunity to upload their data to the GIS platform and participate in community discussions.

Mentors are able to view the learning module and related background information, protocols and instructional videos, as well as experiment with the GIS platform to determine if the project is one that could be modified to fit a study they are currently offering or one that they are considering developing. We have tried to keep the module general enough so that the learning activity could be adapted to both science and nonscience studies. Mentors offering studies that include topics related to one or more of the following could incorporate the project into their studies (but the list is not exhaustive):

- Agroecology
- Atmospheric Science
- Biology
- Citizen Science
- Climate
- Climate Change
- Economic Impacts of Nonnatives/Invasives
- Ecology
- Environmental Policy
- Environmental Science
- Environmental Studies
- Field Methods
- Gardens/Gardening
- Geography
- GIS (Geographic Information Systems)
- Horticulture
- Instructional Technology
- Literature
- Local Food Systems
- Movement of Organisms related to Globalization
- Nature Photography
- Nonnative/Invasive Species
- Plant Ecology
- Science Education
- Science Illustration
- Scientific Writing
- Social Attitudes toward Science
- Soil Science
- Statistics
- Urban Ecology

For example, I have adapted the module as a project in advanced level urban ecology and soil science studies, in introductory environmental science studies, and in a blended literature and science study on gardens (which I offered with mentor Elaine Handley during the summer of 2012). A general description of the project, like the following, was modified to fit the specific focus of each study:

In the nonnative species project, students will explore the interrelatedness of climate, ecosystems and soils. Students will study their local climate and consider ways climate has influenced the distribution of species and soils in their area. They will then consider ways changes in climate might impact local ecosystems, both from the perspective of native and nonnative species. They also will consider the ways fragmentation and urbanization may impact the colonization patterns of nonnative and invasive species.

Depending on the larger context of individual studies, the description presented above can be modified to a greater or lesser extent. The only constants are the environmental parameters sampled and the sampling methods (the context will vary according to mentor and student interests). Mentor and student support, in terms of integrating the learning activity into studies and training on the monitoring equipment and GIS platform will be provided by me and Nikki.

I also should mention that in addition to the collection of data related to local environments, we will be collecting data related to students' attitudes toward science and technology and their understanding of climate and climate change, both prior to their participation in the project and after they have completed the learning activity. This information also will be available to mentors.

The project and opportunities for collaboration continue to grow, and they would not have been possible without the support of many at the college (mentors mentoring mentors). In August 2012, we were awarded an IITG – Innovative Instruction Technology Grant – to develop



PHOTO: ALLAN VARCOE, NORTHEAST CENTER

Field science is a possibility at Empire State College. Student is preparing a sample point to collect soil moisture data.

sampling protocols, which could be used by Empire State College distance learning students and students enrolled at other SUNY institutions who might not have access to the sampling units purchased with funding from the USDA grant, and to make available the open source code to the Citizen Science Template, which will guide mentors and faculty through the creation of their own Citizen Science projects. In April 2013, we will host a SUNY Citizen Science Conference at Empire State College, which will provide members of SUNY with a venue to share and collaboratively develop project ideas related to Citizen Science.

Anyone interested in participating in the Beetle Project and/or developing a Citizen Science project of their own can contact me at Linda.Jones@esc.edu, Nikki Shrimpton at Nikki.Shrimpton@esc.edu, or Sadie Ross at Sadie.Ross@esc.edu for more information.

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Letter to the Editor

Alan,

I read the article, “All About Re Mentoring” [All About Mentoring, 40, winter 2011] and was struck by what appears to be a lack of good training and orientation for new mentors. The issues that are mentioned didn’t emerge during the time I was with the college in Rochester. It is possible that these problems are also coming about due to the influence of more structured programs and of the Center for Distance Learning where they have always adhered to a much more rigid set of guidelines.

To me, one of the ways I learned how to help students develop degree programs was by serving on the assessment committees. We had long discussions about programs, but we always reached a consensus on what the program needed, or what the student should be commended for. (This was also a great way to really learn many aspects of mentoring, as I had the good fortune to work with [mentors] George Drury, Lee Herman, Bob Seidel, Ken Cohen, Ellen Hawkes and Frank Trice, among others.) I never considered that someone was trying to “rementor” one of my students, but that they were trying to help make the program better.

While Doug Emmons [director of the Genesee Valley assessment office] didn’t always get along with Vic [Victor Montana, dean], he was an excellent coordinator and added immensely to the assessment committee meetings. Doug was not your typical assessment coordinator. He raised intellectual as well as program issues. He didn’t read a program and compare it to the guidelines, but looked at it as a mentor – looking for progression, breadth and focus. This helped me as a new mentor immensely, as I quickly learned what made a good program.

From what I read, I am concerned that there is not enough effort to get the student to really write a good explanatory narrative about their program. (While I am as guilty as many for not pushing as hard as I probably should have, all of the essays that I read eventually did a good job of spelling out the rationale for the program. We didn’t originally have strong area of study guidelines, so we deferred to one another, going back to the rationale to see what the intent of the student was. As the area of study guidelines came in and became more prominent, there was a slow shift to de-emphasize the rationale and fall back on the guidelines. However, the only areas in BM&E [Business, Management and Economics] where we adhered strictly to the guidelines was where the student insisted on a specific concentration title. For example, if they wrote that they wanted a concentration in accounting, they had to have specific areas of knowledge in their program that were recognized by the profession.

To me, the value of the assessment committee meeting was the interchange of ideas and questions about a program. I tried to review the programs before we met, and if there was a program outside of my area, and I had a question, I would talk to the mentor or to one of my center colleagues. Over time, I think I learned most of the general core knowledge that was required in most of the areas.

I see the college losing something as it become more rigid and structured. While I realize that some of this is necessary due to State Education requirements, much of it is self-imposed, such as providing grades and a GPA. I think size is also an issue, as the college appears to be adding more administrative overhead. I know you can’t turn back the clock, but you might want to consider having a major discussion on this rementoring issue at one of the all college meetings.

– Walt Frykholm [February 26, 2012]

Note

Walt Frykholm was a BM&E mentor at the Genesee Valley Center from 1985-2002.

The Residue of Memory

Terry Boddie, Metropolitan Center

My work as an artist explores the physical and psychological landscape of memory and history – a landscape framed by issues of exile, migration, globalization and the role that memory plays in shaping cultural traditions. I use “mark making”: gelatin silver emulsion, oil paint, pastel, charcoal, graphite and other media to examine the recording and re-envisioning of memory through various photographic processes. The camera and the hand combine to create new narrative possibilities.

Because of its mechanical nature, the camera seemingly captures time and thus renders memory transfixed and static. On the other hand, mark making is an act of imagination, or of re-creation and activation in the present. As a result, the layering of images and media is a central device in my work, reflecting the accretion of history, memory and narratives, as well as the competition between “subjective” and “objective” voices for narrative space. What is the role of the photographic medium in relationship to these issues? How can it be negotiated through other media and forms? I am intensely interested in how the very nature of a photograph changes in the process of this interrogation.

In the following portfolio of images, I seek to continue to explore this idea of history and memory, but also expand on it. In the images, time and place become central elements in the cyclical ritual of birth and regeneration.





Conduit



Traveler

Ferry

Ripple



Crowning Glory



Immanence



The Long Way Home

Reflections on MOOCdom – A Dialogue on Possibilities

Carol Yeager and Betty Hurley-Dasgupta, Center for Distance Learning

Introduction

The hype about MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) is a bit unusual for higher education, which is better known for measured change. Extensive articles in The Chronicle of Higher Education (2012) and The New York Times (2012) have chronicled this explosion of offerings. The MOOC site with the most universities scrambling to join is Coursera (including Stanford, Princeton, Duke and 14 others), but other notables are EDx (with MIT, Harvard and Berkeley) and Udacity.

In some ways, the emergence of MOOCs should come as no surprise. The Internet has become the resource of choice for almost all learners. And, the resources are rich and varied. Universities such as MIT and Carnegie Mellon have offered free content via the Internet for years.

The term MOOC dates back to 2008 when Dave Cormier, from the University of Prince Edward Island, and Bryan Alexander, of the National Institute for Technology (Canada), responded to an open online course designed and led by George Siemens, from Athabasca University, and Stephen Downes, from The National Research Council (Canada). The course was called, Connectivism and Connective Knowledge, and was presented to 25 tuition-paying students at the University of Manitoba in addition to 2,300 other students from the general public who took the online class free of charge. All course content was available through RSS feeds, and learners could participate with their choice of tools: threaded discussions in Moodle, blog posts, Second Life and synchronous online meetings (“Massive,” 2012).

Other MOOCs followed, many offered by Siemens, Downes and Cormier. One that several at Empire State College participated

in was PLENK (Personal Learning Environments and Networked Knowledge) in 2010. In addition, Siemens was a keynote at the CDL Conference in 2009 and Downes followed in 2011.

Although a few thousand participated in these MOOCs, the explosion really began when Sebastian Thrun of Stanford University announced a MOOC on Artificial Intelligence in 2011 and over 80,000 registered. Thrun then left Stanford and started his own company, Udacity.

So, what is a MOOC and does it have any common characteristics? As MOOCs have developed in different directions, the common thread, if there ever were one, has diminished. All are clearly online. Certainly, current ones have been massive, often attracting tens of thousands of participants. Although earlier offerings were fully open (meaning that not only was personal use without charge permitted, but reusing in other venues and even repurposing or adapting in some way also was allowed) more recent versions have complex legal restrictions on reuse and few allow repurposing. And, though all meet a broad definition of “course,” the lack of a definitive end date for many (some tend to gain a life of their own) and the current remixing of MOOCs does challenge one’s usual expectations for courses.

The early MOOCs were based on the concept of connectivism, which Siemens (2005) called “a learning theory for the digital age.” Siemens and Downes have written extensively on the topic. The general idea is that learning happens through the connections one makes with resources outside of oneself.

A Conversation About MOOCs

In September 2011, we collaborated on CMC11 – Creativity and Multicultural Communication – a MOOC, which was SUNY Empire State College’s first offering in



PHOTO: MANUELA BROSI FREI

Betty Hurley-Dasgupta (left) and Carol Yeager

the realm of open education. It was based on the theory of connectivism and the practice of Personal Learning Environments and Networked Knowledge that utilize metaliteracy within the connective personal learning environments (PLEs).

CMC11 grew out of Carol’s five-year journey of personal research and new learning opportunities and Betty’s exploration of new pedagogies for learning mathematics online. This recent collaboration grew out of our previous work within the Center for International Programs at Empire State College in Lebanon and Greece, as well as their affiliation with the Academy of Process Education.

Below is a conversation about our experience with MOOCs.

Betty Hurley-Dasgupta: Carol, you’ve experienced quite a few MOOCs before doing your own MOOC. What most impressed you about them?

Carol Yeager: My initial MOOC learning exploration was with PLENK (Personal Learning Environment and Networked Knowledge) and I followed that up with CCK (Connectivism and Connected Knowledge). While I was used to the linear format promulgated in the multiple realms of education, I quickly found my comfort zone in the organic nature of these learning journeys. I am a learner as well as a learning facilitator, and the connectivist nature of learning meshes well with my own pedagogy as well as development of a personal learning network. I agree with Arthur Koestler's (1968) position that creativity comes from having the teacher and learner residing in the same individual. From my perspective, a connectivist MOOC, or cMOOC, underscores Koestler's philosophy as well as my own.

While the MOOC acronym alludes to this learning experience as a "course," I like to think of it more as a "learning journey" that offers multiple opportunities for connective, personal learning networks that grow knowledge and understanding via a more organic process methodology ... much as we learned as toddlers ... at least until we entered more structured and formal "education." The MOOC is an opportunity to rekindle our creativity and find more interconnected, intrinsic motivation and process methods for lifelong learning.

B. H-D.: Unlike you, I mostly was a lurker in the earlier MOOCs. I joined PLENK and I was part of the Facebook group of CCK11. I've been fascinated, though, by what has happened to MOOCs since Sebastian Thrun introduced his MOOC on Artificial Intelligence. I registered for that class, but never bought the book and did not participate. But I recently completed several units of his Statistics course, offered through his new company, Udacity. Unlike PLENK, the Udacity MOOCs are highly scripted. One literally is led from segment to segment in micro-modules. Although his explanations were good, I found I was not getting any opportunity to construct the ideas in my head and therefore my memory of what I had covered (and for me, these were all review) was pretty minimal.

Anyhow, over a year ago, you and I decided to try our own MOOC. Why did you want to try out a MOOC?

C. Y.: Through my most recent studies in creativity and participation as a learner in a number of connectivist MOOCs, I had become interested in multiple styles of learning and learning facilitation. My experiences have been those of contagious exhilaration in the learning journeys of the MOOCs and the possibilities for innovation and opportunities of learning from each other on a global level. The open learning platform and process offer so many possibilities for shaping and reshaping the learning process and connecting and reshaping our thinking.

B. H-D.: For me, the attractiveness of the MOOC was the opportunity for collaborative learning. I've always found that a rich learning environment (one with a wide range of resources, including other people) enriches lifelong learning. I also found the whole idea of Personal Learning Environments (PLE's) compatible with my work at Empire State College. Don't you agree?

C. Y.: Yes, PLEs put the learner at the center of their learning, which is where the core values of the college place our students. With the ubiquitous burgeoning of the computer and Internet-generated options for learning in a global venue, new modes of learning have evolved, which have changed the look, but not the feel of the learner-centered environment that has always permeated my work at the college. Some models have been content driven; others have been investigations, research and reflective learning around domain/topical modes of inquiry. With connectivism, what one knows takes on a different shape when exchanged and built upon by what others know.

From my perspective, personal learning environments somewhat replicate the way we learned as children ... from many sources through an exchange of learning and modeling behaviors. We were free to explore, discover and develop new thinking. The PLE is an open and evolving exploration, discovery and further development of ideas among many globally connected participants on the

Internet. A variety of tools are available for communication, from writing through video recordings to live video meetings in Google + Hangouts.

As a mentor, I see myself as a facilitator of my mentee's PLEs. I aim to strike the delicate balance between empowering them to take charge of their degree and leaving them too much to their own devices. Since their degree program does need to address external factors, such as expectations of professional organizations, potential graduate school admissions committees and, of course, the assessment committee, I need to combine my respect for a mentee's PLE with efforts to make them aware of these external factors.

B. H-D.: Yes, mentoring is a delicate balance and I've found that my role has become even more complicated with the enormous increase in Internet resources. An increasing number of my mentees are accessing resources to help them meet their goals. But, sometimes these resources are not very good. Therefore, part of my role as mentor has become one of guiding mentees through what has sometimes become a tangle of intricately related ideas. And, because many of my mentees often have ever-expanding PLEs, I am now helping them work through the development of degrees that use a combination of Empire State College studies (many using these resources, but in a more limited way) and developing PLAs [prior learning assessments] that depend very heavily on resources within their PLE.

But, let's get back to our MOOC. How did we come up with the topic of Creativity and Multicultural Communication?

C. Y.: We felt that since the MOOC is offered in a global environment, the venue offers multiple opportunities for increased creativity and multicultural communication. The interrelationship of connective learning using creative content as a foundation in a global context offers many intriguing possibilities. Increasingly, the challenges we face are complex and open ended, and knowledge alone is not enough to reach innovative and effective approaches to these challenges. In addition, our networked world can provide us with a rich global environment for creative problem solving.

And thus CMC11 became an entry in the quickly growing and ever-evolving world of MOOCs that had been initially “birthed” by Cormier, Downes and Siemens about four years earlier.

B. H-D.: And, what was it like to set up the MOOC?

C. Y.: In order to keep the MOOC open to wide global participation, we were able to use the BlueHost Web server service, thanks to the continued support of Center for Distance Learning Dean Tom Mackey. We were assisted by Downes, who installed gRSShopper on the official course template, <http://www.CDLprojects.com/cm11blog/>. He also referred us to his website that included installation and operational instructions. gRSShopper, an open source program, is an intrinsic element of the MOOC learning process as it harvests, aggregates and feeds back the blogs, tweets, discussions and ancillary commentary that have been tagged for collection. These materials are published daily and sent to all registered participants in a newsletter, “NewPosts.” The weekly recorded Blackboard Collaborate guest sessions also were made available for review on the CMC11 website, and asynchronous participation/reflection has been encouraged.

Building the platform required a lot more coding expertise than we had. RetSam “Sam” Zhang, a fellow MOOCer residing in China, was our guiding light for the technical challenges. This also was an initial exciting and rewarding experience in connectivism building CMC11 for both Sam and me.

The process of building the MOOC and then co-facilitating was exhausting, stress laden and time sensitive, exhilarating and extremely rewarding. One needs to be quite flexible in real time, as the direction of the learning changes as participants guide the learning in multiple dimensions. It is important to be open to constant change with a flexible mental agility for working in the now and not with pre-programmed expectations. The immersion, mindful challenge and sense of flow, as defined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2008) in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, has tremendous potential for fun with enhanced learning and personal satisfaction.

B. H-D.: For me, experiencing the MOOC gave me a better sense of what connectivism can be. The connections made among people from around the world were wonderful to see. And, the interaction during our weekly sessions was excellent. We really learned from each other during those sessions.

C. Y.: Yes, it takes time to open the mind to a distributed learning venue as opposed to a linear one and I am not sure any specific instructions are helpful. I think one needs to embrace ambiguity, before one can go with the flow. As the participants discovered new ways of connecting and sharing their learning, I became even more connected with my own explorations as well as theirs. Ambiguity became a way of finding, and chaos became a way of filtering, and remixing became the new ways of thinking and connecting learning. I am sure I learned as much, if not more, than some of the other participants. What one knows takes on a different shape when exchanged and built upon by what others know.

The Blackboard sessions and Google + Hangouts were mentally expansive, as well as fun. The best outcome has been to see learning become fun for those who are engaged, and, I suspect, for the lurkers (which is its own form of engagement). And the MOOC goes on. ...

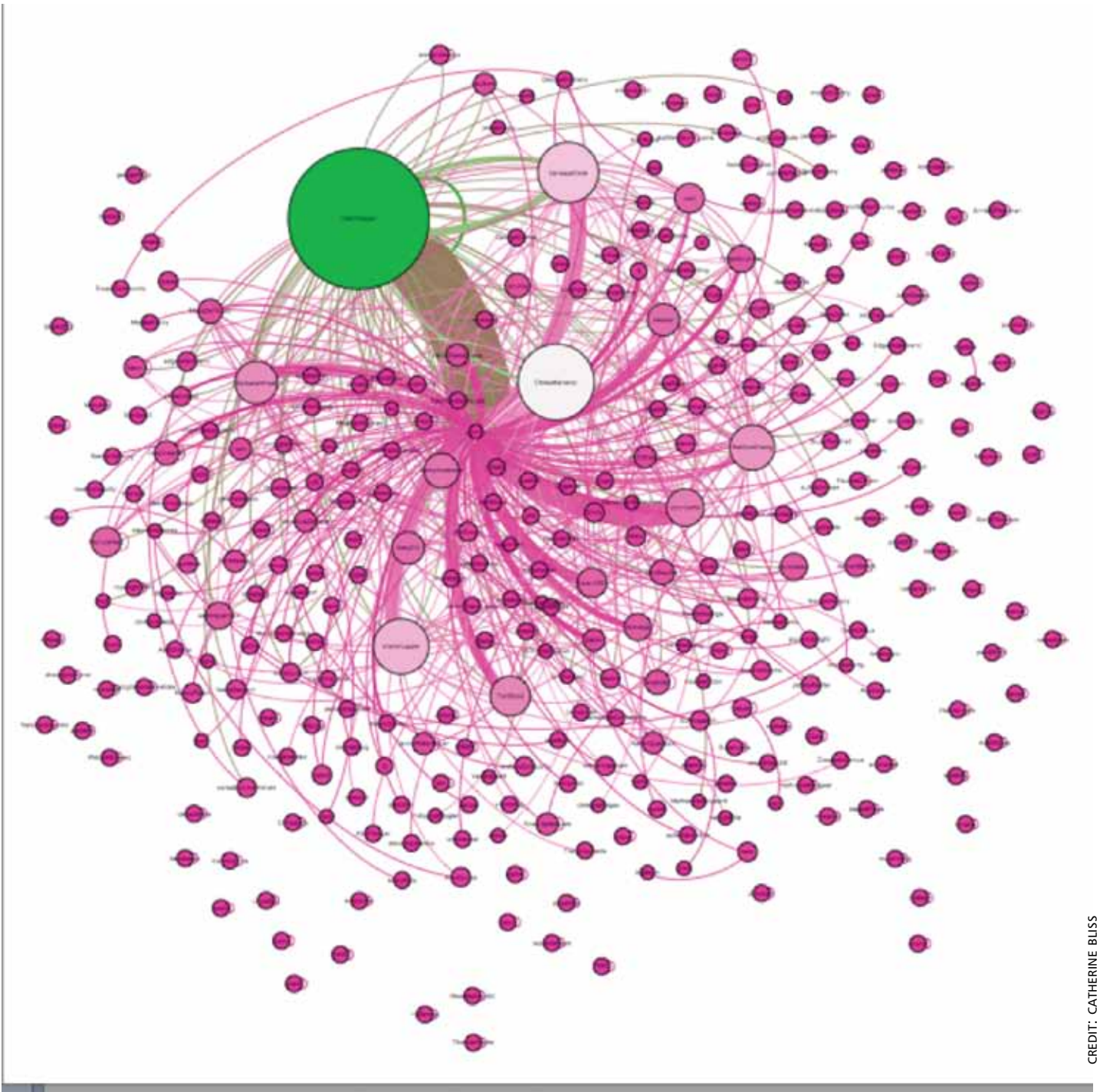
B. H-D.: What kind of feedback did the MOOC generate?

C. Y.: Here are a few participant comments, some from the credit-seeking students as well as other, global participants reflecting their experiences and learning in CMC11:

- *I think that with this, I'm going to start chronicling more with this blog and I'm going to start fixing it up and personalizing it! Thank you, CMC11, I never would have started a blog without you (I always kind of thought they were silly), but I'm really starting to enjoy this and see it as a creative outlet! So I guess the class has been quite successful for me!*
- *It felt effective and comfortable for me to work collaboratively with others through a combination of different Web tools*

- *I LOVED this course! ... What an eye opening and invigorating course ... Hope there are many to come!*
- *The final projects presented by everyone taking the course for credit were fabulous. We learned so much from one another and had great practice at using new technologies that we might not otherwise have had the chance to use.*
- *I believe that the collaboration of new ideas and the diversity of the participants were the best aspects of this learning experience.*
- *[The best part was] the open-endedness regarding my choice of resources and technologies to utilize. Also, the richness of the material made available.*
- *It helped me to “step out of the box.” I engaged in various new experiences and broadened my horizons to new ways of learning and communicating.*
- *There are no boundaries to learning and no timelines. One textbook, one focus, one instructor, one semester – that was the way I learned in elementary school, and I've spent decades unlearning much of what I was taught back then. Taking part in the MOOC allowed me to encounter new worlds of thoughts and ideas, new ways of thinking, new ways of planning, and new ways of writing, reading and connecting concepts. Sparks of creativity, so carefully fanned into flames, made the experience rewarding even after the timeframe of the class reached its end. Classes may end, learning never does, and the MOOC has made it easier to understand that. Sharing ideas with classmates from around the world provided exposure to voices I'd never heard and perspectives I hadn't considered. And it all happened in a way that was exciting as well as instructive. What fun!*

B. H-D.: An exciting addition to our MOOC experience has been the analysis now being done by our CDL colleague, Catherine Bliss on CMC11, our first MOOC. We are presenting at the Sloan-C [International] Conference [on Online Learning] this fall with some of those results



CREDIT: CATHERINE BLISS

and Catherine is working on a paper based on her work. Below is a preliminary graphic showing the interactions in the MOOC.

The graphic shows the connective interaction of the participants including Facebook wall posts and “NewPosts” archive items (tweets, blogs, replies, announcements) from August through

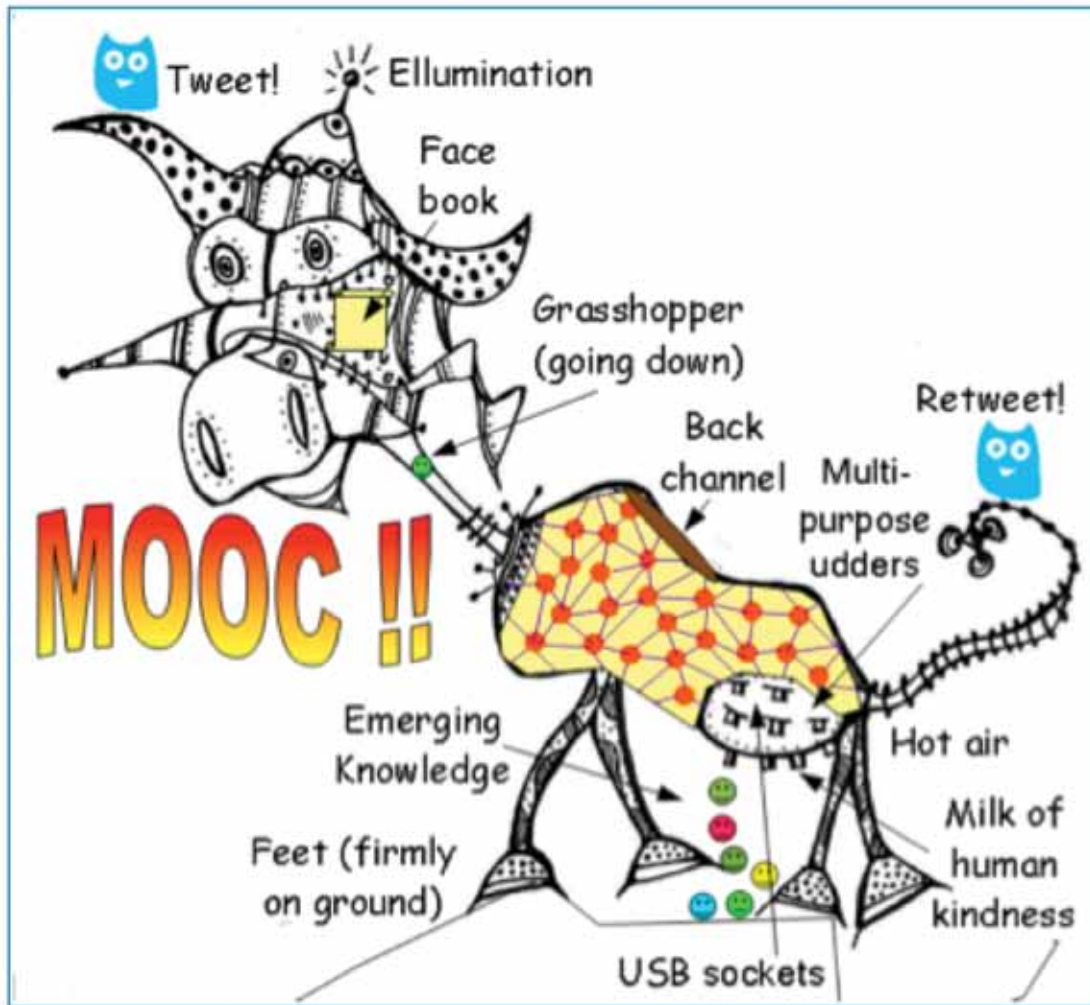
December 2012. It shows each person in the MOOC, including most lurkers. The size of each node is proportional to the number of posts made by that person and the color shows this, as well. Our thanks to Catherine Bliss for hand harvesting every posting in CMC11 and creating this graphic.

C. Y.: I also would like to include a graphic that is a visual representation of the connectivist MOOC experience. It is a version of Jose Bogado’s “La vaca de los sinvaca” graphic that was adapted by Gordon Lockhart, a veteran MOOCer who created this version for CCK11 (Connectivism and Connected Knowledge) – a Cormier, Downes and Siemens MOOC

Connection not Content

#CCK11: Man! This MOOC is Something Else!

with 40 comments



Based on *'la vaca de los sinvaca'* by José Bogado



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production. The illustration meshes quite well with my own thinking around a more organic and connectivist learning model in the spirit of fun through learning and learning through fun.

B. H-D.: So, what's next? Well, Carol and I talked about a number of possibilities and we decided on a math-related MOOC.

It fit well with another OER project I'm working on. We're planning eight topics, all connected with the visualization of math, so we're calling it VizMath: A MOOC. We will again have synchronous sessions via Blackboard Collaborate. Recordings will be made available as OERs [open education resources]. And, through gRSShopper, we're hoping to create lots of connections among

math lovers worldwide. Our Twitter hashtag is #VizMath and the URL is <http://math.cdlprojects.com/index.html>.

The support from Tom Mackey has been terrific. Without this support, we'd never have had this opportunity to explore.

C. Y.: I am excited to learn more about the visual applications of math that we are researching for the VizMath MOOC. It is pushing me to go beyond what I ever dreamed I would in the realm of mathematics. Of course, math has components in the art world but beyond that, mathematics has remained elusive for me. I look forward to the new learning journey as well as connecting with others on that journey and beyond.

The CMC11 MOOC is ongoing and new participants join most every week. This is a shameless plug for all to come and play with us in the ongoing CMC11 sandbox, as well as the new VizMath sandbox. As Plato posited, “You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.” Lifelong learning in the MOOC sandbox is fulfilling and FUN. Join us at CMC11 and VizMath and enjoy the learning journeys!

For more information about MOOCs, some of the following resources may be helpful:

Article about Coursera:
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/georgeanders/2012/07/17/coursera-boom/>

Research article on MOOCs:
<http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/1041/2025>

Dave Cormier on MOOCs:
<http://davecormier.com/edblog/2012/07/31/20-questions-and-answers-about-moocs/>

George Siemens on MMOCs (video):
<http://blog.p2pfoundation.net/george-siemens-on-massive-open-online-courses/2011/05/14>

Stephen Downes on MOOCs (video):
<http://www.slideshare.net/Downes/xmooc-the-massive-open-online-course-in-theory-and-in-practice>

Sir John Daniel on MOOCs:
http://sirjohn.ca/wordpress/?page_id=29
 (Scroll down to article: “Making Sense of MOOCs: Musings in a Maze of Myth, Paradox and Possibility”)

Special Report on Online Learning: “MOOC Madness” from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: <http://chronicle.com/section/Online-Learning/623/>

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Finding Time for Mentoring: A Conversation

Lois Zachary, Leadership Development Services; Lee Herman, Central New York Center; Alan Mandell, Metropolitan Center

Lois Zachary is president of Leadership Development Services in Phoenix, Arizona, a consulting firm that specializes in leadership and mentoring. Her many books on these topics include the second edition of The Mentor's Guide (Jossey-Bass, 2012) and Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide (Jossey-Bass, 2005). Lee Herman and Alan Mandell are long-time mentors at Empire State College who have given many presentations and written extensively about mentoring, including their book, From Teaching to Mentoring: Principle and Practice, Dialogue and Life in Adult Education (Routledge, 2004). This conversation took place on 17 February 2012. Thanks to Lois and Lee for their patient preparation of this text.

Alan Mandell: Lois, how did your understanding of mentoring develop? Where did you begin?

Lois Zachary: Many years ago, I was invited to start a mentoring program, and as I did my research, I found that what people were using when they were thinking about the mentoring of adults was a very pediatric, a very paternalistic – a very *non*-adult focused kind of mentoring. I thought: “We’re mentoring adults, and we’re talking about learning. Learning is really what people want to get out of it. So, what would happen if we took adult learning theory and held it up as a lens to better understand and better facilitate the learning of people who are engaged in mentoring relationships?”

Lee Herman: How were people defining the term? Was there some common understanding?

L. Z.: One of my first major clients was a multinational corporation. I sat with the development team and I asked: what does mentoring mean for you? We unearthed multiple assumptions about what mentoring was, and I said to the group: If we hadn’t had this conversation and you went out and were planning a “mentoring effort,” you’d

all be operating under different assumptions about what mentoring is and nobody would be satisfied with the result. Let’s see if we can all come to agreement about what mentoring is and what it’s not. And that’s probably one of the most important conversations that any group can have.

A. M.: Did you come to agreement?

L. Z.: We did come to agreement, but there were a lot of people who had to take a look at their assumptions. There were a lot of people who still had the “old boy” – what I call the “spray and pray model” – where you sit at the feet of the master; or if you think about Freire’s work, a more “banking education model” – where the mentor is the holder of the pearls of wisdom. It’s the difference between “the sage on the stage” or “the guide on the side.”

L. H.: I love your use of the word “pediatric.” Something’s wrong with the child and that child has to be fixed by a physician.

L. Z.: When I was thinking about “pediatric,” I was thinking about a caretaker model and its limits when we work with adults. But, yes, I agree: mentoring can’t be about doctors fixing people.

A. M.: It’s really hard to get away from the notion that the mentor is the expert.

L. Z.: I think the mentor can and does have expertise. But it’s not for all reasons and for all seasons. Do you know Stephen Brookfield’s notion of “impostership”? This is important to remember. The mentor has expertise but the mentor is not an expert in everything and does not have the entire world of experience. That’s just impossible.

A. M.: These days, instead of “mentor,” people seem quite willing to use the word “advisor.” Are there substantive as well as symbolic differences between the mentor and advisor?



Lois Zachary

L. Z.: This is interesting. I don’t know if you’ve been following a lot of the GenY mentoring and the virtual kinds of platforms that are out there. Instead of the word “mentee,” people are using the word “learner” who looks for multiple “advisors.” Many people don’t even want to use the word “mentor” when they’re doing it virtually.

L. H.: This is the case here, as well. For example, there are a number of Empire State College programs where the use of the word “advisor” is preferred. One is in the graduate program; the other is in our online program, the Center for Distance Learning. Nowadays, when a student graduates, instead of the student’s name and other graduation information, where it used to say “mentor” or “primary mentor,” it now says “mentor/advisor.” And in the academic record system, it reads the same way.

L. Z.: So, at your institution, how do you differentiate the two?

L. H.: Just speaking for me, with probably a narrower breadth of experience and view of Empire State College than Alan's, an advisor is someone who gives expert advice; that is, "Don't do this, do that."

A. M.: One argument is that you change the language because people are more used to the word "advisor," so there's a claim that there's a kind of demystification that occurs when you use a word with which people are just more familiar. But the other side of this is that by using the word "advisor," there's a tacit assumption that, if it's not exactly "don't do this, do that," it's at least the assumption that there are only a finite number of moves to be made and the advisor can talk with you about what those moves are. I think that advising ends up being more administrative, which reflects a certain kind of closure of options. Certainly in my own college experience as a student, a question like "What do you want to learn?" didn't exist as an option. In this way, "advisor" becomes more legitimate when the questions narrow.

L. Z.: Though comfort with the term "advisor" may not be universal, it's interesting to ask why the word "advisor" would appeal to a GenY, someone born around 1980, someone in her early 30s?

A. M.: In the late 1990s, when Lee and I were working on our book, *From Teaching to Mentoring*, the term "mentor" was just about everywhere! It was difficult to find an institution of any kind that *didn't* have a mentoring program, whether a corporation or a college. And I think this meant that the institution wanted everyone to know that it would never throw an individual to the wolves, that there is a support system and we call it mentoring. So, one of the difficulties was that the word had attained a kind of ideological status, almost to the point of meaning nothing. The "mentoring" word took off, got legitimized as defined as something like "caring advising," and thus no institution could say that it *didn't* do it. So, in the process, "mentoring" lost some kind of critical edge.

L. Z.: I always say that the term is used "promiscuously." It is the idea that we care, and all the literature also tells us that if you are going to be successful as a leader, you need a mentor in your life and those who

are successful have had such a person. The research also tells us that mentoring is a great recruitment tool because it does make the claim that an institution cares.

A. M.: I feel that mentoring has become some kind of blanket term. But even "kind advising," for example, is not collaborating – which Lee and I wrote about as one important dimension of mentoring – it's what it is: "kind advising."

L. H.: I was having a discussion this morning with a number of people who are faculty and administrators at the community college here in Auburn, New York, where my office is. They are starting a program of assessing experiential learning. I'm thrilled that they're doing it. However, very quickly during the discussion, there was a tension in the room – not between different people, so much as it was *within* people who were speaking. This was a tension between what I would call a "conservationist" approach to education – meaning an assumption that we already know what the best things are to be known and the best things for our students to learn, and that should be the primary if not the sole reference point for evaluating experiential learning – *and* an assumption that says, we want to find out what you think you know about through your experience, and we'd love to find ways to get at that and document it and incorporate it in your formal education. The latter is a more open-ended and, as you put it, Alan, a more collaborative version.

L. Z.: To me, this speaks loudly and clearly to mentoring because mentoring is a reflective practice.

L. H.: And I would say exactly that tension is what so many people, not only in the academic world but in other situations, too, struggle with. It's between preserving a certain historically and rationally grounded notion of authority and this other way of approaching learning, which is not conservative in that sense. It is open to discovering learning and legitimate learning purposes in the student that may not already be housed in a ready-made fashion in the institution. I think that tension is really fundamental, and it's really hard to handle.

A. M.: That's what I meant to say: as the choices narrow, advising actually seems a more appropriate term.

L. H.: To put it in terms of the tension that I was observing really clearly in the room this morning, what you are calling the "narrowing of options" means that the discussion and the weight of the reference goes more to the conservative side of authority – curriculum and so-called legitimate learning already housed in the institution and its representatives.

L. Z.: This is so interesting to me. I was just working with people from about 30 different countries around the term "mentoring" and it reminded me of the old Bill Clinton line that it depends on what the definition of "is," is. How you juxtaposed it, Lee, was very clear. It also speaks to something else that has been very much on my mind, which is the role of context. That is, we bring who we are to what we do. Who owns these assumptions? So, for example, there's this big power dimension in the eyes of the mentor *and* the mentee. And there's a lot of dynamics that are going on there, which accounts for why mentees are often very reticent and you often hear the comment: "What's my mentor getting out of this?" And the mentor thinking: "Well, I've got 45 minutes; what's this guy doing wasting my time? I'm going to tell him what he needs to know. Why is he asking me all of these questions? This is *the way* to do it." All of this feeds right into the tensions that we've been discussing. So, as I was revising *The Mentor's Guide*, I thought a lot about the circumstances, conditions and contributing forces that people brought to the mentoring relationship that influences how they connected, how they learned and how they interacted with each other.

A. M.: I've been tangentially involved in a program at Columbia University, an "executive master's program in technology management" for people who are interested in becoming chief information officers of corporations. Arthur Langer, who runs the program, has been very proud, as he should be, that he has been able to get the support of a huge number of corporate information executives who volunteer as "mentors" to the students in the program. Every student is assigned a mentor. But, as I see it, there is a

completely taken-for-granted hierarchy in all of this. The “context,” as you might put it, Lois, is that there are experts who are there to “show the ropes” to those who are their juniors. Of course, there is interacting and advising and, I think, sincere helping here, but certainly not collaboration.

L. H.: We’re back to the “tensions” between the two different points of view that were so poignant to me in this morning’s discussion at the community college. There is an important legitimacy in making the claim “Stop asking me all these questions, I need to know from you, senior person, what it takes to succeed in this environment,” which, indeed, might be a hierarchical corporation. Or it might be a community college from which one is hoping to graduate and have one’s degree be accepted by transfer to a four-year college that might not be interested in experiential learning. That desire to be advised about the risks ahead and how to avoid them for the sake of one’s own purposes, which is what mentoring is all about, is a totally legitimate desire.

L. Z.: I think you are making the case for how important it is to have mentoring training. One of the exercises we do when we do a workshop is that we take the mentees in one room and the mentors in the other room and we ask them each about the assumptions they have about the others’ role. And it’s always amazing to me – and also reflective of the culture and the context in which we’re working – the kinds of answers we get. In colleges and universities and in some corporations, we hear that mentees assume that their mentors have all the answers. In some, we hear that their mentors will be available to them 24/7, that the mentors have been there, that they know the right thing to do, and that they’ve experienced the same challenges that the mentees have. And when we get the mentors together, we hear assumptions that are often diametrically *opposite!* However – and this is really significant – through the discussion and the training, what many mentors discover is that they *don’t* have to have all the answers.

A. M.: This isn’t simple for either the mentor *or* the mentee to accept.

L. Z.: I remember a study we did with one organization and one of the mentors said: “My deepest learning is that I didn’t have to have all the answers. The hardest thing for me was to hold back. I knew the right answer, I knew how to fix it, and it was really frustrating for me, but when I went through this training I realized that my purpose was to *ask the questions*. When I went back to my organization, I started to ask more questions that made me listen more and which developed more ownership in my team.”

A. M.: Is there room organizationally – in terms of assumptions about authority and in terms of time – for that kind of un-knowing or admission of lack of knowing? Is there room and is there respect for that point of view? That is, it seems to me that one of the “contexts” that so many institutions are facing is that calls for various kinds of efficiencies reign. Doesn’t mentoring demand a kind of pausing – that “holding back” – and reflection for which there is just less time and space?

L. Z.: I think that what happens is that in the desire to hit the numbers or the preset outcomes, we tend to focus on getting *there* and we forget about the core of mentoring, which is about building and strengthening the relationship and about acknowledging how central relationship is to learning. When I go into institutions, I’m consistently told that the one thing that gets in the way is *time*, perceived or real. However, the real issue is how you deal with and manage that time.

L. H.: A really huge difficulty our students at Empire State College have always faced, because that’s why they’ve come to this college is that they don’t have a lot of time. They’re busy doing their jobs; they are busy taking care of their kids, sometimes kids and parents; with community activities. In other words, they’re adults. So, they have a range of commitments, each one of which is every bit as serious – or more serious – than the commitment they can make to school. It takes a while for them to discover – to learn – that it’s possible to create time for the kind of reflection, invention and collaboration that Alan was talking about and still be timely. One of the things we have to fight with is that it’s so much easier not to see

it that way. It’s so much easier not to see that if you give it the time and patience to learn how to do this, to make this unusual “relationship,” to use your word, Lois, that it’s really going to pay off, *even* in terms of productivity. It’s so much easier to say: “Our students just want to know what they need to do in order to graduate as soon as possible. Why not just tell them?” And that point of view has a lot of clout.

A. M.: But is there evidence that, in fact, the thinness of some advising relations often doesn’t provide the kinds of supports that students and others really need, and there is an important link between the depth of these mentoring relationships and student – or employee – learning? And I don’t mean some crazy romance with the term here, but something that is more than the purely instrumental. In the college context, even take a crucial issue like “retention.” If the student feels a connection that is deeper than merely being shown how to fill out a form or make a choice between X and Y, isn’t it more likely that the person will complete his or her studies?

L. Z.: It definitely makes a difference as to whether someone stays in an institution or stays in an organization. In both cases, with mentoring programs, people are much more likely to stay. It definitely impacts retention. I think the point, the secret, is to learn to sit at the feet of your own experience and learn from it. And I think that’s one of the things that a mentor does: a mentor helps you do that. And here’s how I think this connects with this “time” theme. When organizations want to develop mentoring programs to enrich what they already have, one of the mirrors I hold up for them is to reconceptualize time as part of the infrastructure. We typically think about human resources and technological resources and knowledge and financial resources. But I have added two pieces – one is time and one is leadership. If you think about time as a piece of the infrastructure, it helps shape what is valued and how to create that space and the time for it.

L. H.: So, this legitimates time as a part of the basic work of the institution. Can you give us an example of this?

L. Z.: It means that as a mentee, my manager understands that when I say that I'm going to meet with mentor, my manager is *not* going to say: "Why are you going to take time for that; we have something that's got to get out the door right now."

So, time is seen as valued for mentoring and everyone is pulling in the same direction and it's assumed that someone will *not* abuse that time. Or here's another example: in companies that are global or have multiple locations. "I'm going to meet with my mentor in Canada." "You're going to what!?" "I need a day for that." And then:

"I hope it's a good session. Tell me what I can do to support you when you come back."

L. H.: And that message that goes through the organization originates where?

L. Z.: Leaders have to create value and visibility for mentoring. And they have to be champions for it. They need to recognize that there's learning going on when mentoring is present. They need to acknowledge that mentoring is intrinsically important and that it contributes to the quality of work." When not only an

individual but an entire *institution* pays attention, it creates active communities of practice. In a mentoring culture, which is really what we're talking about here, it's about how we individually and collectively get better at keeping the conversation about mentoring going. That's why I always ask people: "What are you going to tell me a year from now that you're better at doing as a mentor? How have *you* developed as a mentor? Who is going to mentor the mentor? How do we make room and find time for *that*?"

"What if we were to allow the concept of reflection to 'reflect' on itself, not within the confines of a small upstairs room well away from the distortions of subjective experience but rather by running downstairs, exploring the darkness of the basement, flinging open the front door, and venturing out of the house? If reflection could stretch its limbs, get in touch with its bodily held feelings, its discomforts, emotions, intuitions, and imagination, might then awareness emerge of a more expansive calling in the service of human learning and development? Might reflection see that it can embrace a wider range of elements in our learning processes?"

– Richard Jordi, "Reframing the Concept of Reflection: Consciousness, Experiential Learning, and Reflective Learning Practices" Adult Education Quarterly, 61(2), May 2011, p. 184

Discussing Discussion

Himaneer Gupta-Carlson and Colleagues, Center for Distance Learning

Introduction

Discussion forums are an integral aspect of most Center for Distance Learning (CDL) courses, based on an underlying assumption that spirited and meaningful dialogue will help deepen student learning. However, as the experiences shared in this article suggest, discussion forums often suffer from a lack of student participation or stilted dialogue that offers little evidence of new learning.

This dilemma prompted several members of CDL's Humanities team to open up a conversation among full- and part-time college faculty attending the CDL Conference in April 2012 on the viability of discussion forums and on strategies for improving the quality of student discussions. We structured our presentation by modeling the online forum mode in a face-to-face setting, creating three "discussion threads" initiated by CDL Area Coordinators Cindy Conaway (media studies) and Pat Lefor (The Arts) and long-time Historical Studies Instructor Mitchell Wood. CDL Area Coordinator Himaneer Gupta-Carlson (Historical Studies) then asked participants to respond in writing to one or more of the "threads," provided an overview of some of the scholarly material on online discussions, and opened up the forum to general dialogue.

The article below is based on written materials provided by the presenters, moderator and participants who took part in the dialogue.

Thread #1: Creating Strong Discussions: Cindy Conaway

In my courses, Television and Culture, Women, Girls and the Media, and Communication through New Media, discussion is where most of the learning takes place. In many courses, much of the learning may come from textbooks. I tend to want to use a discovery sort of model rather than a "this is the content you should learn



PHOTO: JIM GUPTA-CARLSON

(l-r) Cindy Conaway, Pat Lefor, Sue Epstein and Himaneer Gupta-Carlson

in this class" sort of model. In general, I use books that may represent one small aspect of the subject. I then assume that students will choose a subject that particularly interests them on which they will follow through in a multi-stage project, and for which they will do their own library and Internet research.

I also realize that my classes are more likely than many to be considered "fun," and that I've only taught upper-level courses here, so haven't been in a situation where the majority of students are just getting used to college or online learning, although I have to write to some to tell them not to use "text speak." I often get courses in which, in that first week before the term has begun, there are 30 to 60 postings before I even enter the discussion! I'm also aware that my subjects tend to be somewhat less controversial or personal than some subjects.

I get a ton of discussion in my courses, and the majority of it is substantive and interesting. Students seem to go quickly

from "TV is just entertainment" to "Wow, look at these race, gender and class issues present in what seems like innocuous fluff."

This doesn't happen easily, however. The first time I taught through the Center for Distance Learning, I believed that discussions should be "student run," and therefore stayed out of them. I found that students hardly participated, and that when they did, the discussion was extremely shallow. So I started participating heavily, especially in the earlier modules, attempting to model the behavior I wanted students to follow themselves. Later in the term, students "claim" a book chapter or article and lead a discussion on that reading. I stay out of it, but by then hopefully they're asking the sort of questions I do. I also have encouraged the adjuncts who teach courses for which I am responsible to use this method, as well.

I lay some ground rules. Since I've found that longer discussions tend to be deeper and get to some heavier matters, I ask students to attempt first to read everything and then enter into a discussion already in

progress, only starting a new topic if no one was posting about something related. I also give them the opportunity to start discussions about any topic, as long as they also make sure to discuss the prompts I've provided. I suggest that they think of the discussion forum as a cocktail party: "Would you rather join a group discussing something already, or sit talking to yourself and hope someone joins you?"

I start out participating in nearly every thread. Another good reason for asking students to join discussions rather than have short exchanges is to minimize the number of posts I have to make. These days, I am more likely to tell them that I'll generally only enter into the longer threads. This is partially to minimize the amount of work I have to do. As I've started to teach more sections and do more independent studies, I have less time or patience for every thread. I try, when I respond, to say something about the whole discussion, and to ask a furthering question.

Students don't always follow the guidelines, and there are still plenty of monologues, or dialogues of two or three conversational turns. Often, I'll respond after the module is over and students won't see it, or a student will join in late, and I won't respond to that. I encourage students to move interesting discussions over to the next module, but they don't, which I'm sure squelches something just about to get good before it starts. I do feel hindered by how ANGEL lays out discussions and am hoping that some of the Moodle or Mahara tools will make this easier. I plan to experiment with "ongoing discussions" in the future, or something more Facebook-style.

Thread #2: Assessing Student Participation: Mitchell Wood

In evaluating discussions, we, as instructors, often require a certain amount of participation. The templates for CDL course sections tend to stipulate standards for participation: Students must post a certain number of times per week or module; they must respond to the posts of the others; and the posts must be well written and use appropriate citations when required.

By doing this, I think we lose track of why we want our students to participate in discussions. In order to evaluate them appropriately and fairly, we need to think of why we want them to participate in the first place.

One important measure is to look at how students demonstrate knowledge of course concepts. Some students who are not as capable of writing essays prove themselves very skilled in the shorter form of writing discussion posts. Discussion posts also are good opportunities for students to practice the skills required in essay writing, since discussion posts require them to present one idea and develop it with specific information.

There is a more important function to discussion in the humanities, and the evaluation of a discussion as merely a writing exercise may conflict with that. The idea of the discussion is dialogue, the exchange of ideas; the ability to engage, impact; to appreciate the ideas of others and to learn from them. Discussions should be a transformative learning experience. In the course of a two-week long learning discussion experience, we should expect a student who is an active participant not only to demonstrate an understanding of the topic, but to grow and change.

The question then is not only about evaluation – because that simply relies on students meeting standards that we think they understand – but how to create an environment that will enable the student to succeed at these goals. A couple of suggestions:

- Establishing quantitative standards is helpful because if students do not participate they cannot succeed.

- Reminding them not to repeat what they or others have previously written and actively discouraging that practice (as noted in the guidelines above) is valuable because it forces the student to interact with others.

During the course, there are several important tasks for the instructor. One is to give individual feedback. When reviewing student essays or other written work, we also should try to make suggestions as to how their discussions can improve. Tell students to respond to others, explain their



Mitch Wood

ideas more completely, and answer the questions that other students ask of them. Be active. Students need a model. Given the nature of the discussion questions in many CDL courses, they need to be prompted to think deeper and more analytically about a topic. Ideally, students will require less and less prompting as the term progresses and the instructor presence can decrease, but this will vary from course to course and from group to group.

We provide numerous learning activities because students have multiple ways of learning. However, we then evaluate each learning activity as complete unto itself. We should be evaluating the learning, not the activity. If the principle objective of a discussion forum in a humanities course, for example, is to gain practice in the art

of dialogue, it will be challenging, perhaps impossible, for the mentor to have a formula approach to grading a discussion.

We can use several standards of assessment:

- **The ability to engage in discussion.**
This can be measured quantitatively, by the number of responses and peer responses to students posts, but we must be careful to review these numbers qualitatively as well, so we don't confuse combativeness for reasoned exchange. As noted, if the discussion is successful, students should show some transformation of ideas.
- **Improvement.** As the course progresses, students should be learning to make more complex arguments and to be more attuned and interested in the ideas of others.
- **Writing skills.** In a written discussion, the ability to express one's self is important.
- **Frequency.** You do have to play to learn!

Lastly, we need to realize that some students are better or worse at this learning activity than others activities. When determining students' course grades, this factor needs to be considered. Did their essays reflect an ongoing dialogue with their sources? Did they read and reflect critically on the writings? If so, why should I penalize them because they did not have the time to engage in this kind of discussion with their peers? On the other hand, was their discussion participation particularly outstanding? Did it demonstrate a thorough understanding of course concepts? Did their involvement in discussions help them and other students to think more deeply and broadly about the subject? Did all this occur if their essays were less than perfect? Why not give them additional credit for their engagement in the discussions?

Once again, our key is to evaluate the learning, not the activity.

Carolyn Buscemi, instructor, Community and Human Services

In response to Mitch, I really felt connected to what you said about discussions. This idea of a longer ongoing discussion can

work very well for students in a way that demonstrates their growth of understanding of course concepts. I work in Human Services and often the "real work" doesn't happen until the last five minutes of a session. The same can be true for discussions. In set modules of two-week intervals (with different topics) often the last two days are filled with higher level thought provoking comments. An ongoing discussion would enable a student and his or her peers to tap into such posts without having to move on to another topic. This could expand the breadth of knowledge expressed by the student, thereby allowing instructors to see the progress of the students.

Janelle Pfister, instructor, Community and Human Services

Presenter Mitch – The instructions for the discussion you provided gave a clear overview of your expectation. It seems as though that guideline gives the students who are aiming for a good grade and/or to advance their knowledge a better opportunity within the course. I will apply that in my class.

David Steindorf, instructor, Human Development

I liked the idea of not "grading" discussions but commenting on them in evaluating papers. I also liked the option of an open-ended thread that lasts throughout the term. However, I'm still ambivalent about the criteria of evaluation being one of content, manner of expression, and/or academic style. For example, some of my courses require APA citation when stating "facts" obviously not native to the student. Other courses are only concerned with demonstration of insight, learning or response in critique of fellow students.

Liz Seegert, instructor, media and communications

One of the things Mitch mentioned was "getting students going and raising it to the next level" on the discussion boards. In the courses I teach, "Communication Analysis and Communication Through New Media," there are very mixed bags of students who

often think they know a lot about these topics and only later realize how little they know deep down.

Particularly in the New Media course, I find that students come in with a lot of preconceived ideas, and getting them to let go or at least open themselves up to new concepts is very difficult in the beginning to middle of the term. How can I, as the instructor, raise the level of discussion when dealing with students who seem unwilling or perhaps unable to go there?

Nancy Gadow, instructor, Natural Sciences

I would add the suggestion to use teams when there are about 20 students in a course. I form teams Cardinals and Blue Jays, for example). Students only are asked to join in the conversations for their team. However, they are welcome to visit the other teams and join in some of that discussion if they want to.

I appreciated the comments regarding whether discussion should be graded or not. How do these discussions fit into the overall learning experiences? How do we determine how they are part of the final evaluation and grade?

Thread #3: Questioning the Value of Discussion: Pat Lefor

These remarks are based on my experience as a full-time faculty member at CDL for the past three years, and my attempts to deal with discussions that seem narrow in scope in the two courses that I teach – The History of Western Architecture and a seminar on The History of Photography.

Student participation in discussion is, at best, uneven. Accepting discussion as a given, I tried encouraging students to be more active, tweaking the discussion topics to try to make them more compelling, and suggesting that students see discussion as writing practice. When I inherited The History of Western Architecture course, it came with several very theoretical discussion prompts. That format seemed troubling for an introductory-level course. One prompt, for instance, had as its topic "visionary architecture," without actually indicating that that was the subject. I tweaked that discussion by adding some background

information on visionary and unbuildable architecture. Eventually, I replaced it with a discussion that asked students to focus on comparing similar architectural features, such as the floor plan, the façade, the use of classical elements in two buildings of their choice, one Baroque and one Rococo. And I provided a link to a site that features virtual tours of architecture from both periods.

I also am experimenting with a weekly digest of student posts in that course, highlighting new points that students make, asking follow-up questions and adding new, optional resources. This is a work-in-progress and I've yet to see any real change in the quality or quantity of student posts that I can claim resulted from the digest. To date, I have put the digests in the discussion space and have noticed that follow-up questions and additional resources seem to get more traction when I put them in the announcements. Maybe it is important to think through placement.

The seminar on The History of Photography is an advanced-level study that deals with the construction of that history as well as specific photographers. In this study, I have used a single discussion space for the entire term and asked students to propose discussion questions. This has been somewhat successful when there are more than six students participating in the seminar; it hasn't worked with smaller groups. One issue at play here is the varied interests that students bring to the seminar. Some of them haven't studied art, art history or photography prior to enrolling in the seminar and do not have experience in formulating good topics/questions about the subject. For example, they propose topics such as fashion photography or street photography without asking any questions that might focus the discussion. This experience leads to a question about how might we better take into account the varied backgrounds and levels of preparation of our students.

Reflecting on my experience, I began to question the purpose of discussion. Robin Goodfellow and Anne Hewling (2005) point to a question that we might well ask ourselves: Whose culture informs the centrality of discussion in online courses?

Is it our assumption that discussion is good for students? Further evidence on this point might be seen in our various strategies for getting students to do it – how we grade quantitatively, for instance.

When I was a mentor teaching art history at the Long Island Center, I often hosted study groups in the hope that encouraging discussion among students would make them less dependent on my voice – a voice of authority, at least in their minds. Hearing each other changed, and often improved, the quality of the conversation at those meetings. That activity was not graded. Its impact was more subtle and was manifested in what they wrote.

In another context, I am skeptical of the notion that we are attempting to create a learning community, no matter how temporary, in our courses. This is a difficult task for a single course, particularly one that is part of a student's general learning. In the literature on that topic, I was struck by a statement in Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's (1991) *Situated Learning* that the community of practice for most undergraduate students is the community of educated adults. How might I reframe discussion topics with that idea in mind? Might we think about how discussion, over a number of courses, contributes to that goal?

My tentative conclusion from these lines of thought is that discussion is a learning activity, not an outcome, and that community cannot develop in a single course. How does that change our culture – and expectations – as teachers?

Sue Epstein, CDL faculty/mentor, Business, Management and Economics

To Pat's "posting," do you think it takes students time to feel comfortable enough with the material before they can feel confident asking questions? If that were the case, it might take one or two modules before we can reasonably expect students to formulate and post questions that go beyond the superficial level. I have wondered if I should have different expectations for students' posts early on versus later in the term; and, if so, whether the discussion

"assignment" should change to reflect those different expectations. For example, should I give the students in my Leadership Styles course time to compare differing styles in the first module and then by module three have students post their ideas for discussion that draw upon the topics covered to date in the course?

Brian Morgan, SUNY Geneseo, Education

I see the dilemma of Pat's situation and have felt it both in my live and online courses. One way I have strategized is to consider a couple of things (perhaps more than a couple!).

I look toward the constraints and affordances of both types of discussion – online and live – and see what each has to offer. It is evident that you, Pat, have done this. You see the affordances of time for reflection offered by online (asynchronous) discussion and the compelling immediacy offered by the live (synchronous) discussion. However, I have found ways to think about both environments as what James Gee (2002) calls "semiotic social spaces" instead of communities of practice. In semiotic social spaces, people interact around an evolving collection of meaning that is related to evolving practices and identity. This takes into account the difficulty of belonging based on postings by communities of practice. It also pushes aside the expert/novice or master/apprentice dichotomies and replaces it with a paradigm of allowing varied levels of expertise from all participants similar to the way people participate in video bars.

One way to facilitate is to give students an object to make meaning about, such as a reading and prompts; and require them to create an artifact such as a picture, list, essay, answer, etc., as a representation of their individual meaning making. The group, with professor/instructor standing aside as much as possible, then makes meaning through discussion of each participant's artifact.

The instructor then facilitates the bringing together of these meanings for the entire group. This works in the ANGEL platform or in Moodle.

Scholarship on Discussion: Himane Gupta-Carlson

The impetus for this panel came in January 2012 during a meeting of CDL Humanities team area coordinators. We were discussing our various hopes and desires in regard to curriculum development when questions about the strengths and weaknesses of discussion forums came up. Most of us saw the discussion forums that exist in our classes as an important component of online learning. We spoke of these forums as spaces that could provide for learning through conversation, replacing the instructor-student and student-to-student interchange of the face-to-face classroom. At the same time, we were not entirely sure collectively of how discussion added value to the student learning experience. Troubling that question was an admission that some students participate actively in discussion while others are content to sit on the sidelines. Further muddying the waters was the question of doing away with discussion altogether. With what would we replace the forums with? How would we teach differently?

Some of the first questions that surface in the scholarship on discussion deal with cultural coding. Paige Ware and Claire Kramersch (2005), for instance, note that it is not just differing levels of Internet/ Web 2.0 information literacy that might be affecting student participation in discussion. It also might be cultural differences. Many students see their participation in online communication as a task to be performed for a teacher to evaluate rather than a meaningful way of engaging in learning through conversation. In other words, discussion is not a process of learning but a task to be completed.

Ware and Kramersch (2005) also find that the medium of the Internet tends to impose communicative norms on learner groups that are problematically Western. Robin Goodfellow and Anne Hewling (2005) build on this premise by noting that within this context, a sort of good/bad dichotomy arises. The active online participant is idealized as the “good” student. This student is independent and autonomous. This student participates and benefits from online discussion and sees the environment

in which the discussion unfolds as unthreatening and collaborative. Meanwhile, the bad “other” is the nonparticipant. This individual not only hurts himself or herself by refusing to participate and thus reap the benefits of the collaborative process, but also hurts the whole learning community because nonparticipation undermines the goal of creating community.

Ware and Kramersch (2005) document the imposition of the Western norm on the non-Western learner through an incident in which an American male takes a conversation off topic and is brought back to task by a German female who then bears the brunt of the American male’s anger. The point they wish to make is that the privileging of the Westernized – and I would argue Americanized, masculinized – voice ends up silencing non-Western styles of communication and potentially stifles a diversity of voices that might exist in an online environment. I would suggest that you don’t need a cross-national, global class to see that disparity in action. Consideration of the Empire State College student demographic also might help us see how a discussion forum assignment can be perceived by some students as a necessary performance task to be completed in order to earn a good grade and by others as an intimidating space.

Christopher Jones (2004) dissects the idea of the community of practice as a learning environment to which Pat referred, noting that such communities place a strong burden on students (not instructors) to develop, monitor and control the groups within which they learn. Students who are expected to form community, collaborate and cooperate also are expected to form close ties, an outcome that is not in very many course descriptions and perhaps not in the individual learner’s immediate interest. Jones suggests that the brief time-space interaction of students in an online course is not sufficient to build the lasting meaningful relationships upon which community and critical social change might occur. In proposing a move away from the idea of a community of practice to a network, Jones creates a distinction between weak ties that enable long-term developments of social activism and meaningful relationships,

and strong ties that convey a particular top-down-imposed norm for behavior to students. This norm violates the spirit of the slower, more sustainable long-term relationship-building practice that Jones argues has come to occur almost naturally via the Internet.

With all of this in mind, Goodfellow and Hewling (2005) propose giving a student multiple places to demonstrate knowledge, and, as Mitch point out, using several factors to assess the learning. They suggest the learner be allowed to exercise some flexibility in how they want their learning to take place.

Closing Thoughts

Charles Raymond, Western Civilization

I agree with Cindy that ANGEL discussion is awkward to work with, specifically that threads are not as visible as they were on SLN [SUNY Learning Network].

I like Mitch’s approach in giving directions to participate: (1) Read classmates’ posts; (2) Respond to classmates’ posts with facts-supported responses; (3) Do not repeat classmates’ posts; present new ideas and perspectives.

Pat’s suggestion or approach to use the Announcements area as a place to post questions and resources gave me a new approach for my course.

Menoukha Case, history and culture

[There is an] interesting contrast between Mitch’s implication that discussion can be an “outcome” (or demonstration of outcome that garners a grade which can trump problematic papers) and Pat’s framing of discussion as a learning activity, which I took as part of a process, but probably not the locus of demonstrated learning outcomes. Cindy’s statement that most learning takes place in discussion seems to bridge these perspectives. It also interested me that she herself functions as a kind of “interactive text book.” The differences are intriguing because all three discussed courses that are visually driven. This requires negotiation/translation between media, entailing a double layer of interpretive analysis.

Pat Lefor, The Arts

One of the follow-up questions that I would ask all three presenters has to do with the amount of time our strategies require. Is that time a reasonable investment in fostering student learning? Are there other course activities that are more important in achieving the goal of fostering student learning?

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The following "challenges" and "strategies" were compiled by Himanee Gupta-Carlson from handouts distributed and discussion during the CDL Conference session.

Challenges that online instructors face

- Discussion forum prompts tend to be structured and close-ended.
- Structure of discussion forums often stifles participation by setting rules on minimum postings that students are to make.
- Some students do not participate while others participate too much.
- Because discussion forums are designed to be "student centered," the appropriate level of instructor participation is unclear.

Strategies shared by participants to increase student learning through discussion

- Encourage students to view discussion forums as opportunities to work on writing on topics that will inform their written assignments.
- Connect postings and comments that students made in discussion forums to the students' written assignments, encouraging students to incorporate comments they give to and receive from others into a written piece.
- Design discussion forum assignments as a series of scaffolded tasks that encourage students to post several times during a particular module, deepening their learning on the topic with each task.
- Form student teams and break up a discussion forum assignment so different teams are "teaching" aspects of the course material to each other.
- Create a weekly digest to help students see how learning via discussion evolves.
- Use Course Announcements [in ANGEL] to comment on discussions so that the discussion forum remains a student-centered space.
- Add new questions to the forum if a discussion becomes repetitive.
- Provide feedback to students on the learning they gained through discussions.
- Use one discussion forum space for the entire term, and allow students to develop topics of their choice that are pertinent to the course.

Adjunct Nation

Mindy Kronenberg, Long Island Center

Behold the ubiquitous yet mysterious adjunct, a growing yet largely neglected or misunderstood force in the academic workplace. Like most colleges across the country, public and private, two- and four-year, Empire State College has a burgeoning community of part-time and adjunct faculty across the institution and across the disciplines. This overall growth, and its impact on the quality of academic service, has been the subject of numerous articles in a variety of education periodicals.

The most recent issue of *On Campus* (the American Federation of Teachers magazine for college faculty and professional staff) examined the pay scale, resources and general support available to part-time instructional staff in most institutions. Though their numbers are considerable – the U.S. Department of Education identified the number of part-time, nontenure track faculty as 1.3 million out of the 1.8 million total faculty teaching today – there still lacks wide recognition of how valuable this population is and the necessity to provide appropriate and sufficient support for their teaching and scholarship (McKenna, 2012).

Part of the problem was a dearth of national and local information on the hiring practices and working conditions of this group. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (2012), a group of higher education associations, disciplinary associations and faculty organizations, conducted a survey in 2010, “A Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members,” that revealed a lack of necessary resources, support and recognition for adjunct professional development. Another issue was how part-time and adjunct faculty were often designated as “temporary,” even as they remained on staff for years and indicated interest in a permanent commitment.

The May issue of the *Higher Education Advocate*, the bimonthly newsletter of the National Education Association, includes

a discussion on the potential benefits of an adjunct union to address working conditions and access to office space, grading systems, college email and participation in college governance. The consideration for greater recognition and support of the “contingent” faculty in the larger college community was connected to providing better service to students. When adjunct faculty can have an onsite presence, a voice in academic decision-making, and a virtual portal for messages and curricula, it encourages inclusion and eases accessibility and communication with their students (Flanner, 2012).

Over the past year, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* has devoted several articles to wide-spread adjunct issues, including last-minute hiring practices and inadequate prep time, and obstacles to obtaining computer access, phones, library resources and curriculum guidelines. The journal’s August 23rd issue included a piece by June that described a recent report published by the Center for the Future of Higher Education, a virtual grass roots initiative dedicated to ensuring an affordable, quality education to all sectors of our society while monitoring current reform movements and trends aimed at “efficiency” and “accountability” in higher education. The report, based on findings from a survey conducted last fall by the New Faculty Majority (2011), an advocacy group, revealed deficits in adjunct working conditions that can adversely affect student learning and engagement and jeopardize morale and teaching effectiveness (Street, Maisto, Merves, & Rhoades, 2012).

The connection between service to adjuncts and service to students has become part of a broader discussion and has caught the attention of the American Federation of Teachers, which, with support from the American School Counselor Association, developed and distributed college evaluation kits for high school students that factor in the pay scale and participation of adjuncts.



Mindy Kronenberg

Accrediting commissions, including Middle States, also are being asked by education advocates to pay closer attention to performance review practices and professional opportunities for adjuncts as part of comprehensive institutional reviews (Schmidt, 2012).

At Empire State College, several initiatives have been underway to identify, examine and develop support for the adjunct population across our centers and programs. This past year, in my capacity as faculty associate for the Center for Mentoring and Learning (CML), and as a CML advisory board member involved with the Part Time and Adjunct Faculty Working Group, I worked with Director Kathy Jelly and Karen LaBarge on several projects designed to better integrate and support adjuncts in our college community, locally, in programs and at-large.

One of our challenges was to define the role of “adjunct” at our college, as the parlance for contingent faculty could vary according to location and tradition. In early conversations of our working group, we discovered that “adjunct” was sometimes used to describe partial-line faculty. In other instances, adjuncts were known as “tutors” (a phrase printed on older learning contracts that distinguished temporary teaching staff from “mentors.”). We came to an agreement that the “adjuncts” of our focus were those

who taught by seasonal contract or term-to-term, whether on a short-or long-term basis, according to center or program needs.

We also had to consider how adjuncts might define themselves within the context of their overall teaching experience at Empire State College, and whether they felt isolated, ignored or welcomed in the scheme of things. We wanted to provide nuts and bolts information to help them function as instructors while at the same time presenting the concepts and foundational ideas that make Empire State College unique among universities. This could be valuable in helping to bolster pedagogy, forge an identity with the college and develop *esprit de corps* with our community.

After reviewing materials and the former incarnation of faculty handbooks from several locations, we developed, produced and distributed a *Resource Guide for Adjunct Faculty in Regional and Networked Learning Centers* that introduced the mission and core values of Empire State College, our dedication to adult learning and mentoring, and included information on SUNY criteria, learning contracts, assessment, and available resources for students and staff. The guide is available online¹, and will be updated regularly to include new program information or to reflect policy changes. There also is an abbreviated, hard copy and online *Quick Start Resource Guide* that is useful for day-to-day practices and distribution locally at adjunct orientations. Information from both the School for Graduate Studies and the Center for Distance Learning has been gathered and incorporated into the guides for a new collegewide version.

We also configured an adjunct Frequently Asked Questions document that aims to answer basic questions (“Will I have an email address?” “What library services are available?”), and posted this on the CML website. This is a work in progress, as we continue to engage and encourage discussion among the adjunct population and discover how best to serve their pedagogical and scholarly needs. (CDL, for example, has developed an FAQ list using this document as a reference and refining it for its own constituency.) An adjunct spotlight feature, called “Innovations in Practice,” also is

posted on the CML website²; this section highlights the personal and professional achievements of adjuncts collegewide and publicizes their collaborative efforts with other faculty and staff. This will help bring awareness to the expertise and contributions of our adjunct faculty and perhaps inspire future conversation and collaboration across programs and disciplines. Because of their connection to other institutions and industries, adjuncts can serve as our “ambassadors,” sharing our mission and educational opportunities with populations outside Empire State College.

Through my faculty associate role, I have become much more aware of the issues impacting the teaching effectiveness and overall interaction of the adjuncts who serve our students. At my center, I have had the good fortune to become acquainted with adjuncts in different areas of study and developed ongoing conversations with them that have helped to enrich and inform my own pedagogy. The experience also reminded me of how meaningful it can be for adjuncts to truly understand the mission of the college and to have an opportunity to share their teaching techniques with other adjuncts and faculty. These exchanges inspired an idea for a collegewide video to help introduce adjuncts to the college and inspire them, using narratives relevant to their Empire State College work. This project is still in discussion and has exciting potential to communicate powerful ideas through personal testimony.

I am confident that the adjunct projects CML has initiated will evolve as we discover new ways to reinforce best practices, share resources and encourage camaraderie and creative teaching strategies. The more we learn about our adjunct population – their areas of expertise, their immediate and long term needs, their intellectual and creative ambitions, the better we can prepare them and support them in our shared mission to provide excellence in teaching and mentoring to our students.

Notes

- ¹ *The Resource Guide for Adjunct Faculty in Regional and Networked Learning Centers*, the *Quick Start Resource Guide for Adjunct Faculty*

in Regional and Networked Learning Centers, and the “FAQs for Empire State College Adjunct Faculty” can be viewed at <http://cml.esc.edu/resources/internalresources/adjunctresourceguides>.

- ² The “Innovations in Practice” section of the CML website is located at http://cml.esc.edu/mentoring/innov_practice.

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Making Connections: Big Picture Schools, Ernest Boyer and Empire State College

Donna Mahar, School for Graduate Studies

“Bucolic” is not a word usually associated with the structured world of public high schools, especially schools that appear on the government’s Persistently Low Achieving (PLA – not prior learning assessment!) list. PLA schools are laden with restrictions, mandates and the need to raise student scores on high stakes assessments. When I walk the halls and visit the classrooms of PLA schools, I frequently think of Dante’s “Purgatorio” rather than a peaceful Arcadian setting where shepherds nurture their flocks by providing guidance and sustenance.

On Sept. 21, 2011 my concept of public high schools became problematized much in the same way coming to SUNY Empire State College challenged my view on what a postsecondary education could and should encompass. On that autumn morning, I made my first visit to a public high school where 16 Life Science students were outside enjoying the warm weather before the beginning of class. The surrounding landscape of barns, cows and fields was accentuated by white noise provided by an unseen interstate highway. Several students remained perched high in a tree they were climbing when the shepherd of this pastoral flock asked them to “circle up.” Lenny Oppedisano was the science advisor for this group of 101s at the LaFayette, New York Big Picture school. Like Empire State College, Big Picture schools have their own terminology, with 101 referring to first year students. More significantly, like Empire State College, Big Picture Learning was founded by educational visionaries who were determined to expand the boundaries of secondary and postsecondary education in order to bring more students into the fold.

The Big Picture Learning movement was established in 1995 by Dennis Littky and Elliot Washor to “demonstrate that schooling and education can and should be

radically changed” (Big Picture Learning, 2012, para. 1). Littky and Washor sought to design schools where students actively participate in their learning from design to assessment. By 2008, the year the LaFayette, Big Picture School was established, there were over 60 Big Picture schools operating in 14 states as well as in Australia, Israel, and the Netherlands. The movement continues to grow in New York state, even in times of significant cuts to education: in the fall of 2012, Big Picture schools will open in Buffalo and Oswego. Littky (2004) summed up the movement this way, “[It is] a movement that is passionate about educating one student at a time, about evaluating students with multiple forms of assessment, and about measuring students’ progress against real-world standards. [It is] a movement that values students as individuals; values families as integral to each child’s learning; values communities as resources; and values educators as change agents who, together, have the power to better our neighborhoods, cities, states, countries, and world” (p. xv).

The rolling hills of LaFayette, N.Y. are not representative of all Big Picture settings. The first school started by Littky and Washor has become one of six schools that comprise The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center – The Met – in Providence, Rhode Island. Using the success of the Met’s template demonstrating that small, community integrated, public high schools can lead to college and career readiness for some of the most at-risk youth, Littky and Washor established The Big Picture Company to support schools where students are partners in designing their own learning experiences. Oakland, Sacramento, San Diego, Denver, Detroit, Chicago and Indianapolis are cities where Big Picture Schools have flourished. (Meier as cited in Littky, 2004). This is not to imply that something as radically different as the Big Picture philosophy has been embraced with



Donna Mahar

open arms by all educational stakeholders. Significant financial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation did not stop community members in LaFayette from calling the district office when Big Picture students were seen outside on a school day without adult supervision. Just as the Big Picture philosophy seeks to educate one student at a time, educating one community member at a time regarding the power of alternate ways to look at traditional education is worth what it holds for students and the larger community.

I was at the Big Picture serving as a mentor to Gwen Lennox, an Empire State College graduate student enrolled in the Master of Arts in Teaching clinically-rich residency program for teacher preparation. The residency program requires graduate students to work with a certified teacher in his or her content area from the start of school in September through mid-May of the following year. The MAT residency students co-teach from the first day of school, gradually assuming more responsibility as the school year progresses until they become the lead teacher for eight weeks in the spring. Gwen was a member of the first residency cohort, and as such, was

part of the process of building partnerships between Empire State College and regional middle and high schools.

When Gwen approached me in July 2011 about forming a partnership with the Big Picture, I wasn't aware of this educational movement. In addition to giving me Littky's 2004 book, *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone's Business*, Gwen wrote the following rationale explaining why the LaFayette Big Picture School would be a rewarding residency placement:

The Big Picture School is an international high school model that closely resembles Empire State College's undergraduate program. Active learners who create individualized learning plans determine their learning sequences and styles. Students not only learn from advisors within the school but also engage with mentors in the community through internships.

Big Picture students, like Empire State [College] students, are not limited by the offerings of more traditional programs; rather they are challenged to pursue their interests and play an active role in their learning. (G. Lennox, personal communication, July 12, 2011)

Although I had read my homework on the Big Picture before joining the community that September morning, my reading could not prepare me for the "active, reflective and creative academic engagement" (Empire State College, 2005) that engulfed me as I entered the building. The heart of the structure was one large room used for individual and group mentoring. In addition to Lenny, several other advisors, as well as Principal Susan Osborn, were working there on individual and group studies as well as on their own paperwork. Students, teachers and the principal were all on a first name basis and several students stopped by the kitchen to get a snack or something to drink prior to the start of their science workshop.

Gwen noticed the parallels between Empire State College and the Big Picture School even before beginning her residency placement. She volunteered at the Big Picture School during the 2010-2011 school year and was excited to connect the work

going on there with her Empire State College studies. In his 2004 book, Littky draws on the work of Ernest Boyer to stress that time within a school building does not indicate that learning is occurring. In 1993, Ernest L. Boyer, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching made this incredible proclamation:

I'm convinced, the time has come to bury the old Carnegie unit, [which has based] education in this country ... on seat time, not on learning. And since the Foundation I now head created this unit of academic measure nearly a century ago, I feel authorized this morning to officially declare it obsolete. I also am convinced that the proposed National Assessment program should not be implemented until we are very clear about what schools should be teaching as we enter the next century. Let's not put the cart before the horse. (p. 33)

With the advent of No Child Left Behind in the first decade of the new century and now the Common Core Learning Standards that have been adopted by 45 states, it seems that the cart is leading the way. Realizing that high stakes tests are gatekeepers for success both within and after high school, Big Picture Schools prepare students to successfully complete state mandated tests to be college and career ready while maintaining committed to a student-driven curricula. For Gwen, balancing the state and Big Picture philosophies while completing a state regulated certification program required continual reflection on her roles as advisor, graduate student and future classroom teacher.

And so on that sunny September day the year was off. I entered a wonderland where, much like Alice, I began to believe that six or more impossible things would occur on the mornings I spent at Big Picture. The idea that high school students could take an active role in planning their degree programs in an era of increased state and federal regulations was difficult to comprehend and magical to watch. Students at Big Picture graduate with a New York state Regents diploma, yet they take part in deciding when to take the required content exams, how

they need to prepare for the exams, and in the case of science, if they are in the most meaningful course of study.

In order for students to meet the New York state science requirement for a Regents diploma, Gwen and Lenny spent an hour Monday, Wednesday and Friday conducting a Life Science workshop where students would complete the labs and learn the material necessary to pass the Life Science Regents. These workshops were structured around the New York state curriculum, yet remained focused on students and the community. The majority of students were from a neighboring Native American reservation, and Gwen worked to enhance lessons with videos and materials that embraced and acknowledged their cultural beliefs. While Gwen led the Life Science workshop on Jan. 18, 2012, Lenny worked individually with a young man who decided he was better suited to take the Earth Science Regents. Several of the Life Science students felt that they could successfully pass the Regents exam in January and they were working quietly in a study group at a table where the principal was doing her work. It is highly unlikely that students would be provided opportunities to make these curricular decisions at a school with a more traditional philosophy. At a PLA school, these choices would be almost impossible for students to take part in.

While on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays students met with their advisory group at 8:45 a.m., their first academic workshop began at 9:30, the second workshop started at 10:15, lunch at 11, physical education at 11:40, advisory and independent work at 12:20, and dismissal at 1:15. It is interesting to note that physical education took place on a blacktop parking lot with one basketball hoop. As with everything, the Big Picture was able to accomplish a lot without the equipment found at larger schools. Keeping the focus on students allows students to remain central to all school decisions.

Tuesdays and Thursdays were the days when students spent time at community-based internships, shadow days and college classes. In the weekly *T.G.I.F.* internal faculty newsletter for March 2, 2012, Gwen reflected on her experiences on the Tuesday

and Thursday following a weeklong school break. The *T.G.I.F.* newsletter is something Littky initiated at The Met and is part of all Big Picture Schools. Here the adults at the school reflect on their week and share student accomplishments.

One of the most impressive and noticeable changes was the absence of students in the building on Tuesday and Thursdays. Typically we would not be celebrating the absence of students, but on Tuesday and Thursdays students were showing up to school and then leaving again for internships, shadow days and college classes. Though we may not be able to teach welding or photography, our students are linking up with experts in the field who can and learning useful skills while making a positive contribution to their community.

A quieter Tuesday and Thursday gave me time to have valuable one-on-one sessions with a few students. This week, I was able to work with Malajia on developing her learning plan. Throughout the process, Malajia was able to vocalize what I think many other students are feeling. She pointed out that previously in her education people had told her specifically what to do; now she is being asked to create her own projects which she said is really hard! She and many others fought through with grace and by the end of the week had completed learning plans. (Lennox, 2012a, p. 4)

An internship that has become a year-round commitment for participating students is a garlic field whose profits support student scholarships. The amount of a student's scholarship money is based on the time dedicated to the project. This idea was conceived by the LaFayette School Superintendent Peter Tigh in 2010, and the district provided \$250 for seed garlic. Harvesting the 2011 crop was an opportunity for students in the three high schools serving this region, the Big Picture alternative school, the LaFayette High School and the Onondaga Nation School, to collaborate on a common goal. The best garlic from the 2011 harvest was set aside to replant, enabling the project to



PHOTO: MARIA SALATINO/POST-STANDARD

Corey Morabito (right), Gwen Lennox (center) and Marissa Atkinson (left) peel away excess foliage from a Kettle River variety of garlic as part of the Big Picture.

be self sustaining (Corbett, 2011). Gwen was involved in the garlic project when she was a volunteer at the school as well as during her internship year. Just as Malajia recognized the rigor involved in creating and completing learning plans, students soon learned that running a business from start to finish also was hard work. When the garlic was ready earlier than expected in July 2011, Gwen volunteered to take part in the harvesting and her work was captured in the local newspaper.

Gwen reflected on the tension of being a mentor and a mentee, a teacher and a learner, throughout the year in the residency journal she shared with me and in her weekly contributions to *T.G.I.F.* Although she planned her lessons and reviewed student learning plans, she learned that teaching is often like harvesting garlic; sometimes you can't control when the harvest is ready to take place. In the March 30 issue of *T.G.I.F.*, Gwen reflected that even though a conference she put a lot of effort into did not live up to her expectations, it still provided opportunities for growth and enlightenment. As she wrote, it gave me "a renewed appreciation for my coworkers and our students. Looking backward, this was a great week."

After describing events of the week, Gwen concluded with:

Over the past couple of weeks, we have been reminding each other as a staff about staying true to the Big Picture philosophy "one student at a time." This week, I got to spend one-on-one time with Odenhaida while she worked on her ribbon shirt and Galah as she completed a paper on racial profiling. Both of these girls worked very hard and I was glad to be able to take the time to really appreciate that. (Lennox, 2012b, p. 5)

Gwen's words gave me pause to think about Empire State College during a time of change within the college and in higher education throughout the nation. She reminded me that mentoring one student at a time, regardless of the mode of study, will keep me aligned with the fifth Empire State College (2005) Core Value:

We value a learning-mentoring community that:

- defines each member as a learner, encouraging and appreciating his or 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. (para. 5)

On May 21, 2012, Dennis Littky visited the LaFayette Big Picture School. When he learned that Gwen was a graduate student at Empire State College, he said he was aware of the college and discussed values the college shares with the Big Picture philosophy. I received an email from Lenny later that day stating, “The co-founder of the Big Picture said he loves Empire State College.” Although I was not able to meet Dennis Littky during his visit, I was thrilled to have him confirm what I had realized on that sunny autumn day, something perhaps best stated by Ernest Boyer, an educator

will be encouraged to be creative, not conforming, and learn to cooperate not compete. (as cited in Littky, 2004, pp. 3-4)

The 2012-2013 school year will bring an Annual Professional Performance Review to all teachers and principals in New York state where single test scores will play a significant role in how individual teachers, administrators and schools will be judged. Rather than looking at Boyer’s words from two decades ago as unrealized anomalies of a lost dream, the growth and proliferation of both Empire State College and the Big Picture Schools demonstrates that creativity and cooperation need not be excluded in the face of high stakes assessments.

I began with a reference to Dante’s “Purgatorio” as a metaphor for my journey through PLA schools within the Central New York region. Gwen has acted as my

from millipedes and newts to trillium and moss. Just like when they are in school, each student worked at their own pace, taking time to catch their breath or enjoy their surroundings. One after another each student made it to the clearing at the top and awed at the view ... students were able to look up the side of Morgan Hill and see where they had just hiked to. “Wow! We were all the way up there!?” many exclaimed when they saw the small clearing. I was proud, but more importantly, just as in the post-exhibition narratives they were able to reflect on their own accomplishments. (Lennox, 2012c., p. 5)

Like me, it seems many of our students are having a hard time letting go of Big Picture. After tests were finished and projects were completed, students kept coming back, some even asking if we would be here over the summer. I have heard many stories from parents about the ways their children have changed since coming to Big Picture and this was plain to see in our final weeks. Some students showed up to participate beyond their requirements and some (including past graduates) made a special trip to Clark Reservation to celebrate classmates’ graduation. You might think this is rare, or that it’s a different type of kid who goes to Big Picture, but I disagree. To take a line from David McCullough Jr.’s commencement speech, ‘Our kids aren’t special. They are like kids everywhere, they are just responding to being in a special place.’ (Lennox, 2012d, p. 5)



PHOTO: LENNY OPPEDISANO

Gwen Lennox (far right) and her students on Tinkers Falls hang glider take-off point.

whose insight guided the design of both Empire State College and Big Picture, in his 1993 “Making Connections” speech:

I know how idealistic it may sound, but it is my urgent hope that in the century ahead students in the nation’s schools will be judged not by their performance on a single test, but by the quality of their lives. It’s my hope that students in the classrooms of tomorrow

Virgil, a guide leading me up a mountain of rules and regulations to see a place where real learning occurs, one student at a time. Since this is Gwen’s story it seems apt to end with her words:

On Friday after all 101 exhibitions were completed, Lenny and I took students to Tinker Falls and Labrador Hollow ... On the way up students pointed out many interesting organisms

Note

You can contact Susan Osborn (sosborn@lafayetteschools.org) and Lenny Oppedisano (loppedisano@lafayetteschools.org) to learn more about the Big Picture and arrange a visit. You also can learn more about Big Picture schools at <http://www.bigpicture.org>.

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“Transformative learning, the process of developing more open and better justified habits of mind, frees people from constraints and is a liberating experience. But in the journey there can be times of grief, pain, conflict, and a feeling of loss of the old way of life. The educator who helps initiate this journey is responsible for ensuring that support is available. Support comes through relationship with another person and especially through relationship with someone who is authentic, open, and genuine in their caring. Becoming an authentic teacher is, in itself, an important developmental and transformative process for the educator, and making that explicit helps establish trust and support. Each educator needs to find his or her own best way to form relationships with learners.”

– Patricia Cranton, Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults 2nd edition, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006, p. 178

It's 4 a.m., Really?

Michael Mancini, Central New York Center

It was 4 a.m. and neither my dog, Lila, nor I knew why we were getting up. My partner was unfazed by the insistent alarm. Then I remembered I had to head to Saratoga. Lila, with a roll of her eyes, went back to sleep. This began my months-long journey heading east to work on a part-time reassignment in the Office of Communications and Government Relations.

Once my body warmed itself to the shock of being up at 4 a.m., I put the kettle on to make some coffee and after its whistle cut through the quiet morning, I poured the hot water into my unnecessarily expensive Bodium French press travel mug – yes they make those – headed into the dark, cold February morning, with suits and dog in tow, and made my way to the mother ship.

And dark it remained until well beyond Utica. The casual observer, or better known as “focused on driving” drivers, may well have missed the sights along the way. But I pride myself on seeing all that is around, even if I might miss what it plainly in front of me.

The soundtrack of my trip is often my Kate Rusby station on Pandora Internet Radio. Rusby is an English folk singer who I stumbled upon a year or so ago. Having complete control of the radio, which is often otherwise usurped, has allowed me to discover other great artists and songs, from June Tabor to “Winter Song” by Emily Smith as well as old favorites like John Denver.

I have been doing this drive for many months now and have enjoyed seeing the chill of winter surrender to the warmth of spring and spring, in turn, allow summer to blaze. While the 4 a.m. alarm is no less jarring, and the dog remains unimpressed



Michael Mancini

with my rising hour, and my partner still remains unfazed, what has changed is my appreciation for the Saratoga jaunt. I love to see Utica poke its head out about 40 minutes into my drive, and a bit down the strip to peer into the Mohawk Valley.

Exit 27, which often never comes fast enough despite my efforts, provides a time to slow down and wonder at the tired brownstones of Amsterdam. How did this place look 40 years ago? Was it a great upstate city? Did it have a Starbucks?

These thoughts are soon dismissed as I embark on the open fields of whichever town I enter next. For a long time, the farms and quaint houses provide a welcomed welcome to the final stretch of the trip. In the winter months, the sun would be just about rising over the barns. I did try one day to grab a picture of it while driving, which proved a worthless pursuit, beyond being entirely stupid.

The Holiday Inn is my hotel of choice given it is pet friendly and steps away from 2 Union. Most mornings, I could check in at 8 a.m. After staying there for several

weeks, I became known to the staff. And by “I,” I mean Lila. Lila is what some would call an accessory dog. But it has become painfully obvious that as far as the staff at the Holiday Inn is concerned, I am Lila’s accessory. Or better put: the conduit by which they get to enjoy my dog.

The return home is equally gratifying, for wholly different reasons. Lila, much like a compass, knows which direction we are heading and responds accordingly, usually by trying to burrow her way out of the carrying case, emboldened by excitement.

Prior to arriving at the Thruway, I stop for my routine large coffee hazelnut Coolatta and an order of hash browns at Dunkin’ Donuts. I know, healthy. And I am always happy to see the Iroquois rest stop, the Coolatta being large and all. I have become apt at sneaking the dog into the rest stop, which I am sure is not allowed, and the secrets of which I won’t reveal here.

The drive home, during the late spring and summer months, requires some squinting but the sight of evening sun on the Mohawk River can ease any man’s trouble. When I see nature in this way, I get a glimpse into what inspired John Denver to write those majestic and soaring songs about the great outdoors. I, however, am fine with living vicariously through him, rather than getting firsthand knowledge camping out at Rocky Mountain National Park with the bugs, the bears and lack of room service.

For those who have done this drive for years, and those who have come by different ways, and those who have been less frequent travelers, I hope that as you embark on your next journey to Saratoga, you will take some time to notice the wonderful scenery, for just long enough to stay in your lane, of course.

Using Interactive Tools to Enhance Language Learning in an Online Environment

Nataly Tcherepashenets, David F. Wolf II and Hui-Ya Chuang, Center for Distance Learning

Introduction

Students' continuous interest in world languages and cultures inspires creativity in designing online language courses, which currently include Spanish, French, Italian and Chinese. Learning and teaching new languages and cultures in the online setting is not an easy task. People often ask, "How do you teach a language course online?"

In fact, online language learning is not as radical as it may first seem. Computer assisted language learning (CALL) has been around since the 1960s, when it was often used for traditional drill-and-practice techniques (Marty, 1981). Later, particularly after Levy's (1997) research, more robust language learning theories began to be adopted by CALL strategists. With the development of several Web 2.0 applications, we can now enhance language and culture learning with interactive tools (Thomas, 2008). In this essay, we focus on the discussion of interactive tools, which are instrumental in the development of (inter) cultural competence, which along with four basic skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking) is a key learning objective for all Center for Distance Learning language courses.¹ The tools upon which we'll focus here are interactive maps, timeline, flashcards and Elluminate/Collaborate.

Geography, Culture and Language Learning

When students decide to study a foreign language, they are usually interested in becoming effective communicators. This means they need to acquire a set of linguistic skills along with the in-depth understanding of culture(s), where the target language is used. Geography plays a significant role in shaping both cultures and languages. Learning activities, which engage students in the exploration of interactive maps or mapblogs for the purposes of analysis and



(l-r) Hui-Ya "Laura" Chuang, Nataly Tcherepashenets and David Wolf

comparison, allow students to unravel this role, as well as discover the diversity of cultures, where the target language is used.

Mapblogs are among the college's first open educational resources (OER), created through the collective effort of the area coordinator, part-time language faculty and instructional designers and now adopted by the entire language program at CDL. While learning with the interactive map, which later, due to its blog architecture became known as a "mapblog," students, by selecting a location, receive access to a vast set of resources, such as text, hyperlinks, images, video and panoramic virtual tours.

Kent Stanton (former instructional designer) and David Wolf (academic support technologist) played a key role in developing technological aspects of these innovative learning objects. Originally conceived and created in 2007, the Spanish map was the interactive map to supply online resources for students at Empire State College. At this time, it was an interactive Flash object that supplied hyperlinked resources when regions

were selected. The map was upgraded in 2010 to use a Google Maps API (application programming interface) and a Drupal blog architecture. It now includes more resource links, images, video and original text, as well as viewing tools to focus on specific world regions. A layer called "Points of Interest" provides access to various "points" that reveal these resources. Viewers can control the level of detail of the map and zoom in on regions to investigate geographic boundaries, cities and other geographical information while maintaining the ability to access the resources from the markers. This is the case of the new Spanish map, <http://links.esc.edu/maps/spanish>, which highlights countries where Spanish is the official language.

The Francophone map (see Figure 1), <http://links.esc.edu/maps/french>, is similar to the Spanish map in architecture but with various layers that learners can opt to select. The layers provide specific regional information by merely selecting a feature in the key, including: where French is the

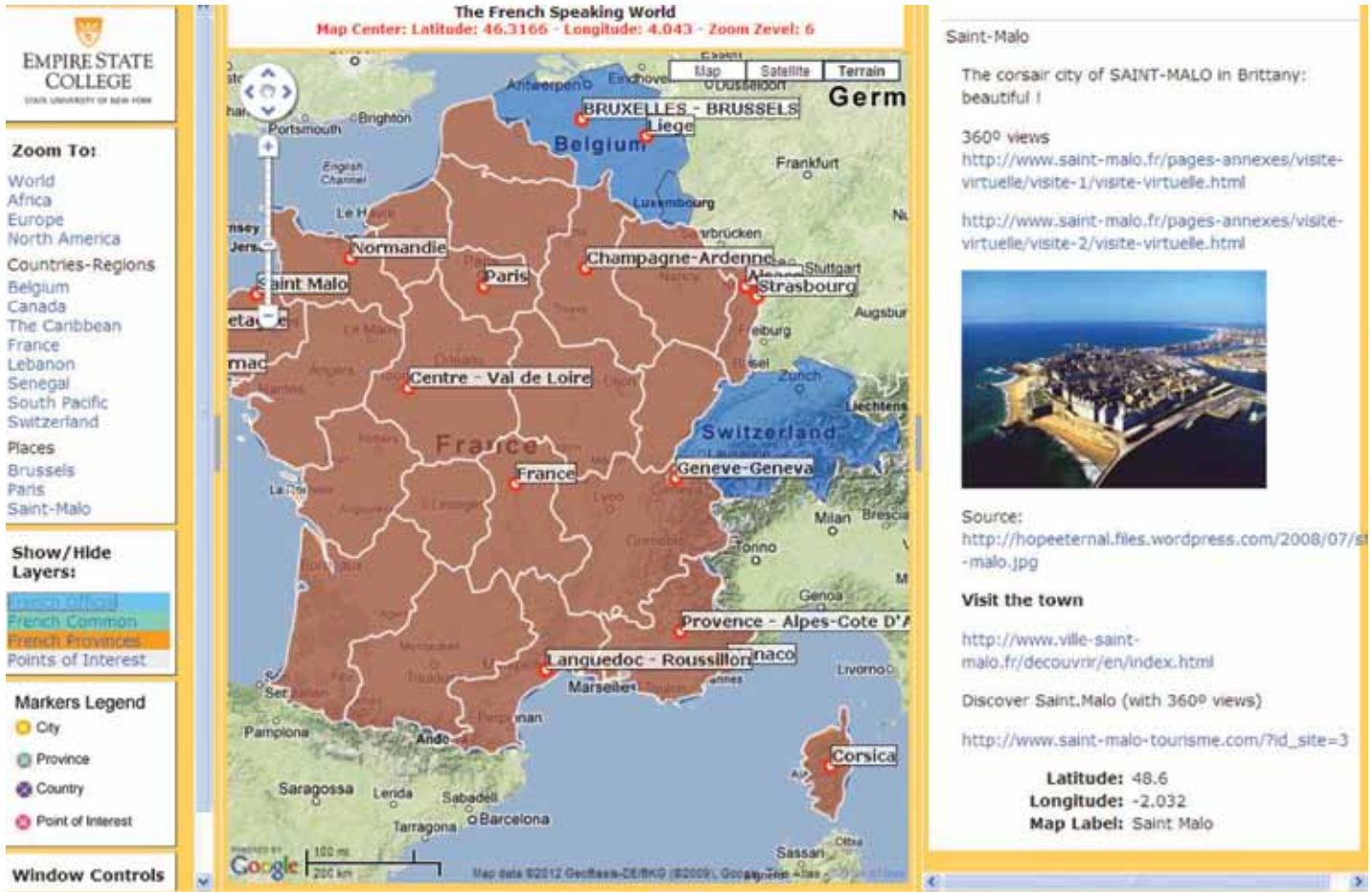


Figure 1: Above is a screenshot of the Francophone map. This mapblog presents an interactive map where learners can explore the learning environment in several ways. They can choose how to see the map, such as using satellite photos or relief maps, as well as have the option to select pre-sets that present various areas where French is spoken. If they choose the Point of Interest layer, they are presented with several markers that, when selected, provide focused resources to develop a keen understanding of the culture and language of the specific geographic regions. On the lower part of the map, in the center, is a gray tab that, when activated, offers help in navigating and using the mapblog, as well.

official language; where French is commonly spoken; the provinces of France; and the Points of Interest (markers that lead to resources such as text, hyperlinks and images). The key also contains navigation tools to zoom to specific regions, such as the Caribbean or Belgium. These added features enhance the learners' environment so that they can choose to view various geo-political relationships also while having a platform offering useful vetted resources to assist their understanding of the language and culture that affects the language.

As we developed the mapblogs further, we decided to make them easier to access and offer multiple navigations to accommodate various learning styles. First, we switched

to a mapping architecture that allows us to easily embed the map directly on a page within a course. We found that with a seamless interface, students are more likely to use the tool. By offering tags and categories, the blogging nature is accentuated and offers textual learners another way of exploring the content. Currently we have three of these mapblogs to assist our language courses. They are:

Canary Islands <http://commons.esc.edu/canaryislands/map/>

Carta Italiana <http://commons.esc.edu/italianmap/>

Chinese Map <http://commons.esc.edu/cdlchinese/>

One further advantage of this new architecture is that it accommodates mobile devices. This better prepares all of us for future tools and adopts a strategy for mobile assisted language learning (MALL) (Shield & Kukulka-Hulme, 2008).

The interactive mapblogs have received very positive feedback from students and faculty. As the features of the mapblogs increased, so did the tool's popularity. Finding mapblogs to be efficient pedagogical tools for language and culture learning, our partners in the SUNY Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project from the University of Las Palmas, Spain, expressed interest in collaboratively creating an interactive map of the Canary Islands. As a result, this object



Figure 2: At left is a screenshot of the Chinese Culture timeline. Each point can be activated to reveal text, images, hyperlinks and video with a click of a mouse. Learners can explore the space as well as opt to present the information in four separate presentation styles: as a Timeline, a List, a Flipbook and a Map. Each presentation mode offers a unique presentation of the same content to accommodate various learning styles.

is used in the new international team-taught course *Advanced Spanish: Language and Culture*.

As mentioned earlier, mapblogs are open educational resources (OERs). While students can access the mapblogs from within the course, there also is a feature that will allow students to view the resource on a separate Web page. These resources can be bookmarked and referenced by learners who want to continue expanding their knowledge about world cultures beyond their course work. It also affords students, researchers, educators and colleges an excellent learning resource. We have included the links to these resources to help any mentor wishing to use them in their courses.

Time Travel and Language Learning

While mapblogs enhance exploration of the dynamic relationships between geography, culture and language, a timeline permits insights into the key moments of the historical development of the target culture, presented in a diachronic way. For example, activities that engage students in the exploration of the timeline in *Introductory Chinese Language and Culture* allow language learners to discover some of the major Chinese inventions and analyze their impact on world civilization.

Information is presented textually, visually and may contain hyperlinks to further resources as well as embedded video. Chinese terms accompany the events to reinforce their vocabulary.

The timeline is one way to present the content that can accommodate multiple learning modalities. The learning objects offer students four different presentations of the same information: Timeline, Flipbook, List and Map. These presentations are easily toggled with a simple click of a mouse and can accommodate different learning styles. The timeline is seamlessly embedded within the course, which allows students to interact with it without having to leave the native learning environment of the course.

Shall We Speak?

Speaking is the most difficult skill to teach online, but, as noted earlier, for many students, becoming an effective communicator is the main motivation for taking language courses. Active interaction with the highly qualified instructors with native or near native fluency, enhanced by technology, such as *Elluminate/ Collaborate*, makes the mastering of speaking skills possible across time and space. Indeed, students are required to meet synchronously with both a professor and a teaching assistant at least once a week for

a 45-minute session. This session is usually recorded, so that students can listen to it as many times as they want in their free time. Further, this is an opportunity to learn with an expert, who often resides in a target culture, and therefore can share her country's most recent news and perceptions. Thus, students receive a unique opportunity to hone their linguistic skills in the process of intercultural communication, and learn from a personal experience of the interaction with a representative of the culture about which they are studying. This is actually the unique affordance of this tool and illustrates a distinct advantage over most face-to-face instruction. This feature does not go unnoticed by students, as well. *Empire State College* alumnae Anita Brown has openly commented in *The New York Times Magazine* of her positive experience learning Italian from a Florence-based instructor (Feld, 2012).

It Isn't about the Flash, It Just Uses Flash®

Flashcards are one of the oldest devices used for studies of a new language. They usually include a foreign word on one side and its translation on the other. With the flashcard that contains the foreign word and the image, we achieve an immersive approach that appeals to a student's visual memory and associative learning. The



Figure 3: At left is a screenshot of the interactive flashcards in French 1. Several images/cards of fruits and vegetables are either randomly presented or available for selection and manipulation. After a brief presentation, the French term appears underneath the image to reinforce vocabulary.

interactive nature of flashcards empowers students to autonomously expand their vocabulary. This assists them in preparation of their assignments, discussions and oral presentation, as well as in communication outside the virtual classroom in a target language.

Influenced by Krashen's (2003) acquisition-learning hypothesis, we created the flashcards where students can subconsciously process much of the language data (such as associating foreign terms with images), while still offering them the ability to interact with the objects to learn terms. By providing an experience that is interactive and entertaining, learners spend more time absorbing vocabulary associations through acquisition than they are generally aware. The playful nature offsets conditions defined by Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, whereby anxiety and boredom can impede learning. We suggest that this blockage can be reduced by sparking and maintaining interest and providing a playful environment, as is the case with flashcards that promote "stealth" learning and enrich learner's vocabulary (Wolf & Tcherepashenets, 2010).

For students who find the learning object distracting, they also can "pause" and focus on learning aspects that best suit their learning styles. The polished and interactive presentation also appeals to a learner's sense of play, which contributes to further language acquisition and vocabulary reinforcement.

Conclusion

Interactive learning tools are integrated in language instruction at all levels in online courses. There is no doubt that by enhancing students' acquisition of basic linguistic skills, as well as by providing constructive and enjoyable ways to expand (inter)cultural competence, such 21st century tools can be useful for language learning in any setting.

Acknowledgements

Much thanks needs to be offered to Kent Stanton for his pioneering of the mapblogs, as well as faculty who explored various interactive technologies that acted as a foundation for the development of these tools.

Note

- ¹ We use the term intercultural competence along the lines of John Corbett (2010) as a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which he summarizes as follows: "(a) knowing the self and the other; (b) knowing how to relate and interpret meaning; (c) developing critical awareness; (d) knowing how to discover cultural information; and (e) knowing how to relativise [sic] oneself and value the attitudes and beliefs of others" (p. 2).

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Learning to Live with Money: The Gift of Credit and the Transition to Capitalism in the United States, 1800-1900

Michael Merrill, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

We live in the age of business, management and economics. The masters of our universe are not warriors or priests, but hedge fund managers. Where once we dreamed of glory or salvation, we now mostly dream of money. It is what people want; it is the world in which we now live. As these contrasts themselves imply, however, the world was not always this way and one of the purposes of the following is to suggest just how different it once was. In particular, people once organized what we would now call their economic lives differently, though of course, for most of our past, “the economy” as such did not exist – it was not a figure with which people were familiar. What follows, therefore, is an account of the history of monetization: the transition from the exchange systems upon which people once largely relied, in which money played an important but largely secondary role, to the fully monetized systems that now dominate our lives. This seemingly narrow focus will pay broad dividends, for it reveals some surprising things about the world in which we live and opens up various perspectives on our possibilities that anyone concerned about the future would do well to consider.

First, it establishes that until quite recently most Americans actually lived in both a commercial *and* a gift economy and many of us still do so. Gifting still predominates in many crucial dimensions of our busy lives, not the least of which are our families, our workplaces and our public lives, where the forms of our cooperation, where we do cooperate (!), are each thoroughly reticulated with gifting relationships.

Second, the history of monetization helps us to understand better both the nature of money and the financial institutions most closely associated with it. The money system

is one of the key technologies of modern life without which we could not grow the states, corporations and other large organizations that are among its most distinctive features. And, the financial institutions (both private and public) that enable us to supply and manage the money system, to the extent that we do, are among the most important and most powerful institutions of our society. A better understanding of where all this came from, how it all works and the constraints under which it does so is obviously desirable.

Third and finally, a brief history of monetization also provides us with a better perspective on the so-called “mixed economy” of the 20th century, the combination of private and public enterprise that is the characteristic of *all* developed commercial economies to some degree or another, and never only incidentally. In fact, every functioning society or social group relies upon gifting to constitute itself and to conduct its affairs, whereas for most of human history, commercial relationships have been confined to the social margins. As such commercial relationships have assumed a larger and larger importance, their ill effects also have been, and can only be, mitigated by the parallel expansion of a countervailing gift sector, which today takes the form of a so-called welfare state.

My argument is more or less as follows. In 1800, that part of the U.S. economy in which goods and services were purchased with ready money (aka “the money economy”) accounted for barely one-tenth of the total gross domestic product, and it would only become the largest sector of the economy relatively later in the century, after 1850 or thereabouts.¹ I begin by describing the alternative, nonmonetary economy that the money system displaced. That in place, we are in a much better position to



Michael Merrill

explore the implications of the transition from gifting to commerce – and, for that matter, from cooperation to competition – for our understanding of what money and money economies are, and how they are best managed. Contrary to the just-so stories of economists, barter is not the only alternative to monetary exchange. Most people in the first decades of the United States, in order to trade goods and services back and forth among themselves, relied upon neither barter nor money but the gift of credit.² They neither waited for the “double coincidence of wants” required of barter nor spent their days haggling over the prices of things and deciding what to include in order to effect a fair trade. Instead, they simply took from (and gave to) their neighbors what they needed, when they needed it, and took back (or received) from them in return, mostly in kind, when and as they could. The goods and services traded in this way accounted for the vast majority of economic transactions during the first half of the 19th century, and remained of considerable importance even during the second half, especially in small towns and villages, and in urban working-class neighborhoods. In order to understand how this alternative

system worked, let's begin by taking a closer look at the dominant business practices of the early modern era before the rise of modern commercial economies (aka "capitalism"), as they appear in the accounts of a prosperous and enterprising farmer in the Hudson River Valley at the end of the 18th century.

A Late 18th Century Farmer

Jacob Delamater began an account book in December 1768, when at the age of 18 he inherited his father's farm.³ The first entry was for a horse worth \$25, received from his mother's brother, Stephen Nottingham. The last was for nine skipples of wheat and three skipples of potatoes, valued at 87 and 25 cents per, respectively, to Peter Vanderlyn, a doctor, for what Delamater's heirs described laconically as "sundries."⁴ In between lay more than 6,000 other entries for everything from opium and belt buckles to plow shares and hemp collars: a record, in a neat schooled script, of Delamater's dealings with 274 different people, including the date, quantity, unit price and total price of the items that changed hands. By the time of his premature death at 44, he had filled 520 pages of two quarto volumes and 42 pages of a third with such entries. It is a massive text, marked by scant "textuality," from which we can nonetheless learn much.

Economic relations are, at their simplest, two-way transactions consisting of something given and something received. Before we can analyze the distinctive features of the different exchanges recorded in an account book, however, we must reorder and reconstitute them, bringing their severed sections together in the right sequence and in one place. We also need to restore them to time, the sequence of sequences, which account books shatter. Bookkeepers analyze simultaneous events into their separable components – different accounts for each person and purpose, different pages for purchases and payments – scattering them to the several parts of a ledger. Dr. James Oliver received two skipples of wheat "for setting Bett's shoulder" on 12 Sept. 1789, the same day that James Murdoch, whose household had been weaving cloth for Delamater's family since 1772, dropped by to pick up six pounds of flax. To discover their relative

simultaneity, we need to find our way from folio 40, where the first appeared, to folio 109, where Delamater entered the second.

Nor is such restoration simply of antiquarian interest. It brings the relationships between Delamater and his exchange partners into sharper relief. Let us start with a few, relatively simple interactions. (All the accounts to which I will refer are contained in the appendix to this essay.) Delamater purchased a waistcoat from Seth Curtis (Account #89) in January 1774. He paid for it in two separate installments, the first three months after getting his coat, and the second four and a half years later. He paid no acknowledged interest. This was a common pattern. Benjamin Delamater (Account #8) ground a total of 25 barrels of flour for Jacob in April 1772 and April 1773. Jacob made his first in-kind payment on an initial shipment of 14 barrels 20 months after he had received them, and eight months after he had credited Benjamin for delivery of the next 11 barrels. At this point, his account was still in arrears. The next exchange five months later, which had Jacob debiting 13 skipples of corn, and soon 3 skipples more, put him slightly ahead. Instead of settling their accounts, however, seven months later Benjamin asked for and received a "fat cow," which left him once more in debt to Jacob. At this point, recorded transactions between them ceased altogether. They exchanged nothing else until December 1784, eight *years* later, when Benjamin paid his account in full and in cash, but without interest.

The first thing to notice about these relationships is their nonmonetized character. In a monetary economy, customers are expected to pay upon receipt, whether by product, coin, paper money, a credit card or some other instrument of commercial credit.⁵ Modern financial institutions function to facilitate immediate payment or something as close to it as possible and they do so by creating assets, which are themselves articles of commerce. In this way, commercial credit facilitates exchange *and* has exchange value. In other words, it is money. It also is both liquid *and* productive (i.e., it has a recognized claim to a share of the revenue from the sale of whatever is produced). In other words, it is capital. The gifted credits that

mediated most transactions in Delamater's world were neither money nor capital. Exchange partners routinely extended one another's implicit, interest-free loans and accommodated themselves to the hazards (and the privileges) of indefinite repayment schedules. Such gifted credits facilitated exchange but they did not themselves have exchange value. They were a means of exchange but not a means of payment.

We can see this clearly in Delamater's case. Most of the people with whom he traded did not pay upon delivery or even within a specified period of time. Instead, the rhythms of repayment were dictated by the concrete needs and capacities of each party. For example, when Jacob sought 35 bunches of thatch in the winter of 1780, he got them from Mathew Keator (Account #98), who may not have been the first person he asked. When he needed leather nearly two years later and apparently could not get it anywhere else, Keator again helped him out. A year passed; still no payment. Finally, in February 1783, Keator called to ask for three skipples of corn, which Delamater obliged, asking in return for two pounds of butter, which balanced the account. Keator did not ask that any interest be paid on the outstanding amounts in any of these instances.

How can we know that Delamater's failure to charge interest was a matter of principle, and thus truly a sign of a different way of doing business? One reason is that Delamater could have charged interest, if he had wanted to do so. Mathew Cantine, for example, once demanded interest from Delamater on the balance of an overdue account. Delamater acknowledged Cantine's right, as "an honest man," to make the demand, but he also expressed a hope that "it would be the last accounts that would ever pass between us."⁶ Moreover, it was the established practice of long-distant merchants in his time to charge interest on overdue accounts.⁷ Jacob could have easily insisted that Benjamin Delamater (Account #8) pay him an additional 42 percent in December 1782 (6 percent simple interest for seven years, with one year of "grace") on the value of the "fat cow" received in November 1774. He also could have collected another 9 percent of the value of the mare he sold to Simeon Vanwagenen

(Account #202) in December 1784, had he demanded 6 percent per annum on each payment received after December 1785. He did not.

To explain these failures by reference to some idiosyncrasy in Delamater’s outlook or character is superfluous. He was neither an altruist nor an idiot. He was a prosperous, enterprising individual who lived in a world where everyday economic transactions were conducted on a nonmonetized basis. Most of the people with whom Delamater traded did not pay with money, whether coin, paper or commercial credit.⁸ Only 16 percent of the total value of Delamater’s receipts and 40 percent of the total value of his expenditures involved the exchange of monetary instruments or tokens. Further, as can be seen from Table 1, in the overwhelming majority of Delamater’s exchange partnerships, cash entries accounted for less than 25 percent of receipts in four-fifths of Delamater’s accounts and a similarly small proportion of his expenses in more than one-half of his accounts. Delamater and his contemporaries, in other words, had access to and even used money. But they do not seem to have regularly used it in a monetary way. Money may have been an *item of trade*, but it was not a common *means of payment* in most transactions.⁹

Table 1

PERCENT OF CASH IN ACCOUNT

Category of Account	Receipts	Expenses
Less than 25 percent cash entries	81	53
25 to 50 percent cash entries	6	15
50 to 75 percent cash entries	3	10
More than 75 percent cash entries	<u>10</u>	<u>22</u>
	100	100

This point is worth emphasizing. The issue is not simply whether cash traded hands: money may be bartered or even given away. It is only when some kind of direct and immediate payment is insisted upon in every transaction that we are dealing

with a fully monetized exchange system. Where repayment may be delayed almost indefinitely without cost, transactions cannot meaningfully be considered monetary, even if the balances are ultimately paid in cash; nor can the relationships engendered by such transactions be considered commercial – at least not in our accepted sense of the term. The social relationship trumps the object. Sellers who habitually sell without being paid, and buyers who habitually buy without paying, or even issuing a credible (i.e., a transferable) promise to do so, are not like you and me.

The difference between monetized and nonmonetized relationships can be further underscored if we imagine how Delamater’s accounts might have looked, had they been monetized. Each entry would then most likely have listed separate shipments sent upon receipt of a bill of exchange that promised payment at some future date. The bill itself might subsequently have circulated from hand to hand as a means of payment, been sold to a bank or another merchant for another note or coin that could so circulate, or been held as savings by the original payee. Moreover, the amount due on each shipment that remained unpaid by the due date would have accrued interest. In a commercial or commercializing society (that is, one in which buying and selling goods and services to any and all was, or was becoming, a common practice), most retailers would naturally tend to insist upon cash payment (or third-party commercial credit) at the time of purchase, and financial entrepreneurs would respond by developing more “liquid” credit instruments that could circulate more easily and cheaply far beyond the personal networks of those immediately responsible for their generation. In such ways, also, would social relationships become increasingly less cooperative and utilitarian, and increasingly more competitive and individualistic – which was indeed the case.

Commercialization in this sense clearly presupposes monetization. For commercial practices to become more than just familiar to most people, for them to become central to their survival, exchange relationships must first be monetized.¹⁰ This is not to say that commerce presupposes monetization.

People can buy and sell goods and services without insisting upon monetary payment and clearly they did so, for trade and barter are ancient practices. But commerce does require monetization, if it is to become what we call capitalism. It is only possible to make money with money by insisting upon monetary payment. Those who would live on money can do so only if the rest of us are willing to accept in payment for whatever they might need. If we are not, their money is worthless. This is no doubt one of the reasons we read so often of currency shortages in the commercial press, even at a time when most people relied on gifted credit. When credible money is in short supply, those who demand money payments, and those from whom such payments are demanded, is stressed. They also are most likely to be among the more prosperous and well-situated members of the community, with plenty of access to the public prints, where they can voice their complaints. But where most goods and services circulate by means of gifted credit, the interests of the moneyed are not those of the whole. Indeed, even when exchange is monetized, the interests of the moneyed are those of a very small minority. Most people have only moneyed enough for present needs, and often not even to that extent.

This point, too, is worth emphasizing. It is often assumed that 18th century Americans like Delamater bartered because they *had to*, that the absence of readily available cash left them no alternative. The evidence in Delamater’s account books suggests otherwise. The farmers, artisans and local merchants of Marbletown appear to have had access to all the “cash” they needed for their most pressing purposes. To be sure, coin was scarce but, though of diverse origins, represented only a small part of the available money supply.¹¹ A promissory note also was cash as far as Delamater and his contemporaries were concerned, as in the case of Henry Brodhead, who paid Delamater “by cash a note of hand” for \$34.43 in February 1787; or as in the case of Delamater himself, who two months later entered a note as “cash” in his own favor with Dirck Wynkoop. Even bonds were cash as far as Delamater and his friends were concerned, for in November 1786, he entered L20 “cash,” a “bond delivered

into my hands,” from Samuel Mowritz. If notes and bonds also were considered “cash” – as they deserved to be and clearly were – money cannot be considered in short supply. The cost of “producing” more notes and bonds was minimal. Nor were they obviously less secure than bank notes. Indeed, for much of the early history of banking, personal notes and bonds were probably a more secure currency than bank paper. In short, cash in some form was *always* available to Delamater and his friends. If it did not mediate the exchanges between them, it did not do so on purpose. Delamater and his partners had the option of paying in cash. For the most part, they chose not to exercise it.¹²

The Transition to Capitalism

At the beginning of the 19th century, almost all of the world’s production and exchange, including that of the United States and Atlantic Europe, occurred outside the scope of its monetary economies, in what Fernand Braudel once misleadingly referred to as a “vast world of self-sufficiency.”¹³ Delamater’s accounts are a window on that world. They help us understand, among other things, the role of cash in a nonmonetary economy. Even when a debt is repaid entirely in cash, the exchange in question may not be fully monetized: for, as we have seen, the nature of the relationship is determined not by what is exchanged but by the repayment rules implicit in the transaction. To distinguish one system from another at the transactional level, we need to look at how the constitutive transactions are conducted. Only where goods and services are paid for when purchased can an exchange be meaningfully described as monetized. Where they are gifted, we are dealing with something altogether different.

Even today, most households support themselves with a mix of subsistence activities (cooking, cleaning, child rearing, gardening, etc.) and commercial employment (wage labor, shop keeping, professional services, etc.). But over the last 200 years, the mix and the character of these activities have changed significantly.¹⁴ Let us review how. In 1800, the great bulk of both production and consumption occurred within the household sector, where it circulated in extended trade networks

on an as-needed basis by means of gifted credit. Households also traded with local merchants, who themselves did business with export/import houses, or with other merchants who did. At least locally, however, these exchange relations, too, were similar to those between households – which is to say, they were generally not monetized. In addition, households also provided goods and services to governments, sometimes as direct obligations (e.g., local road repair) and sometimes in return for coin or currency of some sort; their members paid taxes with money issued by the central authorities, or accepted by them, which the household had obtained somehow. Finally, there were a few fledgling firms in 1800, both goods producing and money lending, all of which were struggling to gain a toe hold. At least in the U.S., however, they had not yet had much success. Instead, the economy was still the world of which Braudel wrote: scattered marketplaces surrounded by a vast sea of subsistence-oriented households, between which plied a small number of moneyed conveyances piloted by various intrepid entrepreneurs, adventurers and scoundrels, the capitalists of the day (see endnote #13).

In the capitalist economy of 1900, the household sector was still an important site of production, primarily of final consumer goods that were the focus of most so-called housework (cooking, cleaning, mending, caring for children, etc.); it also was, obviously, the prime source of labor services hired out in return for wages, including domestic service (which was the principal occupation of women outside their own households). Nevertheless, by 1900 the fledgling firms of 1800 had become the dominant sites of production, accounting for the largest proportion of national output. Moreover, even simple proprietorships, not to mention partnerships or joint-stock corporations, were organizationally and socially set apart. Where once there had been mostly household production, there now was household *and* business production, with the latter far larger than the former. As a corollary of this bifurcation, goods and services no longer circulated largely between and among households on the basis of delayed reciprocity and gifted credit. Instead, they circulated between households and firms on the basis of cash

or commercial credit. Exchange had been monetized and each monetary transaction offered the prospect, large or small, of being turned to profitable advantage.

To supply the necessary instruments of this monetized exchange, both governments and private banks minted or printed money, the former as they had long done and the latter as an extension of the established household practice of gifting credit. The difference was that in the latter case, commercial credit was bought and sold rather than gifted, as private banks and others accepted deposits and loaned funds, paying out more than they had taken in and remaining solvent (when they could) only by (a) diversifying their holdings and (b) having enough on hand at any given moment to meet their obligations. In short, not only had exchanges been monetized, but production and consumption had both been “financialized.”

In this regard, it is important to remember that the primary motive behind incorporation is financial, and as late as the 1880s, to be paid frequently and in cash remained one of the cardinal demands of the labor movement. Moreover, by the end of the century, work and investment were increasingly undertaken simply to make money rather than to meet a specific need. Money had become capital. Goods and services circulated as part of a monetary economy; demand had been redefined as the ability to pay; and all production had become, in some sense, a speculation. Governments and a foreign trade sector also continued to do what they had always done, though they did so on a somewhat different basis and larger scale.

All of these shifts had momentous consequences. Before the transition, the principal means of exchange was gifted credit; afterward, the principal means was currency and commercial credit, including bank notes, issued by a rapidly expanding private finance sector. The effect of this change was to make most livelihoods dependent on finance in a completely different way; to make investor confidence as important an issue for households as drought-induced crop failures. Before the transition, most labor was unwaged and occurred in and for a household; by 1900,

most men worked for wages outside the household and increasing numbers of women were doing so, as well, though the dissolution of the household as a unit of production continued well into the 20th century, and is not yet wholly complete. As a result, large numbers of people were newly vulnerable, and vulnerable in new ways, to dispossession and starvation. In their prior, more traditional “gift economy,” even when the only gift was credit, it was possible for anyone able or willing to work to provide and to be provided for. In the new capitalist economy, however, access to subsistence depended not upon one’s membership in the community but upon one’s disposable income. Is it any wonder that many found and still find the transition unsettling?

Finally, before the rise of capitalism, long-distance trade and cash-starved crowns were the most profitable, and sometimes the only, outlets for private investment by the moneyed class. Afterward, in contrast, an increasing number of firms in all industries in the emergent capitalist sector presented profitable investment opportunities. The effect of this change was to build speculation directly into the structure of the system. Not only was exchange monetized, but labor was commodified and production was financialized. We can even date these last watersheds with reasonable accuracy. The first occurred in the U.S. in roughly the 1840s, when there was a general shift from what was called “the credit system” (or gifted credit) to what was called “the cash system” (monetized exchange). The second took place largely in the middle decades of the century, especially after the law governing incorporation was relaxed to encourage the organization of more and more corporations. And the third occupied the last decades of the 19th century, beginning the process of financialization that continues to make its effects felt today, and now on a global scale. The results have been by turns enriching and catastrophic, mobilizing social energies to produce more wealth for more people than ever thought possible, while at the same time exposing society to repeated financial breakdown, class conflict and personal despair.

Learning to Live with Money

While contemplating these momentous transformations, however, it is very important not to lose sight of certain fundamental or underlying truths. In particular, it is important to remember: (1) that all money, like any gift, is a debt, and (2) that all money economies, like all gift economies, are based upon and made possible by debt. Anyone who accepts money in payment for goods and services delivered becomes thereby a creditor of the economy, in possession of an asset that they can hope to redeem for items of equal or greater value. When they do redeem it, the debt is discharged, at whatever gain or loss. Any promise to pay can serve in this capacity, though I know of no instances of completely “oral money” – i.e., a mere verbal promise to pay – that circulates beyond the initial parties to the promise. So far as I am aware, all known money has some material form, whether it is a notarized acknowledgement of a verbal promise, a written or printed promissory note of some kind, or government-issued currency. The promises of any credible source can circulate in this fashion – i.e., be used as money – and much monetary history consists of the examination of their many forms.¹⁵ States have always been the most important issuers of such promises. They have always been, as Martin Wolf noted, “essential players in any set of financial promises, even if they themselves have not made them,” not least because the money they issue is the “basis for any set of financial contracts.”¹⁶ Among the too often neglected implications of this fact is that, if we want to rid ourselves of the national debt, then we also must be prepared to rid ourselves of money, or at least of money over which citizens in a democratic society can hope to have some control. We can’t do the former without also doing the latter.¹⁷

In his fascinating history, *The Economy of Obligation*, Craig Muldrew (1998) surveyed the rapid rise of a “culture of credit,” coincident with the increasing commercialization of English society after 1530. Using local court records, he charted the increasing volume of suits involving failed or contested credit transactions, and also, therefore (assuming a more or less stable ratio of failed to successful

transactions), the increasing volume of borrowing generally.¹⁸ For me, the most important aspect of this story is that it illustrates clearly how any large and complicated exchange system *requires* debt. In the real world, unlike the make believe kingdoms of most economists, adjustments are neither instantaneous nor free. On the contrary, they take time. If they are to happen, efficiently and often, someone, somewhere will be indebted to someone else – will owe them something. Where this is so, it is possible, as we have seen, for creditors to extract *nothing* from their debtors, if they wish. But it also is possible, and perhaps even likely, that they will, where they can, attempt to extract as much as possible. Money seems always to come with strings attached. It has historically been more often marshaled by those interested in extraction than by those interested in freedom, but this need not be so.¹⁹

Indeed, the citizens of modern states have successfully insisted that their governments develop the institutional means to manage and control the money supply to serve the public interest. In order to exercise such management and control, not only must government budgets be an appreciable proportion of the total GDP, but governments also must have a relatively free hand, the “necessary and proper” powers, to undertake relevant enterprises (for example, national defense, education, highway construction, health care), levy taxes and issue the necessary “legal tender.” The free hand does not, of course, guarantee success. Governments have and will make mistakes. But without such a free hand, there is no way for the government to manage and control the money supply in order that we each might flourish; and if it doesn’t do so for that purpose, then the moneyed will do so for theirs. There is no third way. If we want the whole society to flourish, then we have to learn to live with “big government,” high taxes and a seemingly unmanageable national debt. They are not obstacles to a broadly-based and widely-shared prosperity. They are the only means available in a modern commercial democracy by which this prosperity may be achieved in a manner consistent with freedom.

Appendix**ACCOUNT #89**

SETH CURTIS	DR.	CONTRA	CR.
<u>1774</u>		<u>1774</u>	
		Jan. 1 - 1 waistcoat	1.50
Mar. 31 - 3 sk. corn	1.12		
<u>1778</u>			
July 1 - 1 sk. corn	<u>0.37</u>		
	1.50		
Reckoned and Balanced all accounts this first day of July 1778			

ACCOUNT #8

BENJAMIN DELAMETER	DR.	CONTRA	CR.
		<u>1772</u>	
		April 1 - 14 barls flour	4.37
<u>1773</u>		<u>1773</u>	
		April 7 - 11 barls flour	3.43
Nov. 26 - use pasture	2.50		
		[correction]*	0.38
			<u>8.18</u>
<u>1774</u>			
Mar. 24 - 13 sk. corn	4.87		
Mar. 31 - 3 sk. corn	1.12		
Nov. 19 - 1 fat cow	12.50		
		<u>1782</u>	
		Dec. 10 - cash	<u>12.81</u>
	<u>20.99</u>		<u>20.99</u>
Reckoned and Settled all accounts, Dec. 10, 1784			

ACCOUNT #98

MATHEW KEATOR	DR.	CONTRA	CR.
		<u>1780</u>	
		Jan. 1 - thatch	0.50
		<u>1781</u>	
		Sept. 1 - leather	0.37
<u>1783</u>		<u>1783</u>	
Feb. 13 - 3 sk. corn	1.12	Feb. 13 - 2 lb. butter	0.25
	1.12		1.12
Reckoned and Settled all accounts with Mathew Keator			

ACCOUNT #202

SIMEON VANWAGENEN	DR.	CONTRA	CR.
<u>1784</u>			
Dec. 18 - 1 mare	20.00		
		<u>1786</u>	
		June 19 - 30 lb. sugar	3.75
		June 27 - 4.25 lb. sugar	0.50
		Nov. - 18 lb. sugar	2.25
		<u>1787</u>	
		Jan. 15 - 5 sk. peas	3.12
		April 23 - 20 lb. sugar	1.87
		July 23 - 32 lb. sugar	3.00
		Nov. - cash	0.12
		<u>1788</u>	
		June - 24 lb. sugar	2.25
		June 30 - 33 lb. sugar	3.12
	<u>20.00</u>		<u>19.98</u>

Notes

- ¹ This paper is extracted from a larger essay, which develops the argument in more detail and offers additional evidence for its principal claims. The estimate of the size of the monetary economy is derived from the standard equation of the quantity theory of money, $PQ = MV$, using estimates of the US GDP (PQ) and the money supply (M) between 1800 and 1900, together with an assumed “structural velocity of money” (V) of $1 < V < 3$. Within those bounds, the monetized portion of the US GDP in 1800 lay between 4 percent and 12 percent of the total. See Merrill, “The Monetization of Everything: The Gift of Credit, the Social Relations of Exchange, and the Transition to Capitalism in the United States,” 28-31 and Figure 1. Copies of the complete essay are available from the author upon request.
- ² The direct and immediate exchange of one product for another, consequent upon what economists call “barter,” is a relatively rare phenomenon. As Paul Einzig observed, faced with need but without immediate means, most people offer to buy now and pay later, relying on the fact that someone can usually be found who will accept the offer (*Primitive Money: In Its Ethnological, Historical and Economic Aspects* [2nd ed.] Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966 [1949], 343-344). It is on the basis of such implicit loans that real world barter proceeds, as first one party and then the next provides goods and services, as required. Unlike the theoretical barter of economists’ models, real world barter in settled communities almost invariably operates through the intermediation of gifted credit – implicit, reciprocal and interest-free – which, in the place of ready money, does yeoman service to facilitate exchange. This is not the best way to make as much money as possible, but it appears to have been perfectly serviceable where the goal was simply to live well with and among others.
- ³ Jacob Delamater, Ledgers A, B and C, Senate House Museum Collection, Kingston, New York. All the entries in these books were recorded in English pounds. I have converted them to dollars at the constant and – for Ulster County – customary rate of one pound = \$2.50. I will use only Delamater’s accounts as my source for the current exercise but I am confident that his experience was typical. On the US, see Robert Craig West, “Money in the Colonial American Economy,” *Economic Inquiry*, 16 (1978), 1-15; and Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 36-39 and 264-271. For a perspective on the early modern origins of these practices, see Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave, 1998), passim.
- ⁴ A skipple is the equivalent of three pecks or three-quarters of a bushel. Vanderlyn attended to Delamater on his death bed, to which the former went after the latter’s horse kicked and ruptured his owner’s spleen.
- ⁵ That the last item appears in this list may be confusing to some. When modern consumers use a credit card to make a purchase, they appear to be delaying payment by borrowing money, albeit at a cost. From the standpoint of the seller, though, a credit card user is in actuality paying immediately upon receipt with a liquid asset that can be resold in recognized markets.
- ⁶ Both contemporary commercial and contemporary legal practice sanctioned charging interest on overdue accounts. Interest was routinely added to debts collected by both the Court of Common Pleas and the Surrogate Court.
- ⁷ For example, James Beekman, a prominent 18th century New York merchant, habitually granted “established merchants” among his own customers a period of 12 months from the day of shipment to pay the amount due before charging interest. From the less established, however, he asked for payment sooner – anywhere from six months after delivery to “on demand.” See Philip White, *The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce, 1647-1877* (New York: The New York Historical Society, 1956), esp. 348-349, 353-354.
- ⁸ W. T. Baxter, the distinguished historian of accounting, has drawn attention to relationships similar to those I have called “noncommercial (and which he called “bookkeeping barter”) in *The House of Hancock: Business in Boston, 1724-1775*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945).
- ⁹ Nor was this practice peculiar to Delamater and his neighbors. For example, between 1796 and 1801, Adam Stanton, a storekeeper in Clinton, Connecticut, classified each week’s sales as either “truck,” “charged” or “cash.” The latter constituted less than 3 percent of the total sales over the five-year period. Even if one includes the “charged” sales that were paid for in cash (about 6 percent of the whole), total receipts in cash equaled less than 10 percent. See W. T. Baxter, “Accounting in Colonial America,” in A. C. Littleton and B. S. Yamey, Eds., *Studies in the History of Accounting* (Homewood, Ill: Richard D. Irwin, 1956), 274.
- ¹⁰ Alexander Hamilton understood as much and said so. In his precocious analysis of the revenue crisis of 1779-80, he complained that “farmers have the game in their hands.” When approached by a government procurement officer, they were “not obliged to sell because they have almost every necessity within themselves, salt and one or two more excepted.” Hamilton to [unknown], December 1779 (?), Harold Syrett, Ed., *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-87), 244. Hamilton never forgot the lesson and in his 1791 *Report on Manufactures*, he specifically applauded the influence of higher taxes, payable in money, as “a motive to greater

exertion in any occupation” and a spur to capital accumulation. *Ibid.*, Vol. X, 280.

- ¹¹ Delamater’s account book contained all of the following money items, besides “Cash,” which was far and away the most frequent: bonds, notes and silver; “hard money,” “old money” and just plain “money”; also continentals, dollars and continental dollars; and, finally, crowns, guineas, doubloons, dutch “Johannes’s” and “Half Joe’s.”
- ¹² For further discussion of these issues, see J. J. McCusker and R. R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (1985): 337-341; W. Letwin, “Monetary Practice and Theory of the North American Colonies during the 17th and 18th Centuries,” V. Barbagli Bagnoli, Ed., *La moneta nell’economica europea secoli XIII-XVIII* (Prato, 1981): 439-469; R. Weiss, “The Issue of Paper Money in the Agricultural Economy of 18th-Century Massachusetts,” *William*

and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 41 (July 1984): 333-364. Also see the articles by James Lemon and James Henretta in *Colonial British America* (Baltimore, 1984); and Steve Hahn and Jonathan Prude, Eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation* (Chapel Hill, 1986). W. T. Baxter also has revisited the controversy in his “Observations on Money, Barter and Bookkeeping,” *Accounting Historians Journal* 31:1 (June 2004), 129-139.

- ¹³ Fernand Braudel, *Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism* (Baltimore, 1977), 19. Also see *idem.*, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York, 1972), 383-386, 452-453; and *idem.*, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, Vol. I: *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible* (New York, 1979), *passim*.
- ¹⁴ For more detail, see “The Monetization of Everything,” *supra*, note 1.

- ¹⁵ For recent examples see John Smithin, Ed., *What Is Money?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) and William N. Goetzmann and K. Geert Rouwenhorst, Eds., *The Origins of Value: The Financial Innovations that Created Modern Capital Markets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- ¹⁶ Martin Wolf, *Fixing Global Finance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 3.
- ¹⁷ See especially L. Randall Wray, *Understanding Modern Money: The Key to Full Employment and Price Stability* (Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998).
- ¹⁸ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, *supra*, note 3.
- ¹⁹ For a lively, scholarly but polemical account of these issues, see David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2011).

Central New York Arts Learning Community: Reflections on an Inspiring First Year

Deborah Holler, Peggy Lynn, Yvonne Murphy, Heidi Nightengale, Maureen Kravec, Laurie Seamans and Alan Stankiewicz, Central New York Center; Tom Huff, Artist-in-Residence

In January 2010, the Central New York Center started planning for an Arts Learning Community (ALC) where students meet with one another and study mentors in three Saturday residencies at our East Syracuse office supported by online and other activities. The 2011-2012 academic year marked the first year of the Arts Learning Community with a total of 15 different offerings and 56 student participants. In our first year we had stone sculptor and mixed-media artist, Tom Huff (Seneca Cayuga), as our artist-in-residence. This year, our artist-in-residence is Craig Thornton, a local playwright, actor and film maker. Craig started the recent Sept. 22 residency with a lunchtime presentation and discussion of "Creative Tools and the Creative Process." He later gave a workshop on writing the "10 Minute Play." Students will next send drafts of their scripts to Craig for feedback and we expect to hold a reading of the finished student plays at our last residency meeting of the term. Ultimately, we created the Arts Learning Community and artist-in-residence position to provide students with greater interdisciplinary access to the arts, increased potential for focused and/or studio-based work and to promote local art and artists' activities as models for ways to be a practicing artist in Central New York.

What follows are the reflections of the seven mentors and the artist-in-residence who participated in our first year of work.

The Artist's Journey, Fall 2011; Fantasy Art and Literature, Spring 2012

Maureen Kravec and Laurie Seamans

In an economic recession, adult students – and their mentors – want to make every credit count. The press and Internet advise students about what is "safe" to study – usually business, technology and health – to become employable. In such a climate, why encourage students to study arts and humanities? Our students' creativity, enthusiasm and success during the first year of the Central New York Center's Arts Learning Community may contain some answers.

A central principle of andragogy is encouraging students to become mindful learners who can integrate their experiential learning and their formal education. In our fall 2011 Arts Learning Community study, *The Artist's Journey*, we asked our students to reflect on their own creative paths, and hoped they would find the opportunity to take a step forward. Our students did not disappoint us; each produced work that

documented growth, integrated the personal and the academic, and in two cases, led to new avenues of expression.

In the fall term, our readings were the sort of Jungian texts that inspire some students and teachers, and madden others: Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, 3rd Edition (Studio City, Calif.: Wise, 2007) and Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Tarcher, 2002). At our first meeting, we discussed the archetypal hero's journey, and students read from some of their "morning pages," in keeping with Cameron's urging to establish a habit of taking time to write in order to develop their ideas and inspirations. The students seemed a bit unsure and uneasy, but as we discussed their ideas, we realized they had some interests in common. Interestingly, too, as their projects evolved, they developed the journey theme beyond the purely personal. One student, a playwright, worked on a concept he had had about the personal and moral price of freedom for an African-American slave and his descendants. The story had a supernatural element and a multigenerational cast of characters. Our photography student (who did not complete the study) had an idea for a journey related to solo space travel. Our two other students



PHOTO: ALAN STANKIEWICZ

Bamboo scattered on table in front of student Gwen Lubey working on a project for Art, Environment and Activism.

both volunteered in animal welfare activities. One, a graphic design student, realized how important the cats she had adopted were to her and what her real interest was after college. Her project demonstrated the connection between the cats' stories and her own personal journey. The other, a human services student who volunteered in canine rescue, developed a large diptych made of bark from the trees in her yard, documenting the journey of a black lab from abuse to rescue and happiness. Her piece, "Bark," reflects both her concern for animal welfare and her desire to express her message using natural materials (bark) otherwise left to waste in the yard – a dual message to the dog's plight. This student, who took this study as an elective, discovered a new talent and went on to enroll in the Earth Arts group in the spring.

In the spring, we co-taught another study, Fantasy Art and Literature, with two participants – a visual arts student and a creative writing student. Our plan was to ask them to read about and explore the nature of the fairy folk, and to create a fairy house or habitat. The students transformed our suggestion into their own final project, on which they collaborated. Our visual arts student (another animal lover) initially planned to draw a fairy steed and a race in the gardens surrounding Saratoga Springs, where her family had vacationed; our creative writer planned a story using fairy gold loosely based on '80s rock musicians. Their project evolved: the house became a birdhouse on the protagonist's property, where she moved to start over after a failed marriage. In a night of revelry, the fairies help her see her that her "ex" is not worth her sorrows, and she meets a kind and handsome brownie who bears a striking resemblance to both Jon Bon Jovi and the paper deliveryman she meets the next morning! In addition to portraying scenes from the fairy race, our visual arts student created a series of portraits of fairy "Cyndi Leaper," "Jonovi," and other characters in the story.

We watched our students create integrative, experience-based, reflective learning activities. An unexpected commonality seemed to be interest in animals and in the natural world. Each student's project evolved from the initial conception often into



PHOTO: ALAN STANKIEWICZ

Rock, Paper, Scissors group discussing making handmade children's picture books.

something quite different, more personally and aesthetically satisfying. Most of our students had vocational or avocational goals in the arts, and chose creative final projects that enabled them to develop their skills. One might say the overall ambience (for both female and male students) in both studies was eco-feminist: students thought not only about themselves, but also about maintaining healthy relationships with the natural world.

Art, Environment and Activism, Fall 2011; Nature Drawing, Spring 2012

Alan Stankiewicz

As a celebration of the arts, the spirit of the Arts Learning Community contributes to the culture of Central New York by adding the studio element, using the role of the artist as a way of looking at things with an inventive eye and from a critical perspective. As a model, the Arts Learning Community and its residency component provides a platform for critique and criticism, both essential in preparing students for a future in the arts. Specifically in the visual arts, this is achieved in such studies as Nature Drawing, Photography and Photoshop, and Printmaking. At Empire State College, the

elusive studio experience is often addressed by cross registration; the Arts Learning Community allows us access to the artist studio through the immediacy of understanding visual arts materials while sharing creative solutions in a studio setting. For many, this may appear elementary, but for students whose goal is to be accepted into a Master of Arts program after finishing their degree at the college, such studio tools are important in defining their visual work and how they chose to communicate their ideas.

If one accepts the notion of artist as thinker and inventor, the Arts Learning Community is dependent on a multidisciplinary environment. This not only informs the art student but also invites students from other area of studies to participate in the creative process. Found in this collaboration are diverse perspectives expanding the definition of the arts while creating applications across disciplines.

This was evident in the Arts Learning Community Student Showcase exhibition in the spring of 2012 presented at the Central Arts Gallery housed in the Central New York Center in Syracuse. The quality of the work highlighted the



Michele Cooper and Rick Pallatto performing at the First Annual Student Arts Showcase.

diversity of the studies offered through the Arts Learning Community. Equally important, the exhibition embraced a complexity of mediums addressing the many environmental issues framing the debut theme of the Arts Learning Community, “Art and Natural Environments.” Exhibited were sculptures from naturally found objects, inventive books, digital imagery, collages and drawings. Furthering the importance of the arts in a liberal arts institution, the opening of the exhibition included a coffee house where students shared other compositions in music and the written word.

Rock, Paper, Scissors: Creating Children’s Books That Explore the Natural World, Fall 2011

Yvonne Murphy and Heidi Nightengale

Of central importance to the Learning Community model is certainly what students bring and take away in their collaborations and communal learning experiences; however, the benefit to collegial relationships and individual teaching practices also is immense and shouldn’t be under-recognized. As Laufgraben and Shapiro offer in their *Sustaining and Improving*

Learning Communities (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), the very structure of ideal learning communities, including collaborative team-teaching, paired or clustered studies, a faculty-generated over-arching interdisciplinary theme, have tremendous potential to help foster different approaches and reinvigorate faculty investment and innovation in their offerings. They suggest that “team taught programs represent the most extensive approach in terms of curricular integration and faculty involvement” (p. 7). This was certainly our approach and experience in co-creating a study where students could research and study diverse examples of children’s picture books, write an original manuscript and then create physical manifestations of their book.

In a sense, we created the study we wish we could have taken as undergraduates. Both poets and teachers of children’s literature, we leaned on each other’s more specialized expertise (Heidi: a published children’s book author; Yvonne: well-versed and practiced in book arts) to fulfill the promise of the study. The sense that we were stretching and growing as an interdependent unit served as an encouraging example for our students and allowed for/catalyzed greater

experimentation and creative risk-taking on their end. Students naturally more comfortable in the visual arts attempted rhyming couplets in their narratives, while the experienced writers opened up more confidently to the reality that good illustration isn’t solely figure drawing or representational. It made us take several second looks at the ways an imaginative idea can be expressed and experimented with simultaneously in different mediums as a vehicle or impetus for deeper discovery and complexity. We both continue to take this forward into our own practices, both as educators and practicing artists.

Earth Arts, Spring 2012

Deborah Holler and Tom Huff

The blended (ANGEL component) study group, Earth Arts, offered students an opportunity to work together at a distance on a group project. Our three students lived hundreds of miles away from each other, and were all in their final term. Two were concentrators in The Arts AOS, while one, who had always wanted to “do art” was in the Community and Human Services AOS. During our first meeting, they were introduced to concepts and artists working in Eco Art (repurposed materials) and Environmental Art (working with natural materials and/or landscape) through Web resources that included YouTube clips and artists’ websites. Later, when they returned home, they were able to revisit and expand on the Web resources and write response papers telling about their understanding and inspirations for the Earth Arts course. They also were introduced to the 2011 artist-in-residence, stone sculptor Tom Huff (Seneca Cayuga), who shared his experiences and artworks in “found” natural materials.

At first, students were hesitant and challenged by the idea of working on an art project together, but then quickly began sharing ideas in the ANGEL discussion feature. They also met in another ANGEL discussion space, “Studio 1,” to post photos of their individual work in progress, as well as components of the group project. By the second group meeting, they told about their inspiration for their project, a poem by Shel Silverstein (*A Light in the Attic*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1981):



Mixed Media project by Melissa Clary, CHS student, for Earth Arts study.

Peckin'

The saddest thing I ever did see
Was a woodpecker peckin' at a plastic tree.
He looks at me, and "Friend," says he,
"Things ain't as sweet as they used to be."

The students also discussed their plans, materials and which components they would work on individually. They came to our third meeting prepared to work, excited and eager to make "community" art together with Tom Huff. Their boisterous enthusiasm and the weird variety of materials they carried through the halls caused a stir among students and staff who peaked into the temporary "studio" throughout the day.

The Final Project, complete with a tree made from plastic bags and covered with bark chips, a woodpecker made from wood and found materials, and a crooked sign with poem, came together between the last group meeting and the Student Showcase Open Mic session (more on this from Peggy Lynn follows). At that event, these three students took the stage proudly and told the audience about their experience and inspiration, and the way in which the work fit the emerging categories of eco art and environmental art. Most importantly, they told the audience

and wrote in their final response papers about the ways in which they had recreated themselves as a community of artists through their group project.

Adirondack Song and Story, Fall 2011; Protest Songs, Spring 2012

Peggy Lynn

In thinking of ways to add more "community" to the Arts Learning Community, we had a brilliant idea of hosting an open mic. This was in addition to the gallery art show. It was held on June 7, 2012, the same evening as the gallery opening. It was held in the auditorium of the Empire State College offices in Syracuse. All of the faculty involved with the Arts Learning Community had announced the event to their students, those in ALC studies and any others who might be interested. One student from the Adirondack Song and Story study volunteered to emcee the evening. His eloquence and wry humor made for a seamless program. Several of Yvonne Murphy's writing students read their short stories and essays. One student from Yvonne's and Heidi Nightengale's study on making children's books did a dramatic performance of his rhyming picture book about a persnickety but hungry uncle with the constant refrain: "No, thanks, I'll just have salad!!" A few of Alan Stankiewicz's visual arts students participated and explained the concept of their pieces. Laurie Seamans and Maureen Kravec staged

a reading of the first act of their student's play (the student was away performing in Pittsburgh at the time). We even had vocal performances by Nicole Rand, a work-study student, and Michelle Moretin, a professional staff member. This event met several goals. Students and faculty were able to see each other's work and envision new ideas for collaboration and support. The entire Central New York Center community came together and was moved by the arts. Creative expression was given voice and value and the artists among us were afforded an opportunity to express ourselves. After this successful and invigorating inaugural event, we definitely plan to make it an annual one.



Panels created by Melissa Clary for Root and Tree study.

PHOTO: MICHELLE MORETIN

PHOTO: MICHELLE MORETIN

A Need for Culturally Responsive Mentoring in Graduate Education

Lisa Merriweather, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Mentors serve useful functions in the workplace, in the community and in the academy. Mentoring is an instrumental tool for developing adult learners but is often overlooked as a teaching method (Daloz, 2004; Zachary, 2011). Daloz (2004) wrote, “The relationship between mentorship and learning is a crucial one for educators” (pp. 451-452). It involves development and growth – cognitive, emotional and spiritual. He goes on to say that mentors are “*interpreters of the environment* (italics in original)” (p. 453) who support, challenge and provide vision for their mentees (p. 453). Although mentoring poses great opportunities for learning, its full potential is often not realized because it is a skill that is taken for granted and thus not actively developed. Further, though it is a universal skill – one that is useful across diverse environs – it is not a culturally neutral skill. That is, it is always enacted, often unknowingly, through the prism of cultural hegemony. The unacknowledged and not resisted power of hegemony thwarts the effectiveness of the many well-intentioned mentors who work with students from nondominant culture groups, in particular. This article calls to question the assumed neutrality in academic mentoring and suggests a need for actively developing mentoring that is culturally responsive.

Review of Literature

Mentoring in the academy has captured the attention of many scholars. These scholars consistently framed mentoring as different from academic advising (Creighton, Creighton, & Parks, 2010; Nettles & Millet, 2006; Selke & Wong, 1993). Selke and Wong (1993) suggested that academic advising consists of clarifying goals, monitoring and evaluating progress, integrating resources with needs, fitting programs to interests and abilities, and exploring career options (pp. 4-5).

Mentoring, on the other hand, is more relational with emphasis on socialization, support and information (Gaffney, 1995). Because of its perceived benefits to educational success, researchers have explored varying aspects of mentoring. Researchers have asked questions such as: What are the components of a solid mentoring program? (Gaffney, 1995); What are the roles of mentor? (Combs, 2011); What are the elements of a strong mentoring relationship? (Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008); Which students acquire mentors? (Ellis, 2001; Nettles & Millet, 2006); and What are the outcomes of mentoring? (Creighton et al., 2010; Fracasso, Franco, MacDonald, & Friedman, 2011; Noonan, Ballinger, & Black, 2007). These questions have produced a robust body of literature on mentoring, but as the representative review of literature that follows shows, few have explored the role and import of cultural responsiveness in mentoring.

Mentoring Graduate Students

Gaffney (1995) reviewed seven university-based mentoring programs and determined that there were multiple viable approaches to mentoring graduate students. Some institutions formalized mentoring within an institutional-wide program, while others sought to develop more localized programs at the departmental or college levels. Some



Lisa Merriweather

universities opted to support initiatives to encourage faculty at an individual level to engage in mentoring. Recommendations for developing mentoring programs included securing ideological and financial support from all levels of administration (deans, department chairs and graduate coordinators); supporting faculty mentors, particularly those engaged in cross-cultural mentoring through professional development opportunities; and speaking regularly with students to assess their needs within the context of mentoring. The overarching recommendation was that institutions need to be proactive in their mentoring efforts. Brown, Davis and McClendon (1999) also reviewed various models of graduate

student mentoring programs and found that program models varied. Some include financial components, housing benefits and assignment of a mentor for new students. Some provide this support short term (academic semester); others long term for the duration of the program. Activities may be formally planned throughout the year or may be left to the discretion of the mentor dyad.

One aspect that would need to be considered by institutions is the role of the mentor in the graduate education experience. The mentor's role is varied. Johnson (2007) indicated that a continuum exists. On one end the role reflects instrumental functions such as providing basic programmatic and career information and education. On the other end, the role is broader and designed to meet the more holistic needs of the graduate student (Buck, Mast, Macintyre Latta, & Kaftan, 2009). These needs include emotional support, camaraderie and personal investment. Combs (2011) wrote, "I learned a very important role of a mentor, which would later convert to my understanding of the role of a doctoral committee chair: defending and shepherding one's students so that they do not fall prey to the attacks or foibles of other faculty or staff who have no positive investment in them" (p. 495). This revelation highlights the multidimensionality of the role of the mentor. Mentors have responsibility for educating, protecting, guiding and encouraging (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008; Combs, 2011).

Another role is that of socialization (Becher, 1989, Nettles & Millet, 2006). Nettles and Millet (2006) described mentors as being part of the socialization process that is key to successful persistence through graduate education. They wrote, "The socialization process is important because student socialization contributes to students' performance, satisfaction and success in doctoral programs ... [They] acquire the attitudes, beliefs, values, and skills needed to participate effectively in the organized activities of their profession" (p. 89). When these roles are enacted, students are aided in professional and personal growth, as well as successful completion of their degrees.

Faculty mentors may engage in a number of activities in the process of fulfilling their roles. They may co-write with students and invite students to be part of their research and conference presentations. They may write letters of support as well as introduction for students looking for research opportunities or their first professional position. They may exhibit caring behaviors such as being proactive in reaching out and following up with their mentee. These behaviors in conjunction with active listening offer encouragement and build confidence in the graduate student mentees (Nettles & Millet, 2006). Because of the relational aspect of mentorships, trust is another crucial factor to success. Mentors earn trust from mentees when they make a personal commitment of their time and energy to be available to students (Combs, 2011). Brown et al. (1999) agreed by positing that effective mentoring requires that the mentor spend time with the mentee outside the constraints of the normal classroom. Lechuga (2011) summed it up by stating that mentors serve as advisor, teacher, professional developer and socializer.

Mentors are as varied as the mentorships that they engage in, but the literature suggests that successful mentors share some common traits. Lechuga (2011) found that these mentors effectively use "verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors – such as smiling, a relaxed posture, providing positive feedback, and directly addressing students by name" (p. 759). Bell-Ellison and Dedrick (2008), based on the *Ideal Mentor Scale*, included integrity which "embodies respectfulness for self and others and empowers protégés to make deliberate, conscious choices about their lives. The mentor with Integrity is one who exhibits virtue and principled action and is thus worthy of emulation as a role model" (Rose as cited in Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008, p. 556). Lechuga (2011) also noted that these mentors are sensitive to power dynamics and consider the positionality of their mentee. They consciously create space for the mentee's voice. Mentorships are multifaceted and are ultimately defined by the comprehensiveness of the relationship between the mentee and the mentor (Lechuga, 2011). The relationship is interpersonal, professional and advisory.

Another body of literature considered the importance of mentors and who is more likely to reap the benefits of mentors. An aspect of Nettles and Millet's (2006) study focused on whether students had mentors in general and if there were differences between student populations who did based on gender, race and nationality. They also explored whether students tended to have mentors who were of the same sex and race. Their research determined there were no significant differences between student populations with mentors and those who did not; however, African-Americans consistently were less likely to have mentors. Lechuga (2011) indicated that "research has shown that mentoring relationships are more authentic when mentors and mentees share similar cultural experiences, language, and interests" (p. 769). Given that African-Americans are underrepresented among the ranks of academic faculty, Lechuga's statement may have explanatory power for why African Americans were less likely to have mentors.

Replete throughout the literature was the belief that mentoring was critical to success in graduate education (Fracasso et al., 2011; Lechuga, 2011; Nettles & Millet, 2006). Successful outcomes occurred for both student and mentor as a result of the mentor providing "the student with an environment of reciprocity, where the faculty member benefits professionally as much from the relationship as does the student. The two are involved in reciprocal and simultaneous support, where both benefit and contribute to the learning process" (Creighton et al., 2010, p. 42). Graduate students are aided in their technical knowledge of the field and in the development of the writing and research. These students also are introduced to the professional community and apprenticed within their chosen careers by good mentors. Additionally, they are provided with assistance in navigating their respective academic programs. Fracasso et al. (2011) captured well the student benefit in saying,

mentorship is vital to the future success of any field, whether it is in the field of quantum physics, psychology, or any other discipline. In my view, the mentorship process is akin to taking a little seedling, nourishing it, and

watching it grow, so that new up and coming scholars can go on to contribute great things to the field. (p. 500)

Faculty also see both personal and professional benefits. Mentoring is a means of fulfilling their service requirement, and in doing so, they may find that they gain able research assistants and writing partners, which positively impacts their research productivity. Beyond that, it is personally rewarding to help others in achieving their goals. It serves as a source of validation that one's lifework is valuable and worthwhile.

This brief review provides a snapshot of the current thinking and research on mentoring graduate students. The research covered a wide range of issues relevant to the practice of mentoring. Creighton et al. (2010) underscored the need for not just research on this subject, but also professional development opportunities for faculty. Such opportunities would greatly increase a faculty member's competence and knowledge with regard to being a more effective mentor.

One aspect critical to any relationship that is understated in the primary body of literature of mentoring is responsiveness to culture. Noonan et al. (2007) suggested that "given the increasing cultural diversity in our nation, it would be useful to investigate the impact of culture on definitions and expectations in mentoring" (p. 260). Little research on mentoring in general considered culture as a factor, and far fewer considered cultural responsiveness as one of the elements necessary for effective mentoring.

Toward a Praxis for Culturally Responsive Mentoring

A poverty of research frames the practice of mentoring from the vantage point of cultural responsiveness, particularly within graduate schools. With the exception of research on cross-cultural mentoring, mentoring is typically presented as a culturally neutral phenomenon (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). Cross-cultural mentoring includes cross-racial, cross-gender and intergenerational pairs. Consistent among them is identification of problems such as trust, and rewards such as career

advancement. Cultural responsiveness was inconsistently named as a factor in mentorships.

Culture and Mentoring

Culture has been described as an iceberg (Hanley, 1999). It has features that are visible and others that are not. The visible features are easily accessed, and often recognizable, though not always accurately interpreted by those who are not a part of the culture. The most salient aspects are typically invisible to those outside of the culture. This characteristic of invisibility can result in misunderstandings, dismissive attitudes and insensitivity, particularly when the culture in question is not the dominant one and is considered to be a marginalized group. Culture can be defined as a lens for understanding and making sense of the world. It represents shared "ideas, beliefs, and knowledge that characterize a particular group of people," as well as "observable patterns of behavior, customs, and a way of life" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 17). When mentors fail to appreciate and incorporate culture into their operational philosophy of mentoring, problems can result. While these problems may not be of "Titanic" proportions resulting in the deaths of over 1,500 people such as when the passenger liner crashed into an iceberg in 1912, lives are impacted when the invisible is not rendered visible in the mentoring relationship.

Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) indicated "cultural awareness and [cultural] skill level" (p. 550) are important components of mentoring and highlight the problems that occur when insufficient attention is paid to culture. They wrote,

With the scarcity of mentors in graduate school who are knowledgeable about culturally appropriate ways of guiding women and students of color, these students are likely at greater risk of (a) not receiving sufficient training in research and specialized content areas, (b) not completing their degree programs, and (c) not being well positioned to readily succeed in their postdoctoral careers. (p. 550)

Same-culture relationships were found to have many beneficial effects because of the element of cultural identification and understanding. For instance, Patton (2009) illustrated how her African-American female participants preferred having an African-American female mentor because they "would have the capacity to relate to them in unique ways" (p. 530). View and Frederick's (2011) study revealed that students of color had higher and different expectations of the faculty of color who mentored them. There were expectations that these faculty would understand them from a cultural perspective, and that this understanding would aid the faculty in better knowing and appreciating how the students reasoned and experienced the academy, their learning and workplaces. This understanding was conveyed in word and deed by faculty of color through selection of reading and reference material and a greater openness to ideologies that diverged from the mainstream. Participants in View and Frederick's study were skeptical of the ability and willingness of the average white faculty to engage them in such ways, as the expectations for a quality, multidimensional mentorship were lower.

Because having a mentor of the same race and gender is not always possible, many who desire to have a mentor often will need to cross racial and gender lines to form cross-cultural mentorships. Cross-cultural mentorships were more likely to be effective when the mentee's culture was acknowledged and integrated to the relationship. In other words, cultural differences were recognized and critically evaluated to determine what impact they might have on the experiences of the mentee (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001) as opposed to dismissed and discarded. Walker's (2006) advocating of dominant culture mentors "experiencing a culture in a visceral way rather than merely attaining a cognitive level of understanding" in order to develop "a sense of empathy that will contribute to a deeper connection with the student" (p. 64) was another pathway to effective mentoring. Consistent with the mentoring literature in general, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2002) discussed the importance of trust in cross-cultural mentoring relationships. Trust between the

mentee and the mentor can develop as a byproduct of open and honest dialogue, increased awareness of cultural differences and similarities, and empathy. Cross-cultural mentorships flourish when mentors do not presume that their differentially-positioned mentees experience the academy, the workplace and life in general in the same way that they do. Undoubtedly, mentorships between people of different cultures can be effective and rewarding.

Interest in mentorship continues to increase and conceptual models are advanced in an effort to aid potential mentors in developing an effective praxis inclusive of the aforementioned elements for mentoring. Not surprisingly, culture, in some fashion, is frequently discussed as a component of the cross-cultural mentorship but is infrequently discussed as a component of mentorships at large. Literature on cross-cultural mentorships has discussed a wide gamut of factors that impact mentorships between people of different cultures. Though cross-cultural mentorship literature discusses the importance of culture, a purveyor of the literature might be left with the impression that culture is only relevant for cross-cultural dyads. This relegates the significance of culture and thus cultural responsiveness to one of lesser importance than other aspects of a mentoring relationship. In order to be maximally effective, mentors and the literature that informs them also must identify culture and cultural responsiveness as key dimensions of effective mentoring at large.

Culturally Responsive Mentoring

Cultural responsiveness should be consistently framed as a core element in mentoring relationships. Often other concepts such as power, positionality and support are used as proxies for this pivotal aspect of the mentoring process. In other words, some may insist that paying attention to power dynamics, acknowledging positionality and providing support are all ways of being culturally responsive. Indeed, these concepts are core to the process of effective mentoring but are not a substitute for the necessity of naming cultural responsiveness as a key element and being culturally responsive in the practice of mentoring. That is, acknowledging positionality, being aware of

one's power and offering support are staples in the lexicon of the literature of good mentoring, but none are synonyms for being culturally responsive. Cultural responsiveness also should be part of the lexicon for good mentoring practice. When it is diligently employed, it becomes the framework for the action imperatives of a mentor: assessing, educating, protecting, guiding, encouraging and socializing.

Talmadge Guy (1999) argued that adult education devoid of attention to cultural context was a recipe for marginalization because "every aspect of adult life is shaped by culture" (p. 5). Understanding this as a mentor is integral, especially for mentoring "persons whose group identity is socially, politically, and economically marginalized" (p. 5) because the marginalization translates to a loss of power. McIntosh (1988) described the imbalance of power best when she detailed what it was like to be privileged: benefits intentional and unintentional, the advantages offered and presumed, and lack of awareness that all did not reap equal or equitable rewards from the system. Mentors who function from a position of neutrality fail to realize the multiple and insidious ways that marginalization impacts the mentee, and, in some cases, privilege their own culture while unknowingly devaluing the culture of the mentee. Guy provided an analysis of this in describing the impact of internalized negative stereotypes: "Absent any contravening influences both white and African-American adults 'know' that *white* means right, good, and normal and that *black* means less, bad, abnormal" (p. 11). These unconscious perceptions, in turn, impact how one thinks and acts in any given situation. Without the filter of cultural responsiveness, mentors act with disregard to the cultural imperative of the mentee.

This has obvious implications for cross-cultural mentorships, but even within "same" cultural dyad groups, this is an important consideration. For instance, I may be an African-American mentoring another African-American, but there are a multitude of other cultural factors upon which we may differ: gender, class, sexual preference, religion, ableness, generational age, etc. Asserting of cultural privilege by the mentor on any dimension can be detrimental to the mentorship. Failure

to recognize the deployment of power involved in the assertion results in baselines, evaluative end markers and qualitative assessment of quality being based on the centric views emanating from the dominant, power-infused cultural standpoint of the mentor. This ultimately promotes exclusion and devaluation of the mentee's culture and reduces the probability of the mentee reaping maximal benefit from the relationship.

A definition from culturally responsive mentoring can be borrowed from scholars who have written about culturally relevant teaching. Guy (1999) wrote, "Teaching in a culturally relevant way requires that adult educators examine the learning environment for communicative processes, instructional practices, classroom norms and expectations, learning evaluation criteria, and instructional content that is potentially culturally incompatible with the learners' culture" (p. 14). Ladson-Billings (1995) furthered this imaginative inquiry by highlighting the shortcomings of the then commonly accepted nomenclature,

culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, and culturally compatible-seem to connote accommodation of student culture to main-stream culture. Only the term culturally responsive appears to refer to a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture ... It may well be that ... discovering the small differences in social relations ... make[s] a big difference in the interactional ways children engage the content of the school curriculum. (p. 467)

Being culturally responsive, as Ladson-Billings suggests, is nuanced in its difference and therefore offers a value-added concept to the practice of mentoring. It is more than awareness; it is more than acceptance of difference; it is more than making the culture of the mentee compatible with the culture of the mentor or dominant culture (otherwise known as assimilation). Culturally responsive mentoring is a holistic equity-based approach based on cultural competence and critical consciousness of the individual, social context and political

playing field. It, like trust, guidance and support, must become a staple part of the praxis of mentoring.

Enacting critical consciousness and cultural competence then become the foundations for developing a practice of culturally responsive mentoring. Hanley (1999) wrote that “One of the most valuable skills we can have is cultural competence – the ability to work across cultures in a way that acknowledges and respects the culture of the person or organization being served” (p. 1). Cultural competence carries an action imperative implied by the word “work” seen in the definition and suggests that change is a viable outcome of its execution. Hanley asserted that cultural competence is at the end of a five-point continuum that includes at the opposite end cultural destructiveness, incapacity, blindness and pre-competence. Cultural competence is recognized by its proactive stance, its standard of parity, and its search for means and methods of better meeting the needs of those in unprivileged cultural groups through a critical evaluation of the current means and methods. It is in essence an unwillingness to settle for

the alternative to working toward cultural competence [which] is to exist in a vacuum, to live in the absence of comparative information on the cultural life of others. If we choose to live in a cultural vacuum, we will not only continue to perpetuate stereotypes we have of other people, but we also will be perpetuating the stereotypes others have of us. Striving for cultural competence will help you break through these stereotypes and enter the deep waters of culture – yours and those you deserve – where you can effect [sic] positive, lasting change for the better. (Hanley, 1999, p. 6)

Scholars are continually engaging in the process of developing models to provide prescriptive advice on how to conduct various aspects of their professorial roles. The literature on mentoring has not been the exception and it should move beyond the cultural vacuum to define competence to include criticality as it further advances models for good mentoring.

Brown et al. (1999) cited 10 activities from Johnson, and the National Education Association, that they see in most programs:

- Assignment of a faculty mentor.
- Assignment of a student or peer advisor.
- Formally established student or peer/network.
- Academic assistance workshops.
- Computer skills workshops and assistance.
- Research, writing, and professional publication guidance.
- Social activities and programming.
- Provision of financial assistance.
- Orientation or welcome programs.
- Career decision-making and planning workshops. (p. 111)

As a result, they developed a tripartite model that includes three modes. Academic midwifery is the process through which mentors act as “facilitators who coach students through the process of academic and professional discovery” (p. 114). The second mode is role molding. Role molding involves “active engagement of faculty in shaping the lives of their students into the academic and social shapes or patterns the students desire” (p. 115). The final mode is labeled frientoring. Frientoring acknowledges the difference in power – referent, symbolic, expert – between the mentor and the mentee, but stresses that the relationship must exist in meaningful ways that assert a level of symmetrical power outside of the classroom. It involves mutuality.

Zachary (2011) posited a learning-centered mentoring paradigm. The paradigm features seven components: Reciprocity, learning, relationship, partnership, collaboration, mutually defined goals and development (p. 3). Her humanistic approach reflects the andragogical principles advanced by Malcolm Knowles. Unlike Knowles, there is a deliberate attempt to attend to context in the learning situation. Key to the model is cross-cultural competency because it is a precursor to communication. This involves knowing your culture as well as other cultures. Awareness and sensitivity are the

foundational building blocks of a learning-centered mentoring paradigm. While this and the tripartite model acknowledge the role of culture, they seem to stop shy of explicitly advocating cultural responsiveness in mentoring. If it is present, it is assumed as opposed to being directly addressed. If cultural responsiveness is to be consistently incorporated into the praxis of mentors, it must be elevated to the same level of inclusion within the lexicon of mentoring models.

Mentoring models have a great deal to offer to practitioners. They provide the language to understand the task. They provide guidance to complete the task. They deconstruct the process so that mentors are aware of the multiple roles, responsibilities and potential challenges that they must face to be effective. When models consistently fail to identify particular aspects as central to the model, mentors are left with either a lack of awareness about it or a diminished understanding of its importance. Based on my review of the literature on mentoring, cultural responsiveness is one of those aspects. Mentoring models and research on mentoring should be more consistent in its direct inclusion, and it should be a primary factor considered when researching mentoring in both cross-cultural dyads and same-cultural dyads. Models need to be more holistic and draw from a wider base of cultural backgrounds of the mentees. Using cultural responsiveness as a guide, the models would highlight cultural competence married with critical consciousness as one factor within the model. Opening the possibility to consider mentoring from an Asian perspective, a Native American perspective and an Afrocentric perspective provides avenues to move mentoring from a normative state of cultural neutrality to a state of cultural specificity that both demonstrates honor and respect for the process as a whole. The literature is clear that mentors in general fail to take a learned approach to their praxis. It is assumed that they know what to do. Few turn to mentoring models to serve as guidepost for their praxis, but when they do, they find a poverty of options that speak to the diversity of the mentee population. Practitioners can no longer assume the culturally-neutral and culturally-sensitive models are adequate

for meeting the needs of adult mentees. Researchers must develop culturally-responsive models to better prepare mentors for their tasks and responsibilities to diverse student populations.

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Team Teaching Diversity in the Workplace: Our Story

Thomas Kernodle and Gina Torino, Metropolitan Center

I. Introduction – What is Team Teaching?

A team has been defined as a group of interdependent individuals with shared commitments to accomplish a common purpose or goal (Lewis, Goodman, Fandt & Michlitsch, 2007). Some of the major characteristics of effective teamwork include shared responsibility, complementary skills, synergy and cohesiveness.

An effective team should share the responsibility. This means each member should receive an equal amount of credit for accomplishments, and blame for failures. Members of a team should be able to work together. They should have complementary skills, rather than two or more members possessing skills that are similar or identical. An effective team also should have synergy. The total output of the team should be more than the combined total of each individual. By utilizing the complementary skills, each team member's abilities and performance should be enhanced. For a team to be effective, a certain amount of cohesiveness should exist. The individual members of the team have to enjoy working together and want to continue working together for social and not just practical reasons.

Team teaching, also known as co-teaching, has been defined as two or more individuals coming together in a collaborative relationship to share work in order to achieve what could not have been done as well alone (Wenzlaff et al., 2002). The idea of team teaching could be understood in different ways that mirror the various approaches that instructors can take. Team teaching could consist of two individuals

sharing the teaching responsibilities, or multiple teachers taking on several different roles.

Laughlin, Nelson and Donaldson (2011) identified seven models, or approaches, to describe effective team teaching. Instructors may choose a specific style or combination of styles based on the content of the particular course, as well as the teaching styles of the instructors involved.

“The Tag Team” is the most common approach. The instructors divide course material and take turns presenting it.



Gina Torino (left) and Tom Kernodle

“The Dance: You Lead, I’ll Follow” is another model. In this approach, as the name implies, one instructor takes the lead lecturing and presenting material. The other instructor adds supplementary material and comments as needed. “The Specialists” approach consists of one constant instructor throughout the course. He or she will bring in different individuals as needed based on the specific area of specialty or emphasis. “The Rehearsed Improvisation” is similar to “The Dance” in which one instructor takes the lead and the other follows. The main difference is that it is not planned who will lead and there is a certain amount of

“winging it” involved. When one instructor runs into difficulties, the other jumps in and helps. “The Debate or Panel Discussion” model consists of instructors with different opinions about a certain matter. They have a discussion in class supporting their respective sides of the argument, while critiquing the opposing side. “The Animator and the Recorder” is often appropriate for an interactive class setting. The animating instructor leads the class and extracts responses from them, while the recording instructor summarizes the responses on a board or flipchart. The final approach, “The High Wire Act,” is an unstructured, sometimes dangerous approach. The instructors basically have no agenda. One starts teaching and they work together spontaneously.

In addition to the aforementioned models of team teaching described above, we attempted to incorporate our vision of team teaching at Empire State College, which is more closely allied with a team-mentoring approach. With our approach, we attempted to maintain Empire State College’s (n.d.) mission statement by “supporting the individual goals of our students in a collaborative mentoring environment” (Our Commitments section). We endeavored to conceptualize our role as mentors as opposed to instructors in how we provided students with one-to-one feedback in the group study setting. Moreover, in this team-mentoring approach, we fostered individualized instruction by adapting our in-group activities and out-of-group assignments based upon the needs of our students.

In this essay, we will discuss the ways in which we implemented the various styles of team teaching as well as our application of (in the spirit of Empire State College’s mission), a team-mentoring approach.

II. The Rationale for Co-Teaching Diversity in the Workplace

In this section, we will discuss how and why we decided to co-teach Diversity in the Workplace, a study group at the Staten Island Unit of the Metropolitan Center.

Tom Kernodle

I have taught Diversity in the Workplace at Empire State College for the past two years and several times prior to that at another institution. When deciding which studies to offer as groups, and which to offer independently, I always choose to teach Diversity in the Workplace in a group setting. The primary reason is that this subject always leads to interesting, rich discussions that enhance the learning environment and experience for students.

I believe that I bring extensive practical experience to the group. I have over 18 years of professional experience, 15 in which I held a managerial role. My background is in the health care sector, specifically in supply chain management. During my career, I have experienced many situations related to diversity and have observed how many organizations address diversity in the workplace. As a manager, I supervised such an extremely diverse workforce that working with and managing diversity became an integral part of my daily employment responsibilities. I also had the opportunity to learn about common workplace laws, such as sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity laws. Perhaps most important, I have seen firsthand how managers and organizations can deal with diversity challenges, not only to help prevent legal issues, but also to ensure that individuals from diverse backgrounds can be productive and grow in a healthy, multicultural-inclusive environment.

I always felt that I had the practical experience necessary to teach Diversity in the Workplace effectively, but only with an emphasis on the managerial perspective. When Gina Torino and I discussed co-teaching this study, I knew it was a great idea. Not only did she possess a background in “diversity,” but she also is a licensed psychologist and could enhance student

learning by exploring why people and groups act the way they do toward diverse groups.

Gina Torino

The decision to co-teach Diversity in the Workplace with my colleague, Tom Kernodle, was fueled by my passion for promoting cultural competence. For the past 12 years, I have dedicated my research and scholarship to this area of study. During my graduate career, I was fortunate to work with my advisor on many important articles that focused on the importance of recognizing racial microaggressions in daily life. One article that I co-authored described racial microaggressions as “brief and commonplace daily, verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults” (Sue et al., 2007). Since this initial article, I have published various studies and book chapters such as, “Racial Microaggressions and Difficult Dialogues on Race in the Classroom” (Sue, Lyn, Torino, Capodilupo & Rivera, 2009); “Racial Microaggressions Toward Black Americans: Implications for Counseling” (Sue et al., 2008); “Creating Wiser Psychologists: Training to Confront Racism, Sexism, and Cultural Misunderstanding” (Torino & Manese, 2012) and other scholarly writings.

My research continued with my own dissertation (Torino, 2009), which focused on how white individuals developed racial cultural competence and awareness within the context of an immersive/experiential multicultural counseling class. Briefly, my qualitative analysis indicated that white students move through a process by which they initially experienced a denial of whiteness, which then transitioned to guilt associated with the realization of white privilege.

Moreover, I have an avid interest in issues of cultural competence in the workplace. As a doctoral student, I spent a semester working on a research project that focused on the performance evaluations of women in leadership roles. The development of cultural competence in the workplace is essential to one’s livelihood and optimal functioning. I believe it is important for

individuals to learn about their expectations of and interactions with others based on race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, etc. as cultural misunderstandings can easily occur. Thus, the opportunity to help students at Empire State College develop this competence could not be more important to me.

III. Weekly Study Group Structure

In keeping with Empire State College’s educational philosophy, we decided to take a learner-centered approach to teaching this group study. While we went into each weekly study group with a structure in mind, we were open to altering the flow of the discussion based upon the needs of the students. We were both present during all 12 study group sessions. We decided that offering our expertise to students during every study group would further enhance student learning of the material. Oftentimes during our group study sessions, we adopted a “Tag Team” approach. This approach involved taking turns presenting the study material (Laughlin, Nelson, & Donaldson, 2011). For example, during our discussion of gender in the workplace, one of us led the discussion on gender related traits (e.g., communication/leadership styles) and the other led the discussion on workplace discrimination/sexual harassment laws. In addition, we also employed, “The Dance” strategy discussed above. For example, in our discussion about creating an inclusive multicultural workplace, one of us led the discussion on organizational culture and management while the other followed up with the discussion about identity. Both strategies allowed for us to continuously integrate our areas of expertise into each discussion.

Moreover, we implemented a team-mentoring approach by tailoring our feedback and creating an avenue for further discussion with individual students. For example, one student in our study group had many questions concerning his understanding of cross-cultural communication. In our roles as team mentors, we were able to not only act as traditional instructors and answer his questions in the study group, but we also were able to act as mentors by meeting with this student in one-on-one meetings

throughout the term to address his concerns and help him better understand cross-cultural communication patterns. In this instance, we were able to offer the student the opportunity to get a more in-depth understanding of how his intercultural communication style differed from more culturally diverse individuals (direct vs. indirect, high context vs. low context, etc.) by utilizing the framework of one-on-one mentoring. Empire State College's mentoring model allowed for us to engage in the active interplay of ideas in contrast to that of a traditional college in which an encounter as described above is less encouraged to take place.

During the latter half of our weekly two-hour study group, we often engaged students in an experiential exercise. Following our initial discussion on bridging cultural differences for job success, for example, we divided students into teams and engaged in a collaborative group activity. During this activity, students were asked to answer questions related to diversity issues within each of their groups. Some examples of questions included: "How many Fortune 500 companies had women CEOs in 2008?" (answer: 12); and "How many languages are spoken in the United States?" (answer: 311; 138 in Queens, NY) (Mason & Lee, 2011). After each team came up with its respective responses, it was determined which team came closest to the desired response. The team with the most correct answer scored a "point." The team with the most "points" by the end "won the game." This activity promoted engagement and a lively discussion of the topics presented.

After our discussion about issues related to the dominant, Euro-American culture, we asked students to stand up and engage in the "privilege walk" (Brantmeier, Aragon, Kees, Peila-Shuster & Anderson, 2011). This activity allows students to understand the nuances that the role of privilege has played (or not played) in their own lives. Students are asked to take one step forward or one step back based on whether or not they have experienced privilege in a specific area. Some examples of sentences included, "If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward"; "If you went to school speaking a language other than English, take one step back";

"If your family ever had to move because they could not afford the rent, take one step back"; and "If you ever inherited money or property, take one step forward" (McIntosh, 2011, p. 84). One of us read the sentences and the other one led the processing of the experience. During this final processing phase, both of us engaged in asking questions and facilitating the discussion on how the students made meaning of their experience.

IV. Students' Experiences with the Team-Teaching Approach

It was our hope that students would benefit more from the synergy of two instructors rather than a single instructor. Our intention was to bring our discipline-specific knowledge and skills to the teaching encounter. In addition, in the group setting, we intentionally modeled how a man and a woman could work collaboratively in an egalitarian fashion. In this respect, students were able to experience "diversity in the workplace" within the microcosm of our group setting.

At the end of our group study, we asked students to complete an optional short survey assessing their experiences of our team teaching approach. What follows is a series of excerpts from our students:

"It wasn't bad having two teachers. I learned from both of them. It was nice having two views especially since Dr. K. was able to teach us more about the business aspect and Gina taught us a lot about the cultural aspect. Having two teachers to teach us their specialties gives the students a lot more knowledge."

"... It was good to see how two teachers agree or disagree on a situation."

"My learning was enhanced by having two instructors. I was able to benefit from having alternate views (business vs. psychology)."

"I believe that having two instructors enhanced my learning because I was able to have both teachers' undivided attention and not worry about one teacher trying to focus on one student at a time."

"... I was able to see each instructor's point of view (man's vs. woman's perspective) ..."

"It was good to have two different people to communicate with during class. It also was good to have two different perspectives of a male and female."

"I feel that having two instructors kept me more interested in the material. I did not have to hear the same instructor all of the time."

"I loved having both professors teach the class. It taught us the subject more in depth coming from a business perspective and a psychology perspective. I loved it!"

... [I]n the group setting, we intentionally modeled how a man and a woman could work collaboratively in an egalitarian fashion.

The quotes above represent the essence of what all students stated about this group study. We received responses from each of the 13 students who had participated in the study group. Various themes seemed to emerge from the student responses. First, students seemed to enjoy and benefit from having two instructors from two disciplines (management and multicultural psychology). For example, during our discussion about Asian American cultural values, one of us was able to lead the discussion about various cultural values that may impact workplace interactions (e.g., proxemics, deferment to individuals in authority) while the other provided tangible workplace issues/concerns that might arise from cultural misunderstandings. And, as discussed earlier in this essay, our team-mentoring approach allowed for us to meet one-on-one with particular students to address their individualized learning needs.

Second, students seemed to understand and appreciate our cross-gender interactions and points of view. At times, we did not always agree on issues that arose in the group (e.g., discussion on a case study regarding a woman's denial of promotion); however, we were able to respectfully disagree on the issue thereby demonstrating to students how two people can disagree but still work together. Finally, students seemed to benefit from having the attention from two different instructors. We were both present during all study group sessions. This team-mentoring approach lent itself to providing students with our attention and input into all group interactions.

V. Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations to Other Mentors

In conclusion, we both agree that this teaching experience was a worthy endeavor, not only for the students, but for us, as well. First, we have decided to continue team teaching for this specific study – Diversity in the Workplace. We believe that our individual academic interests were enhanced through this collegial enterprise and that future collaboration will result in continued positive experiences. In addition, we each found that team teaching was a learning experience, not just for the students, but also for us. As a business professor with a background in management and organizational behavior, Tom benefited from learning the psychology behind diversity and self-identity. As a psychology professor with a background in multiculturalism, Gina found learning about diversity law in the workplace and how organizations manage diversity to be useful. We both agree that knowledge gained while team teaching is beneficial, both personally and professionally.

Moreover, as educators, we strive to improve our teaching abilities through analyzing the results of evaluations from students and by attending various professional development workshops. Team teaching provided us with an opportunity for professional development. For example, by being present in the room while the other professor was teaching, we were able

to observe different styles, methods and pedagogies and were inspired to adapt these new techniques for other studies.

Second, the students' experiences in the learning environment is essential to their education. Our intention was to provide students with opportunities to create new knowledge and understanding of the material presented. We each brought our respective "expertise" to bear. It was our hope that students would have positive learning experiences and that they would be able to integrate issues of diversity into workplace communication, organization and structure. Based on class discussions, final presentations, and results of the student survey that was distributed at the end of the term, we found this goal to have been successfully accomplished. One student wrote: "The study really opened up a whole new understanding on how to relate to people, be it at work or any other place irrespective of their race, gender, sexual orientation, ability or religion." Another student stated: "In this group study, I learned about the importance of diversity and how not to stereotype people. I also learned that it is important to consider others' feelings and that everyone has different needs."

Third, as a result of team teaching this study, we have decided to co-author a textbook on diversity in the workplace. While preparing for this study, we found the search for a quality textbook on the subject to be challenging. There is a lack of adequate published material covering all of what we consider to be the essential components of diversity in the workplace. Many of the available textbooks are either antiquated or overpriced. Some focus too much on one particular area, such as international business or multicultural education, or discuss only race or only gender issues. We are confident that we can offer a quality text that provides a balance of psychology and management while adequately covering the important topics of diversity in the workplace that are relevant to the contemporary work environment. It appears that the need for such a text, especially at a reasonable cost, is considerable.

Finally, the team-teaching approach has proved to be a positive experience and we encourage other mentors to consider reaching out to colleagues within their own centers or across the college. There are several areas of study that naturally lend themselves to collaboration. For example, certain emergency management studies call on topics in Public Affairs, as well as in Community and Human Services. A group study examining the history of food could be team taught by two professors, one specializing in history and the other in nutrition. We found that management and psychology were complementary when it came to diversity and we were fortunate to have the opportunity to share our knowledge. We hope that imparting our experience of team teaching will inspire other mentors to seek out opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues using this approach. It has great potential to be a positive learning experience for students and mentors alike.

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“Let’s take the study of Heidegger. There is a worldwide community of people who are interested in Heidegger, centered around some of the experts (such as Dreyfus, for example). The people most expert in Heidegger tend to communicate with each other, and to be followed or read by the rest of the community. Other Heidegger clusters also exist and are followed to a lesser degree by the experts. Heidegger novices begin by following a MOOC in Heidegger and gradually contributing their own thoughts (the process we’ve described is ‘Aggregate, Remix, Repurpose, Feed Forward’). As they contribute the work they offer [it] is read by, and talked about by, other people. They are, in essence, ‘recognized’ as having mastered Heidegger by other people who have already mastered Heidegger.”

*– Stephen Downes, “The Rise of MOOCs”
Blog post at <http://www.downes.ca/post/57911>
23 April 2012*

Share Our Future: The CLASSE Manifesto

Coalition Large de l'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante
Translated by Tamara Loring, Rouge Squad

Introduction by Jacob Remes, Metropolitan Center

Introduction

Last winter, the provincial government of Quebec, led by the Liberal Party's Jean Charest, announced that it would raise tuition at colleges and universities by about 82 percent over five years, to \$3,793. (All universities and most colleges in the province are public, and the Canadian dollar is about equal to its American counterpart.) After Charest's government refused to compromise, Quebec's three main student unions went on strike. The largest and most militant of the unions is CLASSE, the Coalition Large de l'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante, roughly translated as the Large Coalition of the Association for Solidarity Among Student Unions, which, following the structure of democratic labor unionism it emulates, organizes department by department, faculty by faculty, university by university. This meant that the strike mandate was determined by weekly votes by students in their departments. Rarely was an entire university entirely on strike, but for a time last spring, not a single philosophy student in Montreal was attending classes. At its height, 180,000 students refused to go to class and picketed their campuses and classrooms to block their colleagues who would have otherwise stayed in school.

After about a dozen weeks, students began to augment their picketing with nighttime demonstrations through the streets of Montreal, which is Quebec's largest city, its cultural capital and the site of its largest universities. These marches were accompanied by occasional vandalism and frequent police violence, by way of tear gas, copious and indiscriminate pepper spray, charging horses, flash grenades, rubber bullets and truncheons. After a month of these demonstrations, the Charest government responded with Law 78, called the "*loi matraque*," or "truncheon law,"

by its critics: emergency legislation rushed through the National Assembly in under 24 hours that banned protests larger than 50 people without police permission and any protests within 50 meters of a college or university campus, threatened crippling fines for individuals or organizations that encouraged – or even failed to discourage – disruptive or unpermitted demonstrations, and forbade any college or university employee to participate in any student demonstration, even if legal.

Charest miscalculated. Four days after he rushed the bill through, perhaps as many as half a million people marched through the streets of Montreal, deviating from the pre-announced route and thus committing what was probably the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history. Law 78 widened the battle beyond campus and brought a broad swath of Quebec onto the streets, young and old alike. It also extended the fight beyond Montreal. Drawing inspiration from illegal protests in South American dictatorships, Quebecers around the province joined as many as 10,000 of their neighbors for nightly impromptu marches, called *casserolés*, marching joyously through the streets banging pots and pans.

What is happening in Quebec is relevant to us not just because the Université du Québec system was initially modeled after SUNY (Henchey & Burgess, 1987), and not just because Quebec public higher education, like its American cousins, faces increased pressure from austerity regimes in government. Throughout the struggle, Quebec's students have consistently articulated a vision of higher education that encourages us to rethink its purpose, its funding and its accessibility. Education should not be a luxury good, purchased by the few who can afford it. Neither should it be a personal investment in an

individual's future earnings. Rather, the students understand education as a social good, provided by the state because an educated population benefits the nation. Told they should pay their fair share in tuition, students responded, in the words of poet Catherine Côté-Ostiguy (2012), that they will do so "when, graduated, we will contribute to a better Québec" (stanza 6).

Côté-Ostiguy's poem is telling. Titled "Speak Red," it pays homage to a seminal nationalist poem by Michèle Lalonde, "Speak White." Côté-Ostiguy, like many of her fellow students, placed the strike in a nationalist history. In 1960, there were an equal number of universities – three – for Anglophones and Francophones, although only 13 percent of Quebecers were native English speakers. Only 3 percent of French-speaking Quebecers between ages 20 and 24 attended university; the equivalent number for English-speakers was 11 percent. Only 14 percent of the province's university students were women (Pigeon, n.d.). Reforms to the education system were a key part of the "Quiet Revolution" that created modern – secular, social democratic and nationalist – Quebec, in which ordinary Quebecers would be "*maîtres chez nous*," masters in our own house, as opposed to English Canadians, clerics or autocratic politicians (Mann, 2002; Manguson 1980; Henchey & Burgess, 1987). Key among these 1960s reforms was the creation of the French-speaking Université du Québec system, with campuses around the province, and the founding of *collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel* (cégeps or colleges). To broaden access to post-secondary education and even the path to university for Francophones and Anglophones, the province inserted cégeps between high school and university. All university-bound students take a two-year general course; others can take three-year vocational and



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Students and supporters march out of Montreal's university quarter during an illegal protest on June 22, 2012. The movement has adopted a red square, often pinned to clothing or bags, to mark that students are "carremont dans la rouge" – "squarely in the red" or deeply indebted – from tuition.

professional courses. Crucially, students in both tracks attend the cégeps together and receive the same diploma. The colleges' character was deeply shaped by a series of strikes and occupations in the late 1960s, indelibly marking their revolutionary heritage (Henchey & Burgess, 1987). If judged on the basis of access to higher education, these reforms were undoubtedly successful. Between 1961 and 1981, enrollment in higher education – colleges and universities combined – increased 250 percent; by 1983, 46 percent of full-time undergraduates were women (Henchey & Burgess, 1987).

Thanks to this history, questions of access to higher education are inextricably wrapped up in questions of nation, even for nonnationalists. But unlike their parents' and grandparents' generations of nationalists, today's students seem not to care much about sovereignty or language. Instead, as anarchist activist Rémi Bellmare-Caron explained to American

video journalists Nate Lavey and Rachel Tomlinson (2012), "A lot of people think it's what makes Quebec different: having more accessible education, more accessible health care." In other words, Quebec's distinctiveness stems not from religion or language or ethnicity, as it did for previous generations, but from the national public services it offers – better, cheaper, or more plentifully than the rest of Canada, and certainly more so than the United States. Former CLASSE spokesman Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois (2012) made that explicit: "American and Ontarian universities are not the best examples, no more than are their health care systems. We do not wish to follow their lead, one that will bring us to the commodification of our lives" (para. 10). The root of the students' struggle, Bellmare-Caron continued, is "the different type of society that Quebec is, and/or should be" (as cited in Lavey & Tomlinson, 2012). That different society – what is generally called the "Quebec

model" – came not only from state commitments to social democracy, but even more from the willingness of Quebecers to defend it. The reason tuition remains so low in the province – even if Charest's hike goes through, tuition will still be the lowest in Canada – is that students have repeatedly struck to demand tuition freezes.

The Quebec model may be distinct in North America, but like its American cousin, the New Deal Order, it has been under attack for 20 or more years by politicians from all political parties. Like the loss of free education at the City University of New York and the systemic erosion of California's Master Plan, the tuition hikes and *loi matraque* in Quebec are part of the broader neoliberal project that seeks to destroy what is left of the commons, commodify all goods and services, radically shrink the social purpose of the state, and simultaneously increase the state's military, coercive and carceral functions. In Quebec, this project also is visible in the long-term underfunding

of the health care system, the expansion of private health care, and, especially, Charest's "Plan Nord" for developing, commodifying and privatizing natural resources in the province's vast north. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Quebec's students increasingly view their struggle as part of a broader fight against austerity and neoliberalism.

CLASSE's vision, articulated in the manifesto it released in summer 2012, is social democratic in the truest sense. It describes and demands a society that is fully democratic and egalitarian, in which the people democratically share resources. It speaks to us as educators in an institution that, like Quebec's cégeps and university system and at about the same time, was born of a desire to make higher education accessible and democratic. "Education is not a branch of the economy, nor is it a short-term training service," CLASSE declares. "Our educational system, which is at the root of all knowledge, can allow us to pave the way towards freeing society as a whole; it can provide a liberating education that will lay the foundation for self-determination" (2012, para. 17)

By the time you read this, we will know the conclusion to the Quebec student strike of 2012. Prompted by the strike and the unrest it spawned, Charest called an election for Sept. 4. As I write this, in their departmental and college assemblies, students are voting on whether to renew their strike mandates, and most are choosing to go back to class. But, as former CLASSE spokesman Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois (2012) wrote in his farewell letter, "The climate of social and political ebullience to which we've contributed in Quebec must imperatively be maintained in the coming months and coming years. The criticisms that were raised by Quebec's youth this spring are far too profound to be settled by a 35-day electoral campaign" (para. 4). Whatever happens, Quebec's students have changed, or ought to have changed, the way we think and talk about higher education. They make clear that the fight for free higher education is part of a broader struggle against neoliberalism. And they have brought their message to the United States, where students are listening to and learning from their analysis and their demands (Jaffe, 2012). They remind us that



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Students and supporters rally in Montreal on June 22, 2012.

the true purpose of education is neither job training nor ideological indoctrination, but rather as "a training ground for humanity . . . that will break down hierarchies, [and] that will pose a threat to all those men and women who still think they can rule over us with a free hand" (CLASSE, 2012, para. 16).

Share Our Future – The CLASSE Manifesto

For months now, all over Quebec, the streets have vibrated to the rhythm of hundreds of thousands of marching feet. What started out as a movement underground, still stiff with the winter consensus, gathered new strength in the spring and flowed freely, energizing students, parents, grandparents, children, and people with and without jobs. The initial student strike grew into a people's struggle, while the problem of tuition fees opened the

door to a much deeper malaise – we now face a political problem that truly affects us all. To find its remedy and give substance to our vision, let us cast our minds back to the root of the problem.

The way we see it, direct democracy should be experienced, every moment of every day. Our own voices ought to be heard in assemblies in schools, at work, in our neighbourhoods. Our concept of democracy places the people in permanent charge of politics, and by "the people" we mean those of us at the base of the pyramid – the foundation of political legitimacy. This becomes an opportunity for all those who are never heard. It is a time for women to speak up as equals and to raise issues that are too often ignored or simply forgotten about. The democracy we see does not make promises: it goes into action. Our democracy banishes cynicism, instead of fuelling it. As we have shown many times over, our democracy brings people together. Each time we take to the streets and set up picket lines, it is this kind of democracy that at last breathes free. We are talking about shared, participatory democracy.

Democracy, as viewed by the other side, is tagged as "representative" – and we wonder just what it represents. This brand of "democracy" comes up for air once every four years, for a game of musical



A sticker found around Montreal with a popular slogan: “The strike is for students; the struggle is for everyone.” As noted earlier, the red square is often pinned to clothing or bags to mark that students are “carremont dans la rouge” – “squarely in the red” or deeply indebted – from tuition; the sticker shows a student passing on the red square to another hand.

chairs. While elections come and go, decisions remain unchanged, serving the same interests: those of leaders who prefer the murmurs of lobbyists to the clanging of pots and pans. Each time the people raises its voice in discontent, on comes the answer: emergency laws, with riot sticks, pepper spray, tear gas. When the elite feels threatened, no principle is sacred, not even those principles they preach: for them, democracy works only when we, the people keep our mouths shut.

Our view is that truly democratic decisions arise from a shared space, where men and women are valued. As equals, in these spaces, women and men can work together to build a society that is dedicated to the public good.

We now know that equal access to public services is vital to the common good. And access can only be equal if it is free.

Free access does more than simply banish prices: it tears down the economic barriers to what we hold most dear. Free access removes the stumbling-blocks to the full flowering of our status as humans. Where there is free access, we share payment for shared services.

This burden is one that we all shoulder, each and every one of us, whether we are students or not: this is one lesson our strike has taught us. For we, students, also are renters and employees; we are international students, pushed aside by discriminating public services. We come from many backgrounds, and, until the colour of our skin goes as unnoticed as our eye colour, we will keep on facing everyday racism, contempt and ignorance. We are women, and if we are feminists it is because we face daily sexism and roadblocks set for us by the patriarchal system; we constantly fight deep-rooted prejudice. We are gay, straight, bisexual, and proud to be. We have never been a separate level of society. Our strike is not directed against the people.

We are the people.

Our strike goes beyond the \$1,625 tuition-fee hike. If, by throwing our educational institutions into the marketplace, our most basic rights are being taken from us, we can say the same for hospitals, Hydro-Québec, our forests, and the soil beneath our feet.

We share so much more than public services:

By contrast, the concept of price determination – the so-called “fair share” – is in truth no more than veiled discrimination. Under the supposedly consensual “user-payer” principle, a surtax is in fact charged to people whose needs are already at the bottom of the heap. Where is justice, when a hospital can charge the exact same fee from a lawyer as from a bag clerk? For the lawyer, the amount is minimal; for the bag clerk, it is a back-breaking burden.

we share our living spaces, spaces that were here before we were born. We want them to survive us.

Yet a handful of greedy persons, answering to no one, is hard at work devastating these spaces – and they are getting away with it, with projects such as Plan Nord, shale gas, and more. For these few, who view the future in terms of the next quarter’s profit, nature has value only when measured in economic spin-offs. Blind to the beauty of the common good, this clique is avid and unpredictable, with eyes only for its faraway stockholders. It caters to those stockholders’ whims in colonial style, with no consultation. The primary victims of this wholesale sell-off are Native women, far from the media, poor and easily ignored.

Fortunately, though Native peoples are displaced each and every time wealth is found under or on their land, they have kept up the fight. Some of these ruthless exploitation projects have been put on ice due to the women and men who have dared to defy them. These men and women have stood their ground against this plunder of resources, despite dire warnings that our economic survival depends on the speedy exploitation of our underground wealth, whatever the price.

Together, each and every one of us will be affected by the waste of our resources, because we are concerned, not only for those who will come after us, but also for the people with whom we now share these spaces – we want to think better thoughts: we want to think ahead.

This is the meaning of our vision, and the essence of our strike: it is a shared, collective action whose scope lies well beyond student interests. We are daring to call for a different world, one far removed from the blind submission our present commodity-based system requires. Individuals, nature, our public services, these are being seen as commodities: the same tiny elite is busy selling everything that belongs to us. And yet we know that public services are not useless expenditures, nor are they consumer goods.

Together we have realized that our underground wealth cannot be measured in tons of metal, and that a woman’s body is not a selling point. In the same way,

education cannot be sold; it ought to be provided to each and every one of us, without regard to our immigration status or our condition. Our aim is for an educational system that is for us, that we will share together.

Because education is a training ground for humanity, and because humanity does not bow to economic competitiveness, we refuse to allow our schools to bend under the weight of well-stocked portfolios. Together, we call for an egalitarian school system that will break down hierarchies, one that will pose a threat to all those men and women who still think they can rule over us with a free hand.

In providing everyone with the resources they need to develop their full capacities, we will succeed in creating a society where decision-making and the ways in which we organize our lives with one another are shared. This is the heart of our vision. Education is not a branch of the economy, nor is it a short-term training service. Our educational system, which is at the root of all knowledge, can allow us to pave the way towards freeing society as a whole; it can provide a liberating education that will lay the foundation for self-determination.

We believe that if our educational system is to be seen as a space where universal knowledge is shared, it must banish all forms of gender-based discrimination and domination. And yet a woman in the current educational system walks a path just as difficult as the one she walks in today's society. It is futile to believe that unequal status is no longer reproduced in the halls of academe: we are disgusted to see that the professions traditionally associated with women are still undervalued, and that it

is still mostly women who study for these professions. We women are numerous in Bachelor's-level classrooms, but how many of us climb to the highest rungs of the academic ladder?

We are against prolonging this discrimination against women as well as against people who are in any way shunted aside by society. Our aim is to make our educational system well and truly a space where equality reigns and differences are respected. Our fervent wish is for an educational system that allows each and every one of us to blossom.

In choosing to strike, we have chosen to fight for these ideas. We have chosen to create a power relationship, the only mechanism that will allow us to tip the scales. Sharing this responsibility together, we can accomplish a great deal: but in order to do this we have to speak up, and speak up forcefully. History has shown us eloquently that if we do choose hope, solidarity and equality, we must not beg for them: we must take them. This is what we mean by combative syndicalism. Now, at a time when new democratic spaces are springing up all around us, we must make use of these to create a new world. Now is no time for mere declarations of intent: we must act. In calling for a social strike today, we will be marching alongside you, people of Quebec, in the street tomorrow. In calling for a social strike today, we hope that tomorrow, we will be marching, together, alongside the whole of Quebec society.

**Together, we can rebuild
Share our future**

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Summer Notes 2012: Near Disaster in Finance 101

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“At every single moment of one’s life one is what one is going to be no less than what one has been.”

– Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, 1905

I usually try to avoid the summer heat in Jerusalem by teaching or learning abroad. Given the widespread high temperatures this year, it is doubtful whether I would have found a cooler place; however, as things worked out, my original summer plans failed to materialize. It was therefore with interest that I learned that a college in Jerusalem wanted me to teach in their summer program. True, I had worked with the college before and had left. We talked and they assured me that everything had changed. My past academic irritations, they assured me, were a product of a different era and unlikely to be reencountered.

The proposal was to teach two courses over six weeks. The Macroeconomics course would run as a small class. The other, Finance 101, would meet as a tutorial for three students. These courses were scheduled for the evenings and while the hours were certainly challenging, they were workable. Remuneration would be modest – exceptionally modest, as it happened – but then I prefer not to consider myself mercenary, and with that level of pay, nobody (myself included) could doubt that my motivation was about furthering education and not pecuniary. Always interested in new adventures, I agreed.

Different Courses, Different Outcomes

Macroeconomics was a pleasure to teach. Students were responsive and engaged. The shadowy chasms of the protracted recession in America, and the Kafkaesque misfortunes of beleaguered Euroland, provided constant points of reference as we considered economic dynamics and policy perspectives. We might not have solved the economic recessions on either

side of the Atlantic, but students came to a more informed understanding of what had happened and what was likely to happen. Learning took place, understanding grew, and my students and I ended the course with a sense of accomplishment. Looking back at the dynamics of the Macroeconomics class, it seems to me that things came together so well because there was a sense of unanimity regarding purpose and learning goals. Students were interested in the subject



David Starr-Glass

matter, recognized from the syllabus that their expectations mirrored those of the instructor, and sensed a commitment to the learning journey upon which they were setting out. Although not openly articulated, there was a consensus of expectation with no need to negotiate specific claims or to argue about ownership of the proposed learning experience. Finance 101, however, followed an altogether different trajectory.

It might be helpful to sketch a little of the context. I have spent many years teaching in the traditional manner – the lecture format – once somewhat pejoratively referred to as “chalk and talk” or “the sage on stage” presentation, today dignified as “face-to-face” or “in-person” modalities. In the more recent past, however, I have

worked almost exclusively in distance learning environments. One of the attractive opportunities of the summer school was to revisit my old teacher-centered skills. Like riding a bicycle after many years, I anticipated that a sense of balance would be quickly restored and looked forward to the journey.

I also should confess that there was another more trivial motivation. I was looking at Finance 101 much as an aging actor might look at a vacant stage. The course was to be a broad survey of financial theory and institutions. The authors of the prescribed textbook (which I was mandated to use) had written their book prior to the financial crash of 2008. Not that they were in any way to be held accountable for that crash, but their text did project finance as a thoroughly rational and calculable activity. To be fair, they did concede problems with some of the mathematical models employed and acknowledged (in passing) abstractions such as “market sentiment.” But otherwise, the fine textbook was devoid of any behavioral aspect of finance. Culture and human behavior was not an issue. Yet culture – especially one that assumes “greed is good,” “lunch is for wimps,” and that trading dexterity equates with mastery of the universe – does have a bearing on the dysfunctionality of recent (and continuing) behavior of financial and banking institutions. This, I thought, I would subtly and poignantly allude to in the course.

And this subplot was strengthened by my personal learning program for the summer. I usually have such a program in place for mental growth, continuing erudition and – not least – for personal pleasure. I had just finished the complete works of Oscar Wilde. My volume starts with *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* and ends with *De Profundis*; naturally, I started with *De Profundis*, which leads to a very different reading of the earlier stories and plays. I was full of borrowed wit and mildly affected

cynicism, which I assumed would be useful in my scintillating critique of contemporary finance. Compounding this, the BBC's Reith Lectures this summer featured the economic historian Niall Ferguson. Ferguson surveyed the failure of social institutions and the erosion of the rule of law, with particular reference to our present-day economic and banking woes. While admittedly not everybody's cup of tea, Ferguson is as brilliant as he is controversial. He also is a Scot (as am I and as was that giant of the Scottish Enlightenment, Adam Smith), so his arguments are probably correct. And even if his conclusions can be argued with, it seems to me to be decidedly unpatriotic to quibble.

There was, in short, a twinkle of glee in my eye when I decided to teach Finance 101. But the witty aphorisms never materialized. Financiers were not really held to account. Wilde's brilliance was not on display, and even Ferguson's rhetoric remained largely unshared. It should be said that Finance 101 is neither rocket science nor mastery of the universe but, from the initial reactions of my students, it might have been perceived in those ways. True, students were pleased when they discovered that the seminar would be taught from a problem-solving perspective. They indicated that language was not their strong point, whereas number crunching was. But to crunch numbers you have to know which numbers to crunch and the manner of the crunching. Eyes began to glaze as the problems unfolded. There was a lack of comprehension and a sense of bewilderment: not so much an inability as to what to do, but why something should be done in the first place. I suggested structure for problem solving: construct a time line, identify information, arrange it spatially and decide what had to be done. But the students embraced formulae without understanding what they represented or appreciating underlying assumptions and limitations. They struggled and grasped the specific, but failed to see the general or the ways in which the specific could apply to altered situations. They became despondent and – just a little – afraid of failing. Something was wrong and, if uncorrected, Finance 101 looked as though it would be a learning disaster.

So, What Went Wrong?

Context is important, but does not explain the key issues. Two of the students were native Spanish speakers, who had a good command of conversational English but who had difficulty in coping with the text. I had been warned that these young men were exceptionally polite, and thus that their nods of approval did not necessarily express understanding. The other student, an American, was constantly distracted. Speaking with him, I learned that his father was scheduled for major surgery. The student was deeply concerned and apprehensive: his head, as he said, was not in the course.

The mandated textbook was too focused and assumed an understanding of the commercial world that my students did not possess. It would have been a good resource in a second-level financial management course, but was inadequate as an introductory text. The prerequisites for the course were unhelpful, inappropriate and generally inadequate. These factors were all significant, but they were not the cause of what looked like an imminent disaster in trying to teach the course. Then, I realized that the problem was exactly that: "trying to teach the course." As artfully as I could, I had prepared a syllabus that addressed the learning activities and learning outcomes. I had selected chapters from the textbook that would present relevant information, designed activities that would consolidate knowledge and was now ready to facilitate the learning experience. But it had been a one-sided effort in which the learners had not been included. I had exercised what was contextually appropriate control, but control – in its management senses – can only come into play when a viable plan has been designed and agreed to. Students were confused, more intimidated than uninterested, and concerned about their ability to perform to the satisfaction of either themselves or their instructor. The situation was diametrically opposite to the one that prevailed in Macroeconomics. In Finance 101, there was a discontinuity – a real and palpable schism – between the expectations of students and instructor.

I had drifted back to a position of teaching: of enabling students to come to an understanding of a body of knowledge, which I had unilaterally defined, yet which – certainly in this case – remained remote from the students involved. It seemed that to pursue this endeavor and make square pegs fit in round holes would be counterproductive, even if with force and manipulation the pegs might eventually be made to fit in place. It seemed to me that a fundamental reconsideration of Finance 101 was required and that, without a restructuring, we were all heading for a disastrous educational experience. So, I sat with my students and listened to what they knew, and what they wanted to know, about finance; about what would connect with prior knowledge, and what would inspire new directions of inquiry. Instead of assuming the power and authority of the instructor to define, I asked for the collaborative input of students to elucidate. It was obviously something unfamiliar to the students, and there was perhaps a mild suspicion; however, I explained that my position was not that of the sage on stage, but the guide by the side – the fellow traveler – and that together we were charged with planning a productive journey of discovery and undertaking it together.

A constellation of issues came to mind. The instructor is seen as a leader and while there are different styles of leading, students might be rightfully wary of instructor vacillation or a seeming abrogation of the leadership role. The instructor also is a subject matter expert and has a duty, professionally and educationally, of ensuring that learning experiences explore the legitimate territory of the discipline. Students cannot be expected to have an understanding of what they presently do not understand: a democracy of the uniformed is probably not the most effective way of entering into new learning. Yet, for adult learners at least, there is the presumption of autonomy – a point that will be returned to shortly – in which the learner is empowered to take ownership of what she wants to learn, and is supported in bringing to bear the resources she has to reach the learning outcomes. It is hard to exercise autonomy when you have

had no say in what is to be done: autonomy, if anything, points to motivation, not resignation.

The central issue, even if belatedly appreciated, is that the learner is central to the learning enterprise. There must be equilibrium between the teacher's pushing learning into unknown and unfamiliar regions, and the learner's pulling the proposed experiences into their autonomous realm of acceptance. Together, we discussed where we wanted to go and how we wanted to get there. In our reconsideration of Finance 101 there was certainly negotiation, but I conducted much of that negotiation from a tell-and-sell perspective: advocating and hopefully inspiring. In time, through collaborative consideration and mutual agreement, we reformulated a revised syllabus that was congruent with learner expectation and interest, and aligned with both disciplinary and institutional boundaries. Then, together, we undertook the new voyage of discovery. And it proved successful.

As a pilot, I felt that the nosedive in Finance 101 had been controlled. After stalling, the class began to pick up speed. The landing was a little bumpy but hardly a crash. A learning destination, different from that originally planned, was reached and there was a sense that we had collectively negotiated difficulties with understanding, consideration and honesty. In retrospect, Finance 101 was an averted disaster, a disaster that was clearly possible but which neither I nor my students had allowed to happen. It was not an experience that I had anticipated at the beginning of the summer, and not quite the experience that I had really wanted; however, we learn by experiences and sometimes those that are unexpected and unpleasant have a richer potential than those that simply confirm.

When Things Go Wrong

There is, so far as I can find, only a very limited literature on disasters in the classroom. From that, it should not be inferred that disasters are infrequent. It is more probable that it is simply difficult to recognize, acknowledge or share them. Perhaps we only feel comfortable sharing the near disasters, where our perceptive

insight and nimble footwork have averted catastrophe? Perhaps, that is what I am doing myself? Or, perhaps, we recognize that disasters are an inevitable part of teaching and only share them when they might prove useful for others?

But sometimes disasters do materialize and shared reflection on them provides collegial value. One of my favorite organizational design scholars is Richard Daft at Vanderbilt University. Daft had an illustrious career, exploring many significant issues in organizational design and behavior, but I first encountered a different aspect of this scholar through his paper "Disaster in Commerce 353" (Daft, 1978). There, he described how one of his business classes came unglued. He analyzed the process, which was personally bewildering and painful. The paper was subsequently reprinted in the *Journal of Management Education*, along with a number of reflections on his experience. Accompanying the reprint was a short postscript – *No More Tears* – in which Daft (1996) reflected on the earlier classroom disaster, provided a personal context, and examined the repercussions and new self-understanding. As recounted, this was a disaster grounded in a complexity of personal and interpersonal contexts; despite recognizing the looming crash, there was seemingly no way of avoiding impact.

Terry Noel (2004), as a freshly-minted Ph.D., also has written about his experience in designing and teaching an organizational design course. He began excited and confident; he ended exhausted and confused. He recounted the attitude of students: indifference and growing hostility. His efforts to undertake in-process course adjustments failed, student evaluations glowed with anger, and he was left shaken and in near despair. He noted that "educators often advocate accepting that we have little if anything to learn from the past – new knowledge is the only kind that counts ... however, the classroom is not the place to create knowledge. The answer is not having the students construct knowledge. It is to guide them on the path toward correct knowledge as best we know it now and to show them how to acquire new knowledge at the same time" (p. 206).

In analyzing the course failure, he noted the central problem was a lack of clarity in what he wanted students to learn. Without that clarity, learning goals seemed fuzzy and evaluation approaches inappropriate. This analysis, and Noel's solution, accentuates the centrality of the teacher in formulating learning outcomes, monitoring subsequent performance and controlling the process. It leaves unanswered who decides what "correct knowledge" is, or whether different paths lead to alternative versions of just as acceptable knowledge. Noel's conclusions – arrived at after much thought and personal trauma – emphasized the separation between the learner's role and the teacher's responsibility; indeed, he does not seem to see them as complimentary or balanced in any way: the teacher alone directs and controls the process. I might not agree with his solution, but then I am a social constructivist committed to learner-centered education. I do, however, recognize the desire to assert control, power and authority in defining what "must be accomplished" and in forcing outcomes that are considered disciplinarily appropriate and educationally desirable. It conforms to traditional power dynamics in teaching and has the pragmatic advantage of "getting things accomplished," even if there is often little consideration of what exactly is accomplished. While recognizing dichotomy of interest and power that may exist between teachers and learners, I see the learning experience in terms of constructive engagement rather than adversarial posturing.

Immediacy, Collaboration and Autonomy

My teaching experience this summer turned out to be a learning experience, or rather an experience of reawakening in which old ideas were seen with greater clarity. The key, and obvious, factor was that I was physically and emotionally present in my face-to-face engagement with students. As I mentioned, for many years I have taught almost exclusively via distance learning. Before undertaking this distance learning work, I had a number of reservations and no experience. I knew that I could not move from face-to-face teaching to distance learning without understanding their differences or appreciating their theories

of learning. I completed a M.Ed. in online instruction – naturally as an online learner – with the University of Southern Queensland, arguably Australia’s most innovative distance learning center. Subsequently, I have designed and facilitated countless online learning environments and undertaken research in the creation of social presence in distance learning environments and the consequences of Michael Moore’s (1997) theory of transactional distance.

Moore argued that learners would inevitably experience transactional distance when separated from instructor and peers. Two factors were critical: course structure and meaningful dialogue. Distance learners, perceiving distance in terms of the rigidity of structure and the paucity of meaningful dialogue, would be forced to assume a higher degree of autonomy. Moore (1997) noted that “many students used teaching materials and teaching programmes to achieve goals of their own, in their own way, under their own control ... ‘learner autonomy’ ... [it is] the extent to which, in the teaching/learning relationship, it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme” (p. 31).

Learner autonomy is a familiar construct in adult learning (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998). The extent to which Knowles, et al. and Moore were talking about the same thing is unclear but intriguing. Despite the vast literature that has been written, Benson (2007) ruefully remarked that “if we are to foster autonomy, we need to know what we are trying to foster” (p. 736). Despite the conceptual and empirical fuzziness surrounding learner autonomy, there is general agreement that it should be fostered and actively encouraged: “responsibility for autonomous learning sits not only with the learner but also with the teacher” (Austin, 2006, para. 10). And, it might be added, the cultivation and support of learner autonomy is more complex when we (literally) do not sit with our students.

Learner autonomy was not present when we began Finance 101. Perhaps it was because I was physically present – the resident sage on stage – and symbolically represented active authority: participants assumed that I would

make and implement unilateral decisions about the course and implement decisions. Perhaps it was tacitly accepted that my agenda and the agenda of students would inevitably diverge, but I was there directing things and they would make adjustments and follow. Students did not need to trouble themselves with ownership of the learning experience because they were divorced from it – followers certainly, but the followers of an intrepid leader who was assumed (and authorized) to know where he was going. That would make sense in terms of Moore: there is little need for great displays of learner autonomy in face-to-face teaching contexts.

But as became clear to all, the divergence of objectives proved too great: student and instructor were not just separated, they had lost one another. Recognizing that – and it was impossible not to recognize that given the immediacy of our small group meetings – I was forced to stop and to reconsider. I took a position that was perhaps novel for these students: I refused to make unilateral decisions. My expressed position was that we had embarked on a venture together, and that its success rested on mutual commitment and shared understanding. Only then, once the relationship between instructor and students had been clarified and renegotiated, could a sense of ownership – a collective ownership and a binding commitment – start to manifest. Only when that sense of ownership and self-determination became apparent to learners, did they start to appreciate the consequences of autonomy: they had bought into the enterprise and were partners in its success.

The question that now concerns me, when I reflect on this face-to-face experience and consider my online practice, is this: To what extent is collective ownership really present when I am spatially distant from learners? I assume that distance learners are autonomous and arrive at their own decisions of how to reconstruct the course in ways that make sense to them. Yet, I am uncertain *how* learners set about taking ownership, or what strategies they employ. I do not have the opportunity to enter into a fluid dialogue with them, to seek clues in their body language, to respond to their immediacy, or to recognize they are

troubled – even when they are smiling and nodding in agreement. These very embodied interactions characterized my involvement in Finance 101. These were the things that alerted me to an impending problem.

The Finance 101 class represented a small social group facing difficulties that could only be resolved through mutual awareness and collaborative effort. I was an active member of that group. As the instructor, I had been invested with traditional authority. I did not set aside that authority; rather, I chose to use it in a different way. Involvement and inclusion within a dynamic of change could only materialize through shared awareness and mutual responsiveness. Learner autonomy was initially low because, in the traditional teaching situation, power is located primarily in the instructor. From the perspective of Kurt Lewin (1947), this situation represented a “frozen” and immutable state of reality. When problems arose, this situation had to be deliberately “unfrozen.” A new fluidity of purpose and possibility was created, a different culture introduced. Finance 101 participants were invited to consider what *they* wanted and how *they* could contribute to new goals. New expectations were shared and incorporated into a revised syllabus. In the language of Lewinian change-dynamics, it was then possible to refreeze the altered learning experience.

That is what I experienced in Finance 101, yet I do not have a sense of whether it happens, or whether it is supposed to happen, in distance learning environments. I do not know whether my distance learners acquire autonomy or have it thrust upon them; whether they are aware of autonomous decisions, or indeed even if

I do not have the answers, but having the questions is the only way by which the answers can be approached.

they have the capacity to make them. I do not fully appreciate the complexities of the equilibrium between the instructor's framing of the learning agenda and the learner's reformulation of it. I do not have the answers, but having the questions is the only way by which the answers can be approached.

Could it be Otherwise?

Returning to a summer of traditional in-person teaching allowed me to make contrasts that had been forgotten or unappreciated. This seems pretty obvious, but perhaps it also stresses the allure of the all-consuming present and the power of tunnel vision. The "distance" in distance learning is not about spatial separation but about social disconnection. In our online studies, we often try to reproduce a structure and process that mimics traditional in-person teaching environments (Schlosser & Anderson, 1993). Such mimicry is always futile, because face-to-face instruction cannot be replicated at a distance (Peters, 2000).

We respond to the lack of transactional distance and try to close it through a representation – an impossible representation – of what is familiar in face-to-face encounters. Distance learning practitioners call upon a toolkit of psychological constructs (social presence, learner presence, teacher presence, transactional presence) and technological hardware (synchronous platforms, mobile technology, Skype, Elluminate) to recreate the conditions for immediacy and at least a sense of community. Generally, learner satisfaction rises, a sense of isolation diminishes, retention rates increase – yet there is very little evidence, if any, to show that academic performance improves.

Moore (1997) rightly understood that autonomy was critical in distance learning. But in my own practice, is autonomy a defining quality of the learner that is being restored to them? Or is it the inevitable price they have to pay for having been distanced? Is it restored because, while ultimately all learners need to make autonomous decisions about their learning, autonomy is so easily sidelined in face-to-face teaching situations? Is autonomy pushed onto

distance learners – perhaps unnoticed, perhaps unwanted – because the process and dynamics of co-responsibility are too attenuated by separation? To what degree are distance learners capable of making autonomous decisions and, if they do lack capacity, how can this be constructively encouraged and supported by the instructor? How can learners be challenged to move from an "ownership," based on possession and control, to empowerment based on an altered sense of being and authenticity?

Adult learners should, it might be argued, assume personal responsibility for what they learn and demonstrate ownership of the learning experience. But, I am wary of assuming what behavior others should adopt, or what responsibilities they should embrace. The evolution of distance learning points to many things – social inclusion, increased diversity, open access to higher education, cost reduction and institutional expediency – but not to the deliberate cultivation of learner autonomy. Is that the welcome bonus in distance learning, or simply the consequence of distance?

My distance learning problem – realized with greater clarity in the near-disaster of Finance 101 – is that I do not understand enough about the liberation (or burden) of learner autonomy in distance learning contexts. I do not understand the learner's assessments of the situation or her coping strategies. I do not appreciate her capacity for autonomy any more than I appreciate her lack of capacity. I *know* that a shifting dynamic of learner autonomy is initiated through distance learning, but I am unclear about the determinants of autonomy or its measurement. We never discuss these issues in our distance learning environments, even although I work assiduously at making connections and providing support (Starr-Glass, 2011a; 2011b). Perhaps autonomy is like the elephant in the virtual classroom: present, recognized but politely ignored. The elephant was certainly recognized, identified and discussed by everybody in Finance 101.

What did I come to realize during the cooler evenings of this hot summer?

- *Sensing and confirming obstacles is critical.* A potentially disastrous learning experience was avoided in Finance 101. The issue is not that

disaster was looming and averted, but that confronting the potential disaster – as an embodied reality, shared with concerned participants – sensitized me to the unacknowledged disasters that might have occurred but that had been obscured by distance. Perhaps there are many unrecorded victories and individual triumphs that remain unshared by those who have acted autonomously to remedy disaster? Being present – physically, cognitively and emotionally – in the learning experience allowed me to realize there was a problem. The experience and flexibility of the instructor could reshape dynamics and objectives. These skills, however, only come into play once a departure from the expected has occurred. This is easy to detect when you are sitting across the desk from the learner, more complex when they are distanced.

- *Realizing disaster is the prelude to its resolution.* Sometimes, teaching progresses well with learners engaged, communicative and participative. Sometimes, things do not progress as expected. To recount failure, whether in real classrooms or in virtual spaces, can be tedious and boring. However, recounted as a reflective narrative – recognizing the details but touching on the general themes – can help not only those who tell the story but those who listen. The literature of classroom disasters might be small, but it provides a significant connection with scenarios that we have all shared. Realizing disaster early enough – sharing concerns with friends and colleagues – can provide a means of diverting the impending crash. The nosedive is never inevitable, but it can only be averted if the problem is diagnosed and appropriate solutions implemented.
- *The ongoing scholarship of teaching and learning.* In other places, I have considered the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) as a core element of the teaching experience, not as a postscript (Starr-Glass, 2010). SoTL requires that we engage critically in our teaching experiences, and in the learning experiences of others. It

demands that we bring together subject matter expertise *and* pedagogical understanding. The scholarship of teaching and learning, according to most, also requires sharing experiences with collegiate peers. To engage in teaching is to engage in learning; to engage in SoTL is to engage in what Ernest Boyer (1990) called “the scholarship of sharing knowledge.” SoTL makes that entwined engagement explicit and more widely available for consideration. This summer, I wrote these notes. This fall, I will explore autonomy with my online students, looking for it empirically and understanding the dynamics through which it materializes and defines the learning experience. These students will be predominantly military learners and one might assume that they are familiar with matters of autonomy. But is autonomy in situations of personal danger and professional duty paralleled with decision making about Finance 101? What are the determinants of autonomy: personality traits, social presentation of self, cultural values or all of the above? More questions and, hopefully, more answers.

Carl Leggo (2005), Canadian poet and educational philosopher, suggested the “autobiographical remembering” of our teaching experiences because “by writing about our experiences, and ruminating on those experiences, and interpreting those experiences, we can become more effective teachers, as well as teachers motivated by more joy and hope” (p. 441). That has certainly been my experience this summer. Interpretation of my experience accentuated a sense of hope and joy; perhaps, it also has contributed to more effective teaching in both face-to-face and in distance learning contexts.

There is no stasis in life or in our experience of it. Oscar Wilde reminds us that we move continuously from who we were to who we are becoming. My summer return to

being a sage on stage was not a return at all. It was an opportunity to compare who I was with who I had become. Undoubtedly, informed by the comparison, I will continue to become a different distance learning instructor and a different in-person sage.

I wonder what my summer 2013 notes will look like.

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The Scholarship of Mentoring and Teaching: Mining our Practice and Sharing our Learning

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A Review of:

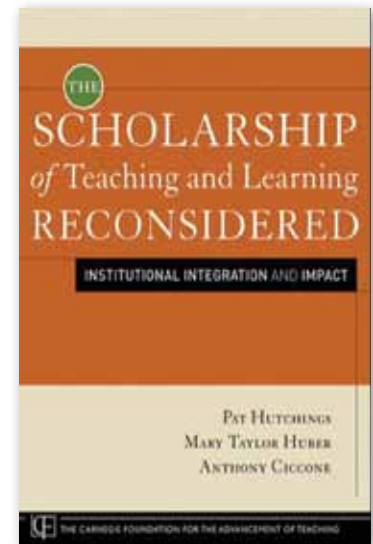
The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered: Institutional Integration and Impact

by Pat Hutchings, Mary Taylor Huber and Anthony Ciccone

When Ernest Boyer (1990) wrote *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, he made a significant contribution to higher education, not just to how we conceive our work and how we might conceive it more broadly – a goal of value in itself – but also to how we carry out that work and how we might do so in more creative, intentional and effective ways. Referring to teaching as “a scholarly enterprise ... [that] begins with what the teacher knows” (p. 23), Boyer wrote, “We believe the time has come to move beyond the tired old ‘teaching versus research’ debate and give the familiar and honorable term ‘scholarship’ a broader, more capacious meaning, one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work,” (as cited in Hutchings, Huber and Ciccone, 2011, p. 1 [this reference hereafter cited as “Hutchings et al.”]). That effort of legitimation, of viewing teaching as scholarship, of scholarship more broadly defined, has made a difference not just to higher education systems of recognition and reward for faculty but also to students’ learning. Similarly, advocates for what is called the scholarship of teaching and learning – which grew out of Boyer’s conceptualization and has been gaining attention in higher education today – have also made a significant contribution, as they have garnered support and visibility for this research.

Referred to by many as SoTL, the scholarship of teaching and learning has, over the last two decades, helped not just to focus attention on teaching – long under-attended to in institutions of higher education – but also to recognize the complexities, challenges and dilemmas that thoughtful, effective and intellectually rigorous teaching entails. It has helped to place students’ learning at the center of our work. While other projects and trends in K – 12 education, such as action research, have for some time focused less on inputs and more on learning outcomes for students, the scholarship of teaching and learning, through systematic inquiry and wide publication of the research, has helped to bring emphasis on students’ learning into higher education, as well. Like action research, SoTL has looked at many facets of teaching and learning, including, for example, curriculum development, instructional design, pedagogical methods and approaches, assessment and evaluation, and institutional organization. As Hutchings et al. (2011) framed it,

The scholarship of teaching and learning encompasses a broad set of practices that engage teachers in looking closely and critically at student learning for the purpose of improving their own courses and programs. It is perhaps best understood as an approach that marries scholarly inquiry to any of the intellectual tasks that comprise the work of teaching – designing a course, facilitating classroom activities, trying out new pedagogical ideas, advising, writing student learning outcomes, evaluating programs (Shulman, 1998). When activities like these are undertaken with serious questions about student learning in mind, one enters the territory of the scholarship of teaching and learning. (p. 7)



In examining how students learn and how best to support that learning, evaluating the effectiveness and results of educators’ practice and publishing their findings (a key tenet of SoTL), these scholars of teaching and learning have supported creative and effective experimentation; have shared innovations, strategies and approaches with their colleagues; and have contributed much to our understandings of teaching and learning.

I should note here that in their discussion, the authors refer to *teaching* rather than *mentoring*, and I will, as well. But their definition of teaching is clearly very broad, including many philosophical and pedagogical perspectives and approaches. The reader could easily substitute the term *mentoring* throughout this review. Many institutions of higher education have centers for *teaching* and learning; Empire State College has a Center for *Mentoring* and Learning. We are all working to support faculty in deepening, strengthening and renewing their practice.

In *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered: Institutional Integration and Impact*, Hutchings et al. (2011) have undertaken to review what

this more inclusively defined scholarship has yielded. Echoing Boyer's (1990) "reconsideration" of scholarship, which broadened its narrow conceptualization as related only to research in the disciplines, to include what he termed "the scholarship of *discovery*; the scholarship of *integration*, the scholarship of *application* and the scholarship of *teaching*" (p. 16), these authors examined this scholarship as more broadly conceived. Their inquiry illuminated several key issues in higher education today. Pointing to some of the impact of this scholarship for example, Hutchings et al. argued that the scholarship of teaching and learning has served to:

- increase attention to effective teaching and to what practices support significant learning;
- integrate the research interests of the faculty with those of the institution;
- give more attention to individual faculty members' goals for their professional development;
- involve students in research on learning;
- place more importance on the collegial conversation; and
- emphasize the importance of community and collaboration to our learning and our work.

These impacts, for which their review of this scholarship builds a clear case, are not insignificant. The scholarship of teaching and learning has supported higher education faculty's learning, our students' learning and our institutions' learning.

Yet, as I will argue below, both the scholarship itself and these authors' reconsideration of its impact could go further – in the questions they raise for examination, in the suggestions and recommendations they make for further inquiry and, too, in the theory they have drawn on to explore the potential of this work. Hutchings et al. pointed to some significant contributions of the scholarship of teaching and learning to our understanding, but they might well have plumbed more deeply and fully some of the ideas underlying SoTL, some of

the possibilities, or even, as Schön (1983) would say, "the revolutionary demands" of examining our work in these ways (p. 338).

First, regarding the contributions that Hutchings et al. pointed to, SoTL has contributed to our understanding of what it can mean to engage a student's interest and how we can spur and support that engagement. SoTL has noted the value of students' active participation in this research as, through examining their own learning processes, they not only shed light on learning itself, but also enhance their own, as they practice a kind of metacognition. SoTL has spurred greater interest in service learning, as this active engagement allows for the integration of theory and practice, for deeper understanding and greater awareness of the potential for advocacy and activism. SoTL has demonstrated the multi-faceted value of interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, as students are supported in framing and inquiring into their own questions, and naming and examining ways to address problems they see. Along with greater attention to interdisciplinarity, SoTL's attention to students' learning *about* (not just *within* or *across*) the disciplinary lenses also has helped to develop habits of mind that will support students' continued learning outside the academy. Through investigating both learning and teaching, this scholarship has added considerably to both our understanding and our repertoire of strategies and techniques that can foster engagement, learning and growth.

Also very important – and illuminating – is these authors' identification and discussion of a distinction between what some have called a "narrative of constraint" and a "narrative of growth" in relation to faculty's professional development (O'Meara, Terosky & Neumann as cited in Hutchings et al., 2011, p. 48). Institutions of higher education, they argued, necessarily and appropriately so, must pay attention to external demands for accountability; that is, our institutions must investigate and publish the outcomes of the education we provide. Faculty, too, have an interest in learning the outcomes of our academic programs. "Within this narrative" of constraint, the authors pointed out, "faculty as well as their institutions are under fire to be more

accountable, to increase workloads, and to relinquish some autonomy" (p. 48). Yet, as Baldwin argued, faculty are also driven by their own desire for professional growth. "In this narrative of growth, faculty work habits and personal expectations – to continue to learn, to undertake meaningful work in a supportive and collegial environment, to commit to and act upon the larger social goals of higher education – are considered essential to *institutional* growth" (as cited in Hutchings et al., 2011, p. 48). So, along with external demands to demonstrate students' learning outcomes, there are internal spurs for all of us to learn and grow, to increase our knowledge and skill, to become better at what we do. Thus, these authors constructively and persuasively argued that our investigation of teaching practice and learning outcomes can – and should – serve the purposes of both institutional accountability and individual faculty growth and renewal. Pointing to Chism's work on the "natural cycle" of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, the authors wrote, "Understanding faculty in this way – as inquirers into their own teaching – continues to move faculty development away from the narrative of constraint and toward the narrative of growth, away from something that might have been *done* to faculty when the institution deemed it necessary, toward something faculty *did naturally with* colleagues and consultants, and increasingly closer to emerging ideas from within the scholarship of teaching and learning" (Hutchings et al., 2011, p. 51). So, returning to Boyer, Hutchings et al. noted,

[T]he problem [SoTL] aimed at, in Boyer's original formulation, was not so much that teaching needed to be 'developed,' but that it was misunderstood – not recognized, that is, for its intellectual (which is to say scholarly) substance. The argument and the (at least implied) strategy behind the idea was that teaching, and therefore the learning of students, would be strengthened when the intellectual work entailed was recognized as such, and rewarded. (p. 53)

What, in my view, is so helpful here is the authors' integration of the narratives of constraint and growth and of the

institution's and the individual faculty member's goals. These goals need not be in opposition if recognized for what they are; they can creatively and strategically support one another.

Equally on target is the authors' noting of "the importance of the self as a source of reflection and action" (p. 58). Drawing on Parker Palmer here, they remind us of the centrality of Palmer's question, "Who is the self who teaches?" (Palmer as cited in Hutchings et al., p. 58). As Palmer (2007) famously said, "Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10). Hutchings et al. wrote:

In legitimizing the individual classroom [or study or course] as the source of interesting, consequential questions about teaching and learning, and in recognizing the teacher as the person best suited to formulate and study these questions, the scholarship of teaching and learning reinforces the possibility of the kind of professional growth that comes from within, in response to a felt need. The most effective forms of faculty development thus help faculty discuss their teaching and learning concerns collaboratively before providing prescriptive 'solutions.' (p. 58)

Not unrelated to this awareness, Hutchings et al. argued for the importance of the learning agenda coming, to a significant degree, from the learner. So, just as is the case for our adult learner, just as is the case for any learner of any age – and we can harken back to Dewey here – much of the time we learn best when exploring our own questions, when working toward our own purposes. Thus, "the notion of faculty as engaged learners carries with it a vision of the institution as a true learning environment" (p. 65). Here, the authors noted, as well, the importance and potential of collaboration and of community, which I would argue, serve both as a *support for* and an *outgrowth of* faculty's scholarship related to teaching and learning.

These emphases – on students' learning and students' sharing with faculty the project of learning about their learning; on the integration of institutional and

faculty purposes and needs for research and development; on the importance of the individual faculty member's knowledge, experience and learning goals to the institution as a learning organization; and on learning together, in collaboration and community – all contribute to a rich and illuminating discussion of the impact of what the authors referred to as the SoTL "movement." In these emphases, the authors shed light not just on Boyer's contribution in pushing us to think about teaching itself as scholarship, but also on what has been learned through SoTL, on how that learning agenda can best be supported and on what it might yield in the future.

Yet, the contribution of this reconsideration would be greater still if the authors had looked back more widely than Boyer to the theoretical underpinnings of SoTL, or to have looked more widely than descriptions of SoTL in order to consider related ideas and approaches, or to have dug more deeply into the kinds of questions that yield not just technical knowledge but critical understanding. They might, for example, have plumbed the ideas of earlier theorists such as Dewey (1938), who wrote extensively about experimentation in education, or Freire (1970), whose conceptualization of the relationship between and necessary integration of thought and action has been very influential. They could have looked at Donald Schön's (1983) work on reflective practice, including reflection-in-action, in relation to SoTL. They could have brought in the kinds of questions embedded in critical pedagogy or methodologies such as critical narrative inquiry. The "histories" (p. xiii) these authors deal with are recent impetuses for and trends in professional development, not these more foundational theorists who are grounded in philosophical and political theory and penetrate far more deeply into questions of ends as well as means.

It is Dewey who wrote so cogently about the tightrope educators must walk between supporting the agenda that springs from the learner's purposes and meeting external demands, whether of society or of one's profession. The parallel here between this critical and creative tension in educational theory, so important to Dewey's thought, and the tension the authors described –

between faculty's goals for their professional development and the institution's need to respond to external demands – is clear. It is Freire who probed fundamental questions underlying adult education, questions about teaching toward critical consciousness; questions that force us to ask, toward what ends, whose ends? In our context at Empire State College, how does one support the learner in his or her learning goals while also having a social vision for the just ends of education? Hutchings et al. gave a nod to needing to keep ends in mind (p. xi), but it is only a nod. Similarly, it is Freire's conceptualization of *praxis*, of the essential interweaving of thought and action, that has also informed deeply our understanding of the relationship between theory and practice, an ongoing relationship in which each informs and examines the other toward greater understanding. Schön (1983), too, drawing on Dewey and others, articulated a vision for and approaches to reflective practice, as he urged moving beyond technical rationality to get to critical reflection and the individual agency and institutional learning that that reflection supports. In his view, individuals and organizations must constantly examine their purposes, values and processes in order to achieve "significant organizational learning" (p. 338). Schön wrote, "An organization conducive to reflective practice makes ... [a] revolutionary demand" (p. 338). Educationists have been aware of these

The "histories" ... these authors deal with are recent impetuses for and trends in professional development, not these more foundational theorists who are grounded in philosophical and political theory and penetrate far more deeply into questions of ends as well as means.

schools of thought and lenses on teaching and learning for a long time; it is surprising that Hutchings et al. did not acknowledge such precursors to the scholarship of teaching and learning, that they did not situate SoTL in the thinking in which it is grounded.

To my mind, this gap in the authors' discussion of the scholarship of teaching and learning is indicative of the ways in which they and other proponents of SoTL pay almost no attention to the ideas and schools of thought upon which this scholarship stands and from which it draws many of its suppositions and proposals. The point here is not that the scholarship of teaching and learning has not made important contributions, both to our understanding of teaching and learning and to our valuing the inquiry and practice that yield that understanding. The point, rather, is that in largely ignoring the intellectual context for and continuing threads within these ideas, authors such as Hutchings et al. lose much of the rich potential – the potential to enhance our understanding, and to deepen our inquiry. As so often happens when theory is translated into practice, the weak translation diminishes our inquiry and thus our learning.

Related to this inattention to significant theory underlying the SoTL project is the tendency to remain in the technical rather than the critical realm. It is to the authors' credit that they mentioned at one point the importance of attending to the critical and creative along with the technical (p. xi), of examining together our aims in education. But stating that they are “pedagogically agnostic,” that they do not assume “pedagogical dogma,” while commendable in the doors it leaves open, is indicative of what may be not just *value neutral* but *absent of value*. Their discussion, though thoughtful in its view of the potential integration of the faculty's and the institution's agendas for faculty development and helpful in its analysis of how that integration can occur, remains technical. Even as it tries to situate SoTL in a theoretical context, the intellectual “histories” that it provides are about “how to” do faculty development programs. And, importantly, even as it embraces a “narrative of growth” springing from faculty's

purposes, as opposed to a “narrative of constraint,” springing from external pressures, it uses the language of the latter – for example, talking about how to “develop teachers,” making teachers the *object* of the verb. This construction betrays both lack of insight into fundamentally faculty-centered support of professional growth and a technical rather than critical perspective.

The danger, or one of the dangers, of this approach to examining our practice is reductive thinking – thinking that diminishes the potential of this kind of inquiry. Yes, specific investigations into learning outcomes of particular innovations and approaches will be important to our understanding of our students' learning, to our ongoing development of programs, models and strategies that support that learning, and to our more effective, creative and engaging practice. No, there is nothing inherent in the SoTL project that limits its rich potential. Our inquiry into our students – and, I would add our own – learning need not be limited to technical or relatively static questions. But while the authors claimed that “the scholarship of teaching and learning ... has within it a bias toward innovation,” (p. 11) I would suggest that any “reconsideration” of SoTL must remain mindful of the conservative tendencies of uncritically-framed research. This tendency is there for reasons with which we are all familiar: Numbers can be easier to work with than the unexpected discovery or the many faceted, hard-to-grapple-with insight. Simpler questions yield simpler, more manageable answers. We have an urge toward precision when much of what we're trying to understand is messy, complicated, not easily measured or even articulated. If we are going to experiment, to innovate, to “try out” our ideas toward meaningful, worthy ends, we need to ask the critical as well as the technical questions.

The scholarship of teaching and learning both can and should go further. Drawing on underlying theory, theory and ideas more adequate to understanding learning, to what it means to teach or to mentor, can emphatically and observably lead to more significant learning on the part of both the mentor and student, as both become learners in this relationship. Moving beyond the merely technical *how* to get to the critical

why, or even to the *what*, can emphatically deepen both our discussion and awareness of what we are trying to do and our students' and our own learning and growth.

To carry out this potentially richer, more profound inquiry, Empire State College is beautifully situated. Whether in answering the call for accountability, or sustaining our institution's culture of inquiry, or supporting our faculty's and all our community members' growth, we could – and should – be a leader in framing the inquiry more deeply, more broadly, even more authentically. Within our organization, we could do more to develop and carry out a mission-critical research agenda. We could be more explicit in our recognition and reward system about the kinds of activity that constitute the scholarship of teaching and learning and about the venues that “count” for publicizing what we learn. To note just one of many, many examples, we could build the Institute on Mentoring, Teaching and Learning (which the Center for Mentoring and Learning began with 23 participants in 2012) to support not just our own learning community, but also to be open to outside participants and presenters and to publish the work coming out of the Institute more widely. Framing inquiry more broadly, deeply and imaginatively, we could contribute significantly to mentoring, teaching and learning and to the scholarship of mentoring, teaching and learning. In doing all of these things, we could “tell our story.” Working with adult students, we eat and breathe theories of transformative learning, critical pedagogy and critical narrative inquiry. We should be leaders in investigating, practicing and trumpeting this work.

Similarly, many of our faculty are leaders both within our institution and in the field of adult higher education. More could be. Within our institution, faculty, as engaged learners, researchers, colleagues and leaders, could take the lead in framing and carrying out a research agenda regarding our practice. “In this view, faculty are not seen as obstacles to change (as they tend to be within the narrative of constraint), but as crucial sources of information about their own and their students' learning and as advocates for changes in policy and practice to support that learning” (Hutchings et al.,

2011, p. 65). With our innovative uses of technology in the practice of mentoring, in our blended and online mentoring, teaching and learning, our experimentation with and developing of open education resources, our work in prior learning assessment – in all of these areas and others, too – our varied and rich practice contributes much, and much that is worthy of further investigation and development through our ongoing scholarship of teaching and learning.

In higher education, there is a not infrequent but regrettable divide between administration and faculty, which relates directly to the narratives of constraint and growth. In referring to this divide, the authors argued that both institutional assessment and the scholarship of teaching and learning “embrace the values of evidence and inquiry” (p. 80). So, they argued, offices of institutional assessment can generate data that “educators care about ‘on the ground,’” and faculty engaged in SoTL can turn learning about their particular practice “into information that is meaningful at the level of program and curricular design” (p. 81). Recognizing “the need for caution” in protecting the root of SoTL in “intellectual curiosity, in a desire to know, in an impulse not to prove but to *improve* and to understand,” the authors recommended not that SoTL be devoted solely to accountability, but rather that it “has something important to contribute as the institution thinks about how to present its work” (p. 84). Bringing together these learning agendas could serve purposes of both institutional accountability and

individual growth and, importantly, could contribute to a true learning community at Empire State College.

As the institution that Boyer conceived, as a learning organization that does explicitly value Boyer’s broadly conceived definition of scholarship, that directly supports inquiry and discussion about mentoring, teaching and learning, Empire State College is very well situated indeed to take this work further – toward our own individual and organizational learning, toward our students’ learning and success, and toward making a significant contribution to higher education. To do this though, we must focus on our learning community as a whole and on an inquiring approach to practice that is reflective and pervasive. That is, in all our roles and contexts, we need to be setting up the structures and processes that support our individual learning and our learning with and from one another. As Hutchings et al. put it, in their “reconsideration,” ... the scholarship of teaching and learning should increasingly be seen not as a discrete project or special initiative, but as a set of practices that are critical to achieving the institution’s core goals for student learning and success” (p. 115). In this view – that the scholarship of teaching and learning ought to be pervasive, integrative and supportive of our many and varied learning agendas – they are right. And Empire State College – if we are intentional, if we work together – could be a leader in supporting – that is, learning from and sharing – this pervasive, integrative vision of *everyone* learning all the time.

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Found Things: Core Values

Throughout the history of Empire State College, there have been many discussions of the college's mission (including collegewide conversations that led to the most recent mission statement that introduces the *Vision 2015: Strategic Plan for 2010-2015* [May 2010]). There have been two occasions in which the articulation of "core values" has been our goal, resulting in a 1993 and then a 2005 document.

Jim Case, then dean of the Hudson Valley Center, described the process of developing the 1993 core values statement in the first issue of *All About Mentoring* (September 1993):

"At the 1993 All-College Conference, one of the discussion tracks was devoted to the College's core values. The tracks were so structured that four different groups discussed the same topic in four separate sessions, the discussions deepening (or progressing) each time because the last three groups had the benefit of the prior discussions, and because there were several conveners who were present at all sessions and who pushed towards a resolution. It was important to reach a resolution because the design of the Conference called for a product, a recommendation or a set of recommendations to be presented to the College Assembly. Not surprisingly, some of the 'final' core values (and they are not final: they are for collegewide discussion) emerged on the first day, and were not substantially changed: the centrality of the student, for example. Others (the mentor role, e.g.) were substantially changed in the course of the discussions. The particular advantage of the discussion format was that it encouraged close examination, and often deletion, of values that the College supposedly believes in but does not exemplify in its behavior. The conveners of the session were Keith Elkins, Walt Frykholm, Bob Carey and myself."

The 11 core values were presented to and endorsed by the College Assembly on the last morning of the Conference. They are as follows:

Core Values of the College (1993)

1. The student is at the center of all educational decisions.
2. Mentoring is the best way to implement these decisions.
3. The quality of the mentor/student relationship largely determines the quality of the student's education.
4. We believe in making ourselves and the College accessible to students in terms of place, time and programming.
5. The College works collaboratively with students in a variety of programs and studies and on a number of levels: we believe in serving individual students in a manner appropriate to their needs.
6. Our goal is to foster the development of self-directed learners who are intellectually curious, open to new ideas, own their own learning, and have the academic skills to continue learning beyond college.
7. The College should be a diverse academic community which serves a diversity of students.
8. We believe in the mentor as an adult learner, in collaborative learning, in collegiality and mutual support. We need to be reflective practitioners.
9. We believe in recognizing learning wherever it occurs and however it is acquired, and in the community as a learning resource.
10. The College should serve the community and the broader society both directly and, through its graduates, indirectly.

11. We should be open to new ways of learning and teaching, and innovative in pursuit of achieving these core values.

In 2002, the college Senate urged an updating of the 1993 core values statement that was taken up at the 2003 All College Conference; that is, one decade after the 2003 statement was adopted.

The Office of Academic Affairs described the process of creating the new document as follows (this description can be found on the Empire State College website under "History of the Core Values Statement"):

- "During the 2003 All College Conference – 10 years after the original statement was developed – the Office of Academic Affairs, Mentoring Institute and college Senate sponsored sessions in which we revisited the core values statement and gathered input for a possible revision.
- The 2003 governance retreat featured plenary and breakout sessions on how our educational principles apply across learning modes at Empire State College, and also informed the core values work.
- Drawing on these discussions, a task force that included Marianne Arieux (Hudson Valley Center mentor and former Senate chair), Eric Ball (Center for Distance Learning mentor and area coordinator), Joyce Elliott (provost), Leslie Ellis (Senate chair and Hudson Valley Center director of academic review), Cathy Leaker (Long Island Center mentor), and Alan Mandell (Mentoring Institute director and Metropolitan Center mentor) drafted a revised core values statement and facilitated discussions at the 2004 All College Conference.

- The task force presented a new draft for discussion at the 2004 All Areas of Study meeting; integrated input into a further draft for one last round of discussion by local centers and governance groups.
- The task force completed a final draft, posted it online, and forwarded it to the college Senate for action as a resolution at the May 20, 2005 Senate meeting.

The following “Core Values of Empire State College” – our current statement and one that we (in keeping with the resolution of the Empire State College Faculty Conference, spring 2007) have included in each issue of *All About Mentoring* since 2008 – was endorsed by the Empire State College Senate in May 2005.

Core Values of Empire State College (2005)

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

already attained, the core values support our continuing inquiry about what learning means and how it occurs.

We value learning-mentoring **goals** that:

- respond to the academic, professional and personal needs of each student;
- identify and build upon students’ existing knowledge and skills;
- sustain life-long 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 or her distinctive contributions;
- recognizes that learning occurs in multiple communities, environments and relationships as well as in formal academic settings;
- attracts, respects, and is enriched by a wide range of people, ideas, perspectives and experiences.

We value a learning-mentoring **organization and culture** that:

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

Submissions to *All About Mentoring*

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

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

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

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

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