ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

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"The autocrat wishes docile followers; he therefore wishes a type of education to build docility and obedience. Democracy wishes all the people to be both able and willing to judge wisely for themselves and for the common good as to the policies to be approved; it will accordingly seek a type of education to build responsible, thinking, public-spirited citizenship in all its people."

– William Heard Kilpatrick
Philosophy of Education
New York: Macmillan, 1951, p. 5

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Janet Jones has been a patient, loyal and always helpful member of our AAM team for years and years. We thank her for everything that she has done – and it has been so much – for this ongoing Empire State College project.

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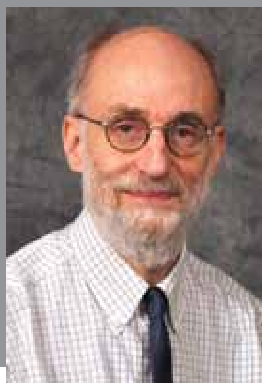
EDITORIAL



Can't you just give it up?

I can't believe we're doing this again. You're completely unrelenting.

It's not about my compulsiveness. It's a serious question. Give it up, I say.

Give up what?

You know what I mean – this persistent posturing of yours.

Why are you so angry?

It's not anger at all. I'm just perturbed and, to tell you the truth, rather bored by your obsession with this mentoring mantra and its supposed magical reverberations. You know, there are other ways to teach, other ways to advise, other ways to organize a college.

Do you care about anything? Be honest: What keeps you going? Help me understand.

You are truly stuck. How can you not get it? I'm a teacher. That's it. I care about my students and about teaching them what they need to know and about working at a place that supports that.

So you assume that I don't share those same feelings, at least similar goals?

My point that I've made to you many times before is only that you should throw in the towel, admit defeat and do the work you've been trained to do, not some crazy emotional labor stuff that's too far from what you studied, what you know and what you can responsibly carry out.

What are you doing at this college? Why are you here?

Look who's angry now. What do you think the answer is? Are you telling me that I don't belong, that I've failed some kind of litmus test? Who are you to create such a test, let alone claim that you have the right to administer it? Who chose you to be the big dude?

I'm searching for the heart of your work. I want to figure out the core of your commitment. Believe me, I'm interested. I can't believe it's only about having a job – that it's only the check.

Listen: This place is no lab for your dipsy-doodling around. I hate to break it to you, but it's a college that needs students, courses and money to keep the doors open. You may have noticed that the competition is hotter and heavier than ever and that all over the place, things aren't looking that good.

You're so proud of your smart pragmatism aren't you? You think you not only stand for what is academically right but for the only path that will keep this joint alive. Talk about hubris.

At least my head's not in the clouds or, maybe more appropriately, my head's not buried in some clever dialogues written four centuries before Christ. At least I pick up the newspaper and see what's happening around us in higher ed. I wish I could say you're just an innocent.

OK, let's try it another way: From your view, is there any reason, any reason whatsoever, to try to keep mentoring going, to do something that runs against the grain? Isn't this part of a legacy that is worth protecting, or at least trying with everything we've got, to hold onto?

Admit it. You're a guy who supposedly thinks about history. There's a time for everything. What could have been "against the grain" at one moment might not have much punch at another. Don't idealize the past. That's a weak foundation for anything. It won't hold. Hey, you know, time marches on.

Obviously, it's true. We're not in 1970. A 37-year-old born in 1933 is not the same as a 37-year-old born in 1976. But might it not be true – can't you admit it? – that there are some principles about teaching, students and the role of the faculty – principles that have merit and depth beyond the moment? Or, how about this: Don't you find it fascinating that, right now, so many institutions are trying to capture what you are trying to jettison? As I see it, you're just giving it up. Just tell me why.

Although it's hard for you to acknowledge, I'm worried too. Adults have been found, the public doesn't trust higher ed, the choices for students are almost boundless and people are broke. If this place and other 40-something institutions don't change, we're all dead. But don't worry, we'll give you your little niche market, your 10 percent sanctuary – you won't be forgotten. I promise. Still, you poor soul, don't mistake your personal passions for the whole. You've got to hold your ego back, even a tad.

Oh, Mr. Pragmatism, you're the one who is naïve. You think you can compete with the heavies; you think you can play their game and hang in there. We don't have the name; we don't have the money; we'll never have the big pull to compete, even if we did everything your own fired up proud passions demand.

Is there any room left for us to talk, or even any reason to? It's unbelievable how many times we've had these discussions – if, at this point, you can even call them that. It's kind of a drag.

You started it.

Wrong. I didn't "start it" if that means trying to badger you for the sake of badgering. I want you to back off, or probably closer to the truth, wake up, because your ideas and your high-horse moralizing aren't constructive. It's not only me they annoy – I promise you that. You're adrift and man, you're turning people off.

We've known each other for a long time and I appreciate your claims of concern, but I don't trust them. You're too shortsighted. You're being buffeted around by yet another crisis, even though if you're honest with yourself, you know there will always be a next one. So what are you then going to propose: some new version of heavy-duty change? What do you want the place to become – a little public Phoenix, a more efficient machine that rolls out graduates, pops out PLAs for the world and badges every conceivable skill?

You must be relieved to spew all of that out. Breathless.

No relief in sight; lots on my mind. You might think we've got nothing to lose, but I think you're completely wrong.

I agree; the flood's exhausting. I just pray that we can remember the bottom line: I want my students to learn.

Wow.

Why "wow"?

Not because you seem to be left with prayer – astonishing in itself – but because we might have something to talk about. It's all about learning.

So after 44 issues, you're willing to change the name of this thing?

Mentoring as Deep Listening

Cindy Bates, Northeast Center

"Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand."

– Sue Patton Thoele

"I am determined to practice deep listening. I am determined to practice loving speech."

– Thich Nhat Hanh, True Love: A Practice for Awakening the Heart *(2004)*

A few years ago, I was asked to participate in a Center for Mentoring and Learning workshop about educational planning and to talk about the work I do with mentees. While I looked forward to this opportunity to engage in an exchange of ideas with colleagues, I was even more excited be able to invite one of my mentees to join our session and to share his perspective on the educational planning process. I asked Felipe Sostre, one of my mentees who designed a unique degree in the Community and Human Services area of study with a concentration in social advocacy, to join us. Little did I know that this hour-long session – and Felipe's contribution – would become a turning point in my life as a mentor.

Felipe came to Empire State College with a wide array of transcript and potential prior learning assessment credits. His background included knowledge in religion, law, child advocacy/foster care and a myriad of other areas. He needed a degree that would serve him well in his yet-to-be-determined career while also reflecting his past experiences and future dreams. To be honest, I had no idea how to "help" Felipe when we began working together. I did not have a magic wand that would create his degree nor was I an expert in Community and Human Services, but I did have some insight into some of the topics he brought to the table. My life includes religious practice, my husband is an attorney (and I used to think I wanted to be one, too!) and we were waiting (at that time) to become parents through adoption. I remember listening to Felipe's ideas and trying to help him find ways to shape those ideas into a college degree. I remember trying to help him find a way to honor his past and plan for his future. I knew he could earn credits toward his degree through individualized PLA. Throughout our work together, I can't say that I remember "listening deeply," but that is exactly what Felipe said that I did. And when he honored our work together by describing it as such, my life was forever changed.

In their foundational work, *From Teaching to Mentoring: Principle and Practice, Dialogue and Life in Adult Education,* Lee Herman and Alan Mandell (2003) suggested that one of the basic principles of mentoring is that, "Mentors engage in dialogue with their students" (p. 8). As Herman and Mandell discuss the importance of dialogue in the mentoring relationship, the subtext of the "dialogue" they describe includes "listening deeply." Dialogue in itself doesn't necessarily require that either party is listening – lightly or deeply – but a mentor/mentee dialogue most certainly does require that both parties pay attention not just to the words, but to the emotions and experiences beneath the words. As the epigraphs to this essay suggest, listening deeply requires paying close attention to what our mentees say as well as to how and why they say such things. It also includes what they don't say, can't say, won't say, but what we can sense is beneath the surface. When we enter into dialogue with our mentees, we often need to remind ourselves that dialogue includes silence and nonverbal signals, as well as reciprocal trust.

Perhaps Felipe's description of my work with him as "deep listening" struck a chord with me because in the world of theater, we are trained to practice and recognize something akin to deep listening in a variety of ways. As nascent actors, we are taught that acting is 10 percent doing/speaking and 90 percent listening. And yet the hardest thing to do on stage is to listen authentically. To truly listen to your fellow actor and to the character he or she has developed takes training and perhaps some talent in that direction. A strong actor cannot *anticipate* what his or her fellow actor is going to say even though both parties know the script. A strong actor allows himself or herself to respond *in the moment* to one's fellow actor(s). Throughout the various schools of actor training, there are various exercises and philosophies designed to help students learn how to listen truthfully, or perhaps "deeply."

Cindy Bates

In mentoring, though, the script is developed improvisationally. That is, the dialogue described in the work of Herman and Mandell comes to life in the moment of the discussion, in the moment of two people living, breathing and sharing a space together. The art of theatrical improvisation requires really good listening skills. While a traditional script can be acted (albeit poorly) without the actors possessing good listening skills, improvisation without careful listening falls on its face. The golden rule of improvisation is to say, "Yes – and … ." In some circles, this rule is known as "never say no." By this we mean that when one actor, for example, says, "Look, here comes the president," the other actor cannot say "No, there's no one there." Or when one actor says, "Your pink sequin dress is beautiful," the other actor cannot say, "I'm not wearing a dress." In other words, theatrical improvisation requires both actors to agree to work cooperatively together towards an unknown end. One actor can, however, send the scene in a different direction by saying "Yes, and …" or "No, but. …" For example, when one actor says, "Look, here comes the president," the other actor *can* say, "I don't think that's the president; I think that's her husband." This new statement doesn't stop the action; instead, it moves the action in a new direction toward a cooperative goal of creating a story together.

I'm not suggesting that mentoring and theatrical improvisation are the same tasks. But I am suggesting that perhaps the practice of "Yes, and …" or "No, but …" can help us to listen deeply to our mentees. Instead of trying to find an answer, these phrases can help us and our mentees bring up new ideas, new paths of inquiry. They open us to a multitude of possibilities.

There is another similarity between mentoring as deep listening and theater that I would like to mention briefly here concerning the work of a theatrical director. A few years ago, I gave a presentation at a Northeast Center meeting where I described the similarities between directing and mentoring. At first, this idea baffled my colleagues because they tended to think about a "director" as a person who gave orders, telling others what to do. And, while one form of directing is indeed "director as autocrat," many of us practice another style of directing in which our job is to collaborate with other theatrical artists toward a common goal. This is how I practice my work as a director – and as a mentor. As a director, I present the basic vision I have for the play in production, and then I refine this vision as needed while I work with and listen to the ideas of the actors and designers. As a mentor, I have the big picture of a college degree in sight and I can communicate that to mentees, from logistical requirements such as numbers of advanced and liberal credits, to a more philosophical idea of what makes a liberal arts college degree "good." But in dialogue with the student, we can shape how that degree comes together. In both instances, directing and mentoring, I practice deep listening skills so we can bring as many ideas to the table as possible while we craft our production or the student's degree plan.

When I "direct" actors in rehearsal, I am not dictating to them where to walk or how to say their lines. Instead, I am helping them discover their characters and the relationships between the characters. For example, I might ask an actor what his or her character wants to achieve in the few pages we are studying. What is the character's goal and what obstacles stand in the way? We engage in a dialogue about this and then try out some possible ways to play the scene. I also help actors discover the space in which our story is told and how each character might use that space. I encourage actors to try out different times to sit, stand, move, etc. based on instinct as well as logistics and stage pictures. When I mentor mentees, I also am not dictating to them how to design their degrees or even which studies to take. Rather, I am (I hope) asking them generative questions like I do in rehearsal and then listening carefully to their answers so I can help guide them to some possibilities from which they can choose. At the end of the day, their degree plans and rationale essays have to meet the expectations established by the college and, to be frank, the ways in which my center and I have interpreted those expectations. Likewise, when I am directing a play, character choices and blocking (where actors move on stage) have to be established and rehearsed at some point; this often requires me to make decisions, but only after listening to all those involved and assessing where the creative process has led us together.

> *I'm not suggesting that mentoring and theatrical improvisation are the same tasks. But I am suggesting that perhaps the practice of "Yes, and …" or "No, but …" can help us to listen deeply to our mentees.*

I want to offer one final lesson I have learned as a director that serves me daily as I work with mentees. When working together in the kind of collaborative setting that theater and mentoring offer, sometimes we have to make choices that, at the beginning, seem silly or wrong in order to find the better choice. Failure is not only an option in theater, it's a requirement. Only through our experiments and our combined successes and failures does our particular version of a play come alive. I have found the same to be true in mentoring. When the mentor and mentee work collaboratively together, sometimes the best path to a degree plan is not the straight and narrow one, but rather a long and winding path with many offshoots that seemingly go nowhere. And yet, when we are both (all) listening deeply to each other, the journey becomes a place where knowledge is generated.

I will forever be indebted to Felipe Sostre for sharing his perspective on mentoring with me, and for helping me to see how I helped him. This, in turn, has helped me become a better mentor. Listening deeply, to me, means listening without judgment, without anticipation, without distraction, and with compassion, critical thinking and joy. I cannot always do this. There are days when my life doesn't allow it. There are mentees with whom I cannot make the connection needed to listen in this way. But there are many, many other mentees with whom I have journeyed in this way. At the end of the day, deep listening is my one, not-so-simple but immensely rewarding goal in every encounter with my mentees.

Reference

Herman, L., & Mandell, A. (2003). *From teaching to mentoring: Principle and practice, dialogue and life in adult education.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Migrant Students and Multiple Journeys: What Do Transnational Students Say About Themselves?

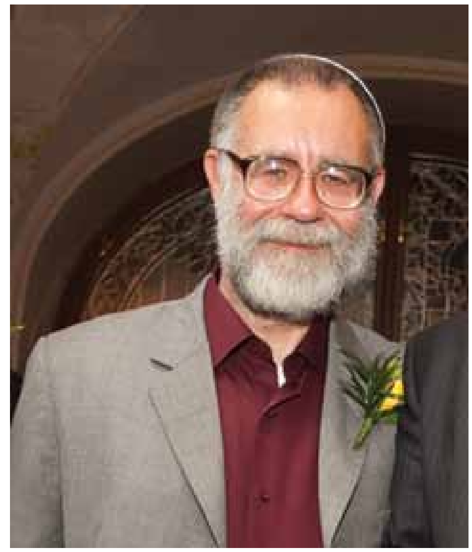
David Starr-Glass, Center for International Programs (Prague)

For as long as there have been renowned centers of education, there have been migrant students willing to leave their home countries to attend them. The migrant scholar was the norm in medieval Europe, making a circuit of the great university cities. That search for knowledge and excellence continues. In 2011, almost 765,000 students came to learn in American institutions of higher education: those from China, India, South Korea and Saudi Arabia constituting 50 percent of the total. The number is significant but, because of the size of the American higher education system, it represents less that 4 percent of all American enrollments. In the same year, 274,000 Americans went to study abroad: the UK, Italy, Spain, France and China were the top destinations (IIE, 2013). But international education and study abroad programs are not the only forms of cross-boundary education: a growing sector is the transnational program "in which fully-functioning campuses and programmes are established in overseas locations quite remote from their host institutions" (Miller-Idriss & Hanauer, 2011, p. 182). The transnational program provides education that is essentially the same as that offered by its home college; however, the students are nationals of the country within which it operates abroad (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007).

Since its inception in 1971, the mission of Empire State College has been to provide flexible, nontraditional educational opportunities for students and communities in the state of New York. Since the early 1970s, Empire State College has maintained an active presence in international arenas, providing unique experiences for foreign students and enriching the collegiate community at home (Bonnabeau, 1996). Transnational programs not only extend the institution's mission but, more importantly, they provide educational enrichment, intellectual exchange and cultural diversity not only for the transnational students involved but also for students and faculty at home campuses. To reap these benefits, faculty and mentors engaged in transnational programs need to share their knowledge and experience with stateside peers and students.

For the last 10 years, I have been a mentor with our transnational program in Prague. This essay is a product of my interest in the life experiences of transnational students in this program. It is important to more clearly explain my relationship with these learners: two significant dimensions are involved. First, as a mentor, I am concerned about the intellectual growth of my mentees, and about the social and cultural issues that might impact that growth. Understanding more of the process through which learners adjust to the new educational and cultural environment has obvious pragmatic value for the mentor. These are the learners with whom I meet on the two annual faculty team visits, and these are the learners I mentor at a distance during the remainder of the year. Effective mentoring requires insight into the challenges and opportunities that confront mentees in their unique educational journeys and in their specific learning projects. As transnational mentors, we have a privileged position on the cusp of cultural adaptation and educational realignment, but to make sense of these processes, we have to ask our mentees about their experiences, their feelings and their constructions of being migrant learners.

Second, as an instructor – facilitating regular online distance learning courses in International Cross-Cultural Management – I also am concerned about creatively



David Starr-Glass

and effectively utilizing the cross-cultural experiences that my students possess. Specifically, I am interested in allowing these students to come to a deeper appreciation of cross-cultural management by reflecting on their own cultural experiences and by escaping the gravity of their ethnocentricity. It makes good pedagogical sense to understand that students have a rich experiential involvement with transcultural engagement: the challenge is to provide learners with the opportunity to recognize this richness, reflect on it critically and utilize it in the learning process.

This spring, I undertook a major initiative to explore the histories and sentiments of the transnational mentees with whom I work. This article provides insight into what these students think and what they have experienced. It also suggests how they have arrived at a different place in their unique journeys through different cultures and through different conceptualizations of education. These insights may be useful in moderating our mentoring efforts. They may guide our educational approaches. The main purpose here, however, is to give a voice to these students and to share in a wider forum their experiences. This article is preliminary and tentative, but it is hoped that it will nevertheless provide stateside colleagues with a better understanding of who our transnational students are and what they have undertaken to arrive with us. This may be of interest to those who work in our other transnational programs, encounter these students in distance learning contexts, and work with international students in the U.S.

Context of the Study

In the spring term of 2013, I asked my students in Prague to participate in an undertaking called "Migrant Students and Multiple Journeys." The project was embedded in an International Cross-Cultural Management course that I was teaching, so participants were already primed for issues of encountering, recognizing and copings with national cultural difference. Students were asked to maintain a personal reflective journal in which they recorded experiences, feelings and reflections on the cross-cultural journeys in which they were engaged. Completion of the journal was required for the course, but students were able to opt out of the parallel "Migrant Students and Multiple Journeys" project without academic penalty. Journals were gathered, retained and analyzed in a transparent and ethical manner. Students were guaranteed anonymity and completed a consent form.

Methodology and Participants

The project rested on the metaphor of "journey," which suggested that transnational students were actively engaged in a process of negotiating displacement, facing obstacles and progressing toward destinations that they define and value. Making cultural, social, educational and personal journeys salient has been used in other contexts to prompt and support reflective practice (Goldstein, 2005; Smith & Kariuki, 2011). Although the study identified the cross-cultural experience, its approach was essentially phenomenological: participants were asked what these journeys meant to them and how they personally understood national-culture difference. Phenomenological approaches lay aside preconceived notions and constructions about what is being studied and aim "to describe and elucidate the lived world in a way that expands our understanding of human being and human experience" (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nystrom, 2008, p. 37).

Participants were from Albania (1), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1), Czech Republic (4), Kazakhstan (4), Russia (4), Serbia (1), South Korea (1) and Vietnam (1). Czechs who had migrated to Prague were included. Some participants noted a bicultural affiliation: the cultures of their parents as well as their birth countries (for example, Korean and Libyan). Ten participants were female and seven male. Gender and home country distributions reflect the population from which the sample was drawn. The average age of participants was almost 23 and (excluding the Czechs) they stayed an average of 4.25 years in Prague. The number of journals included represented 55 percent of those submitted in the International Cross-cultural Management course. Journals were not included, either because the student voluntarily opted out or failed to complete a consent form.

Analysis and Interpretation

Journal content was analyzed inductively with no presumption of structure, an approach generally referred to as interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Each journal was read and concepts indicated as significant by the student were noted. Two weeks later, the journal was re-read and a similar analysis was conducted without reference to the previous notes. Both analyses were compared for omissions and commonalities and emergent themes were identified based on an integration of both readings. Emergent themes were confirmed by revisiting the actual wording of the original journals. Themes were cross-checked throughout the submitted journals, again referring to the words that participants used. Extensive quotations from journals are reproduced in this article to indicate student thoughts. The attempt was to construct a framework of important themes that were common (or consistently re-appearing) in the material analyzed (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). If a single theme was mentioned multiple times in a manuscript, each occurrence was counted separately. Not all emerged themes appear in every manuscript. When the form and purpose of the journal was originally explained to participants, approximately 25 questions were suggested to provide structure. These may have shaped the ultimate themes that emerged; however, it is significant that no participants submitted a journal structured on these initial questions. Although reliability and validity were not central issues in the analysis, it is possible that higher reliability might have resulted had manuscripts been analyzed by multiple readers.

Emergent Themes

A content analysis of the submitted journals yielded 10 emergent themes. These are shown in Figure 1 (see next page), along with the frequency of each theme in the manuscripts. As noted previously, a single theme was counted each time it occurred in a script.

In this essay, written for the Empire State College community, only some of the significant emergent themes are discussed. Four themes (1, 2, 6 and 10) have been omitted because these refer to specific issues with migrant students coming to an understanding of their local (Prague) culture, or their refection on other cultures they had experienced. It is hoped that the six themes presented here will be relevant for mentors, faculty, professionals and administrators working with international and transnational learners. The study deliberately attempted to shed light on the issues and challenges that transnational learners themselves considered to be significant. In order to provide a full authentic voice for participants, reduce editorializing and restrict the author's construction of participant sentiments, verbatim passages are quoted at length.

Theme Identified	Frequency of Occurrence (percentage)
1. Consideration of Czech culture	15 (17%)
2. Culture difference recognized in prior migrations	12 (13%)
3. Reasons for enrolling in an American institution	11 (12%)
4. Thoughts on the meaning of American education	11 (12%)
5. Reflection on the migration experience	9 (10%)
6. Reconsideration of one's own national-culture	9 (10%)
7. Initial concerns about living in a different country	7 (8%)
8. Earlier anticipatory stays abroad	5 (6%)
9. Language and communication concerns	5 (6%)
10. Reflections on other cultures	5 (6%)
Total	89 (100%)

Figure 1. Significant themes that emerged from an analysis of migrant student journals (n=17). Frequency relates to the number of occurrences of a particular theme in the whole data set.

Reasons for Enrolling in an American Institution

Although in some cases student mobility and migration might be serendipitous, the evidence from this study indicates that the decision to engage in international or transnational education was purposeful and planned from an early age. There is a perfectly understandable tendency for those in American higher education, who may themselves have little appreciation of different expressions of education in other countries, to believe that foreign students who opt to learn in American programs have made reasonable and logical choices. This study, however, did not take such a position. It tried to understand what students themselves said motivated them to face the challenge and complexity of studying in a foreign (American) college. Sometimes, motivations were tentative, not deeply considered or partially articulated. Sometimes, the choice was not restricted to an American college or university (several participants had first enrolled in Czech universities); sometimes, it was related to parental migration:

> *My individual philosophy is based on the simple principle of following both my feelings and logic, in order to achieve what I dream, also by working hard every day. Since I was a child I wanted to have an international education and to travel the world.* (Participant #3)

> *When I was in high school I wanted to obtain my bachelor's degree in the United Kingdom and was hoping to get a state scholarship to go there. During my senior year of high school my parents have decided to move to Prague and so my choice was limited to the universities in Czech Republic.* (Participant #11)

Most of those who had considered learning in an American institution were limited economically and sought out such programs in Europe, which were considered cheaper. Here, "American education" was recognized in terms of pragmatics and utility, rather than of philosophy: prestige, learner choice, learning in the English language and exposure to broader cultural experiences all seemed to be significant:

> *I came to Prague for [an] American degree – [for the] prestige and experience of living in [a] foreign country.* (Participant #2)

> *For me [an] American degree is superior because [the] individual can choose courses, while in Czech Universities you have to take whatever is given. For instance, in X [a prestigious Czech economic and business school], [the] professor gives you a book with [a] thousand pages and at the end of term you have to do the exam from this book. No assignments, no discussions, no class participation or even attendance are required.* (Participant #4)

> *My decision to attend an American university in the Czech Republic has further contributed to my understanding of different cultures and I was very lucky [I] got such [an] opportunity.* (Participant #8)

> *Empire State College will definitely increase my competitive position in Russian and international labour markets. This is a great advantage in the conditions of [the] economy struggling with financial crisis … residing in [a] multicultural environment improves English language abilities and gives a unique chance to meet students from all over the world.* (Participant #9)

> *I wished to study in Europe or in [the] USA since I was in school, because education is considered to be of a better quality there, so I was studying very hard in order to achieve this.* (Participant # 12)

> *I always wanted to study at some American university, not because it says it is American, but because of the way professors approach students, and the whole program. The universities back in my country where I come from are having completely different ways of how to approach to students, and how those students are examined.* (Participant #13)

Thoughts on the Meaning of American Education

Although a deep philosophical understanding of American education was not a motivating factor, most participants did reflect on the education that they found within the college. Characteristically, students did not discuss education in abstract ways; instead, they remembered examples of situations, experiences with faculty and pervasive values encountered. Perhaps inevitably, they compared and contrasted these experiences with what they had encountered in their national college systems, or in the Czech higher educational system. Some of these contrasts were based on personal experience, but most relied upon the vicarious experience of friends. Sometimes comparisons are more nuanced rather than unreservedly positive:

> *Courses [at Empire State College] and [the] whole studies were less challenging than in the Czech Republic. The value of education can mean different things. To some people, value may mean how much they can earn. Others may see the value of education as the amount of job opportunities they will have. For me, value means something different, such as the social benefits.* (Participant #1)

> *I am sure that the Russian education system is much more effective for me than the American [one].* (Participant #2)

> *Honestly, I do not understand how we can discuss American educational values … the university in Prague operates almost entirely by the rules and traditions of European education, not American. I believe that the American values of education are greatly exaggerated.* (Participant #17)

> *I think that the quality of education, not only in Czech Republic, is not what it should be. I would say that the education is in crisis, and if it does not change significantly in the following years, it might face some kind of revolution. The importance of having a degree today is doubtless. Everyone needs a degree to get a decent job. Everyone wants a degree. Not many people care what the degree is, what it means, and what they learn. Education is just a big business.* (Participant #5)

> *There is a saying that in Asia, it is super hard to enter a university but a piece of cake to graduate, while in the United States it is the exact opposite where it's not such a big deal to enter a college but it will grind you and make you study hard in order to graduate on time.* (Participant #7)

Most participants referred to the values associated with "American education" but were uncertain about defining these values. That is understandable: it is a question that has been hotly debated in America, as is the relative value of liberal arts education, or the nontraditional approach that has characterized Empire State College. What these transnational learners found on their learning journeys were not different philosophies, but different ways of working with students and different attitudes among faculty members. The educational choice afforded to learners was also seen as a defining value in their American educational experience. The overall narrative is one of a positive experience; behavioral and experiential elements are stressed rather than abstractions about value and philosophy.

> *To be honest I don't know what "American" educational values are. I believe I feel very positive about it because otherwise I wouldn't go to [an] American university. What I know about Americans, many of them want to get a college degree but not all of them can afford it. I like the fact that American universities try to use different ways of teaching – innovative way of teaching, creative way of teaching and this is very interesting.* (Participant #4)

> *I would like to express my thoughts about differences between Czech and American educational systems. I found [the] American educational system [to be] much better than Czech. In the Czech Republic, you spend more hours at school listening to teachers. This often means a large group of people while individuals are not required to express their opinion or be actively involved … [the] American educational system is based both upon group and individual assignments. Performance in groups is strongly stressed.* (Participant #6)

> *Professors are less subjective, which means that to get a good grade, you should work hard through the semester. Students cannot leave everything for the last night as knowledge obtained is tested several times during the course. This creates a gradual process of leaning the subject.* (Participant #9)

> *What I liked about the American educational structure in universities is that you are able to build up your own curriculum and choose the courses you would like to attend as well as the time when and in which semester you would like to take it. So that it gives you more power of your own future and makes you start planning and organizing everything from the beginning.* (Participant #11)

> *In [Empire State College], we have many professors from different cultural backgrounds who actually care about our success in life. The vast majority of them have been very helpful in forming my career, and developing my skills further. With their help, their experiences, and practical knowledge they tried to pass on [to] all of us students, we grew and developed into adults ready to pursue their careers and goals in professional, as well as personal, life.* (Participant #14)

Reflection on the Migration Experience

As noted above, this study attempts to give a voice to the transnational students who participated in the study. A few were Czech who had moved to Prague to enroll in the college; most had traveled from further afield. These latter students experienced much more cultural readjustment. They had to negotiate cultural difference in dealing with the college and with their international peers, but they also had to deal with the national-culture shift associated with living in the Czech Republic. Most students had confronted these multiple levels of disruption and adjustment. Retrospectively, some saw it as a negative experience, albeit with positive outcomes:

> *My experience was negative, but useful. I learned that … my habits, traditions, preferences, behaviour, appearance (and so on) will not change by living [in a different] country (culture).* (Participant #2)

> *Although this journey has been tough on me at times, it benefited me greatly, taught me many things about life, myself, people and education. This journey prepared me for my future life, and opened a door for many other journeys to come.* (Participant #14)

Most participants felt that migration had strengthened them as individuals, as citizens of a larger world and as young people considering international business careers or postgraduate work. They talked about becoming more attuned to different national-cultures and gaining an international perspective. There were reflections on the migration experience in terms of "stepping out of the comfort circles," of becoming a "whole new person" and of personal empowerment.

> *The different countries I have explored during my life journey have made me feel more confident about my skills and abilities since I have been tested in different situations and succeeded in the things I wanted to achieve.* (Participant #3)

> *I consider myself a multicultural person. I've met so many cultures in my life and I'm very thankful that I've met those people who made me much richer morally and mentally. There are so many cultures in our world and to know a bit more about each culture makes our lives a bit more educated.* (Participant #4)

> *By leaving my country at the age of 19, a perfect age to experience a new life, travelling and making friends, I have become a whole new person. I have gained new opinions, beliefs, knowledge, and my outlook on life is poles apart.* (Participant #10)

> *Studying abroad outside of the comfort circle formed in my childhood made me grow up faster. If I was still back home I would probably be only looking now for the first employment and thinking about getting married and settling down. Because I'm in Prague, in the center of Europe my perception and values have changed.* (Participant #11)

> *Being an international student, or living out of your country, helps you to become a better person and to understand how people behave in certain occasions. It may even help to understand the world; what may be considered good and normal in your country and your culture, may not be considered good and normal in [an] other country. The cultures are like water streams, you are aware of them, but you never know where they will go, how they will behave.* (Participant #13)

> *One of the positive things this journey has brought me is the fact that I learned how to deal with things on my own; I came to realize I am strong and capable of living this life by myself. I also realized the importance of certain issues, the importance of family and friends, as well as self-respect and self-actualization.* (Participant #14)

> *My experience was extremely positive. I became acquainted with the culture and lifestyle of another country that was once ideologically close to my country. I gained experience in independent living, learned to quickly adapt rapidly to different situations. I do not see any negative aspects of my experience.* (Participant #17)

Initial Concerns About Living in a Different Country

A few participants mentioned that they had no initial concerns about their journey to a different country to engage in a foreign educational system. Sometimes that was because their personal and family histories included considerable prior translocations; sometimes, it was because the learning experience was judged to be relatively short and that no significant adjustment would be necessary.

> *I didn't have any fears or concerns like maybe other students did since I was moving with my family and for sure it was easier. The language didn't seem so difficult and overall it wasn't very hard to move to Czech Republic from the post-Soviet Union country and adapt to the environment.* (Participant #11)

> *Concerns – language, historical relationship between Russia and Czech Republic, and missing friends. But it is important to note that I planned to live in the Czech Republic only for a year, without active participation in any social activities, and that means that I do not need to adjust to the Czech culture at all.* (Participant #2)

> *Actually I was not so scared about moving to another country as my parents were. I'm used to independent living. I studied the Czech language for a year (and got a level that will help me to function within Prague). From the first grade I have been studying English and I have already been in other countries with their specific cultures and realize that I could adapt to them.* (Participant #17)

Most students had a realistic appreciation that the move to the Czech Republic would be stressful and adaption to the new culture slow. Generally, new experiences were embraced; however, the process of transition was something that was felt deeply and undoubtedly was reflected in, among other things, academic participation and performance.

> *I was quite nervous about going abroad. Going so far away from family was something new and frightening. I had two feelings at the same time – excitement and fear. Excitement to see [a] new world, get to know new people, new culture, and new opportunities … [and] afraid of being alone far away from home … afraid of different culture, different rules, different mentality, and different of everything. Of course, excitement was a dominating feeling therefore I couldn't wait to go there.* (Participant #4)

> *[At the airport] Parents crying, me just silent. I could not realize anything. I never traveled alone, and now I am flying away for unknown period of time without any accommodation in Prague, absolutely no knowledge of Czech, and I had just turned 18.* (Participant #12)

Earlier Anticipatory Stays Abroad

Another strong theme to emerge was that many participants, anticipating later international education, had spent time abroad. This often occurred in the senior years of high school and the main advantage considered was greater fluency in English. Year abroad destinations included Australia, Canada and the U.S. Most participants considered that a pre-college experience in an English-speaking environment was very significant in their lives and that it positively impacted later college studies. This experience provided insight into other cultures, although that experience was often not considered to have been ideal or pleasant.

> *The reason why I chose Canada is because of my teacher. I took some English conversation classes in order to improve my conversational skills.* (Participant #4)

> *[In high school] everything was new and I did not know in advance where I am going. I knew that American culture is very similar to ours but different at the same time. I was not sure what to expect. Czechs are much more distant when they meet for the first time (so do I), so I was very surprised when I get a big hug from all of my host family members when I met them for the first time at the airport.* (Participant #1)

> *My journey for education begun in high school, where I kind of committed to take the extra step, to do something unusual and decided to go to the United States to finish my high school. I was 17, young, inexperienced and naïve … I had not traveled a lot, lived with my parents, and depended on them … this moment changed my life. Living alone in a foreign country was not easy for me, but now, I see it as the best thing I could have done.* (Participant #5)

> *[Education in] South Korea and most of East Asia including Japan, China and Singapore is centered around an education system that is all about memorization. Students are mostly passive when it comes to participation and creativity is the biggest weakness. The strongest points will be fast and accurate calculations and persistent effort put in with hard work. For students in the United States, it seems like they require a longer time in comprehending things, too reliant on technology and slow in progress. The best aspect about studying in the United States is students get to see wider options, learn how to be creative, and are given the opportunity to use these options and creativity.* (Participant #7)

> *My decision to spend a year attending high school in the U.S. was largely fuelled by my desire to gain international experience and leverage it in my future career, no matter in what sector. The greatest benefit of studying abroad in the U.S. was non-academic and essentially based on meeting new people from all over the world.* (Participant #8)

> *One of the biggest challenges in the beginning [of high school in America] was the language barrier. For the first several months, I was not able to fully understand all conversations or assignments at school.* (Participant #8)

Language and Communication Concerns

A recurring theme with participants who decided to move to Prague was language. There was some concern about communicating in English, which they would need for their academic studies. There also was concern about the local language (Czech): most participants saw themselves not only as students but also as socially-engaged beings. For many Russian speakers (from not only Russia but also from the Asiatic Republics of the former USSR), an added concern was the perceived animosity of Czechs toward Russia based on a complex history during communist times (Abrams, 2004; Agnew, 2004; Holy, 1996). Although these issues are not discussed in this article, it might be noted parenthetically that student journals indicate this concern was realistic.

> *I remember that I was very afraid I would not be able to study completely in English, but I found it easier than I had expected. Sometimes it is difficult to express my opinion in a foreign language and the result is that I am not so active as I would be in [my previous] Czech school. Sometimes I do not understand the question in the exam, but those are only small misunderstandings that do not hurt my overall grades.* (Participant #6)

> *The greatest fear I had before moving to Czech Republic was language difficulties. When you travel to the country as a tourist, usually knowledge of English language is enough. If you cannot put two words together in Czech it is very difficult to find a flat, send a package home or contact public services. To avoid [the] language barrier I have begun to study Czech in Russia before my journey.* (Participant #9)

> *One of the biggest challenges in the beginning was the language barrier in both Czech and American college. For the first several months, I was not able to fully understand all conversations or assignments at school.* (Participant #10)

> *When I started learning Czech I was so willing to practice it with unknown people. However, my willingness vanished within a month. One incident happened in the metro, when I was buying a ticket for public transportation. I tried to practice my Czech smiling, saying 'please', apparently it was so bad [that] the woman selling tickets brought me back to Earth saying in Czech: "If you can't speak Czech properly, don't speak at all". No other words needed here.* (Participant #12)

Discussion: What Have We Learned?

Students engaged in cross-national education are inevitably confronted with social and cultural adaptation: they encounter the culture of the institution and its educational model; they will have to perfect their English language skills; and they also may have to learn another language (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Nguyen, 2011; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). Transition and adaptation can be difficult, sometimes traumatic. (In this context it is informative to recall that the phenomenon of "culture shock" was originally coined by Kalervo Oberg [1960] as a result of his work with Scandinavian students on Fulbright scholarships in the U.S. [Irwin, 2007; Kelly & Moogan, 2012]).

More recently, however, researchers have cautioned about the negative stress on the "spectre of culture shock" and the trauma of "identity crisis" that was often associated with the earlier international student literature (Coates, 2004). International students are strangers and sojourners, confronted by difficulties and the need to make sense of new experiences, but they also are resilient and often find that these challenges result in increased self-efficacy (Milstein, 2005). These transformational themes run through the current study.

Migrant learners are strangers and they also are sojourners. As sojourners, our students in Prague anticipate relatively long stays in the Czech Republic (participants had been there for 4.25 years). For social lives outside the college, they find it necessary to adapt to the ambient Czech culture in which they are immersed: belonging, but not integrated; associating more often with those who speak the same language, rather than becoming fluent in Czech. Similar sojourner behavior has been eloquently described by Siu (1952) in his now-classic study of Chinese migrants in America. Although technically defined as "transnational students," many students in Prague are not Czechs, but have moved there from other countries. The socialization and acculturation that they face is much more akin to that of the "international" student: in this article the preferred term is "migrant" student. Like international students, they have to negotiate "the immediate socialization into a language and culture that their mainstream peers have been immersed in for a life time" (Casanave & Li, 2008, p. 3).

In a recent study of international Chinese students in the U.K., Nicola Spurling (2006) found that students "viewed a U.K. education as 'better' because of the perceived 'whole experience' … achieving a degree plus gaining work experience, experiencing English culture, improving English language and making international friends" (p. 113). As their yearlong studies progressed, the same students realized that they were unsupported in this "whole experience," and moved from being "culture and language learners" to "subject learners" with a concomitant reduction in their social and personal goals. In this present study, while themes of temporary sojourn and non-adaptation were found, the majority of participants indicated that their Czech Republic stay was useful as a cultural and social experience, even though they did not consider residing there permanently. Almost all non-Czech participants indicated a desire to return to their home countries or to engage in an international business career.

There is reticence in summarizing these migrant students' reflections on their experiences: any summary would only privilege some voices, exclude others and reduce representative diversity. The project was designed to provide a forum for all participants, but it also provides responses relevant to those who work with migrant learners. The following issues may be useful for international mentors and for those who encounter international students in their face to face and distance learning work.

- *Recognizing the multiple journeys that migrant students undertake.* All migrant students encounter new cultures, educational challenges and language barriers when they decide to pursue their higher education in a different country. For some, these challenges are anticipated and strategies for adaptation and adjustment considered. For others, things may be more stress-inducing and more difficult to navigate. The key issue is that migrant students *do confront* challenges and disruption, no matter how they resolve them. They are impacted as people and as students: they do not have divided lives or compartmentalized existences. Educators and mentors should appreciate the whole person, not the designated student.
- *Encouraging migrant students to talk or write about their experiences.* There are no sealed bulkheads that neatly compartmentalize different aspects of the student's life. Difficulties in socialization and in making sense of a new culture are not isolated from learning, academic participation and educational success. The nature and impact of the connection may be complex and difficult to disentangle; however, there are connections. At a minimal level, the student should be encouraged to recognize these interconnections and to discuss them. Often, this conversation never materializes; indeed, part of the reason for this study was to recognize the value of such discussions and to encourage them. Migrant learners can be encouraged to write about their experiences: reflective journals provide a safe place to explore thoughts and feelings. Writing, which can be private and not shared with others, allows students to structure new meaning, create personal narratives and develop a sense of their situation. The use of expressive writing – which can be as brief as four 15-minute sessions, and which remain unshared – may significantly reduce acculturative stress in international student (Hijazi, Tavakoli, Slavin-Spenny, & Lumley, 2011; Lu & Stanton, 2010).
- *Empathizing is different from intervening.* The mentor's recognition and acknowledgement of the challenges that migrant learners encounter can provide support, encouragement and empowerment. In my experience, these students never ask for mentor or instructor assistance in dealing with the issues that they confront; however, an empathetic mentor is usually perceived as being supportive. Simply knowing that the mentor also has encountered different cultures, or that English is not his or her first language, has been demonstrated to assist foreign mentees in higher education mentoring practice (de Oliveira & Lan, 2012). The willingness to demonstrate empathy is more important that direct intervention. Most mentors lack the professional competencies of the trained counselor; even if they have such skills, there are multiple ways in which therapeutic intervention by mentors may complicate, compromise and distort the mentoring relationship (Starr-Glass, 2006). Acknowledging the cultural stress that a mentee is experiencing also may help the mentee to start thinking about his or her personal narrative. As Kearney (2002) has observed, we are all in search of a narrative not simply "to discover a pattern to cope with the experience of chaos and confusion … [but] because each human life is always already an implicit story" (p. 129). Perhaps, as mentors, we need to allow our mentees to explore those implicit stories of being.
- *Recognizing that cultural and educational adjustments are varied.* There is no single way of negotiating national-cultural and education

difference. Immersion in a different culture can produce disorientation, confusion, and concern; however, these initial experiences can in time lead to adjustment, increased awareness, and deeper sense-making. Often in coming to an understanding of a new national-culture we create "sophisticated stereotypes … [to reduce] a complex culture to a shorthand description" (Osland & Bird, 2000, p. 6). Culture shock can be traumatic, but it is often followed by a process of adaptation. All of these themes are reflected in the student journals that were analyzed. The mentor should appreciate the diversity associated with cultural adjustment and, where possible, communicate this to mentees. There is no single pathway for adjusting to a new national-culture: personal understandings and sentiments will result in individual trajectories.

- *Incorporating experiential histories and narratives into formal learning.* Migrant students simultaneously negotiate journeys in their formal learning, college socialization and national-cultural awareness. These journeys are connected but functionally separated. Learning about another culture is often an informal activity where we "acquire attributional knowledge from personal experience, vicariously from others' experience, and from cultural mentoring. The personal experience method involves carefully observing how people from another culture act and react, and then formulating and reformulating hypotheses and cultural explanations for the observed behaviour" (Osland & Bird, 2000, p. 73). Informal learning can be enhanced by formal study. This project itself was embedded in a formal study of International Cross-Cultural Management. That course understood national-culture awareness and competency was something that all migrant students had experienced, even though they might not have appreciated the experience or explored the issue in depth. There are many subject areas where an explicit exploration of cross-cultural matters might be relevant. Migrant students should be considered as valuable educational assets with rich experiential learning, not simply as learners from different places with different languages.

These suggestions may open up further interest and discussion about the lives of a significant number of students with whom we work. The migrant student is no longer peripheral or distant. In the future, their numbers within Empire State College may grow as international and transnational learners, in mentoring contexts and as online distance learning participants. From instructional, learning and educational perspectives, migrant students represent valuable assets for the transnational program and also for the domestic campus. Migrant students bring with them different understandings, different perspectives and different cultures. Potentially, they can add richness and increased diversity to the college as a whole, even though their presence may be restricted to a particular location.

For this value and richness to be fully incorporated into the college, those of us engaged in transnational work need to share our experience, negotiate links and make connections. Experience shared might be useful for those encountering migrant learners for the first time. Links between faculty members can promote a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities that migrant students bring. Connections bring together not only faculty members but also students in different places. This essay examines the experiences of migrant students and, in doing so, attempts to let them tell these stories in their own way. It also tries to share these stories with our broader community and, in doing so, attempts to foster greater recognition of international students throughout Empire State College and to suggest opportunities for collegiate sharing and cooperation.

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A Labor Day Letter

Michael Merrill, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

Dear Alan:

I am happy to share a few reflections about the Van Arsdale Center's developing partnerships in Sweden and Brazil with *All About Mentoring,* and also to update its readers about other center initiatives, of which its international partnership program is but one. You are right, I think, to suppose that they speak to the range of learning opportunities at the college, and also to the various forms of mentoring available to Empire State College students, which has never been restricted to a single type.

I have been fortunate to visit Sweden three times in the last several years and to develop lasting connections and friendships with labor movement and scholarly colleagues there. These connections and friends include the former national chair of the Swedish Worker Education Association *(Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund [ABF]),* the largest popular education association in Sweden, who is now the head of the LO *(Landsorganisationen i Sverige),* the largest association of blue-collar trade unions; his successor at the ABF, who also is a social democratic member of parliament from her hometown of Västerbotten, in the north of Sweden; members of the communication and education departments of both the LO and the ABF; the principal of Runö, one of the country's leading residential folk schools; the head of the LO archives, who also is a tenured professor of history at Uppsala University; and various other professors, instructors and researchers, both at Uppsala and at the University of Stockholm.

Many of these friends also were able to visit the Van Arsdale Center in 2011, when we co-hosted an executive board meeting of IFWEA: International Federation of Worker Education Associations with the Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations. Among the many fruits of the Van Arsdale Center's association with IFWEA are welcome contacts with labor educators in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe, upon which we have been able to draw when exploring international opportunities both for faculty development, and to enrich our educational offerings for students.

PHOTO CREDIT: DOROTHY SUE COBBLE

Michael Merrill outside the Workers' Museum in Norrköping, Sweden.

I am also happy to report that as of July 2013, the Van Arsdale Center has become the Empire State College host of the influential and widely-read Cambridge University Press journal *ILWCH: International Labor and Working-Class History.* To facilitate the association, I have been asked to join the journal's editorial board, as has Jason Russell, a mentor in the college's School for Graduate Studies and the director of its Master of Arts in Labor and Policy Studies program. In addition, Jason has been named *ILWCH's* book review editor. I also have been invited to co-edit a special issue of the journal on the global history of workers' education, to appear in 2015. It will be the first such overview of the field in more than 50 years and its contents will be greatly enriched by the center's association with IFWEA, which has agreed to co-sponsor the project and, we hope, a conference in New York on the topic when the issue appears.

One of the goals of my recent trips to Sweden and Brazil was to identify potential contributors to this special issue – a goal that I am happy to say I was able to meet in both cases! Another goal was to identify possibilities for potential exchange programs that would enable faculty, staff and students at Empire State College to talk with and even perhaps visit their functional equivalents in Sweden or Brazil.

In the case of Sweden, given the time difference, the most feasible option is an actual physical visit, and the Van Arsdale Center's coordinator of student services is currently discussing with the college's Office of Collegewide Student Services the possibility of sponsoring one or more students, chosen on the basis of an open competition, for such an exchange program.

In the case of Brazil, however, it also will be possible to establish synchronous audiovisual links with groups of faculty and students at partnership schools and to host conversations among these groups, in both Sao Paulo and New York City, for example, about common curricular and educational issues.

I discussed these options this past July with administrators and faculty affiliated with a new Brazilian Workers University, which the National Union of Bank Employees will open in January 2014 with government approval and sponsorship. Among the exciting opportunities we discussed during my visit was the possibility of joint faculty meetings with instructors in Brazil and the U.S. sharing their approaches to and experiences with similar material.

For example, instructors at the Bank Workers' school show a short English-language cartoon, "The History of Stuff," as part of a unit on consumerism in a course on the history of capitalism. Instructors at the Van Arsdale Center who use the same video could hold joint discussions with their Brazilian colleagues, and the two schools would be able to coordinate overlapping class times to allow their students to participate in such joint discussions about the film, as well.

(There are some linguistic barriers here. While most Swedes speak English, few Brazilians do. I managed with English quite well in Sweden, but I had to rely on a translator in Brazil and any joint meeting with Brazilian colleagues or classes will have to do so as well. Given the diversity of the Van Arsdale student body, we may be able to identify some translators within the group. If that does not prove feasible, however, we also will be exploring simultaneous translation services, whose translators can work from a third location, if necessary.)

One of the more exciting conversations in Brazil, by the way, concerned our approaches to literary study. The Van Arsdale curriculum includes a fair number of classic political and literary texts, including Tom Paine's *Common Sense* (1776), Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* (1845), Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855), W.E.B. Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915).

We want students to be familiar with these and similar texts for the obvious canonical reasons. But we also use these texts for pedagogical reasons because it has been our experience that helping students find a way into and through such material, which they know to be classic, helps build their own intellectual self-confidence and encourages them to believe that they, too, have something to say.

I had particularly lively conversations with the Brazilians about the literary texts. The political and autobiographical texts of Paine, Douglass and Du Bois can be treated as artifacts, which do not require any "interiorization" – that is to say, any direct identification with the story or its characters. They can be, and conventionally are, held at arm's length, as it were, or watched from afar until, the spectacle over, they are left to stand or fall on their own.

The stories the texts tell in such instances are treated as something already registered or experienced by others, which do not need to be re-experienced by the students in order to serve their purpose in the historical or political narrative the students are being asked to learn. Our goal, ideally, is to encourage our students to take the next step.

To "interiorize" texts in this way always enhances our experience of them. But that they will be interiorized (i.e., experienced not just as "evidence" but as literature) is not necessarily a standard classroom expectation, however much we might wish it were so! The traditions of history, sociology, anthropology or economics, as they are generally taught, not only at the Van Arsdale Center but elsewhere, simply do not normally encompass such approaches.

Literary study, however, does typically include an expectation that students will not only mine a text as evidence, but also will experience it directly, as an event in their own lives, as something that actually happens to them, and is not just witnessed by them. And when this interiorization happens, it is magic: not only does the text come alive, so too does the student (or students) for whom the text has been enlivened.

Having just taught a semester-long class on *Moby-Dick* with mentor Rebecca Fraser, I was able to share many examples of how this process worked with our Brazilian colleagues. But I could just as well have used examples drawn from my experience with *Leaves of Grass or Metamorphosis.* All lend themselves exceptionally well to an objective of helping students learn how to read more richly and with more confidence. And they do so in part because they do not easily conform to a reader's initial expectations about novels, poetry or stories. They confound convention.

Every semester produces examples of such magic, the signs of which can be found in the center's annual magazine, *Labor Writes,* among other places, wherever the students have an opportunity to show themselves. At the Van Arsdale Center, we try to create as many such opportunities as we can, and to make them as integral to the curriculum as possible. The contributions to *Labor Writes,* for example, both the written work and the visual arts, are produced in class, on assignment. They are not expressions of extracurricular aspiration but of classroom achievement. *[Labor Writes* can be accessed at http://www.esc.edu/news/magazines-journal/labor-writes/.]

We also provide as many other public forums as possible for students to express themselves and to hear what others have to say. We want them to be, from their first day at the school, the leaders we are asking them to become. For example, Rebecca and I organized a story slam as the final assignment in our *Moby-Dick* class last spring and asked the students to serve as peer judges. We also taped all the entries and set up a YouTube channel, MobyDickWorks, where they could be shared with the world. [MobyDickWorks can be accessed at http://www.youtube.com/user/MobyDickWorks.]

One of the most common sites of this magic is not, as it happens, a literature class but an art class, which every semester is full of what we might call Pinocchio moments.

Representations of Work and Labor: Issues in Public Art began as an exploration of the visible art of public spaces but quickly began to spend as much time on the invisible art of such spaces – both the monuments that have never been built and the hidden artistry that goes into the building of what can be seen. Its coordinating instructor, Barrie Cline, an Empire State College alumna, has since grown the effort into the base for a fully-fledged urban art project, if not collective. (Nothing would surprise me!)

Most recently, for example, she and another ESC alum, Jaime Lopez, an IBEW Local 3 tradesperson and graduate of the electrical apprenticeship program, organized a Labor Day performance at Corona Plaza in Queens, built around a set of light boxes that they had constructed to display various pictures and texts, intended to draw attention to the health and safety and other problems faced by manual laborers in the city, both union and nonunion, "formal" and "informal," documented and undocumented.

Co-sponsored by the Queens Art Museum and the Empire State College Student Activity Fund, the performance featured the work of several ESC students and alums, including members of Richard Wells' class on immigration and labor at the Van Arsdale Center last spring; and also invited the participation of members of a Queens-based worker center, NICE (the New Immigrant Center for Employment). According to Barrie, it was a great success – an occasion for a great deal of spontaneous artistry, camaraderie and insight. Education at its finest!

Jaime Lopez has described his Pinocchio moment to me, by the way, and it was in a Literature and Society class. I do not recall him crediting a single text. Rather it was the whole experience that caught – or shall we say sparked – his imagination. It was relatively early in the Labor Center's new regime, 2006 or 2007, and his instructor was Ece Aykol, a CUNY doctoral student in English or perhaps comparative literature, originally from Turkey, who was writing a dissertation on *ekphrasis* in Henry James and others (just so you'll know that social realism is not a requirement to teach at the Labor Center!).

The effect on Jaime, according to him, was a dawning realization that, as a relatively passive spectator of the world, he was missing a great deal of what was going on and that the way to get more out of it all was to be engaged.

That is what literature and art, generally, can do for one, and it is why they play such an important part in the Van Arsdale curriculum. To put the matter differently, in the terms with which my Brazilian colleagues and I actually discussed the process, interiorization can lead, and almost assuredly does lead, to "exteriorization" or engagement of some sort. The text, when interiorized, becomes a mirror within which we slowly come to see ourselves; then, almost inevitably, a window through which we see more than just ourselves; and, finally, a door through which we walk to all that we have come to see.

For example, three years ago a group of Labor and the Economy faculty created a voluntary public affairs forum called "Food4Thought," which is held during the break period every night of classes both at 325 Hudson and at the Long Island City training center of UA Local 1, where our plumber apprentice students attend class. Food4Thought is student-run and student-led. An article is distributed electronically the day before the forum to all students who do not opt out. One class agrees to serve as host for the evening and students from the class organize and lead the discussion.

The effect can be electric (you should excuse the expression!). Among other fruits of this effort, for example, the labor center's chapter of the Student-Alumni Association of Empire State College (SAAESC), aka "Sassy," has sponsored several initiatives and been a presence at recent ESC Student Academic Conferences.

We have been told, "I don't do poetry!" "Why," we have been asked, "do we have to read a story about a man who turned into a bug?" Why, indeed! The answer we give is that students are asked to read these texts because we have learned that if they can learn how to "do poetry," if they can be taught how to "read a story about a man who turns into a bug," it changes them – leads to their own equally profound metamorphosis, if you will.

And metamorphosis, of course, is what Empire State College mentoring is all about. In Brazil, I had many stimulating conversations with colleagues about this process, both at the Van Arsdale Center and at the Brazilian schools I was able to visit, including the Florestan Fernandez National School, which is the educational arm of the Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement. The highpoint of my summer solidarity visits from a curricular standpoint, however, has to have been the Runö Folk High School, which describes itself as the Swedish labor movement's "leading education and development center."

Since its opening in 1952, several hundred thousand trade union representatives have taken classes at Runö on a wide range of academic, professional and political subjects. Initially, many students enrolled to earn the equivalent of a high school degree, which they had not been able to do earlier: hence the name. More recently, the school has aimed to provide a path to college degrees and professional development for the largely blue-collar membership of the LO, the Swedish equivalent of the AFL-CIO, whose 15 affiliated unions represent more than half of Sweden's waged workforce.

I was particularly impressed with their collectively-produced "philosophy," *Runö's Approach to Teaching: Our View of People, Knowledge and Society.* "We believe in people," the statement begins. "It is vital for each participant to be seen, listened to and recognized as an active contributor, rather than a passive receiver."

In order to encourage such recognition, in practice not just in theory, the school also believes in "active learning," which it says "means learning controlled by the participants themselves, starting with their own personal reality and how it relates to [their] overall context." Their aim, they write, "is to open doors and contribute to 'Aha!' experiences."

Their vision of knowledge starts with the assumption that everyone knows something, that it depends upon personal experiences and circumstances, and that it "is not handed out but acquired by each individual." Learning, they forthrightly state, is not something "controlled by the teacher." Rather, "it is a collective process based on cooperation between equals" to facilitate.

To this end, they use "group-oriented teaching methods, where carefully designed group work, based on purpose and objectives" forms the core of the class, as do "supportive assessment and discussion of outcomes."

Finally, their "vision of society" is that "education is politics." "The future," the statement insists, "is not pre-determined but can be influenced. Together we can create a good society where everyone has the same opportunities." Their perspective is "that of ordinary men and women," who are "in close contact with the workplace and the local community." Further, their values are "based on justice, solidarity and freedom," a "democratic society," of which "critical thinking is a fundamental pillar."

Central to the whole process, of course, is the instructor. What happens in the classroom determines whether the vision, as expressed, can be realized. And here the statement is equally forthright: "Runö teachers lead their students toward self-reliance through activities based on the principle that each individual, in his or her own way, is creative and capable of self-development and change. *Participants learn to assess themselves, not to compete with fellow participants*. Our students are allowed to make mistakes and their questions are always welcome" (my italics).

It is what we strive for at the Van Arsdale Center, as well. "There are so many different ways to bring about a good life and society." Hallelujah!

Happy Labor Day!

Best wishes,

Mike (September 2, 2013)

"What is it that makes us want to control more than is actually useful for our own goals? Our goal is to get people to learn and yet to do that, we sort of force them to do all these particular steps. If we just free them up, what we find is that people learn more and they learn more enthusiastically. The energy is enormous because they're excited about what they're doing. So we actually accomplish more learning by being freer."

– Allen Tough, The Iceberg of Informal Adult Learning
NALL Working Paper #49, *2002, p. 6*

Teaching Poetics

Himanee Gupta-Carlson, Center for Distance Learning

Introduction

National Poetry Writing Month takes place annually in April. While I am happy to call myself a writer, I find the shoes of a poet difficult to wear. For that reason, I decided to challenge myself by writing a poem a day and to maintain a poetry blog for the month, which in May spun off into a series of blogs on varied topics: short stories on food and farming; reflections on sustaining sustainability; and thoughts on the research topic that I have been pursuing off and on over the past five years: hip-hop as a sociocultural and political movement. I posted links to my nightly poems to Facebook as status updates, and, as the month traveled forward, was pleasantly surprised to discover that a small cadre of friends – including several at Empire State College – was following the work.

I decided to share three of the poems that emerged from the project, along with some explanatory matter, as a way of exploring how the life of a teacher and mentor might intersect with scholarship and creativity. For more, visit guptacarlsonnapowrimo2013.blogspot.com.

A Series of Challenges

(Dedicated to the depths that procrastination over "real work" can take.)

Run … a marathon in a week.
Try … an Ironman in a month, or a Double Ironman in a month.
Write … a poem a day in April, a short story a day in May,
750 words a day, every day.

Serial challenges appeal to me.
They keep me focused, motivated, excited.
They divert from the past marathon sporting events
and writing endeavors that ended without completion.
They keep the pressure of the project that lurks but isn't ready for words at bay,
allowing ideas to flitter until it is their time to gel.

Probing the Fifth Element

April also came around as I was struggling to make sense of the emerging dynamic between students and myself in my newly-created Center for Distance Learning course, Hip-Hop America: The Evolution of a Cultural Movement. The course had started off with strong, enthusiastic participation, with students ranging in age from 22 through about 50 swapping stories, experiences and videos they found on YouTube of their memories and interactions with hip-hop. Participation stalled dramatically as the first written assignment came due: an essay, which I dubbed in hip-hop language, as an emcee's oration on the history and philosophy of hip-hop. The students remained engaged with the course, as I learned later. But to understand and appreciate the depth of their engagement, I had to learn patience. The assignment was due in Week 5. One out of 12 students turned it in on time. By the end of Week 7, I had received only three or four assignments. In Week 8, I posted a terse note on the course bulletin board, warning the students that their grades depended on them doing the work. In the middle of Week 9, a flurry of assignments came in.

What the assignment taught me was an intangible dimension of what it means to mentor adult learners. We speak about student-centered learning, valuing life experiences as worthy of college credit and of engaging in conversations in which participants sit physically or figuratively in circles as deep, collaborative learning practices. Do we know that dialogic practices aimed at producing knowledge through conversation actually work? Can we measure the outcomes of such practices? Can we cite research that shows that such methods work? The poem is my effort as a writer and teacher to get at such questions.

PHOTO CREDIT: JIM GUPTA-CARLSON

Himanee Gupta-Carlson

Hip-hop,
an art, a culture, a movement,
a way of life.

Building community,
Organizing politically,
Activism and art,
melded.

B-boying, b-girling,
breaking,
Bronx,
boroughs, battles for respect, and dialogues on truth, power, knowledge.

I came to hip-hop old,
reared on old Hindi film songs
and American rock and roll,
music often created by blacks
and made profitable for whites.

College, the second time around,
acquainted me with colonialism,
and its ways of knowing:
using arts, sciences, maths created
in the colonies
to control the colonized.

Four elements define hip-hop
breaking – the b-boying, b-girling
rap – emceeing
deejaying
graffiti – writing
And then there's the Fifth Element
– self-actualization through knowledge.

What's that mean?
That was assignment #1
that I gave the students in Hip-Hop America.
When the papers didn't come in,
I presumed they didn't know or didn't care.
I was at a loss because I wasn't sure I knew
what the Fifth Element was, either.

Then the papers came, late but impressive:
The Fifth Element is:
Music and self-expression of the oppressed.
A way to call attention to the plight of blacks.
Of the marginalized.
Of the silenced.
The Fifth Element is not mainstream.
It is something spiritual, and beyond commodity.
It is a way of knowing your place in the world.
It is a dialogue.
It is something that can't be bought or sold.
It is what hip-hop was meant to be.
It is why hip-hop matters today.

Can you quote it? Cite it?
What are your sources?
These are the questions that the assignment asked students to consider.
They responded:
How do you quote, cite, find a "source"
for what's inside you?
Probing, pushing the understanding of the Fifth Element
brings those teaching questions to the forefront.

One Word: Plastics

This poem was inspired by discussions among colleagues about how best to teach the humanities in an era of MOOCs. While many aspects of these massive open online courses seem impressive, I couldn't help wondering if online content packaged for the masses was a step backward from the arguments for smaller classes that more traditional colleges advocate, as well as the individualized learning programs that are Empire State College's hallmark.

Everyone thinks there's no future in history.
When the reality of plastics has been killing our planet.
Softly quieting birds,
strangling fish,
and filling fertile deposits of soil
with toxic trash.

The Graduate did not seem to heed the advice,
as he hopped a school bus
with runaway bride Elaine.
That prophecy was doom,
no future in arts and humanities.
Unless, of course, you were a girl,
going after an M.R.S.

What is the meaning of a world
of books and old parchment?
Faded photographs,
rusted horseshoes and skillets
that suddenly show up
in a future potato bed?

Is the future in plastics,
or in understanding
and repurposing
the compost of the past?

What's in a Noun? Part II: What Do We Know?

Robert Carey, Metropolitan Center

What follows is the second of a two-part essay by colleague Bob Carey on the meaning of "religion" and its relevance to our thinking about student learning in that area. Part I was included in All About Mentoring #43, *summer 2013.*

The first part of the conversation exploring the several dimensions of the term and phenomenon of "religion" had to do with getting a clearer sense of what the word itself embraced.

One use of the term has to do with "religion" as a field of study, a disciplinary approach, comparative in nature, to the variety of belief systems and their accompanying behaviors that are found in human history. Religious knowledge, from this perspective, is knowledge of particular families of beliefs, where they originated, their presenting characteristics and cultural expressions, i.e., systems of devotion or belief, role of women, role of men, calendars, festivals, gods, demons and the like. It is a "knowing about" approach that brackets claims of ultimacy as beyond the concerns or the competency of the inquirer to assess, even as that inquirer explores the nature of the ultimacy claims that are central to a tradition. What does this tradition mean by … ? What view do followers hold concerning … ?

Viewed as a bit of human culture work, religious stories, codes of belief and ritual behavior – all of these – are historically contingent phenomena, parts of a "world" that makes sense of what humans experience. The degree to which a religious "world" and orders of time and prescribed behaviors are "efficacious" in coping with the everyday of any particular historical period is one of the questions that is at the center of inquiring into the history of traditions: What did people think they were doing?

The emergence of textually-based traditions added a layer of complexity to this question. That is, how do texts become "sacred," and thus, invested with considerable authority? Issues of interpretation and the persistence of restating and reframing core features of the tradition would make answering the question, "What did people think they were doing?" a more densely-packed piece of work (Stock, 1990, p. 37).

Religious studies introduce us to an archaeology of beliefs and, not incidentally, offer helpful insights into the cultures that told the stories or set down received laws and requirements. For example, the Ten Commandments help us begin to understand the world that the invention of agriculture – the domestication of grain and protein – helped to create. Early humans lived in small groups, where hunter-gatherers and the claim of possession rested rather lightly (or was seriously controlled) in the shared life of the group. The world in which one can covet his neighbor's possessions (sounding surprisingly contemporary) is a denser world, one shaped by crops and harvesting and crowd disease (The Lord can only visit plagues when there is a sufficient pool of susceptible individuals – you need cities and higher population numbers). So from the side of teasing out data and insights about an earlier time and the way our ancestors dealt with and pictured the world they knew, religious texts are invaluable.

The second part of the discussion has to do with the issue of objects of belief. We move from a disciplinary framework of analysis into what people "believe" the case to be about things such as God – somehow defined, or gods – again, somehow defined, spiritual meanings and devotional obligations, the several elements that are characteristic of religious traditions.

Any tradition is a bounded entity in that belief, however universal the claims of the tradition. It is always *someone's* belief. Belief in general doesn't exist. People believe with an individual particularity; even as members of a community shaped by a tradition, whatever portions of that tradition are held in esteem and thought to be absolutely essential is an individual matter. Keepers of the tradition – religious professionals – might seek to impart what they understand to be necessary axioms and teaching, a part of their work of boundary maintenance. These are the things that are central to the religious vision of our tradition (Kanter, 1972; see especially pp. 65-67, 83-86, 169-175). But the individual, at the end of the day, peoples his or her own altar with what he or she believes are the necessary items. For a vivid example of the variety that obtains, the reader should find Robert Orsi's (1999) delightful study, *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape.*

Robert Carey

I want to stick with this issue of the universal and the individual, because it bears on where we are tending: How should one evaluate "religious" learning? What are its boundaries and characteristics? What can a person be said to know? Viewed historically, any tradition is comprehensible. That is, its history can be charted; the variety of its subgroups or splinter iterations can be accounted for. Its central tenets can be catalogued and textual analysis and other techniques of analysis can be brought to bear in the quest for understanding how and why a tradition has flourished, undergone change or withered over time.

When we talk about evaluating prior learning in the area of religion, however, we are not, I would suggest, really talking about evaluating whether or not a person "knows" her or her tradition in quite that way. To sharpen this a bit, I want to borrow from Keith Thomas' (1983) book, *Man and the Natural World: a History of the Modern Sensibility.* In this compulsively readable book, Thomas explores the development of scientific systems of classification, beginning with a discussion of Tudor and Stuart England's taken for granted view that the Creation account in the Bible mapped nicely onto the natural world – "the world had been created for man's sake and … other species were meant to be subordinate to his wishes and needs" (p. 17). Thomas explores that world view in great and fascinating detail. Each location had a wealth of terms for plants and animals, and a detailed catalog of what they could or could not be used for and under what conditions and for what purposes. As he observed, "Many vernacular names were hopelessly volatile, leaping from plant to plant according to local whim" (p. 83). Animals were handled in the same way. As study of the natural world became more sophisticated and discerning, the newer system of classification would be "conducted on the assumption that plants and animals should be studied for their own sake, independent of their utility or meaning for man" (p. 91). The vernacular, idiosyncratic and often very earthy and impolitic terms, would give way before a system that left the local and particular behind as scientists tried to understand the natural world on its own terms.

How does this bear on our question? The story that Thomas tells is strikingly similar to the history of how "religious studies" took shape as a disciplinary comparative study, no longer driven by the theological or apologetic demands of a particular tradition. Whatever the particular "theological" views of the world and of humanity's place in it, the study of religion would be shaped by agreed upon notions of method and evidence that have come to inform the historical disciplines.

But what of the particularity and singularity of a student's own reading and exploration of a particular tradition? Does the disciplinary approach help us to capture what a student may be said to know? What kind of knowing is involved at the individual level? What kind of knowledge can this be said to be? How can we helpfully locate it in the midst of the academic and intellectually formative concerns of a degree?

It is at this point, I would suggest that a certain kind of bi-focality is necessary, a style of inquiry that moves easily from a disciplinary point of view into the realm of religious claims. We can sharpen this a bit by observing that the students whose prior learning we are evaluating in order to establish college-level learning do not routinely present what they know as "religious studies." That is, they are not seeking to be evaluated for what they know about the several current methods of textual or anthropological analysis in the field of religious studies. That request would be similar to a "white crow," something rarely, if ever seen. Wanting credit for prior learning in religion translates into credit for a tradition-specific kind of learning: my knowledge, my way of knowing. And what, we want to know, is that?

One learns to be "religious" in particular ways; one learns that it involves particular things – behaviors, for one, or the several propositional features of one's tradition and the texts that are their source. In the process of evaluating a student's experiential learning in a particular religious tradition, it would probably be best to approach the work of sorting out what the student knows or can demonstrate and explain as a matter of exploring the particulars of the tradition that they claim as their own. In a real sense, "religion" disappears from view as a concern when evaluating a particular series of claims that a student presents.

What does fill the horizon are the particulars of a style of formation, the use of a variety of texts and theological "a prioris" that shape the nature of reading and discourse that is part of the "world" of the tradition on view. The study is and remains "local" in the sense that the student did not undertake to do comparative analysis, or to understand the varieties of traditions and how humans have fashioned a multiplicity of mythic "worlds." The student undertook the study, more often than not, to work out his or her own "salvation." What the form of that might be remains personal and particular to the student; what the work of learning has involved, what the level of "denominational literacy" the student has achieved – that is, where an evaluative conversation begins.

Something else follows on the heels of this approach, particularly if the evaluation in question has to deal with issues of professional formation. For example, it is not uncommon for students who have gone to a Bible college to submit materials having to do with religious education. What to do? The easiest way of getting at the learning involved is to peel the term "religious" off and ask about what they know about best practices in teaching young children or teenagers or adults. The same would be true of "religious counseling." Putting the title of "religious" on counseling does not, *eo ipso,* impart some additional quidditas to what

> *Wanting credit for prior learning in religion translates into credit for a tradition-specific kind of learning: my knowledge, my way of knowing. And what, we want to know, is that?*

the person knows or doesn't know about counseling in its several forms (for example, family, individual or some form of clinical work) where the matter of currency in the field would be a first and pressing question.

Consider *The New-England Primer* (1777) and the alphabet. The ABCs were an introduction to the tenets of Calvinist belief. In the Massachusetts's Bay Colony, you learned to read in order to read Scripture and the occasional sermon and other helps for the pious soul. A matter of cultural literacy and competency was the bearer of religious formation; they remain describably different. The alphabet, John Calvin's sense of the urgency of grace notwithstanding, had to be learned for the additional work of formation to proceed, for the "world" described by Calvinist theology to open up to the individual. "A – In Adams' fall, we sinned all; B – Heaven to find, the Bible Mind; C – Christ crucify'd, for sinners dy'd; D – the Deluge drown'd, The Earth around" … all the way to "X – Xerxes did die, and so must I; Y – While youth do chear (sic), Death may be near; Z – Zaccheus he did climb the Tree Our Lord to free" (pp. 9-12).

Just as users of *The New-England Primer* (1777) learned the alphabet and could read and write (males only) while internalizing a particular world view, people who claim competence in things like counseling or education should be understood to be saying that they can account for good teaching practice or informed counseling behaviors. In this instance, the tile of "religious education" only locates where it happens.

The difficulty posed by assessing a person's grasp of the particular architecture and expression of the tradition whose language and "world" they understand to be true for them, is that the world that they are describing is the world of that tradition. It might, at points, interlace with the natural world; it might even make claims about that world, but it is "local." The "world of a tradition" and the world that science continues to study and make clearer to us are two very different things. The "world of a tradition" is, by definition, a creation of its foundational texts and theological claims. It is part of a tradition of restatement, of growth by agglutination.

The world we see as explained and explicated by the various scientific disciplines and their methods of analysis, while intelligible, also is a demanding and elusive quarry. It requires time and effort and the scaffolding work of developing methods of analysis for anything to be seen. Even at that, we are dealing with what, at the moment, is the best reading of things. This is an entirely different kind of knowledge than what one confronts in an evaluative moment. However sophisticated the command of a tradition's literacy and conceptual linkages, it remains an object of devotion and comfort, not a provable testable possibility. Certainly, a lot has been learned; from the point of view of a degree and its concerns, there might even be some transferability given the habits of "intense reading" that some traditions champion. A student can and often does pass from having an introductory grasp of texts and traditions to becoming an advanced sophisticated reader of the same. Evaluation should be able to capture that and account for its depth and range.

I think it fair to observe that evaluations of prior learning in the area of a tradition's literature, practices and devotional requirements, while doable, will always require the necessary beginning work of locating the style and type of learning, locating its "denominational" home and clarifying the degree to which elements of that evaluation need to be measured by the rubrics of other relevant disciplines.

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Coaching, Mentoring and Learning: Reflections from the Water

Desalyn De-Souza, Central New York Center

The gym didn't used to seem so boring. But my tried and true routine – lifting weights, cardio machines and spin class – just was not getting me fired up any more. I was bored and needed a new challenge. When my friend mentioned registering for a begin-to-run program in our community and running a 5k race, I thought she was crazy. I never enjoyed running and did not understand people who would go for a run on purpose. In fact, running had always been a struggle for me. Running was something I only did when it involved team sports and chasing a ball. But my friend was determined that this was the new challenge for which I had been looking. She worked on me for a couple of weeks and I finally gave up and registered.

Our coach, a volunteer and graduate of the program, led us through workouts each week to gradually build our endurance. I drove to the park every Monday filled with anxiety and uncertainty. An hour later, I left with a little more confidence. Over the next 10 weeks, I learned that running was not all that bad if one is properly trained. Okay, that is not entirely true. Especially in the beginning, running was a constant struggle. I would dread it and force myself to get to the park. But at the same time, there was never a time when I went home and regretted that I had gone for a run that night. And the more times I finished a run, the more times I secretly thought about running and looked forward to getting out there again. When crossing the finish line of my first 5k, despite feeling like I might throw up, I knew I was hooked.

The 10-week training program my friend had talked me into was over (coincidentally, she moved out of state), but I knew I did not want to stop. The next training program was touted as an "Advanced 5K" class. Advanced? I would hardly classify myself as advanced. But I also knew I was not ready to go out and run on my own, yet. It was advanced or nothing, so I chose to register. Each week I arrived at the park with that same anxious feeling in my stomach waiting to receive instructions for the team workout. Would it involve hill repeats or speed intervals? Either way, the workout was guaranteed to test my limits and leave me wanting (and fearing) more the following week. At the end of 10 weeks of the advanced training program, I crossed the finish line of my second 5k race with the fastest time I had ever run. The urge to throw up had lessened this time around. I made progress and it felt good.

Just a year after starting running, I registered for a triathlon training program. It is worth noting that both of my siblings previously completed a triathlon and one is an avid runner. I really do not know what possessed me to consider a triathlon. Actually, it might have had something to do with sibling rivalry. Being the youngest and, we'll say, a "little" competitive, I couldn't resist.

The six months of training, six days a week, that followed were truly transformative. I uncovered a deeper level of internal drive and motivation than I had previously found within myself. Having always played team sports, I came to realize the degree to which it is possible to rely on others on the team or become complacent specializing in a position on a court. Triathlon is an endurance sport for the individual. Sure, there are fellow athletes and spectators out on the course providing support and encouragement along the way, but ultimately it is the self-talk and mental toughness that guides the athlete to the finish line.

That positive self-talk and mental toughness is crucial because the journey is riddled with self-doubt. *I'm not fast enough. I'm not strong enough. I'll never be able to swim that distance. I still have to run after I get off my bike! Am I working hard enough? Are my workouts long enough?* These are the thoughts that swirl through the mind shaking one's confidence, if you allow them

Desalyn De-Souza in the transition area preparing for her race, 5 a.m.

the opportunity. Coupled with emotional doubts are a string of logistical questions: *How do I put air in my tires? What do I do when my chain falls off? How do I change a flat tire? How do I navigate clipless pedals? What do I wear? What, how much and when do I eat during a race?* The answers to these questions increase in complexity and involve translating content knowledge into practical application through trial and error. There is no magic formula; it depends on the individual. The only guarantee is that your body will tell you when you have discovered the wrong answer! It is incredibly frustrating and challenging at times, yet rewarding when you find that perfect balance and achieve a personal best. The process is about getting out on the course to experiment, discover, analyze and reflect.

I had every intention of completing one triathlon, with the primary goal of crossing the finish line. By the end of my first season, I completed four sprint distance triathlons (750-meter swim, 20k bike ride and 5k run). I remember thinking, and eventually declaring to others, "I finally found my sport."

Through my own training process and growth, I couldn't help but begin to see connections to the student experience at Empire State College. Training for a triathlon is a learning process that requires goal setting, content knowledge and practical application. "I just want to finish" is a commonly heard goal from new triathletes. After crossing the finish line for the first time, it is not unusual for the inspired athlete to move on to bigger, more advanced goals of improving on time or pushing the distance. Adult learners echo the desire to "just finish a degree" and often set a new goal of attending graduate school.

Adult learners enter Empire State College with a level of uncertainty and an array of questions for their mentor. *What should I study? What should I register for? What should I title my concentration?* The questions evolve in complexity. *How do I write a PLA? Do you think I will get the credit? Is my writing good enough? How do I write a rationale essay? Do you think my portfolio will pass through the committee*? It depends. There is no magic formula for planning an individualized degree program; trust in the process, learn from experience and decide what is right for you.

Following my first competitive season, I was asked to join the volunteer coaching staff for the same triathlon program I had just completed. The initial thought made me once again question my abilities. What did I know about coaching others through a triathlon when I only completed a handful myself? A not so unfamiliar array of words entered into my thoughts: "Facilitator," "guide," "reflective learning," "empowerment" and "transformative." During the course of the following year as I settled into my new role as a coach, these concepts continuously surfaced, especially with the swim.

As a participant of the program, I could remember sitting poolside on the bleachers unsure of my swimming ability. I learned to swim by the age of 5 and loved anything to do with water, but somehow this was different. I was never formally trained to swim; I taught myself. Now as I listened to the opening remarks from the head coach and stood on deck with the rest of the coaching staff, I felt a little more at ease. I was there for the beginners, both to share my experience and to connect with their inexperience.

A fellow coach and I were assigned to work with athletes in the beginner lanes where self-doubt was predominant. Over the next several weeks, they gradually let go of the side of the pool and overcame the fear of putting their face in the water and breathing through their nose. They learned how to flip on their back and float when panic set in. Slowly, they relaxed and progressed with learning the mechanics of an efficient swim stroke. Each week, we reassured our beginners that they were progressing and that come race day, they would be ready. Self-doubt was gradually replaced with competence, modeled positive self-talk and acquired mental toughness.

For some, confidence comes easily: "I feel so much stronger in the water and now I love swimming!" For others, confidence comes when they prove it to themselves on race day: "You told me that I could do it, but I never believed you. I thought you were crazy." Sometimes the athlete's goal is simple: do not panic and just make it back to shore. Every success is worthy of recognition and serves as a building block.

For triathletes, this means going back to the hill that beat you up three weeks ago and making it to the top without walking your bike. Or, maybe it is finishing that brick workout (running after getting off the bike, when your legs feel like lead) despite wanting to quit 30 seconds into it. For adult learners, success might be obtaining positive feedback on a paper, earning a desired grade in a study or conquering an extremely challenging subject. The sense of accomplishment is sweet for all involved.

Coaching triathletes and mentoring and teaching adult learners at Empire State College are comparable and complementary experiences. The knowledge and experience that adult athletes/learners bring with them is valuable and contributes to the learning process. It requires the coach/mentor to meet the athlete/learner where they are. Daunting areas are broken down into smaller, more manageable components in order to develop foundation-level skills. Foundation-level skills are essential in order to advance to upper-level skill sets. Integration of parts into the whole and progression over time are significant; learning is a process. And learning is an individual experience.

There are challenges along the way. For the athlete, these might involve strained muscles, bruises, bloodied knees and road rash. I vividly remember sitting alongside an athlete who just blew the chance to race in three days because she simply did not see a curb and tripped. Then, sick to my stomach, I held the ice pack on her ankle, remembering countless times I had rolled the same one. She ends up with a cast on each leg and seven months of training comes to a screeching halt. Her race is postponed until next season, yet, she still shows up on race day to cheer for her fellow teammates.

Adult learners juggle life circumstances while meeting the demands of academic pursuits. Loss is a central theme experienced by the adult learner – loss of a job, a home, a loved one or their own health. Adults face challenges of balancing work, family and life obligations. Some students take a term off to regroup; others stop-out and may or may not re-enroll. Many adult learners persevere and push through the difficult times and seek support from their mentor.

For both, the finish line is an extraordinary place. Family, friends and spectators fill the venue while snapping photographs and cheering for the athlete/graduate who had, many times, questioned whether or not this day was ever possible. Celebratory hugs and heartfelt words are exchanged as athletes/graduates introduce family and friends to their coach/mentor. The athlete shares: "Every time I ride that course I hear your voice in my head and it gets me up that hill." The graduate shares: "I smiled to myself after I left your office two weeks ago because I felt focused and in charge of my own destiny. The confidence I have gained during these past four years carries into my daily life and I love it." I am on my own journey as an athlete, coach and mentor; it is a parallel process.

Federal Advocacy: The Issues We Face

Michael Mancini, Office of Communications and Government Relations

The type of education that SUNY Empire State College has pioneered for decades has, for the past several years, garnered much public attention from, among others, both supportive and skeptical elected officials.

Often our approach to education, which at its core is about widening the base of "who" has the opportunity to be a college student, gets muddled by predatory for-profit schools – ones that target low income/low achieving students in hopes of scooping up federal money, yet not necessarily providing the appropriate services to their students.

Of course, we strive each day to support our students to not only achieve their educational goals but to shine and flourish in ways they never expected. But to accurately, and more difficult still, to succinctly explain this to busy legislators is a challenge. Thusly, we pursue all possible avenues to share what we do and how we are different.

As I have conveyed before in public forums, we have been involved with other like-minded institutions to collectively lobby on issues that are important to our colleges. Over the past year, our tactic has been to serve as a resource to legislators rather than as antagonists who complain post-passage of regulations.

The Program Integrity Rules,[1] put in place by the Department of Education (DOE) in 2009, are of consistent concern given the inclusion of problematic state authorization rules. These rules set up unnecessary barriers to offering our programs at a distance in other states. The previous standard was that unless institutions had a physical presence in a given state, the state did not need to authorize a college to provide courses at a distance in that state. This becomes particularly problematic now that the DOE is tying Title IV financial aid eligibility to this authorization.

Supporters of program integrity rules saw this as a chance to curb some bad players in the field, but as is not so unusual in federal regulations, they tried to kill a small pest with a nuclear bomb. Opponents of these regulations, beyond the higher education community, saw this as an infringement on state rights and academic freedom.

Several attempts have been made to end the enforcement of these rules. For instance, H.R. 2117, the Protecting Academic Freedom in Higher Education Act,[2] passed the House of Representatives in 2011. This would have repealed the state authorization rule. At the time, I, along with Mary Caroline Powers, called every member of the New York State Congressional delegation to seek their support in passing this bill. We also requested that students and alumni ask their representatives for support.

Unfortunately, the bill died in the Senate, and it also was clear that President Barack Obama was not likely to sign the bill into law, but the idea has not lost steam. This summer, Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), who introduced H.R. 2117, again proposed a similar bill, H.R. 2637, Supporting Academic Freedom through Regulatory Relief Act.[3] This time the bill calls for the elimination of the credit hour, gainful employment reporting regulations, as well as the state authorization rule. We again have committed to supporting this bill and will share our support with legislators.

Another avenue to seek change in federal regulation is through public comment during bill preparation or a rule-making hearing. In early August, President Merodie Hancock, along with the presidents of Thomas Edison State College and the University of Maryland-University College, submitted comments about the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA)[4] to the House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Workforce. In our comments, we discussed a need for changes in the

Michael Mancini

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reporting structure to include students who are not first time, full time, noting "changes need to be made in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System to accurately reflect the behavior of nontraditional students, veterans and active-duty military students."

In discussing the area of supporting innovation in higher education, we asked for the elimination of the credit hour definition. Currently, the credit hour definition is still based on seat-time. There have been some changes to the definition[5] to allow for more innovative approaches, but we feel they have come up short since it is based on an antiquated way of aggregating learning. Specifically, our recommendation was that the "credit hour definition should be repealed. As a practical matter, the particular definition at issue is, at best, highly ambiguous and poses serious challenges for institutions and accreditors as they attempt to ensure policies consistent with it."

With regard to the Program Integrity Rule of state authorization, we recommended that "the federal government avoid creating a penalty for institutions that fail to comply with state requirements for authorization so that the Commission on the Regulation of Postsecondary Distance Education can continue moving forward with the recommendations." This commission, on which former provost and former acting president Meg Benke served, issued their report, "Advancing Access through Regulatory Reform: Findings, Principles, and Recommendations for the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)," in April 2013.[6]

We further recommended that the federal government adopt the commission's definition of "physical presence" which is "limited to the ongoing occupation of an actual physical location for instructional purposes or the maintenance of an administrative office to facilitate instruction in the state. Institutional activities in a state that meet the definition of physical presence, as defined here, permit but do not require a state to require the institution to seek authorization by that state, both for the general authority to offer instruction within that state."

The reauthorization of the HEA will take time and the Senate has yet to take up the issue. We will keep a keen eye on the process and will continue to provide comment as necessary.

An exciting development is a demonstration bill in the works to let select colleges offer competency-based degrees and that would allow the students enrolled in those degrees to receive financial aid. Demonstration bills are meant to test out new ideas before regulations or laws are changed. It also allows for some kinks to be worked out so regulations can reflect the day-to-day realties of implementing new laws. Usually, if projects are successful, it will lead to changes in law. Therefore, if this project proves successful, much like the distance learning demonstration bill, this will be a major game changer in higher education.

As always, I am open to talking to members of the college about any government relations issues of concern, be they local, state or federal and will provide all the appropriate help that I can.

Notes

1. U.S. Department of Education Program Integrity Rules http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/integrity.html

2. H.R. 2117, the Protecting Academic Freedom in Higher Education Act http://edworkforce.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=281565

3. H.R. 2637, Supporting Academic Freedom through Regulatory Relief Act http://www.cbo.gov/publication/44468

4. Higher Education Act (HEA) http://www.house.gov/legcoun/Comps/HEA65_CMD.pdf

5. Subject: Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 29, 2010 http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1106.html

6. Commission on the Regulation of Postsecondary Distance Education report, "Advancing Access through Regulatory Reform: Findings, Principles, and Recommendations for the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)" http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/state-approval/CommissionOnRegulationOfPostsecondaryDistanceEducationDraftRecommendationsFINALApril.pdf

Meditations on the Presentation of Self in Mentoring

Donna Gaines, Long Island Center

As a new mentor in Community and Human Services at the Long Island Center, I've been absorbing new technologies; the pedagogic, historical and philosophical underpinnings of mentorship, and our organizational structure. I'm beginning to grasp learning contracts, prior learning assessments, and degree rationales. This knowledge is transmitted to me on a daily basis through orientation, training, consultation and supervision. But something else is happening. I'm immersed in a socialization process. This happens informally, often serendipitously, through observation, imitation, interaction and hands-on experience. Socialization into any new community or subculture requires the newbie to observe, intuit, practice and eventually internalize the ways of the group. At some point, I understood that the norms, values, behaviors, linguistics, roles and rituals of the mentoring culture would become part of me. But one thing continued to baffle me: What was I supposed to wear to work?

Situated somewhere between bohemia, the creative class and the professional-managerial class, traditional academe offers a mosh pit of sartorial reference points. When we imagine the professor-as-performer, a variety of social types (and stereotypes) will come to mind: tweedy bearded sage, post-punk intellectual, earth mother, urban-activist scholar, disheveled bookworm, post-feminist, queer-positive, corporate knowledge broker. This question of mentor-wear began gnawing at me at my job-talk presentation. While discussing coastal community studies and the adult learner in Community and Human Services, I noted a wide range of styling.

My CHS buddy-mentor, the elegantly appointed Barbara Kantz, now describes my interview ensemble as "business dressy." Yes, I wore a dress. This is something I do only for weddings, funerals, court appearances or holiday family dinners. People who work in the helping professions need to look approachable *and* professional. But the community organizer or disaster relief worker will not dress anything like the hospital administrator or clinical social worker. Once I was hired at ESC, I continued ruminating over my image. I knew I couldn't be everything to everyone. On top of that, it was mid-July, with very few students on site. As faculty prepared for reading period, everyone was dressed in casual summer wear. And still, I had no clue.

The New Mentor Orientation up in Saratoga Springs in mid-July offered no clear solutions. New mentors mixed it up with suits, ties, dresses, pumps, pearls, jeans, frocks and Dockers. One new mentor even wore a leather jacket, which I found comforting, given my New York rocker girl past. Now a Long Island water woman and ocean advocate, I wore my traditional surfy summer regalia: a neatly tailored but boldly colored hand dyed sarong from Bali with a pressed cotton shirt and sandals. Hedging my bets, I dressed it all up with a little makeup and silver jewelry. Even in a 90-degree heat wave, I fretted, *Should I have worn stockings?* As part of our orientation, we met with President Merodie Hancock, who was dressed in sandals, a simple summer skirt and top, casual, neat and efficient. Meeting our new college president in a MBA power suit would have been scary – even linen or seersucker. Instead, the message was reassuring and engaging. We felt welcomed (and very well fed). But I was no closer to resolving my existential crisis. On the surface, I feared my concerns could seem frivolous, ditzy, even a little narcissistic. I dared not discuss them with anyone.

As I obsessed over my wardrobe options, I remembered the work of sociologist Erving Goffman – what we wear as social actors on the world stage is a serious scholarly question. In fact, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* Goffman (1959) argued the artifacts we select to represent us communicate who we are and what we care about. Our choices are loaded with coded meaning; they tell other people how we handle the raw materials of social existence. Our individual clothing styles, make-up, hair, amulets, scents or shoes – the artifacts of self-adornment – communicate our social truth. The presentation of self is a dialogical process; a conversation we hold with others.

PHOTO CREDIT: TOMMY HOT

Donna Gaines

To the critical imagination, the politics of presentation of self become even more crucial. Are we styling for conformity or for dissent? Does the presentation of self convey our embrace of dominant ideologies or symbolic resistance? What is our relationship to power, authority, to repressive or coercive regimes? Where do we situate ourselves in the societal landscape as knowledge workers – educators, scholars, intellectuals or activists? Whether we dress up or down, outward presentations of self underscore who we are – articulating our values and beliefs, as well as our position of class, race, sex, status and power. Covertly or overtly, we set our agenda upfront through the choices we make about what we show the world. We talk the talk and walk the walk. There is theory and there is practice.

In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style,* Dick Hebdige (1979) examined British youth in punk regalia, situating late-1970s cultural rebellion in terms of economic inequality, class culture and generational disenfranchisement. In *Teenage Wasteland,* my study of a quadruple youth suicide, I examined how outcast working class youth on the streets of an "upper poor" New Jersey town subverted the status hierarchy of their suburban high school. First, they fought back symbolically, by appropriating the very language games calculated to degrade and demean them. Much like disenfranchised African American (N word), Riot grrrls (C word) and LGBTQ youth (Q word), the "burnouts" of Bergenfield reclaimed their label for themselves, proclaiming themselves "burnt and proud." They transformed a marginalizing and debasing social status into a source of empowerment, pride and defiance (Gaines, 1998).

Labeled by their school and their town as "druggies," "losers" and "dropouts," the "burnouts" of Bergenfield also resisted the "jock hegemony" through style. At the bottom of their high school status hierarchy, with the school athletes at the top dictating the norms, values and power relations, the burnouts wore their sweatpants inside out, subverting the sign of the jock. More recently, we've witnessed defiant seas of hoodies, as outraged Americans protest the killing of Trayvon Martin. Another youth of color profiled as a menace to society: male, black, just another gangsta in a hooded sweatshirt. We also may recall the shirtless feminist "slut" protest marches of young women outraged by charges that their "sexy" clothing choices – not the social relations of patriarchy – incited rape. Such cultural politics are played out on a daily basis on street corners and in high schools, where young people fight to be who they are visually and ideologically. Cultural politics also are played out in the workplace. Hippie, and later, po-mo professors typically wore their politics on their sleeves, as did the 1980s corporate university scholars of the Reagan era and female academics "presumed incompetent," demanding to be taken seriously – intellectually and economically.

Every occupation has a unique culture of its own, so I drew on my prior learning experiences. As a social worker, I worked in a street-based youth project using my car and the deli as my office. As a family service agency group worker, I organized mothers of children at risk, sometimes meeting with them on street corners. Investigating child maltreatment through the Child Protective Services unit of the Department of Social Services, and later as a program evaluator, I always dressed for the action – street, court, community center, home visit, shelter, jail, office.

But for most of my working life, I've been self-employed as a journalist, consultant, sociologist, professor, holistic health practitioner, author and public speaker. By now, my nontraditional, interdisciplinary, "flexible psyche" (Berger, 1971) was flooded with so many possibilities I was beginning to feel anomic. With such wide and often competing sets of professional ethics, norms, values, agendas and dress codes, I was totally confused. Paulo Freire has argued that without a sense of identity there can be no real struggle. We can't win the day if we don't know who we are, but who was I?

As I reflected on mentor-wear, I realized I've always dressed with an agenda, communicating the interconnectedness of self with society. What I decided to wear on any given day is part of the job. I trusted my instincts. Now my new job was challenging me to formulate a new professional identity, organically and intentionally.

I had now entered into what Alvin Gouldner (1970) described as a reflexive process. As a community activist, I'm dressed in comfortable, durable clothing that will stay clean no matter where the day goes. As a social worker in family court, or an expert witness in youth violence testifying in a death penalty trial, I'm aiming to look as "normal" as possible, a look my musician parents would have readily dismissed as "real square." Clean-cut, non-descript – I'll cover the tattoos, remove the multiple ear piercings, comb my hair straight back, soften the make-up – no distractions. Nothing to sabotage the mission at hand.

As a visiting professor teaching sociology of youth courses at Barnard, a women's college of Columbia University, I always *dressed* for school, except on Youth Subcultures Day when we did a "show and tell" of our cultural affiliations. For this event, students wore everything from their sorority colors to sports gear; every music subculture from Goth to ballet was represented. I represented with a sacred Ramones T-shirt and a black leather Harley jacket, boots and many amulets. Parents attended, and students brought dates. Beyond imparting a critical understanding of youth in society and the importance of subculture, I hoped to offer a pro-sex feminist statement of power and pleasure, of independent women sharing in social and economic equality, scholarly women who loved ideas and hoped to bring some light into the world. After class, students usually stayed late to discuss the finer points of Karl Mannheim, Erik Erikson or Margaret Mead. And then they'd shyly smile and say, "Dr. Gaines, I just love your eye make-up!!"

As a music writer, a street reporter investigating underground subcultures and scenes for the *Village Voice, Spin* or *Rolling Stone,* I opted to let it all hang out, with purpose: jeans, leather, scruffy boots and visible tattoos. Dressing in my "after-hours" clothes provided a smoother entrée into subterranean, deviant, even criminal settings. As I reflected on mentor-wear, I realized I've always dressed with an agenda, communicating the interconnectedness of self with society. What I decided to wear on any given day is part of the job. I trusted my instincts. Now my new job was challenging me to formulate a new professional identity, organically and intentionally.

At the Graduate Faculty of New School University, students in my adult graduate seminar in the Sociology of Popular Music were engaged in theoretical work, cultural reporting as well as ethnographic field studies. I dressed in street-reporter-on-assignment clothes, de rigueur leathers for the downtown music scene I was part of. Today, my students are professors, performers, creators of culture, authors, magazine editors, parents. Whether Rasta or punk, hip-hop, metal or country, most are still putting their money where their love is – communicating to the world through subculture and style.

As the proud product of a community college education, it had always been my hope to go back, to inspire my students as my wonderful professors had inspired me. Like many adult learners at Empire State College, most of my students at Nassau Community College worked at full-time jobs and some had families. They were adults attending college at night. In addition to accumulating necessary credentials, they also came to learn and grow – to challenge their own assumptions about the world and themselves. As the semester unfolded, new career choices and life directions opened up. To help facilitate this process, I wanted to offer a relaxed learning environment, a safe, creative break from the everyday, a space for risk-taking and innovation. Like most of my colleagues in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work, I dressed casually: clean jeans, boots, a slightly dressier top and festive jewelry. I brought candy to class – students barely had time to eat in between work, school, travel and family.

As Goffman (1959) showed, "impression management" is calculated to communicate something to other people about who we are, where we come from and what matters to us. It can be purposeful, coercive, manipulative, patronizing, empowering, nurturing, condescending or respectful. From the salesman to the politician, the banker, preacher, rock star, coach or chef, we manage impressions to help meet our goals, whether stated or unstated. I was busy formulating my goals, clarifying my presentation of self, when a big fat fly dropped into my ointment: I got an office at Empire State College. Now I had a whole new set of considerations. I began to envision my new space. What color should it be? Which artifacts of culture should adorn the walls and shelves? Should it look like a traditional college professor's office, a therapeutic setting, a union hall or a sacred ministerial healing space? Should the office celebrate my love of rock 'n' roll, my spiritual life or my professional credentials? Should the wall art feature surfing, Reiki energy healing, coastal community activism or precious photos of loved ones?

Most importantly, I wondered if any of this really mattered to the adult learner – a parent, worker, a community member already established in a life world of their own. The certified addictions counselor, seasoned child welfare worker, church pastor, ocean activist, nurse's aid, transportation operator, homemaker, police officer, youth outreach worker – adult learners already embrace a set of occupational and ideological values. Students in the Community and Human Services concentration may already be socialized into professional norms, workplace cultures, roles and rituals. Service to the greater good is altruistic, spiritual and practical – it's all about *we,* not *me.* Unlike teaching formal sociology, or mentoring aspiring young writers in music journalism, or working with clients in my holistic healing practice, did I even want to wear my cultural politics on my sleeves or walls? The fall 2013 term was looming, faculty reading period was ending and I had to go shopping!

Desperate for closure, I began reaching out to my colleagues. "I dress to the standard of my wife letting me out the door," says Ed Todd, mentor in Business, Management and Economics at our Hauppauge Unit. The basic plan was to wear something to work that wouldn't be embarrassing. OK, I could relate to that. I had lost most of my "nice" clothes in Hurricane Sandy. And I live in a surf community. But sweatshirts, jeans, T-shirts and neoprene wetsuits weren't going to work in Old Westbury. I had to wear something fairly normal.

Mindy Kronenberg, mentor in writing, literature and the arts at Hauppauge, said she found it interesting to think about her couture as "work clothes." "What does one 'wear' to 'teach'?" she asked. "Being a mentor is so nuanced, much like the compilation of one's self. If dress is an expression of one's personal aesthetic, I'd say I choose clothes in the way I try to choose words and gestures – comfortable but respectful of my environment and associates, never too formal and occasionally accented in an eccentric way, apparel that connects to who I am, rather than who I should be." Mindy's mentoring wisdom suggested to me that in order to connect with students in a meaningful way, *being myself* was the key element. Mentorship is a collaboration based on mutual respect and positive regard.

Mindy likes to think of her office as "A manifestation of ideas and imagination – and my students often comment/inquire on the various artifacts, prints, and photos of writers/artists I've pinned to my bulletin board. We've taken some interesting conversational detours that can enrich and enhance our scholarly discussions. In fact, I had a small project going at Hauppauge where I've hung framed posters of various art works by Klimt, Dali, Rivera, Serrat, Van Gogh and Klee, to give students and staff something interesting and intriguing (or challenging) to look at as they wait for mentors or mill about after orientation." Mindy's office décor is purposeful, intended to stimulate spontaneous inquiry, edification and enjoyment.

A part-time mentor in Community and Human Services at the Hauppauge unit, Toni Raiten-D'Antonio has set up her office space very deliberately. "Because I teach many communications-oriented contracts, especially one called Body Language, and my text includes environment and use of space, color, light and design as aspects of nonverbal communication, I use my office design as a learning tool." She was clearly communicating to me that every moment of mentoring has the potential to be a learning opportunity, a teachable moment. So presentation of self and space was an integral part of the mentorship process.

"As a mental healthcare provider, I begin with a premise common to my field: everything we do or don't do, say, wear, buy, etc., etc., is a reflection of who we are and what we value." For Toni, "Everything about us communicates." So, she says, "I was mindful of what the objects and layout might communicate to students and others about who I am." That meant, "The space should be, I thought, non-intimidating, open, conducive to learning, growth, flexibility, generosity of spirit and optimism."

In *From Teaching to Mentoring,* Herman and Mandell (2003) suggested, "the call to mentoring can be seen as an effort to revive neighborly civility and affection in impersonal and oppressive environments" (p. 10) This is viewed as a response to the creepy vibe most people experience dealing with societal institutions – especially those established specifically to alleviate alienation and depersonalization. Working against what she calls "institutional obstacles" of space, to offset the chilling effects of seeing students in a soulless state office building, Toni's mentoring space includes "objects with organic shapes and colors … the blue of sky, green of foliage, brown of trees. I hung a discarded window frame on the wall behind my desk, having adhered a poster of a verdant French landscape visible through the panes of glass."

Florescent lighting too, can be overbearing, if not psychically debilitating. "To combat the chilly blue-gray overhead lighting, I placed a lamp on the corner of my desk." Toni decorated the lamp herself, a reclaimed treasure she found abandoned on the roadside. "When I teach learning contracts about communication, I use these office elements in the discussion. For instance, students are often quite surprised to notice how different the space *feels* (literally and emotionally) when I turn off the warm desk light so they can notice the cooler light of the overhead fluorescents."

Consideration extends to officemates, "Because I share this space with other professionals in other disciplines, it was important that the elements not be too gender or profession specific … although I do have a framed image saying 'Social Workers Change Futures.' Since that's also what an Empire State College education is about, I thought I could get away with it!" Toni offers adult learners an engaging atmosphere, an oasis of calm in a stark setting, a room coded with opportunities for learning and growth.

On a field visit to our Riverhead office, I had met with Ann Becker, unit coordinator and mentor in Historical Studies. Now, I could say professors in all three units of the Long Island Center had mentored me in the matter of mentor-wear and mentor-space! As Ann explained, her goal is to create a serene and inviting atmosphere for herself and her students. "Since our mode of teaching is so individualized, I try to maintain a professional, yet welcoming presence, both in my office décor as well as in my choice of attire. I always dress professionally, and take care not to appear too casual. I feel that this is appropriate, and provides a level of mutual respect between the mentor and student."

Continued Ann, "I observed a wide array of attitudes about how to conduct oneself and dress as a professor during my graduate school experiences, and believe that a very casual attitude does not reflect a sense of authority or professionalism. During my time at Empire, I have tried to present and conduct myself as a professional, and believe that doing so enhances my ability to relate to students and colleagues." She added, "I never wear jeans to work!" For two generations of academics, jeans had become shifting signifiers – anti-establishment (1960s), designer chic (1970s), anti-corporate (1980s), alternative, gender-flaked (1990s) – but what do they mean now?

For Ann, jeans are a sign of disrespect, "While many industries and offices have moved toward more casual dress, I have made the decision not to wear jeans to work as a message to my students, colleagues and coworkers that they all matter! I believe that dressing professionally demonstrates a sense of care and concern, not just about my appearance, but also about my attitude and commitment to my work. I am at the office to teach and advise my students, and present the face of Empire State College to my community. I believe that my appearance reflects my job and responsibilities, and I always try to present myself as professionally as possible!"

Meantime, as I contemplated a new sociology of jeans, back at my own unit in Old Westbury, I got busy setting up my office. Our resident tech-master, Gus Boyle, had decorated her office with framed photos of beautiful flowers. History Mentor Ian Reifowitz displayed photos of his smiling children and grand maps of the old and new world. Some mentors populated their spaces with personal mementos while others did not. Creating opportunities for learning and growth, being *who we are* as opposed to *who we think we should be,* finding ways to respect ourselves, our students and our schools – I was beginning to carve out a set of mentoring values. I now rejected the normative and proscriptive "shoulds" and "musts" in favor of being true to myself. I would make my office space work for the greater glory of mentoring – I wanted every item to count, to offer cozy, purposeful cues and learning opportunities.

And so, the walls are painted a "Healing Aloe" blue-green, a soothing, calm color I use in my home office for holistic healing. I brought in a new rug for the seating area, and several plants. Our Long Island Center Dean, Michael Spitzer, who always wears a suit and tie to work, was kind enough to hang a large corkboard over my desk so I could post advocacy and community action bulletins for my students. A raging ocean activist, I framed some of my photos of the sea from coast to coast, then shots of my friends' chickens, Marie Antoinette, Ann Boleyn and Joan of Arc. Behind my desk, I hung my credentials, academic and professional. Closest to me are photos of my own mentors: activist-scholar Stanley

As long as it showed respect for the college, the people who work here and our adult learners, I could wear whatever I wanted.

Aronowitz; my beloved late editor, feminist rock critic Ellen Willis; and of course, a shot of New York City's greatest organic intellectuals, the Ramones.

I finally realized it didn't really matter what I wore, as long as it wasn't bad enough to upset Ed Todd's wife. As long as it showed respect for the college, the people who work here and our adult learners, I could wear whatever I wanted. I could rock the sarongs through the summer season, then segue into fall action-wear, as modeled by our Associate Dean Amy Ruth Tobol. Amy Ruth is an attorney with a long history of community activism. She's a Brooklyn girl, no-nonsense and ready to roll in slacks, flats, a colorful shell top and a shirt jacket, always dressed up with a cool necklace. As I imagined myself communing with my students, mapping out intervention strategies, advocacy agendas and exploring counseling skills, I realized the choices for mentor-wear were as limitless as the curricula. I could wear something different every day – because every day was different.

Back in July, during our New Mentor Orientation in Saratoga Springs, we were invited to ask the person sitting to our left one question. Marianne Giardini, my CHS mentor-sister from the Hauppauge unit, asked me why I had wanted to work at Empire State College. I replied, "I was drawn to the college by the open-ended, boundless potential for creativity and growth." Then I recalled a slogan I had read earlier that morning, *Empire State College, Always Evolving*. So too, with the art of mentoring: always evolving.

Epilogue

August 29, 2013, 8 a.m.: Moment-of-truth-meeting with first adult learner. Advocacy and Community Organizing learning contract, fall 2013. What to wear??!!?? Guided by voices and images, first, an internalized Ann Becker: *Is this respectful of your college, your colleagues and the adult learner?* Yes, I think so. Then, Dorothy Todd (Ed's wife), *Will she let me through the door?* Quick body scan – yes, she will: clean black slacks, orange shell top, black long shirt jacket, amber and silver pendant, Kat Von Dee's smashing green eye shadow palette, black flat sandals, matching orange pedicure, splash of Chanel No. 19. The look? Amy Ruth Tobol action-wear with a twist of Goth (Halloween). 2 p.m.: Onsite at Old Westbury. Check: Office clean, serene and uncluttered. Good flow of air. Chairs assembled for collaborative activity, textbook, hard copies of learning contract and study guide on display. Phone rings; she's here!!! Shamble down the stairs to greet my first student. On the way, I run into Associate Dean Tobol. She smiles, "You look lovely." All is right in my world.

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Radical Openness: Toward a Theory of Co(labor)ation[1]

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In June 2012, Dr. Michael A. Peters received an honorary "Doctor of Letters" from the State University of New York. The award was conferred at Empire State College's Metropolitan Center graduation celebration. Michael Peters is professor of policy, cultural and social studies in education at The University of Waikato in New Zealand, emeritus professor at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, and adjunct professor in both the School of Art at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the School of Foreign Studies at Guangzhou University. He has written extensively about contemporary learning, educational philosophy and "policy futures in education, e-learning and digital media" (the title of one of the journals he edits). We welcomed Michael Peters to the Metropolitan Center for a discussion about "the virtues of openness" – a topic that the following essay takes up. Thanks to Michael for providing us with this text and for his help in preparing it for All About Mentoring.

The Concept of Radical Openness

Radical openness is a concept that I coined as a result of a series of published articles and books on the concept of openness over the last five years.[2] In particular, working with colleagues like Peter Roberts, I had tried to rework what we called "the virtues of openness," linking it to the development of scientific communication, the reinvention of the public good and the constitution of the global knowledge commons (Peters & Roberts, 2011). We put the case for the creation of a new set of rights in a transformed global context of the "knowledge economy," that is, universal rights to knowledge and education. In this perspective, I argued that education needs to be reconsidered as a global public good, with the struggle for equality at its center. By charting various conceptual shifts, I had previously distinguished between three discourses of the "knowledge economy": the "learning economy," the "creative economy" and the "open knowledge economy," each with its specific conceptions of knowledge and economy (Peters, 2010a). In the face of neoliberalism, privatization of education and the monopolization of knowledge, I argued that the last of these three conceptions – the open knowledge economy – offers a way of reclaiming knowledge as a global public good and of viewing openness as an essential aspect of an emerging global knowledge commons that foster open science and open education.

Now we are at a stage where we also can begin to investigate links between creativity, the mode of production and the logic of public organizations. With the advent of the Internet, Web 2.0 technologies and user-generated cultures, new principles of radical openness have become the basis of innovative institutional forms that decentralize and democratize power relationships, promote access to knowledge and encourage symmetrical, horizontal peer learning relationships. In this context, radical openness is a complex code word that represents a change of philosophy and ethos, a set of interrelated and complex changes that transforms markets, the mode of production and consumption, and the underlying logic of our institutions. I argued that we need to examine the significance of peer governance, review and collaboration as a basis for open institutions and open management philosophies. This form of openness has been theorized in different ways by Dewey, Pierce and Popper as a "community of inquiry" – a set of values and philosophy committed to the ethic of criticism that offers means for transforming our institutions in what Antonio Negri and others call the age of "cognitive capitalism." Expressive and aesthetic labor ("creative labor") demands institutional structures for developing "knowledge cultures" as "flat

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hierarchies" that permit reciprocal academic exchanges as a new basis for public institutions.

That is, we are seeing social processes and policies that foster openness as an overriding value, as evidenced in the growth of open source, open access, open education and open science and their convergences that characterize global knowledge communities that transcend borders of the nation-state. Openness also seems to suggest political transparency and the norms of open inquiry, indeed, even democracy itself, as both the basis of the logic of inquiry and the dissemination of its results (Peters, 2010c).

Institutions are humanly devised; they set constraints and shape incentives: economic institutions such as property rights or contracts shape economic incentives, constricting possibilities and distribution. Political institutions, including forms of government, separation of powers and so on, shape political incentives and distribution of political power.

Today, with the advent of the Internet and user-generated cultures, new principles of openness have become the basis of innovative institutional forms that decentralize and democratize power and access to knowledge and encourage peer learning relationships. Openness is a value and philosophy that also offers us a means for transforming our institutions.

It was in this context that I was not surprised to learn that TEDGlobal (2012) held a global conference called "Radical Openness" with the following description:

> The world is becoming increasingly interconnected and open. Radically open – manifesting itself in open borders, open culture, open-source, open data, open science, open world, open minds. With the loss of privacy that it implies, openness carries its own dangers. But it breeds transparency, authenticity, creativity and collaboration. … All bets are off as to what openness and collaboration in an ultra-connected world will mean for human potential. Traditional top-down models of organization no longer reflect reality. Social capital and influence are becoming stronger currencies than hierarchy and formal power. New, collaborative ways of creating meaning and things are developing at fast pace. Only one thing appears certain: Secrecy is no longer bankable: impact is. The future will be built on great ideas, and for that, great ideas need to circulate freely, broadly and openly. (About This Event section, paras. 2-3)

A video illustration of the "radical openness" of the TEDGlobal 2012 conference was made and presented by Jason Silva. I think it has some interesting features because it attempts to present an evolutionary approach to the concept of ideas.[3] Ross Andersen (2012) profiled Jason Silva in *The Atlantic* under the heading "A Timothy Leary for the Viral Video Age" whom he describes as "the fast-talking, media-savvy 'performance philosopher' who wants you to love the ecstatic future of your mind." He adds:

> Like Leary, Silva is an unabashed optimist; he sees humankind as a species on the brink of technology-enabled transcendence. Silva is an avid evangelist for the technological singularity – the idea that technology will soon bring about a greater-than-human intelligence. It's an idea that Ray Kurzweil has worked hard to popularize in tech circles, but Silva wants to push it out into the mainstream, and he wants to do it with the slickest, most efficient idea vehicle of our time: the viral video. He has spent the last three years making (really) short films that play like movie trailers for ideas; he compares them to shots of 'philosophical espresso.' (para. 3)

Silva offers the following analysis of "performance philosophy":

> The problem, as I see it, is that a lot of these stunning philosophical ideas are diluted by their academic packaging; the academics don't think so because this is their universe, they could care less about how these ideas get packaged because they're so enmeshed in them. But the rest of us need another way in. We need to be told why these ideas matter, and one of the ways to do that is to present them with these media tools. (para. 8)

Influenced by Ray Kurzweil, Silva describes openness in terms of biology and the emergent nature of consciousness:

> … you have this interesting thing happening where biology is this emergent phenomenon that builds upon its own complexity, and it leads to the emergence of consciousness, but then consciousness wants to free itself from constraints that biology sets forth. So even though biology causes consciousness, it also burdens it. (para. 16)

I think Silva is right, even if his work does not justify the assertions he is making.

The notion of radical openness also has been applied to business by Don Tapscott. *The Harvard Business Review* (2012) summarized his argument this way:

> Globalization and instant communication have changed the rules of the game for business. Today's organizations are being held to stringent and fluctuating sets of standards by unrelenting 'webs' of stakeholders who are quick to pass judgment on their behavior. In what is becoming an ultra-transparent world, every step and misstep is subject to scrutiny and every company with a brand or reputation to protect is vulnerable. (p. 1)

As the summary continues, Tapscott "describes three key elements of openness that modern organizations should embrace: transparency, opening up the business model and placing intellectual property in an open commons. In doing so, he says, a firm will embrace the three dimensions effective organizations for the 21st century" (p. 1)[4]

In the same vein, Tim Leberecht's i7 Summit 2011 "Radical Openness Workshop"[5] discusses "Open innovation," " Designing for the loss of control" and "Openness in organizations" by reference to: 1. crowdsourcing; 2. open design research; 3. open strategy (organization as network including customers, alumni, etc.); 4. open source software; 5. open source social networks; 6. open branding; 7. openness social capital; 8. open conversations; 9. open HR; and 10. open conference (*un*conference).

Closer to home, bell hooks (2003) in *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* urges "radical openness" in teaching and learning as the essence of education considered as a practice of freedom of both spiritual and mental activity. hooks is not alone in advocating a theology of radical openness (see, for instance, Lanzetta, 2001).

In this paper, I am principally interested in this concept as providing a new logic for public organizations, economy and management and as a means of fostering large group creative collaboration and co-creative labor based on being open, peering, sharing, interdependent and acting globally. In this context, my argument and concept is that **"co(labor)ation"** refers to the wisdom of the crowd (so-called "crowdsourcing"), and a systematic mode of collective learning processes that offers the prospect of encouraging "creative labor" and overcoming "estranged labor" *(entfremdete Arbeit* in the Marxist and Hegelian sense) within cognitive capitalism.

Cognitive Capitalism and Creative Labor[6]

In a 2010 paper, "Three Forms of the Knowledge Economy: Learning, Creativity and Openness," I identified three discernibly separate but interrelated developmental strands of the "knowledge economy" centered around the notions of: (1) The Learning Economy, based on the work of Bengt-Åke Lundvall; (2) The Creative Economy, based on the work of Charles Landry, John Howkins and Richard Florida; and (3) The Open Science Economy, based on recent technological developments in promoting the openness of scientific communication (Peters, 2010a).[7] This conception has been part of an ongoing engagement with the discourse of the knowledge economy that views it as a structural transformation of Western capitalism, a third stage of development after mercantile capitalism, a doctrine that characterized the period 1500-1800 based on the the premise that national wealth and power were best served by increasing exports and collecting precious metals in return (Coleman, 1969; Miller, 1988), and industrial capitalism, that replaced the merchant as a dominant actor in the capitalist system with the industrialist and established a factory system of manufacturing based on a complex division of labor. David Hume and Adam Smith were among a new group of economic theorists who questioned the fundamental mercantile belief that the amount of the world's wealth remained constant and that a state could only increase its wealth at the expense of another state. Knowledge capitalism, by contrast, is another transformation of capitalism. The term "knowledge capitalism" emerged only recently to describe the transition to the so-called knowledge economy. Knowledge capitalism and knowledge economy are twin terms that can be traced at the level of public policy to a series of reports that emerged in the late 1990s by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1996) and the World Bank (1999), before they were taken up as a policy template by world governments in the late 1990s. In terms of these reports, education is reconfigured as a massively undervalued form of knowledge capital that will determine the future of work, the destiny of knowledge institutions and the shape of society in the years to come.

These three forms of knowledge economy and their associated discourses represent three recent related but different conceptions of the knowledge economy, each with clear significance and implications for education and education policy. They indicate that there have been different national policy constructions of the knowledge economy. I argue that the last conception based on openness provides a model of radically nonpropertarian form that incorporates both "open education" and "open science" economies and provides a radical alternative to neoliberal conceptions in providing a way to respond positively to the Great Recession by establishing and encouraging open science and education as part of the global knowledge commons. These developments of openness can be understood as an extension of arguments for the public good in a global context, of knowledge and education as global public goods, and as a necessary platform for the promotion of global civil society.

Theorists from different political perspectives and disciplines have simultaneously tried to analyze and describe certain deep-seated and structurally transformative tendencies in Western capitalism, society and modernity to move to a form of post-industrial economy that focuses on the production and consumption of knowledge and symbolic goods as a higher-order economic activity that encompasses and affects the entire economy and society. In these studies, we should recognize certain long-term structural tendencies of increased formalization that transform both the production and consumption of symbolic goods. These are all tendencies toward increasing (in)formalization and abstraction centered on the sign, symbol and the image including a set of overlapping processes that transform knowledge production – informatization, mathematization, digitalization – together with processes that transform consumption – culturalization and aestheticization. Most recently, capitalism has begun to exploit the reproduction of new synthetic life in terms of a set of biological processes. These are the leading processes transforming contemporary post-modern capitalism that rely on new forms of systems (cybernetic) capitalism based on design principles with the capacity to make new connections among old structures; to form areas of exquisitely precise specialization for recognizing patterns in information; and the ability to learn to recruit and connect information from these areas automatically.

Cognitive capitalism is a theory that has become significant in the last few years for analyzing a new form of capitalism, sometimes referred to as 'third capitalism' *after* mercantilism and industrial capitalism. It is a term that focuses on the socioeconomic changes ushered in with the Internet and new Web 2.0 technologies that have transformed the mode of production and the nature of labor. The theory of cognitive capitalism has its origins in French and Italian thinkers, particularly Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (2004a, 2004b) *Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* the work of Michel Foucault (2008) on the birth of biopower, and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude* (2004), as well as the Italian "Autonomist" Marxist movement that had its origins in the Italian "Operaismo" (lit. "workerism") in the 1960s.

> *These developments of openness can be understood as an extension of arguments for the public good in a global context, of knowledge and education as global public goods, and as a necessary platform for the promotion of global civil society.*

Knowledge capitalism involves an increasing and infinite substitution of capital for labor with the automation of secondary (e.g., fully automated factory) and tertiary knowledge activities. The discourse of the knowledge economy has largely ignored the concept of class of the labor or recommended its replacement by a specialized "new class" of scientists or students as a new social movement. This new symbolic development involves a clear mathematization of knowledge with the new search algorithms and the development of an algorithmic capitalism (Peters, 2011) with the attendant "googlization of higher education" (Vaidhyanathan, 2012).

Cognitive capitalism emerges as a global economic system based on the development of a virtual (immaterial) economy ("third capitalism") focused on the increasing informatization (digitization) of production, with increasing formalization, mathematicization and digitization of language, communication and knowledge (especially journal systems). At the same time, and as a response to the same forces, there is the emergence of social media, social networking and social modes of production enhanced by Web 2.0 technologies and distributed knowledge and learning systems, including online publication and archives leading to open knowledge production systems such as an open science economy. Thus we see the decreasing cost of network access, knowledge sharing and transmission, and greater "borderless" interconnectedness of knowledge spaces (emergence of "world brain").

Distributive knowledge systems under cognitive capitalism lead to the eventual displacement of material production as the core of the system with an emphasis on interactive and dynamical relations between material and immaterial sectors, and the digitization and systematization of value (rather than chains) where collective intelligence represents the core of exchange value and profit-making. Coproduction exists through "just-in-time production," where the market precedes production, and increases through new processes directly relate to intellectual property. The private appropriation of global public knowledge goods takes place through the enforcement of patents, copyright and trademark, further increasing the capacity of computing, copying, file-sharing and storage to help enforcement of intellectual property rights. Externalities in complex systems now determine the general conditions of growth, investment and redistribution of revenue.

There is accorded a central role of innovation with a new socio-technical "cybernetic" paradigm of innovation based on "hothouse" social networking and social media. Continuous endogenous innovation is increasingly focused on science as a leading part of the accumulation regime together with the promotion of new models of social and public entrepreneurship.

The discourse points to the question of "immaterial labor." We might argue that cognitive capitalism can accommodate a conception of "creative labor" (construed in terms of "collective intelligence") that is very different from notions of "creative class" (Florida, 2002) or human capital (Becker, 1964) that inform accounts of the knowledge economy. Networks and flows of immaterial labor are based on mass participation and collaboration rather than traditional Smithian division of labor that is nonlinear and comprises dynamical systems of labor. Learning economies reinforce autonomy and collective intelligence as the main source of value in the market with emphasis on codification and contextualization of practical and implicit knowledge. Situated, personal and implicit knowledge is not easily reduced to machine or to mere information (codified software or data). Creative learning economies emphasize "right brain" ascendancy with an accent on a psychology of openness, metacognition and "learning by doing." The infinite substitution of capital for labor for "left brain" logical and sequential tasks releases creative energies (Pink, 2006). Fundamental to what characterizes cognitive capitalism is the emergence of team or network as fundamental labor units in a new political economy of peer production ('Interneting') based on cooperation and collaboration rather than competition. There is an increasing importance of post-human network knowledge and learning practices based on mega-data bases and global portals.

Co(labor)ation: From Co-Production to Co-Creation

In their manifesto for co-production, the New Economics Foundation (2008) suggested that the traditional public economy of service is failing because "Neither markets nor centralised bureaucracies are effective models for delivering public services based on relationships"; "Professionals need their clients as much as the clients need professionals" and "Social networks make change possible" (p. 8). The Foundation defined the concept in the following way: "Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours" (Slay & Robinson, 2011, para. 2). The term was first developed by Elinor Ostrom who used it "to explain to the Chicago police why the crime rate went up when the police came off the beat and into patrol cars," "explaining why the police need the community as much as the community need the police" (Stephens, Ryan-Collins, & Boyle, 2008, para. 1). Anna Coote and others at the Institute for Public Policy Research use the concept to explain "why doctors need patients as much as patients need doctors and that, when that relationship is forgotten, both sides fail" (para. 2). Edgar Cahn used it to explain how critical family and community relationships were part of a core economy, originally called *oekonomika* (para. 3). This reciprocity and mutual help and exchange at the very heart of the social economy is built upon principles that view citizens as equal partners in the design and delivery of services, not passive recipients of public services. Co-production is about a mutual and reciprocal partnership between professionals and citizens who engage and make use of peer, social and personal networks as the best way of transferring knowledge and supporting change. As the New Economics Foundation's (2008) manifesto suggested, co-production "devolve[d] real responsibility, leadership and authority to 'users,' and encourage[d] self-organisation rather than direction from above" (p. 13).

This aspect of radical openness, while enhanced and facilitated by new social media, has its home in a theory of the commons,[8] a policy of personalization and a political theory of anarchism that collectively forms around peer-to-peer relationships and that replaces the old emphasis on the autonomous individual. This conception becomes even more helpful as the new logic of the public sphere when the notion of co-creation and co-design sit alongside co-production. Let me briefly see if I can redeem these claims by suggesting the outline of an argument I would like to foreshadow here and take further on future occasions.

The theory of the commons begins in the 17th century with common fields and town commons in New England. Simply put, commons are resources jointly shared by a group of people. The notion has experienced a huge revival since the mid-1980s. As van Laerhoven and Ostrom (2007) explained, "Scholars working on the study of the commons since the mid-1980s have helped forge a substantial transdisciplinary approach to the study of an important type of socialecological system"(p. 4). Nancy Kranich (2004) put it succinctly when she applied the notion to the realm of information:

> The Internet offers unprecedented possibilities for human creativity, global communication, and access to information. Yet digital technology also invites new forms of information enclosure. In the last decade, mass media companies have developed methods of control that undermine the public's traditional rights to use, share, and reproduce information and ideas. These technologies, combined with dramatic consolidation in the media industry and new laws that increase its control over intellectual products, threaten to undermine the political discourse, free speech, and creativity needed for a healthy democracy. (p. I)

In particular, in the open-access legal regime, nobody has the legal right to exclude anyone else from using the resource. The common-pool resources resemble what economists call public goods. A commons analysis is seen as providing the best framework for talking sensibly about the complex relationships between democratic participation, openness, social equity, and diversity. The open, flat, peer-to-peer network that is based on open and equal participation is seen as the best hope for promoting democratic discourse that allows for individual freedom of expression (Benkler, 2006).

Co-creation is a term that developed in the early 2000s to describe business strategies for involving customers in the production of goods and services (Alford, 2007; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2010, 2012). It is often seen as a form of mass customization and sometimes also viewed as a form of "individualization." The radical notion has little to do with markets. This is what Benkler (2006) called social production or "commons-based peer production" (p. 60). In recent years, the emphasis and trend has been toward open democratic information resources and platforms that provide software and licensing commons and promote open access in scientific communication, digital repositories, institutional commons such as online libraries, as well as subject or discipline-specific commons (Peters, 2008a, 2010b, 2009b). The connection between "information" and "commons" is still in its infancy, yet it holds promise for new forms of the public based on co-production of public goods and services, co-creation and personalization that decenters the state and all forms of central authority in what I will call, using Paul Feyerabend's (1993) term, a new configuration of "epistemological anarchy."

Too often as scholars we emphasize "knowledge that" – as philosophers say, "propositional knowledge," that which comes to us in the form of sentences or statements generally in books or articles, and sometimes in oral or speeches genres like seminars or conference papers. Rarely do we accent the "knowledge who," the personal contacts that often form friendships and provide the collegiality that form the basis of the academic networks that last a lifetime, transcending the purely professional and exercise a strong and lasting positive influence; a "circle of trust" as Robert De Niro's character explains to Greg Fokker played by Ben Stiller in Jay Roach's movie *Meet the Parents*. Collegial trust is of an entirely different kind to that depicted in the infamous movie: it registers integrity, a kind of confidence and certainty as well as well hope. Trust allows us to form relationships and to depend on others. It also is dangerous – it makes us vulnerable and is risky because of the possibility of betrayal. When and whom to trust are vital epistemological questions to younger academics who depend on their mentors. The value of trust takes us beyond questions of simple cooperation to the development of a shared moral and political universe. It is within this space that a kind of purposeful or project sharing takes place and collaboration is fostered.

I have argued that personalized learning has emerged in the last decade as a special instance of a more generalized response to the problem of the reorganization of the state in response to globalization and the end of the effectiveness of the industrial mass production model in the delivery of public services (Peters, 2009a). I examine personalization as a major strategy for overcoming the bureaucratic state through "mass customization," a discourse from which the concept of personalization emerged. I argue that personalization exists as a general concept that has become the political basis for a new social democratic settlement, encouraging citizen participation in the choice and design of service, and thus representing a major change in British social and public philosophy.

There have been many attempts to elaborate the crucial importance of the close relationship between universities and the public good, emphasizing links between civil society, public discourses and deliberation, public culture and the health of democracy. The notion of the public sphere lies at the heart of the liberal theory of civil society and is distinguished by an institutional setting characterized by openness in communication and the production of public goods (Calhoun, 2001, 2006). Habermas's (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* serves as the point of departure for the analysis of the formation of the bourgeois public sphere that depended upon the principle of universal access to constitute a realm characterized by critical-rational debate.

The institutionalization of a fully political public sphere took place first in Britain during the 18th century and was preceded by a literary public culture that revealed the interiority of the self and emphasized a communicative, rational subjectivity that created a new phenomenon of public opinion and the basis for a new liberal constitutional social order. There have been critiques of Habermas's conception in terms of marginalized groups excluded from a universal public sphere (Fraser, 1990) and the way in which Habermas draws the distinction between public and private. Other scholars have sought to develop the concept of the public sphere emphasizing its discursive or rhetorical nature (Hauser, 1998). Habermas's work on the public sphere was written well before the age of the Internet, and some followers have developed his theories within the new public space of electronic and social media that, unlike traditional industrial one-way broadcast media, are open, interactive and characterized by a plurality of voices and the absence of a central control or authority.

Against neoliberal theories that seek to privatize the public sphere, Hardt and Negri (2004, 2009), following Michael Foucault's (2008) biopolitics, suggested that in the liberal political economy, the very distinction between public and private spheres is founded upon a concept of private property in an economy of scarcity. With the post-modernization of the production of knowledge and a shift to the knowledge economy, Hardt and Negri (2009) saw open source and open access as encouraging new forms of collaboration that no longer hold that economic value is founded upon exclusive possession; rather, increasing such forms depends upon new collectives based on the logic of networking that has the power to reconstitute the public sphere.

The global knowledge economy represents a set of deep structural transformations in the transition to a networked information economy that has the power to alter not only modes of economic organization and social practices of knowledge production, but also the very fabric of the liberal economy and society. Distributed peer-to-peer knowledge systems rival the scope and quality of similar products produced by proprietary efforts and provide an institutional global matrix for a confederation of public spaces. The rich text, highly interactive, user-generated and socially active Internet (Web 2.0) has seen linear models of knowledge production giving way to more diffuse open-ended and serendipitous knowledge processes. There have been dramatic changes in creation, production and consumption of scholarly resources – "creation of new formats made possible by digital technologies, ultimately allowing scholars to work in deeply integrated electronic research and publishing environments that will enable real-time dissemination, collaboration, dynamically-updated content, and usage of new media" (Brown, Griffiths, Rascoff, & Guthrie, 2007, p. 4). "Alternative distribution models (institutional repositories, preprint servers, open-access journals) have also arisen with the aim to broaden access, reduce costs, and enable open sharing of content" (p. 4).

Increasingly, portal-based knowledge environments and global science gateways support collaborative science (Schuchardt el al., 2007). Cyber-mashups of very large data sets let users explore, analyze and comprehend the science behind the information being streamed. The new Web 2.0 technologies and development of data sharing with cloud computing has revolutionized how researchers from various disciplines collaborate over long distances, especially in the life sciences, where interdisciplinary approaches are becoming increasingly powerful as a driver of both integration and discovery (with regard to data access, data quality, identity and provenance).

The economic crisis of Western neoliberal capitalism brought about through the Great Recession has impacted the nature of public knowledge and education institutions, privatization education and monopolizing knowledge flows. Education and science have always been wedded to principles of free inquiry and to the academic freedoms that are necessary to sustain the open society and social democracy. The project for revitalizing and restoring the publicness of science and education is enhanced, especially in an era of severe budget cuts to public services, through the utilization of new platforms of openness based on Web 2.0 technologies that promote universal access to knowledge and economical forms of collaboration through file-sharing and the nested convergences in open access, open archiving and open publishing (open journals systems) that have the potential to reconstitute science and education as open and public institutions in the years to come.

Notes

1 A version of paper was delivered as an invited keynote to an international symposium on "The Creative University" at "Organization and Newness" Conference , Commission Organizational Education , German Educational Research Association (GERA) in cooperation with Philipps University Marburg, February 28th & March 1st, 2013 under the title "Radical Openness: Creative Institutions, Creative Labor and the Logic of Public Organizations in Cognitive Capitalism." See the lecture presentation at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZ5zb8gyAr4&feature=share&list=PLUI8E0qsJLCAPvvcct6Y8Y2Y7h_JYBb2O. I wish to express my thanks to Professor Susanne Weber for organizing and inviting me to this important conference, and to DADD for providing funding support.

2 See, for instance, the collection of papers at http://eepat.net/doku.php?id=the_idea_of_openness (see also Peters, 2008b).

3 "RADICAL OPENNESS" – An anthem on the power of ideas created by Jason Silva at Therapy Studios and presented at TEDGlobal 2012: blog.ted.com/2012/06/26/exploring-openness-in-radical-video-jason-silva-at-tedglobal2012/. Inspired by the ideas of TED, Chris Anderson, Richard Dawkins, James Gleick, Matt Ridley, Steven Johnson, Kevin Kelly, Ray Kurzweil, Imaginary Foundation and many others. Special thanks to Bruno Giussani, European Director, TED Conferences. Selected stock footage courtesy of Shutterstock. Still images provided by The Imaginary Foundation. Music composed and performed by Bix Sigurdsson.

[4] See Tapscott's "Big Ideas for 2012: Radical Openness and Entrepreneurship" at http://video.foxbusiness.com/v/1340484924001/big-ideas-for-2012-radical-openness-and-entrepreneurship/; See also *The New Rules of Openness* by The Boston Consulting Group, January 2011 at http://www.libertyglobal.com/PDF/public-policy/New-Rules-of-Openness.pdf.

[5] See Tim Leberecht's i7 Summit 2011 "Radical Openness Workshop" at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnSEBK5ExNk.

[6] In this section, I draw selectively on my "'Knowledge Economy,' Economic Crisis & Cognitive Capitalism: Public Education and the Promise of Open Science" chapter (Peters, 2011).

[7] For work on the knowledge economy and its different modes, see Peters and Besley (2006), Peters (2007), Peters, Marginson and Murphy (2009), Marginson, Murphy and Peters (2009), Murphy, Peters and Marginson (2010), Araya and Peters (2010).

[8] On the theory of the commons, see the *International Journal of the Commons* (http://www.thecommonsjournal.org/) especially van Laerhoven & Ostrom (2007) and Berge & van Laerhoven (2011). See also http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/cpr/index.php for The Comprehensive Bibliography of the Commons.

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Poetry

Barbara Tramonte, School for Graduate Studies

I live in Ernest

First, a moveable feast
Lost in Paris
Olives, goujon, crusty bread.
Then the manuscript
Terse, filled with meaning
Sentences taut
like lariat tails
Leave people behind
with trace marks
on a fence.
I live in Ernest.
Rifle to my head or heart
Good stiff drink
and morning air.
I live in alleys
on mountain tops
and ski
with the vigor of a body double.
Oysters slide down
a welcome throat
Flowers smell fleeting
Time is short and
Sweet as a whiff
in an orangerie.
I live tapping code
from a cave
Alive
Here
Waiting.
I live in Ernest.

How I approach inner peace

I read shambala
I unk finala
I am criminal-a
I robbed a store.
I look back wary
I ate octopus
I ate matzoh
I saw the Streits
I am kombucha
In boiling waters
On Cambodia's rivers
With broad brimmed pilots
Disneyland?
I see.
You see.
I see you as someone else
And you see I am slowly walking
Through your town for peaches, shawl fringe
Ball skip haunches
Small bone
Strain
Balloon and madness
Zocalo brim set
Candle mescal beans.

The Colony

Tumbling out of the dry expanse
Of some machine
Capturing errant weeds and flowers
In the East Village
In Soho
On the West Side Highway
Where my poems used to rattle
But now compete with upper class people
Conquering the hinterlands
Colonizing the West Side Highway
Making the meat-packing district theirs
Beyond the veal of what they need to see
All is Abercrombie and Fitch
Even on Little West 12th Street

Take your crew cut for a walk
By the boondocks darling
There exists no longer any seed
Or seediness
Only lithe bodies
Crossing wide avenues
And looking so gorgeous
On the streets
Of my city.

Does the Library Work With my Mobile Device? The Empire State College Library Mobile Inventory Project

Heather Shalhoub, Empire State College Library

About 15 months ago, questions from online library users, both faculty and students, started to come in more frequently in regard to using library resources with mobile devices. A resource that compiled the answers to this question was necessary. We needed to gather information from library resource vendors including directions for use, links to mobile information and compatibility, as well as support information for various mobile devices. In order to fully address these questions, the library created the Mobile Inventory Project.

The decision needed to be made as to whether this would be an internal or external resource. We opted for external since users should be able to access this information at all times, even when the library is not open for our Ask-a-Librarian service. The goal was to create a Web page where users could educate themselves on using the devices with the online library. Library articles and e-books could be read on the train to work or sitting outside on a lunch break, not just sitting in front of a computer or with a stack of printed articles.

I was tasked with this project. First, I armed myself with the library's test gadgets, which included an iPad, a Motorola Xoom, a Kindle and a Kindle Fire and started to do research. Then, I checked other college and university libraries to determine what they offer users. At that time I started this project, most academic libraries had a mobile website but did not address how online library resources work with mobile devices. Instead, this was an answer more common to public library websites.

Since I was starting from scratch, I commenced with data collection. I gathered instructions and links to mobile device information from each library resource vendor. If anything was available, I added it to my repository. Fortunately, we have numerous databases that come from the same vendors, for example EBSCOHost and Proquest, so the information for one was the same information for the majority of the resources from that vendor.

Once the information for all of the library resources was gathered, I started testing them on our mobile devices. The iPad was the easiest to use with library resources, though the Kindle and Kindle Fire also were easy to use. There were technical complications with the Motorola Xoom that knocked it out of the running before I could get any testing done.

I then collaborated with Katherine Watson, lead Web designer, from the Office of Integrated Technologies. We met to figure out the design and layout needs for the Web page I was going to create. After getting a refresher course on my TERMINALFOUR ("t^4") Site Manager training and deciding how best to organize the information I had gathered, I started to build the Web page.

The Mobile Inventory Web page is comprised of a landing page with three informational pages in the menu. One page has information on available apps for library resources. Empire State College users need to log in/authenticate in order to access library resources. Following the instructions listed will get this done with little technical difficulty. I tested these steps to make sure they were workable for all levels of Empire State College users, since I did not want to link to something that would cause more frustration than benefits.

The next page contains tips and support information for using mobile devices. Tips include information about file types and how to transfer PDF files from your computer to your mobile device, which is the recommended way to read library resources on your device. Support links for mobile devices also are included, since the library does not have access to all of these devices and cannot technically support them. This way, the information is there for users to consult or contact for more technical support for their device.

PHOTO CREDIT: SAWICKI STUDIOS

Heather Shalhoub

The last page is an alphabetical list of all library resources that work on a mobile device. This page includes information for each resource and whether it works in a mobile device Web browser, if you can view articles on your mobile device, if articles can be downloaded and transferred to your mobile device, and if an app is available for download. Links for library resource vendor help and support information also are included here.

Once the page was built, the big decision was what to name it and where to place it on the library website. The librarians – Sara Hull, Dana Longley, Sarah Morehouse, Suzanne Hayes and I – worked together and came up with the title, "Using the Library with Mobile Devices." Right now, this page is listed under the Services tab on the library home page and also is linked to many of our library subject guides.

The page went live in September 2012 and has been updated on a regular basis. It has been well received by users and librarians needing to answer the questions about mobile device compatibility from users. The page is getting traffic, though most traffic comes from librarian referrals during reference interactions. You can view the page at www.esc.edu/library-mobile.

The challenge with the Web page has been getting users to find it. I submitted an article to *The Student Connection* newsletter and published an announcement about the page on the library's blog, Twitter and Facebook pages, as well as the Academic Technologies blog. Hopefully with continued use and user discovery, the page will get more attention and traffic. Another option is moving it to another spot on the library website.

In June 2013, I made a presentation on this project at the SUNY Librarians Association annual conference, "Opening Minds, Inspiring Tomorrow," and it was well received. A few SUNY librarians are taking this information and Web page back to their systems librarians and Web managers to add something similar to their websites. This presentation can be viewed as a Prezi at http://prezi.com/user/HeatherESC/ or as slides at http://www.slideshare.net/heatheresclibrarian/does-the-library-work-with-my-mobile-device.

If you have any responses to the Web page or ideas about where it should be placed, we would welcome your suggestions. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or feedback at heather.shalhoub@esc.edu.

"If the purposeful act be in reality the typical unit of the worthy life, then it follows that to base education on purposeful acts is exactly to identify the process of education with worthy living itself."

– William H. Kilpatrick, The Project Method
Teacher's College Record, 19*(3), 1918*

Toward an Understanding of Mentoring as Emotional Labor

Nadine V. Wedderburn, Northeast Center

Much has been written about emotional labor since Arlie Hochschild coined the term in her 1983 book, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Grandey, Diefendorff and Rupp (2012) noted that since Hochschild's 1983 exposition, approximately 10,000 articles have been published on topics surrounding emotional labor (p. 4). The authors stated that over half of these articles have been published since 2006, which demonstrates a surge of interest in the topic in recent years. Notably, emotional labor has become central to discourses in such fields as nursing, law, sociology and business where researchers consistently seek to understand how individuals and groups negotiate relationships for mutual gains. This essay is an attempt to add to these discussions a perspective of mentoring as emotional labor – as carried out by mentors at SUNY Empire State College.

Emotional Labor

To Hochschild, emotional labor is work done for a wage where the worker manipulates feelings "to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display … [and it] has exchange value." (1983, p. 7). Grandey, Diefendorff and Ruup (2012) submitted that the interdisciplinary evolution of emotional labor has necessitated a trifocal lens to clearly understand emotional labor. The authors contend that emotional labor is a convergence of three factors: "occupational requirements," "emotional displays" and "intrapsychic processes" (p. 5). These factors reflect Hochschild's original consideration of emotional labor as part-job requirement, part-exhibit and part-performance. In other words, workers carrying out emotional labor skillfully demonstrate the ability to discern and influence the emotions of others while managing their own, in order to achieve a given task.

Dimensions of Emotional Labor

Newman, Guy and Mastracci (2009) proposed 16 dimensions of emotional labor that further elucidate the concept. These dimensions are summarized as follows:

1. verbal judo – "tough talk" banter
2. *caritas* – the caring function in human services
3. game face – used to signify toughness
4. compassion fatigue –burnout resulting from too much *caritas*
5. emotion management – the worker's job to elicit a desired emotional response (from the client/customer/citizen)
6. professional face – the "status shield" that workers don to distance themselves emotionally from the interaction
7. emotional chameleon – the ability to switch expressions of emotions on and off
8. spider sense – the ability to intuit the other's emotional state
9. rapport – the ability to establish a deep understanding and communication with the other
10. emotional suppression – disregarding one's own feelings
11. emotional mirror – the ability to reflect and adopt the emotions of the other
12. emotional armor – the ability to gird oneself against one's own emotional response
13. emotional equilibrium – maintaining a balance between extremes of emotions
14. emotional anesthesia – the lack of any emotional response; may occur after prolonged exposure to extreme emotional stimuli
15. emotional engagement – the ability to connect with the other and empathize
16. emotional mask – when workers convincingly suppress their own emotions in order to act as if they feel a contradictory emotion, or no emotion (p. 7)

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Nadine V. Wedderburn

These aspects of emotional labor may be experienced or seen in action at varying levels as workers carry out their duties. To facilitate analysis, each of these dimensions has been classified under one of the three focal categories stated earlier. The classification is shown in the table that I developed (see next page).

Mentoring – The Occupation

The role of "mentor" at Empire State College is arguably a complex one to grasp. In a Center for Mentoring and Learning Sustainability of Mentoring workshop held at the Northeast Center in June 2013, mentors used terms such as "listening," "valuing," "guiding," "facilitating" and "enabling" to describe the work that they do. More detailed reflections from participants included: 1. Helping students think critically about their place in the world and how a degree can help them; 2. Helping students achieve academic success, achieve their goals; and 3. Convincing a student that she or he knows more than she or he thinks.

These phrases may be summed up in Mandell and Herman's (2010) conceptualization of mentoring as:

Occupational Requirements	Emotional Displays	Intrapsychic Processes
Caritas	verbal judo	compassion fatigue
emotion management	game face	emotional chameleon
spider sense	professional face	emotional suppression
rapport	emotional equilibrium	emotional armor
emotional mirror		emotional anaesthesia
emotional engagement		emotional mask

> every professor, every teacher tries to work with students by attending to their individual learning, interests, backgrounds and questions. We help our students plan their curricula and we do individual tutorials with them on topics that they have identified as necessary for their degrees. We also help them find resources and other mentors. We listen to them and counsel them about how to bring their experiences into their studies and as they explore, how education can improve their lives. (para. 1)

Evidently, mentoring at ESC is both rational and relational. Indeed, the role of the mentor was imagined to be distinctive from the beginning of the college when its founders felt that the occupation was to "'signify the special kind of quality of an Empire State faculty member in a special kind of relationship' with students" (Bonnabeau, 1996, p. 26). As Arthur Chickering put it,

> we wanted a person who was very good at listening, who would be skillful in helping people clarify the purposes for their degree programs and their contracts….they had to have a flexible response to students with very diverse backgrounds. That was important. (as cited in Bonnabeau, 1996, p. 27)

Current Research

In order to capture Empire State College's mentors' insights into their work as emotional labor, I designed and distributed a survey collegewide to about 200 mentors. Survey participants were asked to offer open-ended responses as well as structured responses using a 16-part question that operationalized the dimensions of emotional labor. Eighty-six (86) completed surveys were received. Granted that this moderate response rate (43 percent) somewhat limits the generalizability of the findings to ESC mentors at large, the results are nonetheless noteworthy.

For the purpose of this essay, I exclusively examine mentoring against the backdrop of the occupational requirement dimensions of emotional labor. Following are the results from the survey that reflect mentors' opinions. Direct quotes from mentors that relate to each dimension also are presented.

Emotion management – 41.7 percent of survey respondents agree overall that mentoring requires an ability to elicit desired emotional responses from students (22.6 percent neutral).

> *If 'emotional' refers to relating to people on more than a cognitive level, I'd argue that it is at the heart of our work. Part of mentoring is the recognition (or it seems to me) that one is dealing with a whole person, and recognizes the emotional state of the learner and mentor. If 'emotional labor' refers to an effort to create a particular 'emotional' response from our students, I am less inclined to see my work that way, except in so far as I see one of our tasks is to offer students a safe and comfortable setting in which to talk about their ideas, their feelings about their learning and their overall sense of themselves as learners.*

Spider sense – 65.9 percent of survey respondents agree overall that mentoring requires an ability to intuitively know students' emotional state.

> *Since relationships with our mentees 'run deeper' than in traditional academic settings (as we have a personal investment in their success), and require a delicate balance between real empathy and a certain distance, it can be a challenge to find the right approach for each student while maintaining an appropriate professional detachment at all times (much like a counselor or therapist). In fact, since mentoring involves a certain amount of both academic, and at times, informal personal 'counseling,' an intuitive feel for understanding and adapting to divergent student perspectives/needs is critical in a mentor …*

> *I certainly think that emotional intelligence is helpful to the mentoring process. Yes, my students are sometimes depressed, or anxious, or in grief, or experiencing serious challenges in their life. Sometimes I sense that they have a problem with alcohol, or that there are underlying social or emotional issues that affect their educational experiences. I do my best, in that case, to reach out as appropriate within the role of an academic mentor. I am not, however, a counselor and am very clear with myself on that boundary. I refer my students to the appropriate services when I sense that they have a need that exceeds the normal range of mentoring support.*

Rapport – 91.9 percent of survey respondents agree overall that mentoring requires an ability to establish a deep understanding and communication with students.

> Mentoring is connecting to the student and understanding their motivations for learning.

> I believe it is important to make a sincere attempt to make an emotional connection with students. I don't think it has to be deep but it must be genuine. By that I mean that it is important to care that the student learn and want to find a way to help a student who is trying unsuccessfully to learn.

> The emotional work that I see as most central is that of figuring out how to connect with a wide variety of students. Somehow I have to connect with them if I am really to be of any use to them.

Emotional mirror – 50.6 percent of survey respondents disagree overall that mentoring requires an ability to reflect and adopt the emotions of students.

> *I try not to get too 'emotional' with students although I definitely become invested emotionally in their success at ESC. I try to give them good advice about course work and course loads and hope they will take that advice, but when they do not, I try to let it go.*

> *Interpersonal communication in any professional setting requires that we control our emotions and act professionally – I don't see mentoring as special in that regard. I am not a therapist nor counselor and I do not attempt to engage my students on that level – nor do I think any mentor should!*

Emotional engagement – 98.8 percent of survey respondents agree overall that mentoring requires an ability to connect and empathize with students.

> *The key skill is empathetic listening and enabling students to identify the outcomes they desire.*

> *Connection and empathy are key here, at least at first, when the student is new to the college/center/program.*

> *Meaningful mentoring requires compassion and empathy.*

> *Obviously, the job can be done without much empathy, but empathy makes you do a better job of virtually everything in life.*

Conclusion

Based on these results, it is apparent that ESC mentors perceive their work strongly in terms of rapport and engagement, i.e., making meaningful connections with students, all the while establishing and observing boundaries between the cognitive and emotional aspects of their work. Mentors express that having the ability to reflect, adopt and elicit students' emotions are not as important as effectively connecting, communicating and empathizing with students. Additionally, mentors note that carrying out these tasks, albeit necessary, is demanding. The following comments echo this tension:

> *One needs to keep one's own responses under control at times and elicit intellectual, not emotional, responses from students. Mentoring is not psychological counseling but encouraging students in their intellectual endeavors – keeping a boundary that is consistent and clear – and not easy to do all the time.*

> *I find that negotiating boundaries with students is emotion work. More specifically, I manage my emotions and the students' when trying to balance out how much support and assistance I must give while encouraging students to be independent learners.*

> *It's not very easy for me to separate the emotional from the cognitive. Possibly they are intrinsically overlapping aspects of the same experience. I have learned in my now very long experience as a mentor that the emotional aspect of working with students is deeply valuable. The reason is that emotions are a way we know (if not altogether reliably) what we value. By 'we' I mean mentors and students. One of the delights, albeit difficult, of the appropriate intimacy of the mentor-student relationship is that we get to engage in learning that our students care about and will do so well after a term ends and a degree is completed. To me, that is a wonder and a joy – and one of the things I 'value' about my job is that I get to experience those states of mind, both in their cognitive and in their emotional aspects.*

When one considers that labor/work is strictly defined as energy used to bring about movement/activity, it should be concerning that emotional labor constitutes a significant part of what mentors at Empire State College do every day to transform students' lives. Whereas, there are no explicit requirements for a mentor to possess specific emotional competencies to be hired, the preceding discussion illustrates that the role of the mentor utilizes nuanced emotive skills. Among these skills are: the ability to establish sincere, meaningful connections with students; and to effectively balance cognitive and emotional capacities while facilitating learning. Although giving attention to emotions and feelings may be viewed by some as inappropriate, intrusive and unprofessional in the workplace, the results of the study show that doing so is required and somewhat unavoidable if mentoring, as promoted and practiced by many at ESC, is to continue meritoriously.

Note

This essay is part of a project that I am doing as a participant in the 2013-2014 Institute on Mentoring, Teaching and Learning. In future works, I explore mentoring in terms of the other two factors of emotional labor – emotional displays and intrapsychic processes – to further understand these effects from organizational and individual perspectives. It is worthwhile to examine how mentoring, integral to the organizational bedrock of Empire State College, is being experienced as emotional labor; juxtaposed with enduring discussions on sustaining the practice of mentoring.

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Creating the Light

Amy Ruth Tobol, Long Island Center

I have been fascinated by fabric since I was a child, collecting odd scraps for a secret collection tucked under my bed. I leaned toward glam and glitter – lots of sequined cloth, lace, tulle, shiny and furry fabrics that fueled my fantasies of being a rock star or ballerina. Sometimes I tried sewing, but inevitably, my creations fell apart.

I grew up to become an attorney trained in the art of language. Words were my medium. By the time I came to Empire State College, I had taken some weaving and quilting classes but creating art was not part of my life. I lived, breathed, ate words. But words no longer served me quite the same way after September 11, 2001.

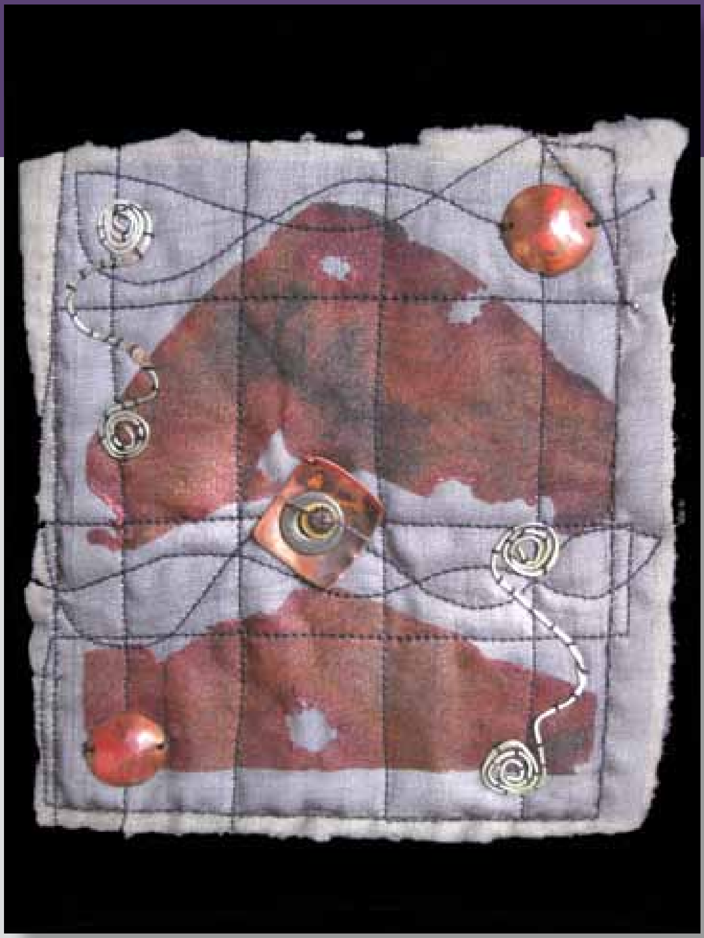
Series on Black II – 2012
12″ x 8 ¼″, painted cotton fabric, polyester organza, copper, wire mesh, hand and machine stitched. Photo by Carolyn Nelson

From previous page
Series on Black I – 2012
12″ x 9 ½″, commercial fabric (cotton cloth, polyester organza), burnt cotton batting, copper, free motion and hand stitched, metal beads. Photo by Carolyn Nelson

September 11 propelled me to return to my love of fabric and, in the summer of 2002, I took a fiber arts workshop at the Penland School of Crafts. Since then, I have been exploring how creating art extends my ability to share what I think and feel. My first completed piece, *Carpe Diem* (see fifth image), reflects how I could connect to others through the art creation process.

This piece represents the variety of techniques I learned that summer: dying fabric, using a sewing machine, surface design techniques and the power of stitches. As I worked on this piece, visitors to our class would share their 9/11 stories when I explained what I was creating. In a real way, creating and sharing this piece taught me about the tremors of emotion that spread throughout our country and beyond. I used blue commercial and hand-dyed fabrics because that day was so brilliantly blue. I left the edges raw and raveling to reflect my rawness and unraveled sense of safety and self. I used children's rubber alphabet stamps for the text included in the piece. I used black stitches to secure the pieces of the poem to the fabric. They were intended to mimic surgery stitches, a necessary part of healing really bad wounds.

Stanley Stories II – 2012
12 ½" x 13", rusted shirting, resist bleached commercial fabric, copper, hardware, machine and hand stitched.
Photo by Carolyn Nelson



Stanley Stories I – 2012
8 ½" x 9", shirting, polyester organza, copper, hand and machine stitched.
Photo by Carolyn Nelson

My later experiments with fabric reflect an interest in incorporating other odds and ends of materials with cloth. The two series of pieces in this portfolio, *Stanley Stories* and *Series on Black* illustrate the integration of various forms of copper, hardware, screening, buttons and brads with hand-dyed and commercial fabric. These pieces are quilted – the top is embellished with various items, batting is then sandwiched in between the top and a solid piece of fabric and sewn together. All of these pieces were backed on black commercial fabric, and photographed so that it appears that the embellished fronts are emerging from darkness. What I create and how I understand my process is similar – what comes out of my hands seems to emerge from some deep, dark area inside of me. The contrast of the hard metals, soft metals, stiff and flexible fabric, makes sense to me. Aren't we all just a mess of contradictions?

The *Stanley Stories* series is part of a developing series using my father's shirts and ties. My father, Stanley, passed in 2010. He was a salesman, a tinkerer, a handyman, a sculptor, a writer. His workshop downstairs in my parents' home is filled with used jars containing all manner of strange metal, wood and plastic items. They find their way into the two pieces highlighted here.

Carpe Diem is the only piece I have publicly exhibited. Until now, my work has been very private and intimate. Sharing my work is about sharing parts of myself, and locating those bright points of connection with others in an increasingly dark world.

The poem in the piece is titled "*Carpe Diem*" and was written by my niece, Sarah Annese, when she was 16 years old after the death of her best friend.

Carpe Diem
Talk to your brother
Write to your aunt
Cuz you never know what
will happen
Could be two minutes and
they're gone.

Hang out with your friends
Make your mother proud
Cuz you don't know when
Their time could roll around.

Joke around with your uncle
Mow lawns with your dad
Cuz when that time comes
You can't imagine how sad.

So love that special person
Invest in them all your trust
Cuz someday it could happen
When they're lost in the dust.

Carpe Diem – 2012
39" x 29 ½", commercial, hand dyed and stamped fabric (cotton, linen, silk organza), embroidery stitching.
Photo by Etan Ben-Ami

Using Open Resources to Your Advantage: How to Effectively Incorporate OERs into College Assignments

Rhianna C. Rogers, Niagara Frontier Center

Introduction

There is much discussion about open educational resources (OERs) in current scholarship. Conferences, workshops, articles, Twitter feeds, blogs and on and offline debates have emerged across the academic community, both supporting and contending their use. With the drastic increase in scholarly dialogue on this topic, there is no question that OERs have had an influence on modern academics and the resources we use.[1] *But why are there so many faculty members still reluctant to implement them in their own work?*

We know from tentative data collections that many faculty members are concerned about (and may even fear) implementing OERs due to concerns over copyright and licensing, quality, sustainability, and lack of support and funding from deans and administrators in their respective institutions (Anyangwe, 2011; Richter & Ehlers, 2010; D'Antoni, 2008; Downes, 2007; Hylén, 2006; Creelman, 2012). We also know there is growing concern about the perceived workload constraints around the use, development and implementation of OERs and how these resources may move academia even further away from traditional brick-and-mortar classroom teaching (Stacey, 2012). In light of so many uncertainties, how do we, as faculty, successfully and effectively use OERs to enhance our courses without undermining our own teaching styles and academic expertise?

The easiest answer is through our own OER vetting processes and assessment techniques; however, there are many tools, blogs and articles out there that can help us through this evaluative process. My hope, in this essay, is to contribute to this ongoing discussion by providing readers with a few examples for how to: 1) use and reuse existing OERs, 2) effectively implement them into current teaching models and 3) assess their effectiveness and sustainability in course assignments. While it is too much to hope that all of those reading these words will embrace the OER phenomenon, it is my hope that the reader will recognize the usefulness of these resources in our modern academic community and see their viability in our progressively globalized and digital college environment.

What are OERs?

The term OER, like any theoretically-based subject, has many definitions and is always changing as new research and platforms emerge. OER was originally "adopted at a UNESCO meeting in 2002 (co-sponsored by the Hewlett Foundation) to refer to the open provision of educational resources, enabled by information and communication technologies, for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes" (D'Antoni, 2008, p. 7). In essence, UNESCO defined OERs as educational, publically accessible resources that can be used within nonprofit educational settings. As we know, many for-profit companies have joined the OER movement (e.g., Moodle), which has led to the modification of this definition. As of yet, there seems to be no consensus for a universal OER definition, yet scholars have agreed that there are some general tenets associated with this movement. As Johnstone (2005) stated:

By 2004 OER was defined to include:

- Learning resources-courseware, content modules, learning objects, learner-support and assessment tools, online learning communities

Rhianna C. Rogers

Resources that support teachers-tools for teachers and support materials to enable them to create, adapt, and use OER, as well as training materials for teachings and other teaching tools

- Resources to assure the quality of education and educational practices. (World Interest section, para. 3)

This is consistent with the Hewlett Foundation (2007) definition, which defines OERs as:

> teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge. (p. 4)

Although all of these definitions are valid in their own right, OERs can be best defined as education tools that have quality academic and/or professional content, which may be located online or offline, are free or fee-based, and are usable and reusable. They can be shared, come in many different languages and should be widely accessible by broad audiences.

Why Do Academics Say They Don't Use OERs?

Over the past three years, I have been very involved in the OER movement and although I have found many people interested in their use, very few of my colleagues have incorporated them into their day-to-day mentoring work. So, why are faculty so reluctant to incorporate OERs? In a survey conducted by Hylén (2006), he recounted that:

> When [193 survey respondents from 49 different countries across the world were] asked to value nine possible barriers for involving other colleagues [in OER usage], the most significant barriers were said to be lack of time, followed by the lack of a reward system to encourage staff members to devote time and energy to producing open content, and lack of skills. The lack of a business model for open content initiatives was also perceived as an important factor with negative impact. The least significant barriers were said to be lack of access to computers and other kinds of hardware, and lack of software. (Users and Producers of OER section, para. 9)
>
> To sum up, the typical OER user seems to be a well-educated self-learner, likely to live in North America, or a faculty member … working with some support from the institution management. Most of them also seem to be involved in the exchange of resources with other institutions. (Users and Producers of OER section, para. 11)

Scholars Alastair Creelman (2012) and Eliza Anyangwe (2011) have expanded on these concerns by stating that academics also fear perceived increases in workload requirements, issues with sustainability, the exclusion of OER work in tenure and reappointment reviews, and a potential breaking away from academic tradition (i.e., my course and class should contain my materials). Some respondents felt that when information was taken from the Internet and global resources, they often lacked a frame of reference for determining the quality of information accessed and its original academic purpose. Thus, it appears the largest factor preventing the use of OERs is fear. Academics are happy to share their information in the form of publications and presentations, but fear the implementation and use of potentially unvetted resources they find on and offline (D'Antoni, 2008). How do we move past these fears? Paul Stacey (2012) offered some convincing benefits of using OERs, which I have included below:

> OERs:
>
> - increase access to education
> - provide students with an opportunity to assess and plan their education choices
> - showcase an institution's intellectual outputs, promote its profile, and attract students
> - convert students exploring options into fee paying enrollments
> - accelerate learning by providing educational resources for just-in-time, direct, informal use by both students and self-directed learners
> - add value to knowledge production
> - reduce faculty preparation time
> - generate cost savings – (this case has been particularly substantiated for open textbooks)
> - enhance quality
> - generate innovation through collaboration. (para. 10)

This is not to say that these fears are unwarranted. I too believe that if the OER movement is to take hold globally, that a more standardized quality assurance model must be created to ensure the academic integrity of the resources used in college settings. Some institutions and organizations are already working toward developing their own quality assurance models and rubrics (e.g., MIT and Achieve.org). Yet despite these perceived issues, I believe the positive impacts of OERs outweigh the negatives. We can truly see this when discussing how academics are currently using OERs.

How Academics are Already Using OERs

Some of the most common questions I get from colleagues include "Are OERs just another fad in academia?" "Are they really helpful?" and "Will OERs prevent me from teaching with my own expertise?" I would argue that the answer is "no" to all three. Although the term OER is new, scholars have been using and sharing educational resources for a long time. As academics, we have been trained to vet information, based on our particular school of thought, academic training and educational philosophies while, at the same time, presenting said information to a potentially less informed audience (i.e., students). Keeping this frame in mind, vetting OERs is then no different than vetting a printed text or resource. We tend to forget that our indoctrination into higher education required us to adopt, assimilate, reuse and modify scholarship and our own course readings from our college experiences and adapt them to our personal teaching tool kits (e.g., the reuse of worksheets, lectures, videos, documentaries, movies from previous classes into other course offerings). I can remember a number of instances where my graduate school professors gave me sample assignments, presentations, teaching strategies and PowerPoint slides to use, reuse, modify and adopt in my courses. In my view, the digital age and modern technology have just expanded on this trend by providing us with us with access to globalized digitized and non-digital resources, (e.g., library digital and non-digital collections, academic repositories, YouTube and Vimeo videos and free and fee-based academic software). Thus, I would argue, as others in the OER movement already have, that most of us are already engaged in the OER movement. To clarify this point, I would like to use the iceberg analogy presented in White & Manton's 2011 report for The University of Oxford (see Figure 1, next page). This report uses an iceberg analogy of visible and invisible use of OERs to describe the visible and invisible use of OERs in academia.

Thus, while many scholars consider the use of OERs as a new phenomenon, I would argue that the majority of us have been using open educational resources all along. However, we have been using them under the auspices of other titles, like academic research, course resource collection and development, and collegial collaboration and sharing. So, are OERs helpful? The only logical answer would be yes! However, are there issues with the current ways in which OERs are being used? The answer is yes, as well. As academic blogger, Amber Thomas (2011), reaffirmed:

> The general consensus amongst people … is that reuse of web-based resources does happen, all the time, *but it is usually private,* mostly *invisible to the providers and often not strictly legal.* So there is above waterline use and below the waterline use. (Visible and Invisible Use section, para. 2)

So, how do we appropriately use OERs, making sure to give credit where credit is due, and maintain our own academic creativity in your class assignments? Below, I provide a few suggestions and examples for doing so.

Strategies to Effectively Implement OERs: A Few Practical Examples

As mentioned earlier, the rapidly growing number of accessible resources and associated repositories makes the issue of how to find, effectively use and assess OERs a critical point in the implementation process. Though we all have expertise in particular disciplines, how can we truly know if the OER we find and/or build is of quality? This is a common question and scholars need not feel alone. Here are a few strategies I would suggest:

1. **Join existing OER communities:** There are ways in which you can join online communities as an individual, as part of a peer academic group, as part of an organization or as part of your institution. Joining existing communities provides further access to OERs as well as additional opportunities for larger discussions about quality and reuse of said resources. Personally, I use MIT OpenCourseWare (http://ocw.mit.edu), the National Repository of Online Courses (http://www.montereyinstitute.org/nroc/) and Open Culture (http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses) to keep up with the latest OERs. I also monitor OER Commons (http://www.oercommons.org/oer) and the OER Foundation (http://wikieducator.org/WikiEducator:OER_Foundation/FAQs/OER_Foundation/#Who_manages_the_operations_of_the_OER_Foundation.3F) to find out what new and interesting projects are coming out nationally and internationally. In addition, I follow a number of blogs related to the subject (many of which are listed in the references below). In addition to these suggestions, I would strongly encourage you to speak with some colleagues working in the field, in and out of your own college or university setting. You might be surprised to see how much support people working in this community are willing to offer!
2. **Understand the reason(s) behind the development of OERs:** Each OER has an author and a reason for its creation. If you are creating the OER yourself, you can develop it to meet your specific needs. However, if the OER is not your own, you need to make sure you understand the original author's intent and its original purpose was so that you can use or modify it to meet your course needs and objectives. Avoid implementing an OER without vetting it first! I have used this as a rule of thumb for my own assignment development. For example, in the spring of 2013, as part of the Innovative Instruction Technology Grant (IITG) project on a Virtual Term Abroad, submitted by SUNY Empire State College colleagues Lorette Calix and Patrice Torcivia, ESC International Programs mentor John DeLuca and I created an immigration assignment based on a OER blog assignment developed by Irina Gendelman and Nathalie Kuroiwa-Lewis of St. Martin's University. Once developed, students from my U.S.-based online course First Peoples of North America and John DeLuca's Panama and Dominican Republic-based online course American Immigration: A Love/Hate Relationship were asked to use this OER in their course and evaluate its effectiveness (for full assignment, see Rogers, DeLuca, Calix, & Torcivia, 2013). The tentative feedback received indicates that it was a successful venture for both students and faculty alike (a full report of Calix and Torcivia's project is still pending). Based on the success of this OER in this course, I was able to reuse the information collected on this blog in a number of my other courses, including in an independent study with one my a graduate students, in an online Digital Anthropology course and in a traditional classroom discussion (for full assignments, see Rogers, 2013; Brust & Rogers, 2013). As this example illustrates, when you understand the purpose and tailor the OER to your own needs, you increase your chances of reusing it in different settings, thus, decreasing assignment development workload issues rather than increasing them.
3. **Develop or adopt OER assessment tools:** As I mentioned before, there does not currently exist a universal equality assurance model for OERs. However,

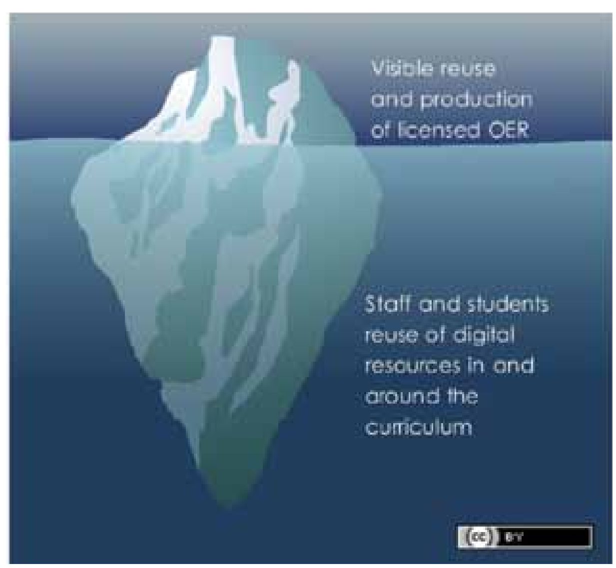


Figure 1: Visible and Invisible OERs (White & Manton, 2011, p. 5).

I believe that we, as academics, understand our own disciplines and can use academic judgment to vet most resources. However, if some find this task too daunting, there are a few organizations that have taken the lead in developing tools to evaluate OERs and have provided public access to their rubrics. For example, I have used both Achieve.org and Temoa to evaluate un-vetted OERs.

a. Achieve.org document *Rubrics for Evaluating Open Educational Resource (OER) Objects* http://www.achieve.org/files/AchieveOERRubrics.pdf

b. Temoa Info document *Rubrics for Evaluating Open Educational Resource (OER) Objects* http://www.temoa.info/sites/default/files/OER_Rubrics_0.pdf

4. **Don't be afraid to reuse quality OERs and OER assessment tools already out there:** There are many websites that list quality OERs created internationally by credible academics (OpenCulture.com, listed earlier, is one of them). In addition to going online, I would always suggest talking with your local and global colleagues. You never know how your work may lead to the development of an OER. In academic year 2011-2012, I was asked by Empire State College to evaluate two general education courses to see if they met the State University of New York (SUNY) general education assessment requirements. During the process of this evaluation, I was exposed to the SUNY General Education Assessment Rubrics. Right away, I noted that many of the SUNY rubrics could be used and/or modified for use in individual course development and assignment creation. With this in mind, over the course of the next academic year, I began to modify SUNY rubrics to use in the assessment of course work, specifically when evaluating my project-based course assignments. Based on the success of this OER in my classes, I presented my findings in a talk titled "Strategies for Formative Assessment: Project-Based Learning Experiences" (for rubric, see Rogers, 2012). Since that presentation, I have reused the same OER for other project-based assignments in other courses and have disseminated it to students for grading purposes.

Strategies for Developing and Using Quality OERs: How Can I Learn to Do This on My Own?

Though the implementation of OERs may seem like a daunting task, I would argue that once you understand them, the use of OERs can actually make your work easier. When starting to develop or use your own OERs, it is important to understand a few things. First, the use of OERs is driven by constituency needs, whether they are from the vantage point of the general public, students, administration or faculty. As Thomas (2011) stated, the development of OERs is based on

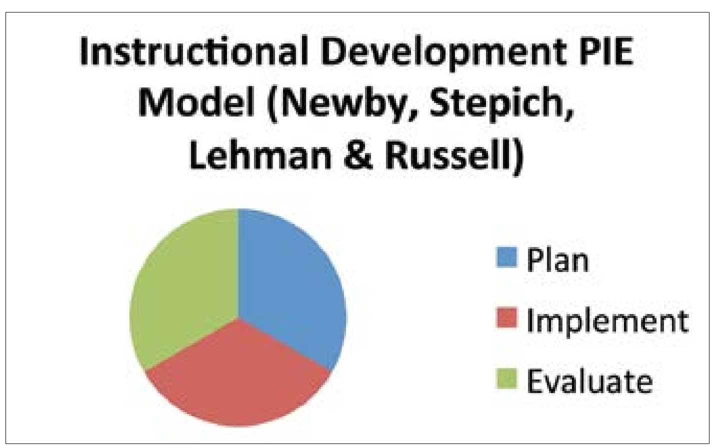
> [t]he pursuit of global knowledge [and] is not owned by universities. Wikipedia, Slideshare, YouTube, Twitter, Delicious have all seen a blossoming of thoughtful quality input from a huge range of sources. The role that academics play in this open content space is only one type of contribution. Learners contribute too. But so do millions who are outside of formal education. (The Role of the University section, para. 5)

Second, it is important to understand that OERs are culturally-based and reflect the interests and needs of the micro-communities developing them. As scholar Paul Albright (2006) stated:

> OERs are cultural as much as they are educational, in that they give users 'an insight into culture-specific methods and approaches to teaching and learning' – a practical exposure to the way that courses are 'done' in another country or by another instructor. (Language and Cultural Barriers section, para. 1)
>
> The conditions under which OERs are created, the languages used and the teaching methodologies employed result in products that are grounded in and specific to the culture and educational norms of their developers. (Language and Cultural Barriers section, para. 3)
>
> Localizing OER material is not only a question of language but also one of culture. It is important to be aware of cultural and pedagogical differences between the original context of use and the intended new use of the material. (Language and Cultural Barriers section, para. 5)

Third, OERs should reflect the course objectives and be tied to the assessment process in order to be effective. Without understanding their role in a course and how they enhance the learning taking place, OERs are useless. I have found that the best way to tie OERs to my course objectives and assessment tools is through the implementation of an instructional development model. Below, I provide a summary of the PIE model that I created and typically use when developing OERs (it is based on the model by Newby, Stepich, Lehman and Russell, 2000).

- STEP 1 (in blue) is to PLAN: Create an outline and/or lesson plan that incorporates the learner's knowledge, from basic to advanced.



Instructional Development PIE Model

- STEP 2 (in red) is to IMPLEMENT: Create an action plan so learners will understand when, where, what and how they will learn and what the objectives of the lesson plan are so they can anticipate what they will learn.
- STEP 3 (in green) is to EVALUATE: During and after the learning activity, evaluate how students performed and assess how effective the OER was in meeting your predetermined learning goals and objectives. This will allow for future improvements and/or enhancements in later courses.

A practical example of an effective assignment development model would the IRB Photosynth project conducted by ESC Faculty Instructional Technologist and part-time Niagara University faculty member Nathan Whitley-Grassi and I in academic year 2011-2012. As part of a joint collaboration between SUNY Empire State College and Niagara University, we applied aspects of the Conversation Analysis approach with the technology platform Microsoft Photosynth to observe the effectiveness of integrated technologies in project-based learning at the college level.

Students who took part in this pilot study developed Photosynth projects, individually and collectively, in order to communicate to external and internal audiences the importance of visualization during the analysis of material objects. The initial phase of this project included mini-lectures, the use of online Web software, digital cameras and collaborative learning. Students were asked to complete a survey as well as perform a written assignment about their experiences using the software. Participants were drawn from both traditional and nontraditional student populations. Differences in documented experiences were examined.

Tentative findings indicated that this platform successfully engaged students in project-based learning (for full details, see Rogers & Whitley-Grassi, 2012). Over the course of two terms, students in Forensic Anthropology at NU and students in Artifacts and Cultures of the Americas at ESC were asked to contribute to a digital artifact repository and comment on each students' posted Photosynths. In each of surveyed courses, we provided students with a copy of our Photosynth lesson plan, project objectives and goals, matrix-based and open-ended survey questions and some additional follow-up questions in the form of blogs and ANGEL-based discussion forums. Data collected indicated that students really enjoyed taking part in the development of a collaborative Photosynth OER at both institutions, giving the highest marks for effectiveness as a learning tool (Rogers & Whitley-Grassi, 2012). As this example illustrates, when you understand the purpose and utilize a sound instructional model, you increase your chances of enhancing your class experience and receiving positive feedback from students.

Here are some final suggestions that I want to highlight from this example:

- **Survey students to measure the effectiveness of your OERs:** Don't assume because you have implemented an OER that it has accomplished your course objective and improved the learning process. Though not specifically mentioned in this essay, I have tried many OERs that seemed like they were good options, but students did not respond well to them.
- **Implement OERs only if they are necessary and relevant to your course.** Sometimes adding something "flashy" to courses seems like a good idea, but ultimately turns out to be a distraction rather than an enhancement to the learning process.
- **Ask others for help:** As you should see by now, this comment is a reoccurring theme. When using OERs, you should never operate in a vacuum; collaboration is an important part of open learning. As Professor Phil Ker (2011) stated,

  > OER is the means by which education at all levels can be more accessible, more affordable and more efficient. … Using OER approaches, institutions can lower cost and save time required to produce high quality courses with untapped potential to diversify curriculum offerings especially for low enrolment courses in a cost-effective way. (An Open Education Message section, para. 2)
  >
  > OER is about sharing and collaboration and to this end we have much untapped potential. … I see this as a major challenge for teaching institutions today, that is, to encourage and facilitate our staff to work collaboratively, not only for the common good, but in their own long-term interests. (An Open Education Message section, para. 3)

Final Thoughts and Concluding Remarks

Although there is a growing number of OER initiatives, indicating their usefulness in academic and professional settings, many fundamental questions still remain. These include: 1) how to properly assess OERs; 2) how to evaluate OER work in faculty tenure and reappointment; 3) how academic fears can be quelled in light of unanswered questions about quality and copyright issues; 4) what type of funding will be allocated for OER projects; and 6) how OERs can remain sustainable in the years to come. Institutions, organizations, peer collaborators can work to support such efforts by encouraging the development of policies and assessment tools that encourage faculty (and students) to make their teaching and learning content more visible, sharable, portable and reusable (i.e., create OER incentives).

As discussed earlier in this paper, there is a number of established avenues in the OER movement that can be utilized to facilitate this sharing. My hope was to expose you, as a reader, to them, and provide you with practical strategies to incorporate OERs successfully into the creation of course assignments. I believe that the sharing of such information builds on the underlying principles of the OER movement. Sharing enhances existing OER communities and is one way to develop a more concrete educational paradigm for this research area. Developing and maintaining OER communities is essential to the success and development of quality OERs.

Furthermore, to truly be effective, OER communities should not develop in isolation; rather, my hope is that scholars work together collaboratively to expand this discussion and develop new ones with the purpose of advancing quality content. In its current nascent state, it is impossible to fully predict the purpose and significance of the OER movement in higher education and monitor where it is going. Nonetheless, it is our responsibility as academics, faculty and scholars to facilitate the spread of knowledge. It is my opinion that OERs can be one vehicle to help us do so. Their significance lies in the potential to raise the quality of teaching and learning in higher education and encourage a more collaborative and accessible environment for learners worldwide.

Note

[1] For example, world organizations, like UNESCO, consider OERs as a way to eliminate educational barriers in economically depressed regions and make learning more equitable across the globe (Hewlett Foundation, 2005; UNESCO, 2002); while institutions, like MIT and Rice (via Connexions), have invested large amounts of time and money to develop OER repositories to streamline resources for national and international use (Richter & Ehlers, 2010).

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The Interrelation Between Mathematical Logic, Math Education and its History

Gohar Marikyan, Metropolitan Center

Gohar Marikyan was the recipient of the 2012 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 21 March 2013.

I was born and raised in Armenia, whose history goes back for more than 5,000 years. In 1922, Armenia became one of the republics of the Soviet Union after losing 90 percent of its territory. I am the youngest of four children of a highly educated family. When I was 4 years old, I could easily add and subtract numbers up to 50. I was known in my neighborhood as an extraordinary wonder child. Later, at school, mathematics was too easy for me, although I had to struggle to learn history. For me, history was something that was uninteresting. Now I know why: what child could be interested in heavy-duty Soviet history rammed down one's young brain? When I graduated from my high school, there was a long discussion between my parents as to what was best for me to study. Parents in those days had a strong say when it came to similar decisions. Initially, my father wanted me to become a fashion designer. As an alternative, he decided that computer science would be a good career for me. Father was an authority figure. After several discussions with my dad, I became very interested in computers and I decided to pursue that career. Everyone, except my family, would tell me that mathematics and computers were not a female thing, not good for women. These people made me want to become good at both fields, just to prove the opposite: that there is no such thing as "not a female thing." Although I was very good in designing, in retrospect, I am very happy with my decision. People are capable of doing different things but should pursue the career that will bring the most out of them. You can always have a hobby to do other things you like.

To enter the university, one had to pass strenuous entrance exams, and from hundreds of candidates, only the best ones were accepted; literally, the cream of the crop. Wealth played no role; one had to earn the honor. From several hundred candidates, I was one of the top five. This is how I started my journey into the world of mathematics and computers. I have a research master's degree in computer science and a research Ph.D. degree in mathematics, mathematical logic. I am a certified Oracle database administrator, and I have worked as a programmer. I have a certificate of mathematics education. At the same time, I pursue other interests. I design and make replicas of Armenian national costumes based on research and historical documents. Recently I started writing and publishing short stories.

Gohar Marikyan

In Armenia, parents teach their kids arithmetic without any visual aids, and take pride in their 2-, 3- and 4-year-old children's calculating skills. "You have two apples. If I give you three more, how many apples would you have?" is a very common problem that very young children have to solve. The problem can be posed in an even more abstract manner, such as what is 2 plus 3. This teaching develops reasoning skills and respect for logical thinking in children. One day, I was with my niece and met a friend who asked her: "If you have three apples and I give you four more, how many apples would you have?" In response, my niece asked her: "Are your apples washed?" My friend didn't understand my niece's question because she didn't know my niece was told that she could eat fruits only after washing them under running water. Let's break down my 3-year-old niece's reasoning. The three apples that she had were for eating. Next, she had to figure out where to place the four apples from my friend. If those were washed then she had to add those four to her three apples. Otherwise, she had to separate the additional apples to be washed. This little story gives us some clues about my niece's thinking. I believe that children are born with a certain level of abstract thinking and reasoning skills that have to be further developed. One way to do so is through teaching them mathematics.

Math Anxiety and Two Main Aspects to Learning Mathematics

The existence of math anxiety among my students was very apparent to me from the first days I began to teach mathematics at Empire State College. In my observation, 55 percent of our students suffer from math anxiety, and only 36 percent like math. The rest were indifferent (Marikyan, 2009a). The high percentage of anxiety-ridden students indicates the seriousness of the problem, particularly with adult students whose last mathematics training was some years ago. By now, they may have forgotten everything. It also is possible that they had difficulties in mathematics in their high school years or even before. In either event, the problem requires serious attention.

My experience and knowledge in teaching and tutoring mathematics to a diverse population on the secondary school, undergraduate, and graduate levels led me to start research into the manner and ways mathematics is taught. As a result of my research, I devised a few strategies that have had positive impact on the math anxiety of our adult students, and have helped them learn mathematics easily and effectively (Marikyan, 2011b, 2009a).

There are two main aspects to learning mathematics: problem solving and the development of analytical thinking. These two aspects run parallel in the process of learning, contributing to each other, although with weak analytical thinking skills, a person will struggle to solve problems. Learning mathematics through understanding develops logical thinking, which, in turn, helps students to learn more complex topics of mathematics.

Learning from Mathematical Logic

In mathematical logic, by a system *S,* we mean a non-empty set, class or domain of objects among which certain relationships are established. The natural number sequence constitutes a system of the type *(D, 0, ')* where *D* is a set, *0* is a member of the set *D,* and *'* is a unary operation successor on a member of *D* (Kleene, 1971). In other words, *0* is a member of the set *D,* and the result of the operation *',* which is the same as adding *1,* a member of *D*. When the objects of the system are known only through the relationships of the system, the system is abstract (Kleene, 1971). We conclude that the sequence of natural numbers is abstract because it constitutes an abstract system. This makes sense because when we count, we do not specify what we count.

Through teaching children to count, we teach abstract thinking, but later on, visual aids are typically used in teaching arithmetic. The child has three plastic apples, receives four more plastic apples, puts them together, counts all the apples and gives the correct answer. Comparing this example with the case of my niece, we can conclude that the use of visual aids in teaching arithmetic to children stops development of their abstract thinking. As I have detected among my students, their difficulty in fully comprehending the notion of variables is evidence of weak abstract thinking skills.

Let us define a formal system that constitutes the formalization of number theory (or arithmetic), a branch of mathematics devoted primarily to the study of the integers. To set up a formal system means to define the following:

1. List of formal symbols is analogous structurally to the alphabet of a language.
2. Formal expressions are constructed finite sequences of formal symbols. These are analogous structurally to words of a language.
3. Terms are analogous to nouns in grammar. Formulas are analogous to sentences in grammar. The inductive definition of terms and formulas have the consequence that each term or formula can be built up from 0 and variables by application of defined steps.
4. Axioms or postulates are formulas that we assume to be true. These postulates consist of postulates of propositional calculus, postulates of predicate calculus, and postulates for number theory.
5. The set of formally provable formulas or formal theorems. (Kleene, 1971, pp. 69-85)

From the above inductive definition of the formal system that constitutes the formalization of number theory, we conclude that following the same construction steps in teaching will enforce learning mathematics and will develop students' mathematical thinking. Of course, these steps are somewhat used in currently used mathematics textbooks. However, there are very important details missing.

Let's go over the definition of formal systems and discuss the importance of each step, and the consequences of not learning them.

Variables and parentheses are the two most important formal symbols that I have observed as being weak loops in students' learning. Students have not learned the proper use of parentheses, and are having difficulties understanding the very notion of variables. This causes problems in constructing expressions using variables and parentheses, therefore, making it challenging to understand terms and to work with formulas. The net effect is students having trouble solving word problems.

Axioms and theorems are missing in the textbooks of introductory mathematics courses.

Learning from Anania Shirakatsi

Anania Shirakatsi was an Armenian 7th century mathematician. In his manuscript, *Tvabanutiun* (in English, arithmetic), he describes the methods he had developed for teaching arithmetic to beginners. This manuscript is the world's oldest extant manuscript on teaching arithmetic (Hewsen, 1968). Shirakatsi's methods have been successfully used over centuries in Armenia, and his love for mathematics and sciences has been passed down through generations. The net effect of this method is the acquisition of higher levels of arithmetical knowledge by children, setting a strong foundation for achievements in scientific and mathematical research in their adult years. Even though times have changed, his methodology continues to be as effective in the contemporary diverse classroom environment as it has been since the 7th century (Marikyan, 2011a). In his tables of addition, Shirakatsi used the unary operation *'* (successor) of the system of the type *(D, 0, ')*. His teaching also covers some of the postulates for number theory. Shirakatsi avoided teaching by rote and preferred teaching by understanding. I plan to continue my research on Shirakatsi's teaching methodology. There is always more to learn from the history.

My Methodology

I have developed a teaching methodology based on my research done on the teaching methodology of Anania Shirakatsi, and on my research in mathematical logic. I also have detected the weak loops in students' knowledge and address them by emphasizing their importance and discussing the common mistakes students make. My methodology allows students to strengthen their analytical thinking and reasoning skills without making them spend long hours on repetitious practice. In other words, students learn through understanding, not by rote.

Research on Martin-Löf's Intuitionistic Type Theory

My main research topic is in mathematical logic. It is devoted to Martin-Löf's Intuitionistic Type Theory (Martin-Löf, 1973, 1982). He presented his Type Theory to be used as a basis for a programming language. Later, there were a few tries in that direction without any positive outcome. I have researched Martin-Löf's Type Theory as a system for automation of problem-solving. Automation of problem solving is one of the important topics in artificial intelligence, a branch of computer science that uses computers to simulate human thinking. My results show that Martin-Löf's Type Theory is more valuable as a basis for automated problem solving than as a basis for a programming language (Marikyan, 2008).

To use a theory it is a requirement to prove its consistency. An intuitionistic theory is consistent if there is no such proposition that both the proposition and its negation are provable in the theory. I also have compared the complexity of inferences (deductions) in Martin-Löf's Small Type Theory, which is a formalization of arithmetic, with the complexity of inferences in other well-known formalizations of arithmetic. I have compared the complexity of inferences in Martin-Löf's Type Theory with the complexity of inferences in other, already researched systems such as the Hilbert-type Intuitionistic Formal System and the Gentzen-type Intuitionistic Formal System. For that, I have built a set of sequences of the Gentzen-Type System so that the complexities of their inferences depend on their length, while the reflection of these sequences in Martin-Löf's Type Theory are inferred by using just one inference rule. My overall conclusion is that inferences in Martin-Löf's Type Theory are definitely less complex than inferences in the other two well-known systems (Marikyan, 2009b).

I have ordered all terms of Martin-Löf's Type Theory, and I have shown that any two terms of Martin-Löf's Type Theory have a least upper bound, and a greatest lower bound; therefore, the set of all terms of Martin-Löf's Type Theory is a lattice. Moreover, I have proved that any subset of all terms of Martin-Löf's Type Theory has a least upper bound and a greatest lower bound in itself. That is, I have proved that the set of all terms of Martin-Löf's Type Theory is a full lattice.

Recursive functions have a central role in much of the research in computational mathematics. Recursion is a method of defining functions. It has been used for a long time in mathematics without being accurately defined until Rózsa Péter founded the Recursive Function Theory in 1932 (Péter, 1951). She defined a few types of recursive functions. The simplest and most widely used recursive scheme is primitive recursion. More complex types of recursive definitions are obtained when the recursion occurs simultaneously over several variables. Another type of recursion is recursion that is used to define several functions simultaneously. In the recurring recursion, the value at an arbitrary point is determined using the values of the same function at all preceding values. The functions constructed by these definitions are complex, and are widely used in physics and other areas of natural sciences. I have proved that different complex types of recursions can be defined in Martin-Löf's Type Theory. These results imply that the Type Theory can be used to calculate complex functions in sciences. Also, I have proved a few versions of fixed point theorems in Martin-Löf's Type Theory. I have not yet presented and published the last two results.

I have structured an "Inference Building System with Dialogue in Martin-Löf's Intuitionistic Type Theory" algorithm that automates the construction of an object of the type that represents the problem under question (Marikyan, 2006). Based on the algorithm, computer software can be created that automates problem-solving and automates computer program writing that solves problems. Cornell University has actually developed a few similar computer systems such as NuPRL, LEGO, Coq, Agda, ALF, Twelf and Epigram. The project was funded by the National Science Foundation. These applications of Martin-Löf's Type Theory are valuable, but more can be done. It is a powerful tool that can be used to solve more complex artificial intelligence problems.

Learning From My Research on Martin-Löf's Intuitionistic Type Theory

A problem defined in Martin-Löf's Type Theory "language" is a type. To solve the problem is the same as to construct an object of that type. Any problem has two parts: left-side type and right-side type. Both can be complex types. Assuming that the left-side type is true, we have to prove that the right-side type is true. Because the left-side type is a given, we assume that there exists an object of that type. First, using inference rules, we break down the left-side type and construct objects of less complex types. Using these objects, we construct an object of the right-side type. In one more step, we construct an object of the initial type that represents the problem under question. Needless to say, the algorithm does the breaking down and the construction intelligently. This algorithm with dialogue raises fixed-point type problems.

On the basis of my algorithm, I have created a methodology of teaching how to solve word problems. My methodology follows exactly the algorithm to break down the left part, that is, what is given, and then constructs the right part, what is required to prove. Math textbooks provide steps for each problem, often without any explanation. Therefore, students do not

Fuzzy logic has been extended to handle the concept of partial truth, where the truth value may range between completely true and completely false; that is, everything is true to some extent.

connect the steps with the problem, and do not try to understand the steps, that is, the logic behind the calculations they perform. I teach my students how to devise steps. Sometimes steps devised by students are more effective than those provided in the textbook.

My Research Plans

Fuzzy logic has been extended to handle the concept of partial truth, where the truth value may range between completely true and completely false; that is, everything is true to some extent. Applications of fuzzy logic range from pattern recognition to intelligent control, in areas such as robotics and intelligent machines, 3-D animation system, banking and loans, etc.

There were some attempts to generalize the type theory developed by A. Church and L. Henkin to a fuzzy one. To my knowledge, there were no attempts to generalize Martin-Löf Type Theory, which is more complex and powerful than the above mentioned type theory. While fuzzy logic has wide range of applications, applications of fuzzy type theory are not yet explored.

I plan to conduct research on the possibilities and methods of generalizing Per Martin-Löf's Type Theory to a fuzzy type theory. Considering the wide range of applications of Martin-Löf Type Theory and fuzzy logic, it will be interesting to explore the possible applications of the fuzzy Martin-Löf Type Theory. The topic of this project is original research, and its successful completion, that is, construction of a fuzzy Martin-Löf Type Theory, will have both scientific value and will open new avenues of applications.

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Mentoring in Haiti

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Introduction

Haiti was not foreign: I was. Teaching in a Haitian college plunged me willy-nilly into a mentoring situation requiring that I learn intensely and inquisitively while simultaneously functioning as mentor. Reflecting on those experiences now, I understand that teaching always entails being a foreigner in unfamiliar territory, meeting people you do not know, whose knowledge you do not have, and who do not know you or your knowledge. The territory is what tourism anthropologist, Dean MacCannell (1992), called "empty meeting grounds." These are the conceptual and physical localities, peculiar to the emerging global "community," where travelers, aid workers, researchers, immigrants and entrepreneurs encounter one another. With MacCannell, I agree that, as distinct from what others have assumed, the territory is never truly "empty." I discovered more clearly in retrospect that it is a dynamic ground capable of extensions and contractions. It is ground stuffed for potential creation. From a background of doctoral studies with J.J. Gibson (1966, 1979) in ecological approaches to perception and learning, I understood this meeting ground to be a particular set of ecological conditions and affordances for behavior – an ecosystem.

Social and cultural differences are always in play during mentoring. Mentor and student arrive at the meeting ground ecosystem as strangers to one another and to the novel territory. A mentor has knowledge and skills that the student wishes to acquire, an admired prestige and status in the larger social order, and is in at least a minor, sometimes major, "gatekeeper" position. A student wishes to enter a larger landscape/cityscape (ecosystem) of knowledge and opportunity. Usually, student and mentor are of a different generation, geography, social, economic, ethnic, religious or language milieu. At Empire State College, we knew that and acted upon it to some extent, but it was only when working in a situation of so many differences that I arrived at a fuller and more nuanced recognition of what such differences may entail for the collaboration of mentor and student.

This instruction from my Haitian students continues to assist me. Now when I am invited to lead a session for students in the 17-21 age range at some university, I pay attention to realizing that although they, like I, may be middle-class graduates of "good" secondary schools and predominantly from "white" families whose forbearers arrived in the U.S. several generations ago, their experiences and culture (including forms of English language and preferred modes of communication) are sharply different from mine. I continue to be grateful to my Haitian students for providing context and instruction concerning this delicate complexity and the requirement to be attentive. The essay to follow considers five aspects of this much richer experience: ambient environment; available resources; languages; religions; and instructional/learning styles. But first, a description of the meeting ground.

The Ecosystem and Desiderata

When I went from cold Ithaca, New York to tropical Cap-Haïtien in north Haiti to teach in a newly-founded college of education, I was immediately aware of a truth my colleagues in Haitian studies had been lamenting for some time: Haiti retains a 19th century French style of education in content, methods, teacher-student relationships and language of instruction despite the 1804 declaration of independence from France. The language of reading materials and of the instructors in elite schools followed *Académie Française* rules from the late 19th century. The home language of students was Haitian Kreyòl, even among those truly fluent in French.

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LeGrace Benson

At this college situated across the quay from the Atlantic Ocean, connecting Cap-Haïtien since the 15th century to Europe and Africa and now the entire world, the education faculty dean wished to move away from the locally constricting old model. She wanted professors of all disciplines to teach content and also to overtly model teaching and learning. The plan was to go beyond the established rigidity of the master on the podium intoning sentences to be memorized; to move away from expecting rote learning test responses, repeated by students who, in at least some cases, had little comprehension in their home language of the implications of their painfully acquired, painfully written sentences. She was intent upon seeing that the new teachers would graduate with their knowledge of educational practice embedded in a more inclusive system of science, math and humanities. She wanted faculty to increase students' knowledge of their own country and to connect Haiti to history and to the rest of the world. Empire State College concepts and practices that I had learned from my work first as an associate dean at the Northeast Center, then as mentor and coordinator of arts, humanities and communications at the Center for Distance Learning, were a leitmotif in our discussion.

The students were all at least in their mid-20s, some in their early 30s. Many already had been teaching in small town and rural schools where nominal requirements for certification could not be met in the local population. (The well-educated rarely desired to move away from resources and daily amenities concentrated in Port-au-Prince.) Each year, students in my classes included Roman Catholic sisters and postulants, Protestant pastors, secretaries, journalists, airline personnel, agronomists, and a range of young men and women who, at Empire State College, could have been successfully evaluated for their learning from work experience and independent study. Credit by evaluation was out of the question, but prior knowledge was respected and drawn upon.

Faculty, over half of them volunteers from North American colleges, brought in their own supplies, including texts. A piece of chalk was a treasure fished out of the professorial pocket at the start of class and returned to it at the end. The three-story building was new, but blackboards and furniture were recycles. Fortunately, there was a library open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to noon and 1 - 5 p.m., hours when students who had jobs were least able use it, though in practice they managed, especially on days when volunteer faculty sat in at the nominally closed noon break. The schools these women and men knew from personal experience and would go to teach in upon graduation did not even have these meager amenities.

The major resource in this meeting ground was people and their collective history. Despite extenuating conditions, the students were remarkable in their determination, resourcefulness, focus, phenomenal memory skills and motivation. I wish there were time to tell their inspiring stories. They lived in an historical and geographical treasure trove of local culture and historical international connections to be drawn upon as soon as these could be re-valorized. Students all had instructional skills garnered from daily life where it is necessary to know how and know what; sharply-honed observation skills instrumentally oriented to sufficing daily needs; tacit knowledge of how to put together a team and get things done from local and African traditions of lakou and konbit. *(Lakou* is the social and physical, genetic and fictive kinship space where extended families live. *Konbit* is the bringing together of a team of folks to plant or harvest a crop, build a house or place of worship. Some historians claim these arrangements were significant in the success of the Revolution.) Drawing upon these familiar modes, they ably formed research and study teams – *"équipe"* – and planned the work they would do together.

The only problem was that of grading. I knew how to evaluate their work individually as well as in the team, but they were worried that some less energetic or apt member would "bring down" the other grades. They had not paid attention in their former educational settings to the phenomenon of teamwork enhancing all achievements. It took a few conversations, mostly in Kreyòl outside class time, to be reassuring, but meanwhile, the équipes were busily conducting their researches and documentations.

Over a period of four years, I joined permanent and volunteer faculty for the winter term of 2001, spring term of 2002 and summer term of 2004 to teach History of Art. In the summer term of 2004, I also taught English as a Second Language (ESL). For both subjects, there were two hour classroom sessions at 7 each morning or at 5 in the evening, three times a week. In the art sessions, we had presentations of images when the electricity was working, short lectures and discussions, with some time on most days for short break-out sessions in which each équipe would either collate results from fieldwork or discuss recent lecture or library information. Fieldwork followed examples set by the Foxfire project in Appalachian Georgia: In our case, students were to search for local artists and craftspeople, interview them, and with their permission, document the art with one-time use cameras I'd brought in as part of our learning materials. Doing such a project was to include active engagement in a process they could repeat in their own schools, at least as interviews if not with photographs. I taught the ESL sessions mostly in the target language, but also had that cohort of students break into équipes for conversations and problem-solving in class and for research into local stories, songs and recipes. Very often, local research had interesting, unanticipated consequences.

The Haitian college during that period was formally joined with an accredited college in the United States. When that college could not continue the arrangement, an equally accredited college from Québec accepted and continued support. The accreditation contracts enabled students to transfer credits or be accepted into advanced degree programs in the U.S. and Canada. (A few years later, I encountered one of my former students at Brown University where he was successfully pursuing a master's degree. A lovely surprise.)

Five Major Conditions and Consequences of the Educational Ecosystem

Ambient environment

The geography and climate of our studies was densely populated Cap-Haïtien port, situated in a valley between mountain chains. The city has an indifferent water system, intermittent electricity and a history of hurricanes, floods, droughts and earthquakes. Its soundscape of general clamor and the racket of passing trucks with bad motors impinged on the classroom. Deforestation left only 3 percent of the original rain forest, but there are places where indigenous flora and fauna still thrive. Hectares of cane, plantains and maize, and orchards of fruit and nut trees stretch across the flood plain. Visible from most places in the district is the great looming Citadel surmounting Laferrière, a favorite subject of the Capoise history painters.

Landscapes are an important, recurring subject in the history of painting, but these students were not accustomed to viewing the city and countryside in which they live as subjects to be enjoyed as beautiful panoramas. In art history, the woods are beauty to be represented. For these students, woods are a source of food, fuel and danger. American artist Frederick Church would have loved to paint the splendid waterfalls that for some of these students is a sacred cascade, and for all a source of scarce water. Some scholars have compared their locality with China's as seen in Taoist and Buddhist paintings. My students' relationship to place was not contemplative but understandably instrumental and oriented toward quotidian necessities and vicissitudes. The lakou and village is location of family, extended family, general human resources, social and physical shelter; sale and exchange of goods and services rather than a subject for a charming genre canvas. Yet, I saw painted exterior house decorations imbued with special meaning in every village and learned that considerations of beauty and lyrical communication are part of daily life. What students learned, I hope, had something to do with historic attitudes toward land, but more importantly, with an increased awareness of their own local ecosystem. I believe they learned some ways to convey this to the children they would teach. I introduced some effective ways to do this from Haitian colleague Florence Sergile, an agronomist and natural resources specialist (personal communication, February 2002). Happily, the teams discovered: local landscape artists; that there was a local tradition of such works; and that the landscape and village paintings were prized in the international art market. This new knowledge had the effect of revalorizing their locality, their family and neighbors and their material culture.

Resources

Available resources included scarce time, funds, money, classroom and institutional amenities, community facilities and abundant people. Always in the near background were scarce health care, food, water, housing and the scrabble to get them. All students had jobs, adding early morning or evening classes to a long day. Transportation for some meant an hour each way in old vehicles over bad roads. Many had no food that day and in general were undernourished. There was stress from several sources, including dicey political demonstrations. Most, along with a major portion of the general population, had insufficient sleep. (In many lakou, people sleep in shifts.) Despite all these impediments, the équipes vigorously pursued their field study, scrounging video cameras, microphones, and even lights and battery packs to take out on their searches for local artists and craftspeople. The little one-time use cameras I'd brought for visual documentation were almost footnotes. On the other hand, many students had never owned or used a camera, so instruction was arranged. Once I brought a skilled local photographer in to teach them a bit about taking pictures and something about the history and appreciation of photography. He enchanted them, and for some, opened doors on new possibilities.

Languages

Everyone's home language was Kreyòl. The language of all instruction in the college was French. *Kreyòl pale, Franse pweferé.* My challenge was to teach in French except in the ESL course, then switch to Kreyòl when students conversed with me after class. In the history of the world, acquisition of the language of those with power and prestige is thought to bring prestige if not power to those who learn it: a kind of sympathetic performance magic. In a village school run by missionaries from the U.S., I asked some children on the playground, "Do you speak English?" They replied deferentially, "Yes, ma'am. We speak English." "Parlez-vous français?" "Oui, Madame. Nous parlons français." "Eske ou pale Kreyòl?" *"Non, non, madamn, nou pa pale Kreyòl pa de tou,"* came the fluent and intense Kreyòl denial. In one art history class, an assignment for the équipes was to use a stack of photocopies of paintings of historic events and heroes by internationally famous Cap-Haïtien "School of History" painters as illustrations for short books they would write for primary school children. I suggested they do the texts in Kreyòl. Totally unacceptable. They insisted the text *must* be in French. "We do not want to teach the children in an uneducated language." This position flies in the face of what most educators now agree is the best strategy. We made a bilingual compromise that term, but I am pleased to mention the "Matènwa Project" on La Gonave since the 1990s setting an example to all of Haiti.[1] In 2012-2013, distinguished MIT linguistics professor Michel DeGraff, a Haitian, is collaborating with Matènwa teachers, parents and youngsters to expand the project and support the translation into Kreyòl of math and science texts. In the ESL class, which was a second-level study, some were already pretty good with simple queries and directions. When it was necessary to explain something more complex, some accepted French but many needed a Kreyòl explanation. I discovered in both the History of Art and ESL classes that few students had strong French skills.

Religions

Religion in Haiti has intensity and visibility not usually experienced in most secular or even religious institutions in North America and Europe. From 1492 to today, passionate missionaries have brought their beliefs to those they believe "live in darkness." Roman Catholics came first. As recently as the late 20th century, over 80 percent of the population was at least nominally Catholic. The religious history of Haiti is intricate, but in general, it was only after 1915 with the U.S. occupation that Protestants began to have significant presence. By 2000, there had been periodic, often brutal attacks conducted by one or another Christian denomination against the others and all of them against Vodou, which , like Kreyol, is "spoken" by or assiduously unmentioned by a majority of Haitians (Ramsey, 2011). (This has increased since the earthquake of 2010.) Including Haitian art in my course necessitated talking about Vodou, a condition that was accepted by the devoutly Catholic dean. I presented the images as related to African heritage and Haitian history, and the religion as focused on healing and as deeply aware of the interlocking systems of the natural world. Diplomatic as I was, problems arose. That was no surprise for Vodou but reactions to Renaissance and Baroque Catholic images startled me.

The strongest objections to course content arose when I began to show the Haitian works. In my classes, all three times, there were students who sometimes asked to excuse themselves from any viewing or discussion of Vodou art or symbols. There was only one student who walked out of the class but several put their heads down and their fingers in their ears. All the Catholic sisters stayed alert and involved.

A frequent motif in Haitian painting is King Henry Christophe's *Citadel,* emblematic of Haiti. Each year, allegedly all the way back to the Holy Thursday months after the king's death, pilgrims from all over the nation climb the steep road to the summit and engage in a veritable stew of incompatible activities. There are Christian penitents, picnickers with music out for a good time, and in very recent years, a tourist production with a top Haitian band, dancing and the usual range of manifestations. At the same time, in a cave near the base of the hill there is one of the most important Vodou ceremonies of the ritual year, also represented in paintings. One student volunteered to do photo documentation. No one else would go with him. One student was going as a penitent, a process precluding attention to documentation. Others demurred because "there is Vodou in it," and others because it was "just for Catholics." Another year, I hoped someone would document the parallel feasts in nearby Plaine du Nord of Saint Jacque in the Roman Catholic Church and SenJak Ogu, where the African divinity ritually possesses some of the participants in the ritual. One student volunteered. When I had the film developed, there were 24 frames of a soccer game sponsored by the Pentecostals hoping to keep their young people fully engaged away from the two religions they believe "worship devils." I thanked the young man, who seemed surprised that I was not angry, assuring him that, although I was disappointed not to see more of what took place on that day, he had done the documentation assignment.

I was quite surprised to encounter problems with Christian images, but might have anticipated that. At Cornell, some students had demurred about learning the Old and New Testament stories in order to know what the paintings represented, viewing that as promulgating a religion. At Empire State College, a student became quite upset when asked to read a book explaining the Biblical iconography. She was a confirmed Catholic firmly instructed at her school that only priests, sisters and monks were allowed to read the Bible. In Haiti, two Baptists came to me after a long session devoted to the work of Raphael and Michelangelo to tell me quite respectfully, "We do not believe in the Virgin Mary." Based upon their former educational experiences, they feared that knowing about these paintings entailed a requirement that to pass exams they would thereby have to be "believers." I put them at ease, mentioning my undergraduate work at a Baptist college. I assured them that they should continue their own beliefs and only had to know that these artists had understood the world and their religion in another way. This exchange apparently quelled their worries to the extent that their contributions in class and in their writing became more relaxed. Similar relaxation occurred for a Seventh Day Adventist who could not take a midterm scheduled for a Friday evening. He came to me stiff with worry that he might fail the course if he honored his religious commitment. Remembering the principle of accommodation so crucial to the success of Empire State College students, of course, we arranged for him to take the obligatory exam at another time.

The ESL class generated the most unanticipated reactions to content. I had not imagined fervent religious beliefs would arise there. But this was Haiti where many hold faiths with exceptional fervor. Following the Foxfire model again, I thought it would be interesting to gather local lore and present it in English. Haitians have a rich heritage of storytelling, an infinity of songs, and family recipes for cooking and home remedies. Each person was to bring in a story, song or recipe in Kreyòl on one page with their English translation on the other. What came back was surprising. There were no family or community stories. There were no lyrics to songs. Recipes were all from French books they found somewhere, in some cases French translations of the *Betty Crocker Cookbook*. No home cooking or home remedies. We discussed this in class. They said the stories were fables unsuitable for them as adults. They wanted me to teach them the lyrics to current U.S. popular music instead of gathering their now unfashionable traditional songs. They attached no value to recipes for their plain cooking and limited ingredients from sparse larders. As for home remedies, we'd hit on a religious minefield. For some, any traditional home remedies were "Vodou" which they all (including those I guessed were devotees) set at disapproving distance. I did remind them that people everywhere have home remedies and that medical scientists are researching the botanical curatives of Haiti. I mentioned liking local foods for which I wished I had recipes. I should have made known the botanist's and medical researcher's studies and my desire to emulate local foods as introduction to the assignment. Such statements would have announced value of local knowledge to students diffident about bringing their own culture to the meeting ground.

The second surprise in my ESL class had once again to do with religion and was a serious issue in the not empty, highly-charged meeting ground. Haitians have the

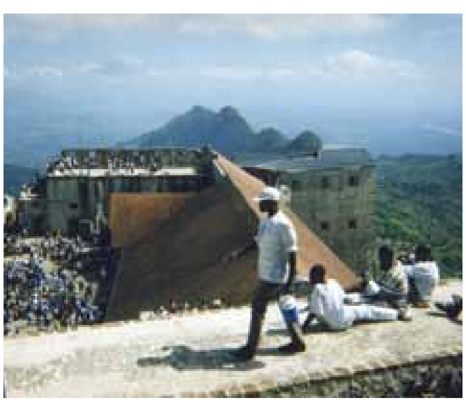
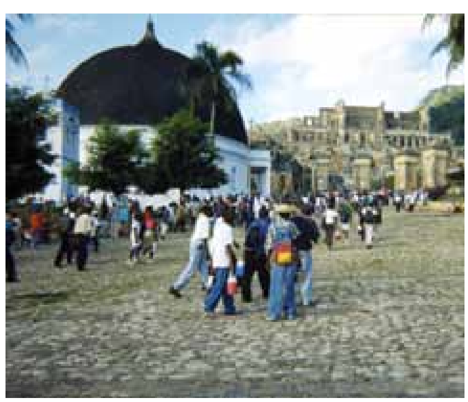


Photo on the left: Beyond Palais en route to Citadel looming at top, 2004. Photo in the middle: Image is taken from top ramparts of the Citadel fortress, 2004. Photo on the right: Crowd gathering in the parade ground inside the Citadel, 2004. Photos taken by students of *Equipe Toussaint* of College of Education, Regina Assumpta, Cap-Haïtien, Haiti heroes and events of their successful slave revolution as part of everyday knowledge. Thinking to draw upon this, I asked the teams to fashion very short answers to questions tourists to the area might ask about the several local monuments, commemorative statues and historical plaques. Shortly after they began this effort, there were several who objected to including any discussion of the revolution. Taken aback, I learned that for a significant number of students, the revolution is a "Satanic event" led by un-Christian slaves who did not honor their masters as the Bible directs. I had two recourses: one was to send them to the library where there were several fine, scholarly Haitian histories by Haitians in which no such recently-introduced stories appeared. The other was a wise, kind Haitian who was a Baptist pastor studying for his education degree. With his good knowledge of scripture, much of it memorized, he was able to build a bridge that I as foreigner would never have been able to put in place.

The stories are cautionary tales that may not have such dramatic effects in most North American colleges but are relevant to mentoring anywhere that people form exceptionally intense affiliations, including secular ones. I learned that in every meeting ground there is apt to be some form of spiritual and religious presence; that I might not recognize it even if attentive, and that mentors, too, even if agnostic, atheist or antithetical to religions, would be bringing such information into the new space.

Instructional Styles

Instructional styles from France carry high-value social cachet. Lightly prepared instructors use French approaches as a needed protection of position not only in the classroom but also in the wider local social milieu. "I don't know, let's see if we can find out" is intolerable to many. Added to that, the students were accustomed to learning by texts either read or heard and memorized. They had little or no experience using visual images as sources of information or focal point of open-ended discussion. In recent years, alternative methods have appeared in missionary schools and these range from those similar to the French methods, to Montessori with imported learning materials too expensive to replicate in Haitian schools; to methods found in the average public school in the U.S., to collaborative and other alternative methods from some public and many private U.S. schools. National guidelines for methods, materials and curricula exist but are seldom, if ever, applied. Many private individuals and congregations come to Haiti and set up schools, none subjected to any regulation or standard expectations. At this college dedicated to creating a better outlook for the children of Haiti, the administrators and faculty were devoted to setting and meeting high standards of curriculum development, educational psychology, teaching methods and materials and educational leadership appropriate to resources in Haiti while enabling students to meet international norms. In the process, they wished to give full honor and respect to the rich cultural heritage of Haiti.

An Aftermath and Conclusions

Such changes in philosophy, educational focus and language instruction deliberately ran counter to neo-colonial imposition of so-called improvements to "modernize" a supposedly lagging, ignorant population and its backward institutions. The achievement of educators like Florence Sergile – whose MacArthur grant supported the development of a curriculum, methods, materials and teacher training specifically oriented to environmental studies centering on the actual environment of the schools in Haiti – on understanding the teachers and their community of instruction, and to learn to make imaginative use of free and inexpensive materials locally available is little remarked in educational literature outside Haiti. The educational psychology taught by teachers from Europe and North America is based upon research conducted in populations whose social, economic and religious environments strongly differ from those in Haiti. This mismatch of information has some unfortunate consequences (Nicolas, DeSilva, & Donnelly, 2010).

The Catholic order supporting the college transferred the excellent dean to Peru to begin a college there with the same aims of respecting and embracing local culture, opening up the range of methods and materials and broadening the scope of the education of education professionals. A year later, the college experienced its change of accreditation relationship and the new regime instituted significant differences. Recognizing the schedule limitations of the students, they decided to delete the studies in literature, history and art history. Their judgment was that the liberal arts studies took up time that could be better spent on courses in theory of teaching; studies in educational management and administration; studies in tests and measurements; and studies in educational psychology, all created by North American and European scholars. They did offer art education, teaching how to use imported art materials using methods common in Canadian public schools, and music education courses using French traditional children's songs. In this country famous for its dance, dance was excluded, probably to the great relief of the increasing number of students who are learning to fear it as evil. The new college firmly decided English should be taught in French and done first as studies in grammar and composition with conversation to follow. Taken together, these decisions intensified the value of non-Haitian educational research over that of Haitians in Haiti and in Diaspora, intensified French as the social prestige language, and skirted any inclusion of local or national culture. Thus, social prestige held primacy over efficacy; the educator's professional knowledge over both local wisdom and national scholarship. Such strategy tacitly and overtly de-valorizes the student's native culture and nation, and thus, the student.

It is harder for me to see the shortcomings of my own work there, some part of which rested on my awkwardness in the two languages foreign to me. I would have been grateful for a critique by Haitian educators of my efforts. I did solicit and receive suggestions and insights from my colleagues, many of whom were either sisters or priests of the order or visiting professors, most of us living in the Reception Center for that order and having meals together. The conversations from that residency remain invaluable to me.

The local research students completed was likewise valuable not only to them, but as word quickly got around, to the larger communities where they were doing their research. Artists and craftspeople began showing up at my residence, and several of them were willing to visit the classes for lectures, demonstrations and conversations. One invited a class to the home of his famous artist father, by then deceased, showing us paintings still there, sheaves of drawings and an album of photographs. As a scholar of Haitian art, it was the best, most finely textured research I was ever able to do in Haiti. I have dedicated my forthcoming book to these students.

As for my education as a mentor, I learned what happened in practice in the novel meeting ground to the theories and methods I was trying to model and promulgate. The *équipes* were a strong success. We call it "team-learning" or "collaborative learning" here, and in Haiti it connected with a tradition of working together in the *lakou* and in *konbit*. The "new" methods joined comfortably with deep rooted African modes of imparting knowledge, wisdom and skill. In Haiti, these were powerfully reinforced under conditions of slavery and later of the U.S. occupation. The only thing "new" I contributed to that aspect of the process was to use it to study art history and ESL. Grading and evaluation had to be implemented in the modern style for practical reasons. Judgment and awarding of "credits" individually seems inescapable for the time being. This contrasts with traditional learning where "everybody knows" who did the most or the best or was good at enabling others. In societies where everyone does indeed know everyone else, this works, but if you have to prove yourself outside that circle, you need "a grade." The young man at Brown was accepted because he had "good grades" in our Haitian college.

By the third time I was there, a Haitian donor had seen that the college had a computer room with two banks of computers, desks and access to the Internet. He also had fitted a classroom with two computers, and a setting comfortable for students to study together. The old *konbit* had appropriate new technology, and students did not have to be instructed about how to use this new space. I observed the art history students using the CDs of art images as well as those by now well-worn paper prints, teaching each other something about the history of art. What was particularly interesting was their use of the images of Haitian art and sculpture. By now, the experience of the first year of art history students had spread out to the successive students, and they were at least acquainted with the fact that Cap-Haïtien had become a major center for Haitian art in the mid-20th century. The first group of students had thus truly accomplished a degree of valorization of locally created and internationally honored art. A second group had benefited from our having been able to arrange for a major Haitian art historian to come up from Port-au-Prince for a teaching visit. This intensified the valorization process, since he was a local "cousin."

What might be called "localization" of people, culture and material resources contrasts with completely externally generated concepts "appliquéd." The recognition of local resources valorizes local people, and by extension, individual students. This creates a receptiveness sturdily rooted in a learner's self-knowledge, incorporated organically into what is already present. In contrast, acquisition as an attachment may or may not become subsumed into the larger body (almost literally) of the learners panoply of knowledge. By learning, or in many cases simply paying attention to what had gone unattended until this new moment, students began a process of valorization of their own space, people and resources. This began to create recognition and convictions in the face of 500 years of tutelage from the seats of political, military and economic power that the culture of Spain was superior to that of the Taino, that of France superior to that of the African captives in Saint-Domingue colony and that of the United States superior to that of Haiti. With few of any of the equipment and books we take for granted in any U.S. classroom, I had to discover how to make creative use of local resources. I discovered that an effective learning environment is already and always present and just needs to be assessed and put to use.

The final consideration: "There are no foreign lands. It is the traveler only who is foreign." That message from a much travelled Scot, Robert Louis Stevenson, I unfold in two directions. The most obvious is that Haiti is not a foreign land. It is I who is the traveling foreigner arriving there. The second unfolds slowly: Where we are when we teach may be our home territory and the students are hopeful travelers, foreign, if not to the landscape or the cityscape, then to significant parts of the cultural-technological ambience residing there; residing in part with us, the mentors of that ambience. But there is another net of relationships – another territory – that begins to germinate. Yes, "germinate" since it is organic, metabolizing, creating something more that did not previously exist. The mentor and the student do not so much travel into this new living, breathing ecosystem as foreign tourists, though that is an aspect of the tour, as they are the mutual creators laboring together in a konbit that extends for each and both their own new found native lands with an infinity of accretions waiting on the horizon.

Note

1 For more on information the Matènwa Project, see http://matenwaclc.org/.

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"Time's Winged Chariot": Aporia and Mentoring the Older Student

Tom Akstens, Northeast Center

"But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near … "

– Andrew Marvell
"To His Coy Mistress" (c. 1652)

One of my most interesting students has offered to take me flying in his glider. He's a pilot of vast experience, a wonderful writer and a keen observer of life. Yes, it would be exhilarating to go. But I get vertigo even in an atrium elevator, and I have dire apprehensions about soaring, motorless, thousands of feet above the Adirondack foothills. My internal voice has already started to whine, "Get me down!"

Besides, my student and I are both at an age when – let's just say – things sometimes happen. My morbid imagination wonders, *What if I had to land the glider?* Surely it wouldn't end like one of those old movies in which somebody like Dana Andrews brings in a DC3 as the tower talks him down:

> "Just ease back on the stick a little, Buck … You're looking good. …"
>
> *"He's comin' in too fast Charlie! He's comin' in too fast!"*
>
> "Now back off the throttle … Just a bit. … Easy. Looking good. …"

In the old films, the hero lands the plane, downs a shot of whiskey and marries the stricken pilot's beautiful daughter. My own imaginings of the scene tend more toward a shredded fuselage.

So I'm ambivalent, and my ambivalence is amplified by the awareness that this opportunity might not come again. The ominous rumble of "time's winged chariot" has provoked my anxiety about some unlikely medical emergency; it also makes me want to seize a chance that I know is fleeting.

This is a classic instance of aporia – a contradiction, a paradox – but of a particular kind. My own sense is that, in aporia, the satisfaction of the paradox tends to *be* the persistence of the paradox itself. In his 1993 book, *Aporias,* Jacques Derrida considered aporia with specific reference to mortality. In his extended meditation on Heidegger's existential conceptualization of death, he turned aporia from what some thinkers had considered a superficially clever rhetorical posture (the detritus of Early Modern rhetoricians such as George Puttenham) into a full-blown philosophical flash point.

Still, to me, it's marvelous that Derrida's post-structuralist wranglings bring me no closer to embracing aporia – and certainly no closer to going up in that glider – than does Shakespeare's sonnet 73, "That time of year thou mayst in me behold …"

In this poem, Shakespeare's speaker addresses his younger lover, initially in a rich complex of images of loss and impending mortality: desiccated leaves clinging to sparse branches and rattling in the winter wind, and the branches themselves like "bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." Winter dominates the physical landscape of the poem – but not the emotional one. Looking the reality of death in the eye and encouraging his lover to do the same, the speaker discovers a paradoxical truth:

> This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
>
> To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

Shakespeare, who was very concerned with the speaking of truth, reveals truth here in the sustained paradox. The poem tells us that awareness of mortality doesn't dampen desire; it intensifies it.

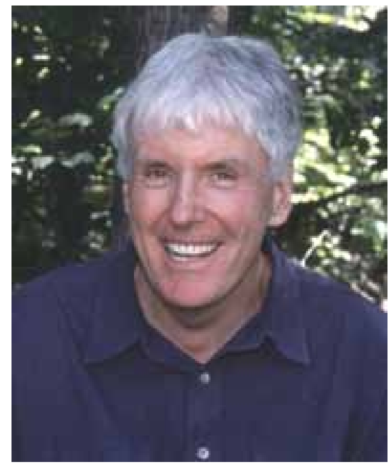

PHOTO CREDIT: SUSANNE MURTHA

Tom Akstens

I can't write about this without thinking of a student I had some 10 or 12 years past. She came to my office with a dream to be a librarian. She told me that from her grammar school years, she had always loved libraries and had wanted to live a life devoted to books. But she had married young, and unwisely, to a dairy farmer. He had "forbidden" her (her word) to take even one college course. His death, after five decades of marriage, had freed her to follow her calling. She told me she would soon turn 70.

She was a bright and dignified woman with both a dream and a burden of regret. Listening to her, I was sad in the knowledge that I would have to encourage her to examine her dream in the light of some very uncompromising temporal realities. I tried gently to temper her enthusiasm for a library career by pointing out that professional positions as a librarian generally require a master's degree in the field. I suggested she explore the American Library Association website, and some undergraduate and master's programs in library and information science. I postponed the inevitable discussion that all of that learning would take years – more years than she could realistically afford. It seemed very unfair that, by the standards of our society, she was out of time before she had even begun.

In our next meeting, she announced that she had adjusted her goals. "I did that research you asked. I've just got to be realistic about my life," she declared. "God knows, I haven't been to school for more than 50 years, and I could be nearly 80 by the time I'm done. Who's going to hire an 80-year-old librarian? I guess I can always volunteer at the library. But I want to switch to sociology. I'd like to study how and why society wastes people like me."

She had encountered aporia and had chosen another path, one with an authentic and personal purpose. I was flooded with respect for her perception and her flinty independence. But it still seemed very unfair.

It would be naïve to assume that the federal Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1967, or the many similar statutes in New York and nearby states, effectively protect or advance the interests of anyone in their 60s or 70s who has a recent bachelor's degree and wants to compete in the job marketplace. Age bias persists, and unspoken calculations of age are routinely made from appearance and personal history. The Urban Institute reported in 2009 that unemployment among seniors, age 65 or older, had reached a 31-year high (Johnson, 2009). By 2012, things had gotten worse: 55 percent of jobless seniors had been out of work for more than six months (Heavey, 2012). Clearly, something is going on in the job market for seniors, and it's not good.

As mentors, how do we find a point of balance between encouraging our more senior students and making them aware that, at least in terms of their professional and career goals, time may not be on their side? We do need to remember that our older students are experienced at life; they've known disappointment before and most of them are pragmatic about their goals for their education and their careers.

In my experience, we do best when we initiate our relationship with students by meeting them where they are, rather than where they would like to be – or where we would want or expect them to be. This is clearly true of factors such as their academic skills, their prior learning, their potential for self-directed work and the demands on their time. I have come to realize that it also is true of their stage of life.

For example, last week I enrolled a 22-year-old woman with no prior college credit. She has her own challenges, to be sure: she's a single parent of three, and she has very little confidence in her ability to do good academic work. Her path to her degree will be difficult, but time is actually on her side. She has several years and 128 credits to explore, examine, invent and redefine who she is and what she wants for herself and her children. With diligence, she may ultimately be able to establish herself in a rewarding career. If she were 62, her situation would be very different, as would the task of mentoring her.

Another student of mine is in his early 60s, and a writer with real potential. He has spoken to me several times about his goal to teach writing at the community college level. He's recently been accepted into several MFA programs. I'm rooting for him, but I'm troubled that he will likely be uncompetitive because of his age. I'm haunted by something I heard at an MLA session on the academic job market: "I'd encourage everyone who doesn't fit the newly-minted Ph.D. mold to persevere," one panelist encouraged us. "We had the most interesting candidate a few years ago … she was in her late 50s. Everyone on the committee loved her. And, you know, we *almost* hired her!" This degree of condescension and self-congratulation would be laughable, were it not so toxic to the efforts of an older candidate to get a fair shake.

With all this in mind, one day I said to my student, "You know, this isn't going to be easy. There's intense competition for whatever teaching jobs are out there."

"Well, I've thought about that," he replied, and shrugged. "I know that I may be completely unrealistic, and some 30-year-old might get the chance to teach – not me. But I have to try. This is that last shot I'll have."

The knowledge that his quest to teach might prove to be futile makes his desire for that goal all the more compelling. For him, the uncertainty – the paradox – is not just something to be known, or even to be endured. It energizes his sense of purpose. In his case, my best practice may be to affirm both his goal and its problematic outcome, to advocate his cause with a strong recommendation, and then to simply get out of the way of his gallant effort to come to terms with his own aporia.

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Poetry

Mindy Kronenberg, Long Island Center

Cruel Aesthetic

Don’t look at me that way
or I might become a fist.

Each dark glance tightens
my skin, my bones,

and my hair shoots out
like a petrified tail.

Don’t approach
this knotted, tufted loaf

of a soul, a silenced
wail braided and tucked

against the cruel
aesthetic; I know

that ugly comes
when you least expect it,

the eyes of the world
descending like raptors,

the shriek and dive
with talons or laughter,

my armor
tightly locked,

my heart
collapsed in terror.

Duet

The only sound as I lift this pen
is the disquieting hum of an evening storm
that rages behind the window,
all of its breath and frantic dance
trapped in a smoky diorama.
As curls of ink spill on the page
I hear your voice, and it
whispers, line by line, your
grief and laughter, my silence entwined
and unfurling like the wind, my breath
unfastened by the rain.

(from *The Body Altered,* Art & Poetry exhibit; Published in *Oberon Poetry Journal,* 2012)

Contrarian

If you say the sea rages with anguish,
I say it foams and unfurls with hunger.
If you say the moon howls in despair,
I say it sings an aria of longing.
If you say the heart is quarry in season,
I say the heart is bait for desire.
If you say our hands are servants to labor,
I say that they are the masters of pleasure.
If you say that eyes shut only in pain,
I say they close in the spell of passion.
If you say that words are tricksters,
imposters,
Then I say that silence is the greatest
scoundrel.

The Praxis of a Peer Coaching Program

Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein and Sarah Spence-Staulters, Northeast Center

"True teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross; then, having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create their own."

– Nikos Kazantzakis

(l-r) Sarah Spence-Staulters, Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein and Kate Stockton with the certification plaque from the National College Learning Center Association, May 2013.

The Official History

In the fall of 2006, SUNY Empire State College made a commitment to provide academic support resources and services to all students across the college. In January of 2007, the college hired eight directors of academic support to develop the much needed learning assistance programming at local and collegewide levels. The Northeast Center Office of Academic Support (NECOAS) serves students at its regional center in Latham and seven units located from the Capital District of Albany to Plattsburgh.

Initially, the "office" consisted of only a director of academic support (DAS) and no other resources or staff members to serve over 1,200 undergraduate students. Over the last 6 1/2 years, stemming from the institutional mission, center goals and student needs, the office has grown in terms of the scope of programs, services, resources and number of staff. Currently, we offer free workshops; credit and non-credit courses; print and online resources; and academic coaching and content area tutoring. The NEC academic support team has expanded to include two part-time professional learning coaches and now a growing number of student/alumni peer coaches.

The academic support staff works together as a collaborative team, striving to establish a friendly, welcoming learning environment for all students. The Peer Coaching Program[1] is the newest of several programs offered by the NECOAS.[2] The program was formally developed during the summer/fall of 2010 and launched in the spring of 2011. Since that time, the program has become an invaluable resource to students, staff and faculty, as it positively impacts the retention and success of Northeast Center students.

Peer coaches are alumni or current students (undergraduate or graduate) trained to guide and encourage other students in improving their academic performance and developing as lifelong learners. Peer coaches assist students by focusing on enhancing general study skills, tutoring in specific content areas, navigating through college resources and developing study strategies within their areas of study. Peer coaches work in both face to face and virtual environments. They are trained by the academic support staff following internationally recognized certification standards set forth by the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) for peer tutors. Peer coaches work as volunteers, work-study or practicum students.

The Real Beginnings – A Conversation and a Commitment

During the 2008-2009 academic year, while Sarah was finishing up her last terms for her bachelor's degree, we would regularly meet in Lisa's office so that Sarah could get assistance on papers or the occasional tip on reading or motivation. By that time in Sarah's academic career at Empire State College, our meetings were more "checking in" and friendly dialogue than focused on her needing any significant academic support. We had grown quite close over the years, starting with our first interaction at orientation when Sarah excitedly insisted that she was going to need help to get through her degree and absolutely needed to make an appointment with Lisa before the term even began. A few terms after that first encounter, toward the end of one of our long circuitous conversations, we got to talking about how it would be great if we could get students to connect with each other on academic issues in a wide range of disciplines. It was impossible for Lisa (who was then the only academic support person who individually met with students at the Northeast Center) to be able to cover all academic content in the individual appointments she conducted with students. Additionally, the college's online content tutoring service did not allow for voice or in-person communication that some students just need to feel connected.

The genesis of the program was this conversation surrounding Sarah's sense of not having the opportunity to connect with other students. For her degree, most of Sarah's studies were independent studies; she felt that the Empire State College experience could be very lonely for students. When she finally took a study group, she realized that this mode of study allowed students to intellectually and socially connect. Meeting with other students took away the pressure of meeting one-on-one with a mentor and created a connection with someone else who was not an expert in a particular content area. Sarah felt that sometimes the best way to understand confusing content is from another student and not the expert: "Another student walks in the same shoes as you."

Neither of us can remember how the conversation ultimately turned to the development of a Peer Coaching Program, but we both remember that we began to get excited about the notion of creating something for students run by students. We made a commitment that day to develop a program that would give students the opportunity to work with other students on content area learning. Lisa also told Sarah that if the funding came through, Sarah would be hired in the fall to become a learning coach and that we would create the program from the ground up.

From the very beginning, the Northeast Center Peer Coaching Program has been a labor of love for and by students. Sarah earned her bachelor's degree in June 2009 and by the beginning of September, she was working as a learning coach. Lisa had experience with peer tutoring programs from her previous work at other institutions and her knowledge of the field of academic support and learning assistance. We both agreed that the Northeast Center's program needed to start with the best practices in the field, but that it also needed to be firmly embraced by a pedagogy that embodies bell hook's (1994) assertion that "our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (p. 13).

Doing it Right and Well – Our Praxis

While the idea for the Northeast Center's Peer Coaching Program started because of our conversations while Sarah was a student, the result is not the product of a Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney spontaneous assertion of "let's put on a show." Rather, from the beginning, we wanted to do this right and do it well. We were not going to start the program until we had done our research, gathered appropriate resources and gotten administrative support. To cultivate the program from a conversational seed of an idea took a lot of work. We began by reading articles and looking at other peer tutoring programs, and Lisa's experience with the Peer Coaching Program she oversaw at the United States Military Academy instinctively pointed us to the CRLA's International Peer Tutoring Program Certification Program.[3] We knew that we wanted to create a program that adhered to tried and true standards of practice and that we wanted the program to be certified to meet those standards. We also knew that we had to take our nontraditional student population into account and that what we were going to create would meet not only the needs of adult students who might be seeking content area assistance, but also would be designed for those adult learners who might want to become a peer coach and help others.

Funding

We began with no stable/sustainable source of funding other than the potential of work-study monies to pay peer coaches (and then only if they qualified for financial aid). We had to make sure that there might be other ways to provide incentives and support those students who wanted to become a peer coach. Our dean, Gerry Lorentz, enthusiastically supported the program from conception to actualization by providing money for refreshments and the fee for certifying the program. We have subsequently been awarded student activity fee (SAF) funding to support the program and a commitment from our dean to fund the learning coach position that coordinates the program. Our current budget allows for any costs related to recertification of the program and monies to buy books and some other supplies for training. Currently, all of our peer coaches are working as volunteers. We strongly feel that recognizing the hard work that the peer coaches put in is important, so it is the least that we can do to provide food at the trainings and to hold an annual awards reception where the peer coaches are publically recognized for their selfless service and hard work. We felt that if you feed them and thank them, they will come/stay. Over the past few years, we have been proven correct in this assumption. We also know that having a certified program is something of interest to adult learners who understand the value of credentialing and standards of excellence. Most of our peer coaches said that they want to have the distinction of being a certified peer coach on their resume.

Objectives and Outcomes

The design of the program was intimately tied to the standards set forth in the certification guidelines. We needed to first determine the qualifications necessary to become a peer coach. In terms of some general qualities, we wanted to find students and alumni who are interested in helping others; have strong communication skills; are good at motivating others; and who might have an interest in the teaching field, life coaching, public speaking or workplace training. More formal qualification criteria focused on their status as an Empire State College alumni or as a current student who has completed at least one academic term and is in good academic standing with a grade of B or higher in the content area(s) in which they were going to work. Additionally, they could have no current "incompletes" and an overall grade point of 3.0 or better if they were going to focus on general study skills development.

As we worked on our certification packet, we had to think through modes of delivery as well as the outcomes and benefits for students participating in the program. We determined that peer coaches would provide both onsite and online academic coaching for undergraduate students in the following areas:

- enhancing general study skills
- tutoring in specific content areas
- navigating through college resources

- developing study strategies within their areas of study[4]

We then developed our outcomes and objectives for both the peer coaches themselves as well as for the students who would meet with the peer coaches. We aligned these with the college's values, vision and mission; center needs; and our own academic support vision and mission statements.[5] We decided that the outcomes and objectives for the students who seek assistance from a peer coach are that they will be able to:

- identify and manage their learning strengths and challenges
- incorporate traditional and technology-based resources in their learning
- use effective strategies in different learning engagements
- create positive learning environments for themselves
- increase their self-confidence while decreasing stress
- improve their academic performance and development as a lifelong learner.

For the peer coaches, it was a little harder to think through what we ultimately wanted the outcomes to be, but in the end we decided that the peer coaches will:

- gain invaluable work experience in the areas of training, coaching and assisting others in a rigorous academic learning environment
- gain experience and knowledge that will better themselves and the students they are assisting
- be evaluated by their peers so as to better evaluate their abilities and to grow as an educator and a professional
- improve their interpersonal communication skills
- develop their leadership qualities
- if participating as a practicum student, provide credits toward their degree completion
- if participating as a work-study student, provide supplementary income
- if participating as a volunteer, provide additional service that they can put on their resume

We are in a continual assessment cycle regarding how we are or are not meeting the objectives and outcomes. That ongoing process helps us focus on formative assessment practices as well as evaluation needs for the certification program; active reflection on what is and is not working; resourcing and return on investment in the program; and the impact of the program on student retention and academic success. Since the program is still relatively new, we are still gathering and analyzing the data we have from a demographic and quantifiable point of analysis, and we are adding qualitative feedback from not only students and peer coaches but also from mentors about the quality of academic work they are seeing from their students after they work with a peer coach. The results have been incredibly positive, and a follow-up essay about the impact of the program is being worked on in collaboration with a few of our faculty mentors.

Credentialing and Peer Coach Training

A lot of thought went into the activities and resources we created for the training program as well as the evaluation and record-keeping tools. We wanted to be flexible with the program, allowing for room to grow and learn from each other, the peer coaches and the profession. We also had to have a structure that met well-established standards in the field. The certification process was incredibly daunting. The paperwork, documentation and the 29 pages of directions nearly drove us crazy. In hindsight, the process was incredibly rewarding, but as we went through the nine months to put the certification application[6] together and the 10 months to wait for our certification to be granted, we realized that we had gone through the gestational period of an elephant or the final stages of Lisa's dissertation writing process.

In the end, our training program adheres to the CRLA's program certification guidelines for Level 1 certification, with each peer coach actively engaging in six hours of face to face training and an additional four hours of individually-structured training. The four hours of individualized training is based on each peer coach's needs and interests as determined by the peer coach coordinator and the peer coach. Once the peer coach has completed this individualized training, the peer coach coordinator reviews the training experience with the peer coach. As part of their training they also are required to have their first session supervised by the peer coach coordinator or another member of the academic support team. A peer coach is not certified until all of the training is completed and the peer coach has put in 25 hours of work with students. Currently, six of our peer coaches have received full certification with a few more who should earn their 25 hours of coaching work by the end of the fall term.

Current State of the Program

March 2012 marked the first anniversary of our training program. We've collected data on use and student and peer coach evaluations of sessions, and have performed some preliminary data analysis of the impact of peer coaching on grades and retention. We also have received informal and formal feedback from faculty members whose students have utilized peer coaches. From all of this initial research and data collection,

We wanted to be flexible with the program, allowing for room to grow and learn from each other, the peer coaches and the profession.

the program seems to be working well to support student learning and academic success. During the spring, summer and fall of 2011, the Peer Coaching Program grew at a consistent rate. We trained 10 new peer coaches. In addition to working individually with students on an as needed content tutoring basis and participating in student panels and academic support workshops, peer coaches became more and more connected with/embedded in the curriculum of Northeast Center study groups and residency studies. Peer coaches express their excitement about connecting with courses, as the experiences allow them to assist more students, and keep current in areas they, themselves, have previously studied.

In the upcoming academic year, we are going to continue with our embedded peer coach initiative, and have plans to expand and enhance the size and scope of the program. In the fall of 2012, we started to embed peer coaches in academic studies by a combination of formal and informal means. We piloted matching peer coaches with three instructors in study groups so peer coaches could work with students on their writing either within group sessions or in outside appointments. The in-class sessions took place in either small group or individual tutorial sessions when the instructor dedicated time for students to work on their writing. In the Critical Thinking study group, during one dedicated period, several peer coaches worked in small groups with two or three students on their final essay. Other instructors only utilized a dedicated peer coach assigned to their group where students made their own appointments with that coach outside of class time. In the study groups for history and introduction to college learning (titled Enhancing the Academic Eye), the peer coach came to class to be introduced to the students and to set up those appointments. This embedded peer coach initiative allowed our peer coaches to be actively involved with course instructors in ways that allowed for free-flowing conversations between the instructor and peer coach related to the curriculum and the specific challenges/needs of individual students. Each faculty member who was interested in participating worked with us to determine what level of integration and support he or she wanted from a peer coach. We wanted to roll this out slowly to determine the promising practices and potential pitfalls of the models, and not overstretch our limited resources.

Now, during the fall 2013 term, peer coach training has been expanded to include the use of an online conferencing program to conduct workshops on academic support topics as well as some of the Level 2 CRLA standards. Peer coaches also will continue to participate in the Northeast Center's extended orientation, "Pieces of Success" workshop series, by either presenting content or participating on a student panel. Additionally, we have a dedicated peer coach who runs study sessions between residency meetings for a Micro/Macro Economics residency course. The faculty member, Sarah and the peer coach (who had been the faculty member's mentee and is a 2013 graduate of the college) met before the term began to talk about the students' need for more contact time between the residency meetings. At the beginning of the term, the faculty member advertised the sessions with the peer coach, and he is now running his own Blackboard Collaborate sessions to facilitate the content learning of the students. The three residency meetings aren't enough for all of the students in the study, so this hybrid/support model seems to be working. We will evaluate more of the impact after the term ends. Finally, we are trying to revamp advertising and create incentives for the faculty by doing targeted advertising for the recruitment program using the faculty members who have had peer coaches embedded in their studies as the focus of this recruiting.

Growth and New Directions

As the Peer Coaching Program continues to grow, we are focusing on recruiting strong students with skills in high-demand areas. At the program's start, we did not do a large advertising push for peer coaches since we wanted to test out the model with students; however, in the second year, with the increased awareness of the program through our more recent advertising and embedded academic support efforts, the volume of Northeast Center students requesting a peer coach has increased, and the need to recruit more peer coaches in specific content areas (whether center- or Center for Distance Learning-based) also has grown. We work closely with the CDL Peer Tutoring Program to streamline center-based student requests for assistance with a CDL course as well as CDL student requests for a face to face peer tutor. CDL's Peer Tutoring Program does not provide face to face support, so we are collaboratively supporting each other's programs in order to provide the best possible support to all students in our geographic location. We are doing our best to do this with limited resources, but the peer coaches help expand the capabilities of the academic support staff. We will continue to seek funding from the SAF, as well as our dean's support for the learning coach lines. The program can be a low cost/high impact support for students with the proper administrative personnel to manage the program. We are finding the need to work with better technology systems to record and manage the tracking data for the program. Additionally, Lisa is working on retention and impact data analysis of the program for internal and external stakeholders that will help us as we seek future funding for the program.

Predominately, as previously mentioned, our peer coaches have been volunteers, and while it would seem difficult to recruit volunteers, we have not had difficulty when we have had faculty members make the connection with a student and tell him or her that they think the student would make a good peer coach. There also is the sense that we get from all of our peer coaches that they want to give back to the college and help other adult learners. At the June 2013 graduation, one of our peer coaches had been selected to be a student speaker. He sums up what we have heard from other peer coaches about what made them want to join the program:

> *As I kept attending more classes and learning more, there came a great opportunity for me, as a student, to give back what I've learned to other students when the school created the Peer Coaching Program. I became a peer coach because I knew there were students who were struggling to adapt to college while maintaining their responsibilities at work and at home. I had gone through some of the same struggles and the Peer Coaching Program allows me to take what I have learned over the years at Empire and help new students to understand that going back to school can be done – they can develop the skills they need to succeed – and that they shouldn't give up.*
>
> *– Donald W. Ellis, Class of 2013 –*
> *SUNY Empire State College –*
> *Northeast Center*
> *Graduation Speech, June 9, 2013*

30,000-Foot View

Lisa was writing the final words of this essay literally 30,000 feet in the air returning from the National College Learning Center Association[7] conference in South Carolina. While we tend to dislike jargon of any kind, let alone catch phrases from the corporate world, from her vantage point, Lisa could appreciate the concept of the "30,000 foot view." It was her 20th time attending the conference, presenting at least one session almost every time. Her longevity in the field, coupled with our intentional design of the program, gives us the 30,000 foot view of not only our program but also the professional field of learning assistance and academic support. The big picture view of the history of the field, Lisa's own research and expertise, Sarah's experiences as a student and as a learning coach, and the formal and informal feedback we've received from students, staff and faculty confirms for us that our Peer Coaching Program at the Northeast Center is successful, not only because of our intentional design of the program, but also because of our commitment to learning from and leading with our students. This program allows the peer coaches and the students with whom they work to shape their learning experiences: to learn by doing and teaching others. Our peer coaches' selfless service to their fellow students and the college humbles us and makes us want to work harder every day. Being 30,000 feet above the East Coast, flying above the clouds, not only provides Lisa with a sense of peace about going home after a long and engaging conference, but it also gave us the thrill of knowing that when she got back to New York, we would have more resources, new ideas and an incredible team with whom to try them all out; and for both of us to "journey with students as they progress in their lives beyond our classroom experience. … The important lesson that we learn together, the lesson that allows us to move together within and beyond the classroom, is one of mutual engagement" (hooks, p. 205).

Notes

1 We decided to call the program a "coaching" program instead of a "tutoring" program for three reasons: (1) confusion with the term "tutor" as Empire State College uses it; (2) to mirror the learning coach title for the professionals who work at most of the regional centers and at the Northeast Center; and (3) the flexibility that the term "coach" gives to our program. Our peer coaches do more than tutor specific content areas; they facilitate workshops, work in an embedded capacity in certain study groups and residency courses, and they help create learning materials and resources.

2 For more information about what we offer, please visit our website, www.necacademicsupport.pbworks.com.

3 For more information about the College Reading & Learning Association's International Peer Tutoring Program Certification Program, please visit http://www.crla.net/ittpc.

4 "Area of study" is the term SUNY Empire State College uses to describe what traditional colleges would call majors and minors.

5 See our academic support wiki, www.necacademicsupport.pbworks.com.

6 All of our certification materials and application packet can be found at www.peercoaches.pbworks.com – click on CRLC Certification Materials in the upper right side of the Web page.

7 For more information about the National College Learning Center Association, please visit www.nclca.org.

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Open to the Creative Process

Peggy Lynn, Central New York Center

When I was asked to write about the project for which I received the 2013 Altes Prize for Exemplary Community Service (my colleague, Desalyn De-Souza, also won the award for her project), I immediately wanted to explain the influence songwriting has on my mentoring. The artistic process of songwriting and the creative process of mentoring have much in common. I don't take off my musician's hat when I am mentoring. I try to keep that flexible, enthusiastic attitude. My style and process of mentoring is integrated with my artistic process of songwriting. Just as each student and her degree program is unique, so is each song and the art and craft of writing it. Writing, composing and leading songwriting workshops have taught me to keep my senses open and go with the flow of the moment. If I am not open to my muse, or a student I am mentoring, I may try to push for something that does not fit and miss opportunities for creativity that would enhance possibilities.

I have been writing songs all of my adult life. In my 30s, I wrote songs as a way to process aspects of life I couldn't understand. It was cheaper than therapy! That also is when I began performing professionally. Feedback from audiences helped me hone my craft and let me know which songs resonated with people. I also wrote a whole body of songs about science and nature for children. This is where I began to lead songwriting workshops. I brought simple songs into classrooms and guided students to write new verses about plants, animals, habitats and the ecology they were studying. Starting with basic rhythms and melodies was a great foundation for later songwriting workshops and sparked many ideas for my own composition.

In 1999, I was asked by Naj Wykoff to co-lead a retreat for women with cancer and chronic illness at Great Camp Sagamore in the Adirondack Mountains. I have led songwriting workshops at retreats annually ever since. In 2008, Creative Healing Connections incorporated as a non-profit organization with the mission of providing creative experiences to promote healing and growth. In singing and writing with these women, I have learned the value of the artistic process in healing and building community. It is an amazing experience to see the faces of survivors standing in a circle, singing a song to which they have added their own images and perspectives.

PHOTO CREDIT: MARY HOGAN

Peggy Lynn

What happens at retreats is difficult to relate, but I'll make an attempt.

Women find us, usually through a friend, register, pay a deposit, possibly apply for scholarship funds and fill out health forms. On the Friday of the retreat, they drive to Raquette Lake and turn down a four-mile dirt road to get to Great Camp Sagamore. The road can seem endless, especially to those from urban areas, or those arriving late, after dark. At the end of the road is a bridge that one can only pass over after getting out of the car and opening a gate. The gate is a handmade wooden gate and must be closed again after she has driven onto the bridge.

Once across, she drives to the conference building, registers and goes into the Reading Room to make a nametag, have a cup of tea and begin to meet everyone. There are two tables covered with nametag blanks, magazines, markers, stickers and scissors. It may look like a child's arts and crafts activity, but it sets the tone for the weekend. Most women savor the opportunity to choose what appeals to them.

Some participants need some help with getting themselves and their luggage to their rooms. Since Sagamore is an example of Great Camp architecture, each building has a distinct function: several for sleeping, one for dining, one at the shore of the lake for boats and one for recreation. A golf cart is handy for assisting those who have trouble walking the distance between buildings. Many participants stay in the Main Lodge, which is a three-story European-style chalet situated on the shore of Sagamore Lake and the most photographed feature of the National Historic Landmark.

At 6 o'clock, the women are summoned by a bell to dinner in the dining hall, which is a great wooden-walled L-shaped room with two huge stone fireplaces. The atmosphere at meals is convivial with several women renewing acquaintances from previous retreats. Hugs and smiles are exchanged as old friends welcome each other. After dinner, the women walk up the hill past the tennis court to the Playhouse, another large wooden structure with a massive stone fireplace. This building has some reminders of the Vanderbilts' penchant for hunting on the walls, bison and moose heads being the most prominent. Here, the women are oriented as to what and where everything happens in camp.

Once the formalities of camp customs are completed, Fran Yardley, retreat director, welcomes the group and declares the retreat a safe, confidential place. The chairs are placed in a circle so each woman can see every other woman. After a simple singalong song, the retreat leaders introduce their workshops. Women are asked to choose between Fran Yardley's workshop in storytelling, mine in songwriting and Wanda Burch's in dreamwork, which begin the next morning. Then the women are asked to introduce themselves and share how they came to be at the retreat and what they hope to take away from it. This is a daunting prospect for many new participants. They face a room full of strangers who are all looking at them, waiting for their stories. Some pass on the initial opportunity to speak. Usually, a woman who is returning will begin, telling her story, often laughing and crying, sometimes at the same time. One memorable comment from a vibrant 80-year-old woman was: "I figure if I keep one foot in yesterday and one foot in tomorrow, I'm going to piss all over today!" That woman outlived a terminal diagnosis of lung cancer by five years as she visited fellow cancer patients in the hospital and volunteered at the local arts center. Another woman told of buying a stick of deodorant and telling it: "I am going to outlive you!" As we go around the circle, tensions begin to ease and women begin to see that they are not alone in their challenges, pain, learning and loss. As each story is told, the circle of women listens with patience and respect. For as long as it takes for each woman to be heard, the space is held open for her. And as we get to know and appreciate one another, a bond of community begins.

One night after a first meeting, we saw a bright full moon illuminating Sagamore Lake. There was not a whisper of wind so we boarded canoes and paddled out into the middle of the lake and sat silent, drinking in that rare stillness. Then a loon called and another answered. The memory of that magical night stays with every woman who was on the water to witness it.

The next day, we split into three workshop groups for morning and afternoon sessions. Being in smaller groups gives participants more time to explore their stories in depth. It also gives workshop leaders a chance to draw ideas from individuals into common themes as stories, poems, theater and songs. Visual arts, journaling and yoga also are offered as optional workshops.

Saturday night is our annual pajama party. Just seeing women come in the playhouse in their flannel prints and animal slippers makes for a festive mood. We play games, tell jokes and silly stories and sing funny songs. The party seems the most like youth summer camp of all our events. To outsiders, it might appear bizarre to encourage women, some of whom are facing life threatening diseases, to relax and laugh, but we have learned it is an essential part of the program. One evening, two women who were going through chemotherapy sat next to each other. One was covering her head with a scarf, the other a wig. At one point during the party, they decided together to bare their bald heads and cover them with glitter! Each woman took courage and delight in the other and the whole group celebrated with them.

On Sunday morning we have our closing ceremony. Small workshop groups share their creations with the larger group. We have a ritual that encourages each woman to let go of what impedes her healing and give rise to joy and dreams. We sing and have a guided meditation. While this ceremony is spiritual, it is not religious. Though the retreat is not a magic wand or a medical cure, many women have found the strength to begin making changes that impact their entire lives. Many deep, long-lasting friendships have been forged there, as well. Before we say goodbye, we share contact information, evaluate the retreat and take group photos. Women take home a piece of the group sculpture that was created and memories of seeing themselves in a different light.

As she leaves, each woman once again drives over the bridge. She opens the gate, drives out, leaving Sagamore behind, and closes the gate behind her. Many women have commented on the metaphor of that gate, opening to a different world and a new perception of themselves. As hard as it is to drive in the length of the four-mile dirt road the first time, that long, slow drive out serves as a needed transition time for reflection and return to the real world.

As a staff member, I appreciate the added time of a debriefing session after the retreat. We spend part of the afternoon discussing program strengths, weaknesses and future plans. This process of developing a program, evaluating it and making adjustments has been very helpful in developing and assessing my studies, teaching and mentoring.

One of the great benefits to my professional development in leading retreats has been to do so with Fran Yardley. Fran is a dynamic actor, storyteller and leader. She is a co-founder of Creative Healing Connections. Fran has taught me the value of creating a safe space and encouraging women to tell their stories. She also demonstrates active, respectful listening and challenges each group of women at retreats to do the same. Fran's organization and communication skills facilitate retreats in a way that puts participants at ease. Leading retreats and workshops with Fran has challenged me to think creatively and organize thoroughly.

In 2004, Creative Healing Connections expanded its retreats by offering them to women veterans at Wiawaka Holiday House on Lake George. I was not familiar with military culture or language, so I needed to do some reading and try to be as open as possible in listening to the participants. Fran Yardley, Wanda Burch and I needed to decide how much of our arts and healing retreats would work for veterans and how much needed to change. We have discovered the universal impact of bringing women together and listening to them. We have now had five successful retreats for women veterans. We honor their service, help them build connections with other women veterans, and give them artistic avenues through which to join and raise their voices.

The experience of developing programs and leading songwriting workshops has helped me mature and gain leadership skills. It also has prepared me to better weather illness and adversity in my own family. The art of listening we practice at retreats enhances my mentoring in learning about each student and her goals before advisement. With each new song, retreat and student, I am given the challenge of exploring creative strategies for communication, artistic expression and community building. I am grateful for the enhancement of mentoring I get from my music and the confidence mentoring has added to my music. I hope that the Altes Prize will build a bridge of communication between Creative Healing Connections and Empire State College so that more women will discover our retreats and more of our participants will realize their dreams through a college education.

Note

For more information:
Peggy Lynn's folk singing and songwriting
www.quercusmusic.com
Creative Healing Connections
www.creativehealingconnections.org
Great Camp Sagamore
www.greatcampsagamore.org

"Academia should be, first and foremost,
A safe space for nurturing higher learning
For the good of each and all.

Not for the good of one at the expense of all.
Not for the good of this one at the expense of that one.
Not for the good of this group at the expense of that group.
Not for the good of all at the expense of one.

If the academy allows its freedom to act as such to be usurped,
From without or from within,
The very few will have won, yet again,
At the expense of the many.

And who knows if history will ever give us another chance."

– Eric Ball, mentor
Center for Distance Learning
November 2013

Writing the "Endless" Book

Joyce McKnight, Center for Distance Learning

The Saga

One October morning in 2006, an extraordinary thing happened – a publishers' representative from Allyn & Bacon made his way to my small office in the bowels of 111 West. His appearance there was unusual because publishers' reps rarely bothered coming to Empire State College, not only because we bought books in relatively low quantities, but because the Center for Distance Learning's friendly, but firm receptionist/gatekeeper made sure that unexpected guests did not enter our inner sanctum. However there he was, staring at me from my cubicle door, asking if he could come in and talk about textbooks. Thus began an incredible seven year journey. In that initial conversation, I mentioned that I had always wanted to write a community organizing textbook and that I had heard that publishers' representatives were on the lookout for potential authors. He said that was indeed the case, and within a week or two, he put me touch with an editor at what was then Allyn & Bacon. I sent her my vitae and an outline. As it happened, Allyn & Bacon *was* looking for a community organizing textbook to replace an outdated one. The editor liked my credentials and ideas. I signed an initial contract and received a very small retainer. I began to think about the book, but had no time to actually write until the relatively quiet summer months some nine months later.

The first draft was an expansion and deepening of the research I had done for my doctoral dissertation, incorporated years of *praxis,* and included new research on the history of human services. It was a reasonably good book, but not a good textbook. I was assigned a freelance developmental editor who was probably so busy trying to scrape out a living that he had little time for a new author. I was lost in unfamiliar publishing jargon and did not yet realize the difference between a textbook and a "regular" book; he had little or no understanding of community organizing. I felt very frustrated. Meantime, life at Empire State College rolled on. CDL grew by leaps and bounds and so did my responsibilities. While I was juggling countless teaching, mentoring, course development, community organizing and institutional service tasks, the publishing world was shifting dramatically. My developmental editor was fired and a few months later my managing editor left, as well. Allyn & Bacon, a major textbook publisher, was "swallowed" by Pearson, which, after incorporating Allyn & Bacon and some other academic publishers, became the largest publisher of higher education textbooks in the world. Through it all, though, my contacts in the editorial office remained mildly supportive.

In the summer of 2008, I wrote the second draft with two goals in mind. First, since there were no suitable texts available, I wanted materials that I could use in my own Community Organizing courses and independent studies. Second, I wanted to please the publisher. The second draft was much better. It was less philosophical, tighter, better organized, and sounded more like a textbook and less like an opinion piece or an academic dissertation. In addition, I asked my editor for permission to have Empire State College publish my rough draft as the text for my Community Organizing courses and studies. She agreed, and so thankfully did Dan Rabideau in the college Bookstore, and Kirk Starczewski at the Print Shop. As a result, for the last several years, my Community Organizing students have used very basic in-house copies of my text at a cost to them of about $40 per term.

Things went slowly. Pearson sent each draft out to reviewers and the reviews came back moderately enthusiastic. By January 2012, I had survived a major health crisis and the book was in fairly good form, but my "senior" editor (who is actually 40 years my junior!) did not like its "academic" style. She said things like: "It sounds too much like a professor giving a lecture"; "It depends too much on you being there to answer questions"; and "Systems theory is confusing." Since she knew little or nothing about community organizing, many of her suggestions would have eviscerated many of the book's major concepts, but she was the senior editor and her word was (and is) law. The few weeks from January until April 2012 were the low points of my book journey. I had sacrificed many other writing opportunities, had had a sabbatical and a great deal of grace from the college, and was coping with myriad personal crises and work demands. I truly felt like years of work had been in vain and that I had let everyone down, including myself.

Joyce McKnight

Then, just as I was about to give up completely, my senior editor stopped trying to edit the work herself and I was assigned a wonderful developmental editor by Pearson's subcontractor PreMediaGlobal. Barbara Smith-Decker is not only an excellent writer, but had been engaged for years in community service. We clicked immediately.

Barbara took on the book (and me) as a personal mission, devoting many hours beyond her contract to our mutual "cause." Thanks largely to Barbara, the "new, improved" version is much more student-friendly. It is based on two composite case studies told in narrative fashion, written in the second person in a down-to-earth style, and with a good mix of solid theory and practical advice. Reviewers were enthusiastic. My Pearson editor was pleased. I breathed a sigh of relief.

My relief was short-lived. Most of you probably remember the dozens of fairy tales in which the hero thinks he has completed the quest only to be told – "Just one more thing." I lived that story for about four months this past summer. The core book was declared fine (and kept on the publishing roles when about 40 other new textbooks were dropped), but Pearson executives decided that they were no longer in the business of simply publishing printed texts. They wanted a combination package: an e-book and a printed version. The e-version led to many new tasks. It seemed as if I was forever just finishing one thing only to be told that something else needed to be done. Moreover, Murphy's Law was alive and well: Everything took longer than I could have believed possible and anything that could go wrong, did go wrong at the worst possible moment. Zeno's Paradox was evident as well: I felt that although I was getting closer and closer to the goal, it still eluded me. The hardest hit came at the end of the August reading period with "Moodle-go-live" looming. The Pearson editor requested that I create 90 sets of four-part multiple choice questions and 15 sets of chapter tests! Each wrong answer to the multiple choice questions had to have a sentence or two giving the right answer and explaining why the wrong answer was wrong. Everything had to fit into a template provided by Pearson that was not particularly compatible with Microsoft Word. Fortunately, my husband, Hugh McKnight, has taught Non-Profit Management at CDL for years. Hugh created the questions for the six management-based chapters. One more deadline was reached and I could turn all my attention to my students and other duties.

Still, even as I write this, the endless book rolls on. Hugh and my co-author Joanna McKnight Plummer, a 2010 Empire State College graduate, are gamely struggling with footnotes and publishers' proofs working with a PreMediaGlobal editor based in India, freeing me from direct responsibility for the final stage. So far, things seem to be going well but it has been difficult to mesh schedules, and telephone calls are nearly impossible to manage. I am hopeful, though. The "endless" book is scheduled to be available to students for the January 2014 term with major marketing for September 2014.

When I allow myself to believe it will really happen, I am terribly excited. The e-book will be in full color and have dozens of links to chapter objectives, relevant websites, critical thinking sections based on the human services competencies, online quizzes and online tests. The written text will be its pale shadow with black and white photographs and printed Web links. The two will be marketed as a package so that students will have access to the e-book on their computers along with the printed text to carry around, highlight, etc. When it is finally safely published, I fully intend to throw a huge party at CDL and invite everyone!

It seemed as if I was forever just finishing one thing only to be told that something else needed to be done.

Advice About Writing a Textbook

I found that writing this textbook could be compared to taking the effort and anguish I put into my doctoral dissertation and squaring it, but I did learn a great deal. I hope that some of what I learned may be helpful to others. Here is my advice from the proverbial "school of hard knocks."

1. Textbooks are very different from other academic writing. They work well when written in the second person, in plain English. Thus, you will have to set aside 90 percent of what you know about academic writing.
2. If possible, connect your subject to something you already do well. In my case, my lifework is helping people organize themselves to create a better quality of life. I do this primarily though my teaching. The materials I created for the textbook have helped me do my primary work better. Their usefulness to other professors and their students and to community organizers working in the field is a bonus.
3. Keep everything you write. Your text will probably go through multiple versions and you will probably be asked to cut some things you dearly love. That's OK … you can keep them and use them someplace else.
4. The process of writing enables you to deepen your knowledge of the subject and is quite rewarding. Writing helps you consolidate what you know in the same way that writing prior learning assessment essays enables our students to make their tacit learning explicit. I found the process of researching, thinking and writing intrinsically satisfying, which helped me through many frustrations.
5. Try to carve out blocks of time for writing. I found the rhythm of writing in the summer, learning new things with my students during the main academic year, and then writing another draft worked well, although it took many years. I simply could not write well during the main academic year.
6. Make sure that your dean, your Center Personnel Committee, and the collegewide Academic Personnel Committee realize that you are writing a textbook, which is a completely different task than writing a trade publication, contributing to or even editing a multi-chaptered publication, or writing for journals. It is a lengthy process in which roadblocks can be raised at any time. In fact, my seven

year journey turns out to be about the norm for a first textbook. The sheer time involved caused some problems for me before I was tenured since I did not have a visible product to show for my effort. I finally asked my senior editor to write a "solicited letter" for inclusion in my portfolio. Her assertion that I was within the expected timeframe for a new textbook and that she was impressed with my writing helped when I applied for promotion.

7. Expect to do a lot of detailed editing work. I have been dismayed by how many time-consuming editorial details have fallen to me.

8. Expect a rather steep learning curve. I found that everyone in the publishing industry expected that I would understand their jargon and expectations. I wish I had understood publishing a lot better before I began.

9. Be politely assertive. I was so afraid that the book would be dropped from consideration that I more or less went along with whatever the publisher asked. In retrospect, I wish I had insisted on clarification at several points along the way.

10. Learn to incorporate links to the Web. From now on, all of Pearson's textbooks will be done like mine with a major e-book and a companion printed book. They will no longer accept books without a solid Web-based component.

11. Prepare to live in a rapidly changing environment. The publishing industry has been experiencing a meltdown and a reconfiguration. Many well-known publishers such as Allyn & Bacon have been subsumed by mega-publishers, especially Pearson. At the same time, Pearson itself has drastically reduced its in-house staff and has contracted its work out to organizations like PreMediaGlobal which, in turn, hire freelance editors, essentially private contractors who work from their homes with no benefits, no vacations and work from assignment to assignment with very small-time budgets. I have had wonderful partnerships with some of these freelancers and have been utterly ignored by others, but all of them are very aware of their own contingency and the need to please PreMediaGlobal by pleasing the publishers. My last two PreMediaGlobal editors believed in the book and were willing to take a few risks with the Pearson senior editor, but both they and I were aware that it was a risk.

12. Be aware that the large "for-profit" textbook publishers like Pearson are under attack all around the world by the OpenTextbooks movement (that includes SUNY), which wants to use open source materials, volunteer authors, just-in-time printing methods and a whole new structure for peer review to produce affordable textbooks. This has already had a major effect. My book will be one of only eight new texts Pearson will publish this year. Forty were cancelled early in March after they had already reached the production phase. I am thankful to have been spared, but feel very sorry for all of those who weren't. If I were beginning this process again, I would probably work with one of the open source publishers or with the SUNY in-house effort rather than seeking a traditional publisher, no matter how prestigious. Not only did I find the Pearson bureaucracy daunting and far from stable, but I also believe that students should be paying far less for their texts than they do now.

In summary, I am relieved that this particular phase of my professional journey is drawing to a close, but I do not regret it and am thankful to the college and particularly Dean Tom Mackey for his patience. I am hopeful that *Community Organizing: Theory and Practice* will have "staying power." Multiple editions of successful textbooks have been common in the past. Some textbooks become classic. For instance, *Gray's Anatomy of the Human Body,* first published in 1918 and updated multiple times since then, is still being used. I have written my text based on principles and skills that I believe have held true since people began organizing to improve the quality of their lives together through unity with one another. I fantasize that I have written the classic community organizing textbook. Some days I actually believe it.

Using Facebook to Engage Students in the Lebanon Residency Program

Jeannine Mercer, Center for International Programs

Introduction

I have had the privilege of teaching students at several of Empire State College's international locations (Greece, Albania, Prague and Lebanon), in addition to teaching courses for the Center for Distance Learning over the last decade. What I've come to realize and appreciate is how each group's culture forms a part of a student's learning experience and affects how students learn and engage the study materials. This has become especially apparent to me over the years that I have been mentoring students in our Lebanon Residency Program (LRP). Many of these students were almost invisible in the online learning environment, posting in the discussions infrequently and rarely writing me or responding to an email to explain what was going on with them. But then, when I'd meet them face to face at a residency, or call them on the phone, I couldn't shut them up! They seemed highly social and talkative, and were able to articulate ideas and concepts that they had not been able to duplicate in the online space of the course. Clearly, these highly socialized students were not faring well with independent learning, and could not find the time to spend on their online assignments or figure out a way to do them correctly.

As a result, I introduced more phone assignments in their online courses, which eventually morphed into Skype discussions when the technology became popular. I also did an extraordinary amount of texting with students and mentees, as they preferred such contact to the traditional email. In small but subtle ways, these methods and others helped me achieve a higher social contact with this particular student population. They responded favorably.

However, when I started integrating the use of Facebook into my online courses for LRP students in 2011, the effect on student communication and course engagement was remarkable and beyond my expectations. Course participation, grades and student motivation increased. The Facebook group discussion space became a competitive learning environment and it created strong group cohesiveness. Somehow, Facebook had not only connected everyone more directly to the course material, but it had created stronger ties among these virtual classmates and their instructor.

How Lebanese Students Approach Online Learning and Instructors

I started teaching students in our Lebanon Residency Program around the same time I started teaching online CDL courses for Empire State College in 2006. Online courses in LRP are similar in scope and structure to a CDL course, with the exception that the study includes a required residency and a proctored examination. However, by and large, the majority of the learning experience takes place online – previously within the ANGEL course management system, and now within Moodle. From the start, I observed some differences between the two groups of students. The most distinct difference was how the students communicated with me. Lebanese students would contact me more often, usually asking very general questions about the course requirements, such as "Miss, when is the assignment due?" or "What am I supposed to do?" They seemed to be unable to read and digest much of the online information related to the course, and struggled to work well independently. CDL students, on the other hand, were better overall at independent learning. They seemed to be more comfortable in the online environment, and didn't need as much general guidance. Instead, CDL student questions tended to be content-based, and they contacted me less frequently.

Students in our Lebanon program study at a partner university in Lebanon before taking online classes with ESC. Thus, two-thirds of their course work is conducted in traditional brick-and-mortar small classrooms where they learn through lectures, workshops and seminars. They are young, mostly in their early 20s, and live in a culture with a high level of social contact. The Lebanese greeting alone provides a small demonstration of just how intimate they are. In America, we seem to expect a handshake and perhaps one small peck on the cheek for our special contacts. In Greece, students will greet you with a warm smile, kiss both of your cheeks and perhaps offer you something to eat or drink. The Lebanese take it one step further and give three kisses, alternating on both cheeks. Moreover, our colleagues and some students are apt to give you a small gift. And no, it's not bribery, as I worried the first time I taught at a residency in Lebanon and was surrounded by small gifts, such as Lebanese sweets and small souvenirs. They are simply being generous and showing their affection and respect (Kwintessential, n.d.). You might think of it as a child giving the stereotypical apple to the teacher.

Jeannine Mercer

At our summer residency in 2013, after I had just explained to the other ESC instructors who would meet Lebanese students for the first time that they were not expected to kiss the students upon greeting, several of my students pulled me in for the customary three kisses and a warm hug. I don't think they did that with the other instructors, and that never had happened to me in the past. But then I realized that many of these students were either my mentees or loyal followers – students who sign up for every one of my courses, regardless of the subject. I attribute this to the enriched social connections that I have made with them over Facebook.

Student Characteristics Conducive to Social Media Engagement

While the strong social context that is so prevalent in Lebanese culture played a large role in the success I have had teaching and mentoring in Facebook, other factors also contributed. For example, many of these students grew up with social media. They are comfortable with it and use it often to express their feelings and share their news and activities with their friends. In this regard, they probably do not differ much from Americans of their generation. Another generational issue is that these students rarely use email (Rubin, 2013). Like many young people, they see email as too formal (Qualman, 2009) and use it only when absolutely necessary. They will email a professor or other academic administrator if needed, but they do not email their friends or family. In fact, I would argue that some of our Lebanese students are even uncomfortable writing emails to their instructors. It is not unusual for a mentee to discuss his/her course-related problem with me over Facebook chat, Skype or texting, and state their reluctance to email their instructor when they are asked to do so. "Can't you do it for me?" they'll ask, or "Can't I text them instead?"

Another issue that affects the online communication of these students in Lebanon is that they lose electricity and Internet connection frequently. Blackouts occur at least three hours a day in Beirut, and possibly as many as nine hours. Lebanon's energy minister has recently promised the people 24-hour electricity by 2015, but no one believes it (Lebanon's Electricity Blackout, 2013). Mountainous areas are even more vulnerable to long blackouts, especially during winter months when there are many storms. Therefore, it is not uncommon to receive Facebook messages from students during the winter who are trapped by snow in the mountains or some other rural area, usually because they or a relative lives there, and they are panicked because they cannot write or send their online assignment without electricity or the Internet. Somehow, as an app on their phone, Facebook comes through when all other methods of communication fail, at least until their battery dies.

Facebook Facilitates Communication with LRP Students

Even though I knew all this about the Lebanese students, my Facebook interaction with them happened by chance. In the fall term of 2011, I taught for the first time a course on social media and society. I thought it would be meaningful to create a Facebook group for the course, after reading about the successes of other professors who had done so (Malhotra, 2013). As I began this course, I immediately not only saw how the Facebook group was enhancing the learning experience for everyone, but also students were using it as a place to communicate with me, both academically and socially.

Slowly but surely, no longer were many of these students leaving me course messages in ANGEL or sending me emails. Instead, they knew that all they had to do was to send me a Private Message on Facebook, and wait for me to respond. When I did, their phone would vibrate and we could communicate synchronously, and without delay. To me, this proved extremely valuable since students were known not to read their emails regularly (Rubin, 2013). Often, when I'd have an urgent message for a student (either in my course or for a mentee), it could take them days or even weeks to even find and open the email. Because of this, I would have to email one of the Lebanon academic coordinators and ask her to phone the student and ask that student to read and respond to his or her email. However, I soon saw that if I was connected to students on Facebook, I could just message them and perhaps resolve the problem on the spot. And if I needed them to read some formal email from the administration, I could simply message them to read their email.

From that very first experience of using Facebook in the online course, I saw the possibilities that it held for these students, and I was drawn to it. I decided from that point on that I would include a Facebook group for every one of my courses. Not only that, I would be sure to communicate with my mentees over Facebook.

Creating the Facebook Group

The one caveat of setting up a Facebook group is that it must be linked to your own Facebook account. Although there are ways around it, the easiest way to create a group is to have students make a "friend request" to you, and then you accept and add them to the group. If done in this way, they can see your Facebook wall and you can see theirs.

Wanting to keep my personal life private, and also wanting to respect the program director's recommendation that we do not connect with students on Facebook until after graduation, I created a professional account. In other words, I created another Facebook account to be used just with students. Next, I created a closed Facebook group for the group and added students to it after they sent me a friend request. In a closed group, others will be able to see that the group exists and who is in it, but they won't be able to see any of the posts in the group. Apparently, this works well since they know that their friends won't be able to see their class-related posts and thus, they won't risk social judgment (Malhotra, 2013).

When Using Facebook for Academia, How Personal or Social Should the Instructor Be?

When I first started using Facebook groups for my LRP courses, I was very aware of the access I had to my students' walls, which is where they post photos and details about their personal lives. Initially I told myself that I would not look at them in order to respect their privacy, and that was what I did. However, I did get exposed to some posts in the Facebook newsfeed when I logged onto my account, and like this, by chance, I saw some of what my students were up to. But I restrained myself from looking further and respected the promise I had made to myself, simply because I had thought it was the right thing to do.

With time, and after much internal debate, I agreed there was an exception that allowed me to peek at their walls. This began when one of my students seemed to have disappeared from the course. She was not participating in online discussions for over two weeks nor responding to messages, and she had not submitted any assignments. By looking at her wall, I could then see if there was any sign of life. Did something happen to her? Was she extremely busy or was she simply out socializing, enjoying the freedom of being young and single? In this case, based on all of the recent photos she had been tagged in at clubs and parties, the latter proved to be the reason.

As other students disappeared from their studies, the first thing I'd do is look to see when they posted last on their wall. If it had been several weeks or longer, I'd feel concerned. If I saw a lot of photos of them out at night with friends, I'd shake my head, but understand. If I saw a post from a different country, I'd realize that they'd become distracted by their travels, usually for work. But whatever I saw, I never confronted them with it or mentioned their activities to them. I thought that would be crossing a line, a line that I had worried I had already crossed. I just simply used the information to a get a sense of what was going on so I knew how to approach them.

Slowly, as the terms progressed, I found myself becoming more personally engaged with the students. I'd start by "liking" some of the more important status reports that surfaced in my newsfeed – celebrations of birthdays and holidays, or new jobs and new babies in the family. And sometimes I was so bold as to write "congratulations" or "what a cute baby." The response had a double effect. Not only was I immediately thanked for my comment, but there appeared to be a higher response from such students, both in their interaction with me, and in the course overall.

This gave me pause. Maybe I was going about this privacy issue all wrong. I was responding to what I perceived as American cultural standards and applying that to the Lebanese students, members of a highly social culture. Obviously, I thought, I was making a mistake. I decided to test the waters by interacting with the students personally, but without overstepping my boundaries as instructor. I added a few photos from my personal life on the wall of my Facebook work account. Each photo would generate dozens of "likes" and comments within minutes. (The photos that I post on my own personal Facebook account do not generate such attention, sadly, but true all the same).

These students appeared to be responding positively to personal attention and social interaction with me on Facebook. However, this did not really resonate until I was reading comments that students had written in the course closure survey. Several had commented on how they liked the personal interaction they had experienced with me and other students, and how such interaction helped to create a social bond that made them want to be part of our course group and do the work expected of them. One student in particular wrote that she had thought the course was hard and was thinking about dropping it, but when I asked her about a child who was in her profile photo, she felt at ease and sure that I would be able to guide her through the course, which of course, I did.

I now give myself permission to look at their walls sporadically and interact with them personally. Not only has this increased the comfort and connection of the students in their interactions with me, but the more I interact with students, the better they seem to perform in the course itself. And those who do not succeed are friendly and apologetic about their shortcomings. It is not uncommon for them to thank me for my encouragement and to apologize for what they have not been able to do – such as successfully complete the course.

The Consequences of Informal Communication with Students

Despite all of the positive experiences I seemed to be having using Facebook to communicate with my students, I wondered if there were some drawbacks that I hadn't considered. Much like a customer service representative, I began to ask my LRP students what they thought of our

Student using Facebook on the phone for class.

interaction, and what, if anything, could be changed. By and large, the students told me that it was "the best way" for them to communicate with me because: 1) they don't use email, 2) it's easier, and 3) it's more timely. Not one student reported feeling uncomfortable that I had access to their wall and could see what was happening in their personal lives. "No, not at all," and "I liked that part" were common responses.

Many of the students said they thought that "it was cool" that I communicated with them over Facebook and that they felt more comfortable communicating this way. I had interpreted this positively, until one day recently, when I was in the middle of an online pep talk with a mentee who was not doing well in his courses. While I was explaining satisfactory academic progress to him, he told me that he had a hard time taking me seriously because he saw me "more like a big sister than a professor."(This was communicated to me over WhatsApp, a texting service phone application.) It did take me aback. I delayed responding and he sent me some smiling emoticons before continuing our text conversation. Even more recently, I found myself contemplating my role while talking online with another student. After discussing the details of a late registration with a mentee over Facebook (and then sending his registration details to the program coordinator and director over Skype), he thanked me profusely and said that it was "cool" that I talked to him about this on

Facebook. Hearing this again, I became intrigued and asked him to elaborate. After some discussion by text, he explained that because I was communicating with him in an informal way, he didn't perceive our relationship as formal, but assured me that this was "a good thing" for him.

This reiterated Qualman's (2009) claim that the younger generation perceive email as being too formal, but I hadn't thought about how that might impact an actual relationship. I began to realize that this informal means of communication did indeed create more of an informal relationship between me and the students. Students respond to me in text type, and they "talk" about school issues between inserts of what is going on in their personal lives. When they are depressed or even if they are bored, they may write me incessantly at all hours of the day and night. They ask for advice about school, but also for reassurance about anything they might be doing. I guess in many ways, I did become their big sister!

I've always felt that social media enabled better communication and benefited the mentor-student relationship, but now I find myself questioning this process. First, it can be high maintenance. Already, my husband has complained that I spend more time talking to my students than I do to him – and he's right. Secondly, an informal bond can leave students feeling high and dry when they graduate or leave Empire State College. I do receive texts and private messages from ex-students, saying that they miss me and would like me to keep in touch. This is not practical on a one-to-one basis, but at least staying connected to them on Facebook allows me to be connected to their lives on some level after they have left the school. But finally, I can't help but wonder about what I have done. I have made a traditionally formal relationship an informal one. Is this wrong? And if these students enjoy a more informal relationship with their professors, what does it imply about the structure of higher education?

Some Conclusions: Lebanese Students Prefer Using Facebook in Their Online Studies

It has become very clear to me that Lebanese students tend to do well when using Facebook for either course discussions or mentoring. It is more convenient and unlike email, they use it regularly. Most have it on their phones and can respond to discussion posts or instructor/mentor questions at any given moment. It also provides more of a high social context between each other and with their instructor, so they are more apt to enjoy and do well in the learning experience.

Because of this, I think some of these students have become attached to this particular type of learning experience. I have noticed one of two patterns after a term has ended. Some students developed into what I call loyal followers, taking as many new courses that I offer as they can between that point and their graduation. For example, I usually teach courses in communications, media studies or marketing; but the term I taught a history course, I found it filled with students from previous courses. Some of them confided in me that they were worried about the course, and they struggled with the material. And yet they took this course as an elective simply due to the connection they had felt with me that had developed in the Facebook group space. That alone says something. The other pattern I noticed was that students with whom I had worked before continued to communicate with me over Facebook about any issue they had with school. For example, they might ask me about a course, an Empire State College policy, or for an instructor's email. When this first started to happen, I simply assumed that these must be my mentees, only to later realize that wasn't always the case. These were students who simply got hooked on communicating over social media.

In fact, as I am writing this essay, it is the registration period for LRP. One of my mentees has just contacted me over Facebook chat, asking who the instructor is for the Senior Project course he is expected to take next term. After I have told him, he writes, "Can't I take it with you?" I immediately begin to look at his grades. He has taken two courses with me, both of which utilized the Facebook groups, but he has only earned Cs in each. However, I see that he earned a B in a course he took with the instructor who teaches the Senior Project for his concentration. It was the student's best grade.

"May I ask why you don't want to take the class with this instructor? You did very well when you took a class with him before."

Even though we are chatting over Facebook, there is no response. Five minutes go by, and then 10. The student is still online. I finally write, "I am still waiting for your reason, because if I am going to request to switch you to my section, I'd like to have an explanation."

More time passes. Finally, the student responds, "Mmmmm I don't know."

We discussed it for another five minutes or so, as I explained to him that he would most likely do well, if not better, if he took it with the stated instructor. I thought he would concede. But then he declared, "I don't care about the grade. I just want to take it with you."

Although the student was not able to articulate his reason for preferring to take the course with me, I cannot help but believe that it must be due to the social connection that was created based on that student having been part of my Facebook groups for two terms. And obviously, I also was using Facebook to mentor him, and as indicated by his chat status, he was doing it on his phone. So even though I was not the easier instructor for this student, somehow Facebook was easier.

The social cohesion that Facebook creates is a crucial part of the Lebanon students' overall satisfaction with their learning experiences. Facebook has allowed me to communicate effectively with students on a regular basis, even when obstacles such as the loss of power or Internet prevented them from communicating with me otherwise. And the use of personal photos and small chats has helped humanize this online communication. All of this I cannot deny.

On the other hand, using social media such as Facebook has somewhat changed the nature of the mentor-student relationship. By chatting with the students over social media, my role has morphed from an authority figure to something in-between that and a peer. Not only am I the helping hand, but at times, I'm the arm around the shoulder. I wouldn't argue that my form of communication with them makes them better students, although it has helped motivate quite a few. Instead I believe it provides them with something more intrinsic – a memorable, pleasurable learning experience that they will take with them as they leave Empire State College and go forth into their careers and future.

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" … 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."

– Rebecca Bonanno, Michele Forte and Thalia MacMillan
"'The Mentor Is In": Human Services Skills in the Mentoring Relationship"
All About Mentoring, 42, *winter 2012, p. 35*

Emil Moxey – 2013 Black Male Initiative Heritage Award

Introduced by Lear Matthews, Metropolitan Center

On Friday 28 June 2013, the Metropolitan Center held a celebration of Black History Month at the Brooklyn Public Library on the Grand Army Plaza. (The event, "Made in America: An Evening of Art, Music and Literature," was to have been held in February, but was postponed because of the weather.) About 200 students, alums and community members enjoyed a program that was organized by a committee led by Mentor David Fullard. Honored with the college's Citizen Laureate Award was the photographer, Ben Fernandez '87. Bestselling author of books for children, Walter Dean Myers '84, was presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award. Mentor Joe Washington introduced a performance by the Mansoor Sabree '00 Jazz Ensemble and the Marcus McLaurine '09 Quartet.

Also honored was recently retired mentor in Community and Human Services, Emil Moxey, who was presented with the Heritage Award. What follows is colleague Lear Matthews' introduction of Emil Moxey and the recipient's reflections on this special occasion.

Introduction

Lear Matthews

I was delighted when asked to present this award to my friend and colleague. Dr. Emil Moxey was born in Nassau, Bahamas. He attended public schools and St. John's College, a coeducational Anglican secondary school, from which he graduated with the Cambridge University Overseas Senior School Certificate. He migrated to the United States in 1956, earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Virginia Union University, and a Master of Social Work from Fordham University. He then pursued and completed a Ph.D. in social work, with a concentration in clinical practice at New York University.

Dr. Moxey is a licensed clinical social worker and a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers. Before joining the faculty at Empire State College as a full-time mentor in 1989, he worked with adolescents as a senior clinical social worker at the Youth Consultation Service in New Jersey and the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital and Medical Center. He was the assistant director and coordinator of field work for the ANSWER Social Welfare Program at Adelphi University. He also taught at several schools of social work, including New York University.

PHOTO CREDIT: MARTY HEITNER '92

Emil Moxey (left) and Lear Matthews

My first stint as a mentor at Empire State College was to "fill in," so to speak, for Emil while he completed his Ph.D. program. When I met him, I was impressed – not only by his professionalism and calm demeanor, but his mastery of the area of study. Let us say, I needed no further introduction to Empire State College. By the end of our first meeting, I was convinced that this is where I wanted to work. In short, Dr. Moxey was a prized ambassador for this institution.

Emil Moxey can be considered one of the gatekeepers of quality higher education. His effectiveness as an educator is undeniable. He is indeed, the consummate mentor.

However, I must tell you that his calm disposition contrasts with that of his brother, Edmund, whom I met in the Bahamas while attending a conference. Not only is he a good raconteur, but with the ease of a diplomat, his outgoing personality and the legendary politician that he is, we were able to visit places that were off-limits to most locals and tourists. Indeed, the name "Moxey" carries some weight in the Bahamas.

Music has been a major part of Emil's life. As a member of several church choirs, both in the Bahamas and the United States, he performed as a chorus singer at various venues. He served as co-chair of the Organ Committee at St. Phillip's in Brooklyn and was honored for his many years of community service, as educator and chorister by the Crusaders Guild of the Brotherhood. He is a member of the Bahamian-American Association, a vibrant hometown organization of committed individuals, dedicated to "reaching back" to their homeland, social networking and progressive political activity.

Emil, we are forever grateful for your enduring contribution to the field of education, to Empire State College and particularly to the growth of the Brooklyn Unit. The Bedford-Stuyvesant days were memorable and challenging, but rewarding. I know there were times when you, Rudy Cain and Ethel Bowles had to "dig deep" to stay the course with meager resources and the unwavering support from dean Nancy Bunch and the likes of Alan Mandell. Your students adored you. They cherished your guidance, mentoring style, ability to empathize, and, at the same time, your firmness about the quality of the work they produced. Brooklyn had the most vibrant alumni association due to the work you and others have done. In celebration of Black history and on behalf of SUNY Empire State College, I present to you the 2013 Heritage Award.

Ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Emil Moxey!

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ESC Reflections

Emil Moxey

Now that I am fully, officially retired, I sincerely hope that I do not fall prey to the adage that: “Retirement is the time when you never do all the things you intended to do when you would have the time.” Or, the one that asserts that: “Retirement is the time in life when there is nothing so difficult as doing nothing.”

Frankly, aside from my Caribbean and South American traveling excursions, I never feel that there is enough time to complete all of my writing projects in the offing.

My exciting sojourn at the Metropolitan Regional Center of SUNY Empire State College took root in 1985 when I joined the faculty of mentors as a temporary sabbatical replacement for the late Professor Dr. Joseph Goldberg. Upon Joe’s return, Dean Nancy Bunch very pleasantly invited me to stay on. In 1989, she further graciously offered me a tenure-bearing line, which I readily accepted. I was later transferred full time to what was then known as the Bedford/Stuyvesant Unit of the Metropolitan Center on New York Avenue at Fulton Street (an area that has been presumably upgraded to the designation henceforth of Crown Heights North), under the expert directorship of Dr. Rudy Kofi Cain, now a professor emeritus.

In recent times, the unit was subsumed by the downtown Brooklyn Unit on Livingston Street. But I must finally admit, even at this late date, that I had something of a hard time adjusting to this new venue. Why? You see, I soon realized that I really missed the neighborhood/community atmosphere and the excitement and pleasant streams of the nearby elementary school children during recess and at the end of the school day. Then there was the buzz of the Fulton Street shoppers and others such as the liming (i.e., the pleasant socializing – heightened, spirited chitchat) of West Indian men at the subway entrance as I plied my way home to Manhattan late at night from the office.

In retrospect, perhaps my unconscious mind knew better than I did that I was bound to become a teacher from the period when I tutored some cousins on my grandaunt’s porch during my teenage years. Before long, I was approached to tutor other neighborhood youngsters. At that time, I absolutely had no idea whatsoever about how far the obvious satisfaction from these tasks would eventually take me.

Throughout my involvement with the college, over some 26-odd years, I was always amazed at the sheer volume of the ever so rich knowledge, skills and occupational expertise that mature, diverse students brought to the table. I personally gained tremendous reciprocal satisfaction from challenging them to develop their own unique analytical mettle by emphasizing conceptual self-analysis of their critical reading and writing skills, instead of providing them with ready-made answers to the identified problems or issues. These oral and written exercises evidently afforded them considerable gratification when they produced substantive solutions to the required content with the biggest smiles on their faces. Moreover, my overall knowledge base and skills were greatly enhanced in the process, and I could actually feel the personal growth that ensued. These episodes were my most rewarding experiences!

At this point I wish to share that this past year has undoubtedly been an exceedingly challenging one for me medically, so this honor that you are bestowing upon me tonight is ever so timely because it enables me to come to grips with the things that really matter in life, particularly one’s personal development. I stand forever grateful to the college, as well as to the planning committee, especially Dr. David Fullard, faculty advisor, The Black Male Initiative and primary organizer of this event, Vice Presidents Dr. Hugh B. Hammett and Dr. Marjorie W. Lavin, and Metro’s Dean Dr. Cynthia Ward.

I especially wish to thank my colleagues, relatives and friends for whatever role you played in this momentous event, particularly those unknown to me who worked so tirelessly in the background. Guest representatives include staff of the Bahamas Consulate General at New York, officers and members of the Bahamian American Association, Inc., and members of St. Philip’s Episcopal/Anglican Church of Stuyvesant Heights, Brooklyn, New York.

The Steinmacht Radio

Robert Congemi, Northeast Center

Jesse *tried* to do the right thing. Things never worked out in high school and for a few years after that – some odd jobs. But he did try to do the right thing, tried hard. That's why when he met Meg in the bar and fell in love with her, instead of just living with her and her kids, he talked her into marrying him.

At first, she didn't want to. "Oh, Jesse, you don't have to do that," she said to him. But Jesse insisted, so in the end they did, by a justice of the peace.

"All right, you can give the judge your donation now," said the fat lady who worked for the judge, who stood up for them.

"What?" said Jesse.

"The money," Meg whispered in Jesse's ear. "She wants, *they* want the money for marrying us."

"Oh," Jesse said.

The first place Jesse rented for his new family was a whole house – not too bad, not too old or out of shape. Meg liked the roominess it had. But just behind the house, which was built on a pretty steep hill, the earth dropped away pretty much straight down, and he and Meg could never rest with the kids outside. There was a hedge that kind of protected against the fall, but it was pretty skimpy and for no good reason, it seemed, there was a big space in the hedge just about where the kids came out the back door of the house, maybe 10, 12 feet away.

"Some backyard," Jesse said, scratching his head. "How would you know someone would build a house like this?"

The second place Jesse rented for them was better – at least, you could make a pretty good case that it was better. It was a little ranch house on a concrete slab, smaller but newer than the first house and in a better neighborhood. But this house turned out to have the beginning of a railroad yard behind it, about a couple of hundred feet away. The backyard to this house was big enough, and there was a line of trees between the house and the yard, but, as Jesse had learned from the neighbors, at night you could hear them banging the train cars together, coupling them.

"Hells bells," Mr. Lafayette, their next door neighbor, said. He had worked for the railroad for years, but was now retired, except for when he worked part time as a guard for the small-engines factory where Jesse worked. "A person can get used to the banging and the booming. It's when they come down roundin' that mountain that scares the b'dickens out of me. It ain't outta the question that some day or night a train could be in our garden or even the house. They've had wrecks over there before. Especially when some conductor's all liquored up. They just never got quite up to here yet."

Audrey, Meg's oldest, and a real wiseass, if the truth be told, sat at the Formica table in the little kitchen they had, eating the dinner that Meg had made for all of them and said, "I think it's dumb living here."

"Be quiet, Audrey," Meg said, sticking up for Jesse.

"Yeah," Ralphie, Meg's boy, who disagreed with everything his older sister said, chimed in.

"I need a beer," Jesse said, getting up from the table and walking into the living room, where he could light up a cigarette and watch television.

At the factory, Jesse worked hard and tried to keep his nose clean. He even *liked* the place and hoped that everything was going to work out there. In the beginning, he didn't think it would. Mr. Pavlich, who was his supervisor, was the father of a guy Jesse had met a few times who had told him about the job at the factory. On Jesse's first day, Mr. Pavlich walked Jesse into the supervisor's office and more or less asked him to spy on his fellow workers for him. Mr. Pavlich was a short, square-set man, who talked with an accent.

PHOTO CREDIT: LANA ORTIZ

Robert Congemi

"Jesse, you do me a favor, huh? You let me know what the mens say about me, OK? You know my son. It helps me out, OK?"

At Mr. Pavlich's words, a distress alarm went off somewhere in Jesse, and he actually felt himself get warm. He had just gotten to the job!

"Uhhh, gee, Mr. Pavlich. …" He let his sentence trail off, not knowing what to say, hoping his being unable to say anything would somehow excuse him. But it didn't help.

"It's no big deal, Jesse," Mr. Pavlich told him, patting him fatherly on the cheek.

Jesse never knew exactly if anybody saw him go into Mr. Pavlich's office and get a talking to, but he always figured at least *somebody* had to. After that, every few days, Mr. Pavlich would come up to where

Jesse sat at his machine, raise his eyebrows as a question and say, "Huh? What they say, huh, Jesse? You tell me something?"

But Jesse never did. He just looked at Mr. Pavlich confused and uncomfortable and said, as quietly as he could, "Gee, Mr. Pavlich, I don't hear anything. I really don't. I just stay here by my machine and keep working. I got my quota to make. You know."

And to show Mr. Pavlich his loyalty in another way, Jesse worked as hard as he could. The factory had a reputation for making good small engines, and Jesse had been assigned to the polishers' section. All day long, he sat at his machine and picked an engine part out of the bushel basket on his left, polished and buffed it to absolute smoothness according to specifications, then dropped it into the bushel basket on his right. Though he was in a line with all the other polishers, he hardly talked to anyone else while he was working. The company policy didn't want people gabbing all day long while they were working, but it didn't forbid it, as long as nobody abused the privilege. But even so, Jessie just kept his nose to the grindstone, so to speak, and concentrated on always making his quota, and even going over it some days. He had worked out a routine that really let him polish and buff cam shafts and rotors as fast as possible, without wasting any motion or time, and he was proud of it. One time, he even showed Mr. Pavlich exactly how he did it.

"Hey, we ought to let you show the other polishers what you do, Jesse, you know," Mr. Pavlich told him, standing beside him and his machine, beaming. "They could use the help."

But working like that, to show Mr. Pavlich what "a good man" he could be and to secure his job, got Jesse – he never realized it, he never saw it coming – into trouble with the other side, not management, but his fellow workers. One day, he sat down at one of the tables in the lunch room and had just opened a sandwich that Meg had made for him when Arthur, a thin guy who worked in the plating department, sat down next to him. Arthur was about Jesse's age, maybe a little older, and he giggled nervously when he talked, but he was always very, very serious, especially now.

"Hey, Jesse," Arthur said to him, with his little, nervous giggle. "I gotta talk to you, man."

"OK," Jesse said.

Arthur looked around him. "Jesse, I don't know if you know it or not, but I'm the union representative around here. The men voted me in."

"Oh," Jesse said, nodding.

"And, uh, Jesse … I gotta tell ya … that …" Arthur leaned closer to Jesse. " … that … you're working *too* hard, man … *too* good … you know what I mean?"

Jesse, who had started eating his sandwich, stopped.

"What do you mean?" he asked Arthur.

"I mean, you're working too hard, too good. It's not good for the rest of us. You know? It puts pressure on us; the management picks up on it. Someday maybe they tell us we should increase production, they look to a guy like you for justification."

"You're kidding," Jesse said first. Suddenly, he felt like he was in a movie he had seen somewhere. But he knew he wasn't. It was a very real thing. "But I didn't know that. Why didn't somebody tell me? I don't want to cause any trouble for anybody. I just want to do a good job. Hell, I really need the job."

Arthur agreed with Jesse. He nodded his head, showing Jesse he understood. "I know. I know. That's why I'm telling you now. Just so you understand. We *all* want to do a good job, Jesse." Now Arthur leaned back and smiled, and theatrically spread his arms apart. "We all need our jobs, too."

Jesse tried to make himself as clear as he possibly could. "Look, Arthur, I'm happy to do anything anybody wants me to do. I knew we had a union, but I was told that I couldn't join up right away. There's a waiting period, a trial period or something to see if you're going to stay at the factory. I'll join up right now. My trial period's gotta be over. I don't want any trouble. I just want things to work out. That's all I want."

"You don't have to do that, Jesse. You don't have to sign up yet."

"But I want to, Arthur. I'll do whatever anybody wants me to. I'll join up. I'll help out. You got committees or something? I'll be on them."

At that, Arthur didn't know what to say, and Jesse tried to breathe easier, *thought* he could breathe easier.

And then one day, several months later, a Saturday, Jesse had the encounter with the radio, the Steinmacht radio. The morning had been busy. Everyone was tired from the week.

"Boy, it sure was a long week," Meg said, in bed, stretching, in her nightgown, as if all the weeks were not long. She looked especially desirable to Jesse, but he found himself uncertain about letting her know that. Besides, the kids were only around the corner, in the little house's other bedroom. It was morning – not a good time. He should have thought ahead last night.

A few minutes later, while they were all gathered in the kitchen, his mother called. It was about Jesse's father, of course. His mother and father lived back in the city, where they had always lived. Moving out with Meg to where he and she were did have its positive side. Jesse remembered once he and his father had had such a bad fight that Jesse actually thought his father was going to have a heart attack and die right in the living room of the house in the city.

"Is everything all right?" he asked his mother, knowing it wasn't.

"I just wanted to talk with you, Jesse," his mother told him. His mother had become an enormous woman, and not much good in any situation in the last few years. "Your father's drinking real bad now. Worse than ever before."

"Ma, he's trying to drink himself to death. I told you that before."

"That doesn't make it any easier on me, Jesse," she said to him, after a few moments of silence.

At about noon, Jesse insisted they all get in their car, which Jesse had swapped for his pickup truck when he married Meg, and drive to the new shopping center in the next town. Audrey didn't want to go – she wanted to play with her friends – but Ralphie did, and Meg was happy to please Jesse.

"It'll be fun," Jessie told everyone, especially Audrey. "You'll see. "We can walk around. See what they got."

"Yes, but are we going to *buy* anything?" Audrey asked. "We always walk around, but we hardly buy anything."

"Oh, Audrey, stop it," Meg told her daughter. Now Meg looked tired to Jesse, and lit up another cigarette. He had to figure out how to get her to stop smoking, or at least cut down.

"We'll buy something," Jesse said, taking up Audrey's challenge.

When they got to the new shopping center, Jesse thought he had never seen so many people, a place so crowded, he soon learned, because of all the opening day sales the stores were having. Jesse was especially drawn to an enormous store, called Superworld, and he asked Meg and the kids if they could go into it. Inside the store, people had to squeeze by each other, brushing up against the counters and display cases to do so. On the second floor, in the electronics section, next to the appliance section, Jesse saw the Steinmacht radio. It was on display with a number of other radios, behind a glass case that was locked. The radio was larger than most and very sleek-looking, with a hard, brown, bright-lacquer finish. The face of the radio had several dials, more than ordinary radios, and it just *seemed* foreign-looking, with its strange signs and notations. A small card, in front of the radio to one side said: On Sale!

"Look, guys," Jesse said, pointing to it, almost pushing everyone toward it. "That's a Steinmacht radio. Isn't it gorgeous? Did you ever see anything like it? And it's on sale!"

Meg and Audrey and Ralphie were obviously confused. They weren't quite sure how to react, what to think. Jesse was all excited about this radio, which was handsome enough, but it was, after all, just a radio.

"So?" Audrey asked.

"Yeah," Ralphie said.

Now Jesse was up close to it, his nose almost against the glass. "It's a Steinmacht. It's a Steinmacht. Don't you know anything about Steinmacht radios?"

Meg was wide-eyed. "No, they don't, Jesse. How could they?"

"Well, it's only the best radio made in the world," Jessie explained, turning to them. "I mean, there may be greater radios, in the Army or something, really top-secret kind of stuff. But for *ordinary* people, this is as good as it gets."

"So? So, what?" Audrey said again. There were all these other parts of Superworld she wanted to see, see bad.

"So, nothing," Jesse said. "I just wanted you to see it, that's all. I just wanted to see it."

Audrey shrugged, not impressed.

"Where's the toy section?" Ralphie asked his mother, turning and looking up at her.

"And it's on sale, too," Jesse repeated. "Can you beat that? I never thought I'd see the day. Hell, I never thought I'd see the day that I'd see a radio like that in a place like this."

Meg stared at Jesse, carefully. "Do you want to get it?" she asked him. "You want the radio, Jesse?"

Jesse stared back at Meg. "Are you kidding? We couldn't afford that radio, Meg. Not by a long shot. Sure, I'd like it in my wildest dreams, but that's about it."

"No, get it, Jesse," Meg told him. She took him by the hand. "I want you to get it. We'll afford it somehow."

"I still don't know what's so *special* about that radio," Audrey said. "How do you know about it anyway?"

"My father," Jessie explained. "He isn't good for much, but he always used to tell me about a Steinmacht radio. That's what he always wanted. He said the old machinists from overseas, where he worked, told him about it and said it was the best."

"Can we look at some *toys,* Momma?" Ralphie said, finally a little unpleasant, thinking more about himself.

"Get it, Jesse," Meg repeated. "I don't know why. I just feel you ought to get it."

"I can't," Jesse told her. "Even on sale, it's way out of our league, Meg. You know that."

Meg shook her head at him. She seemed very convinced. "Oh, get it, for God's sake."

"We got bills, Meg. Big bills. And they're gonna keep coming. They ain't going away. That ain't going to change."

"All right, I'll just come back another time, when you're not with me and get it," Meg said.

"Don't you do that, Meg. I want things to work out. I don't want anything to go wrong. Please understand that."

In the end, Jesse bought the Steinmacht radio. It was clear to Meg that he wanted it, and when he considered that fact, he saw the truth of the matter. As he made the purchase, though, he did feel sheepish and edgy.

"You're getting a good buy, mister," the salesman, who was writing up his order, told him. "This is a good sale price." It seemed there were customers all around them, waiting impatiently, even asking questions over Jesse's shoulder.

"Yes," Jesse said. "But it's still a *lot* of money. I mean, a lot of money."

The salesman was a little younger than him, obviously some middle-class kid, who pretty much felt smarter than anyone else.

"Well, it *is* a Steinmacht."

"I know that," Jesse told him. "What are the terms of the payment plan?"

The salesman shrugged. "Pretty much the usual thing. You pay it off in a year. Twelve installments. Plus sales tax and interest. Unless you want the insurance policy, too. That's extra."

Jesse shook his head. "No. No insurance policy. I don't know why people have to buy an insurance policy when something's brand new."

The salesman didn't agree. "Well, I don't know. Some people think that's a better way to go. You never know."

Jesse decided to ignore him. "Twelve installments? What does that come out to each installment? And what's the whole total?"

The salesman seemed to sigh, but computed the figures for Jesse, which he then reported to him. Jesse looked at them closely. "You want to go longer?" the salesman asked. "I can bring the monthly payment down if you go 18 months, two years."

"No, no," Jesse said. "I don't want this to go on for more than a year."

"Suit yourself," the salesman said, turning to the next customer.

On the drive back to their house, Jesse didn't say much or pick up on anything Meg said about the purchase. As for the kids, he hoped *they* didn't say anything that would rattle him. As he took the Steinmacht out of the car, he handled it, in its cardboard carton, as carefully as he could, lifting it out of the trunk of the car and carrying it into the house as if it were a carton of eggs. Once inside the house, he had to decide where to put it, something he hadn't thought of, and finally decided on one end of the living room, rather than in his and Meg's bedroom.

"I want it to be the family's radio," he explained to Meg and the kids. "That way, I'll feel better. What do you think, everybody?" He put the carton on the floor in the living room and began to, rather delicately, open it up, not tearing at the carton.

Audrey didn't seem to care. She was starting to lose interest, and besides, she had wanted something of her own. Ralphie, clearly, wanted to go and play.

"Put it wherever you want," Audrey told him. "I just don't understand why I couldn't get anything."

"Me, too," Ralphie said.

"Knock it off," Meg was quick to intervene. "You two do all right."

"I don't think so," Audrey said. "Can I go out now?"

"I wish you had let me get something for *you,* Meg. You're the one who should have gotten something."

Jesse thought about Meg, about her life so far – it was not much better than his – a first marriage that should never have happened, and now him, Jesse, who could just about manage, if he worked hard enough, was smart enough, and minded his p's and q's.

"What would you like, Meg, if you could have anything?" Jesse asked her.

"I don't know, Jesse," she said, not wanting to be bothered, but good-natured about it, too.

"I mean, more clothes? Your own car? A chance to do some traveling around?"

"I don't know, Jesse. Just enjoy your radio, won't you?"

As he continued to unpack the carton, the others all went their own way, not wanting to wait around until he set it up and played it for them. They could listen to it later. Audrey went across the street to one of her girlfriend's house, and Ralphie went outside to see which of his neighborhood friends might be there.

Slowly, Jesse unpacked each piece of the radio – the tuner itself, its two speakers, its antenna and the connecting wires that came with it.

"Man, this is no one-piece affair," he commented.

When he had all the pieces unpacked and on the floor beside him, Jesse took the directions and began hooking the speakers up to the tuner and attaching the antenna. The job went easy, and for the moment, Jesse began to feel a little better about everything. After the antenna was secure, he spread the ears of it open and pushed the now-assembled radio toward the electrical outlet low on the wall underneath the table by the living room chair. Plugging the radio in, he backed away a little and turned it on, and almost immediately it lit up nicely where the dials were, a glowing green color, and began to send out strong, screechy noises.

"Static," Jesse commented. "Let me find a good station." He turned the radio's tuning dial. "God, I don't even know what a good station is around here," he said.

Finally, a station came in loud and pretty clear, Jesse kneeling before the radio on the floor, leaning forward. At its sound, Meg came into the living room from the kitchen, where she was cleaning up.

"Oh, you got it going, huh?" she observed to him.

"Sort of," Jesse said to her. "I just gotta get one good station coming in perfectly. Gimme a minute."

"It sounds pretty good to me," Meg said.

"Yeah, but I want it to be even better." Jesse was whirling the tuner dial now, bleeping past one station after another whenever he couldn't immediately find one that was static-free. "A radio like this can pull in other countries. Look at those other dials. I think they're even for overseas." Jesse looked up at Meg. "It least, it ought to. It damn well better, seeing how much it's going to cost us."

But try as he may, Jesse could not get the exact sound he wanted from a station. He thought he had it from a few of the local stations, but in the end, he wasn't so sure.

"Those sound just fine, Jesse," Meg tried to assure him, wiping her hands on a towel she had brought into the living room with her. "Those sound just fine to me."

Jesse was wondering if he were getting impatient. "Yeah, but not good enough for what we're paying for this thing. Hell, Meg, it's going to take us a year to pay it off. It better come in better than this. This radio is supposed to be one of the best in the world."

"Well, it sounds OK to me," Meg repeated, thinking it better to go back into the kitchen.

"But the static-y part, Meg. That's what I'm talking about. Listen real carefully."

Jesse put his ear up close to one of the speakers, and Meg leaned forward to oblige him.

"This is the best station I can get. Do you hear it?"

In the end, Meg couldn't hear what Jesse wanted her to hear and did go back into the kitchen. For the next hour or so, Jesse continued to work with the radio. He tried station after station, moving the dial as little and carefully as he could to a promising station, to try and capture the perfect sound, or at least a sound that would satisfy him. He got up off the floor and reconnected the antenna, and moved them around in various directions and to various heights to see if he could get what he wanted. He moved the radio itself, sliding it across the floor. He even took it into the bedroom, to see if the reception would be better there. Soon after that, he walked away from the radio, left it off in the bedroom, passed Meg without saying a word and went outside the house. He wandered around the backyard for some time, not sure whether or not to start a project. A few times, the train cars in the yard, behind the trees and bushes, boomed together. Trying to calm down, he went back inside the house, again not saying anything to Meg, who was cooking, and had another try at the Steinmacht. The radio's reception was the same, no change, a decent-enough sound, but *nothing* clearly *perfect,* in his opinion. The overseas dials were even less satisfactory. A few times more, as the day progressed, he tried again, and again nothing had changed. Finally, just before supper, Jesse walked into the kitchen. Meg had supper on the stove, and was setting the table, Audrey helping her. Ralphie was on the floor, playing with a toy car.

"That's it," he announced. "I'm bringing it back. I'm bringing it back to that damned store. I'm not going to pay for this thing for a year and only get that kind of sound. Do you know what I mean, Meg? Think of all those payments. All that money. I'm just not going to do it."

"But I don't think you can bring it back," Meg said to him. "I don't think you can bring back something when it is on sale."

Jesse was firm. "Oh, no? Well, just wait and see. Just watch me. I'm bringing it back. I really am. Just let them try and give me a hard time."

Meg stood up straight from placing plates out for everyone and put her hands on her hips. "Jesse, the radio's fine. It's OK. I listened to it, and it plays just fine. Stop going crazy over it."

"I'm not going *crazy* over it, Meg. How can you say that? You think I want this to happen? I just wanted everything to be nice."

Meg turned away from him. Audrey and Ralphie looked at him. "Well, do what you want, Jesse. But they're not going to take it back."

"We'll see about that," Jesse said, almost fiercely. "I don't know how I could have done something so stupid."

All day Sunday, Jesse was out of sorts, and the day wasn't much fun for Meg and the children, either. Jesse seemed almost ready to explode, he was so angry and frustrated. Everyone stayed away from him mostly, which he realized and made him try very hard to control himself. Several times, he wanted to go into the bedroom and try the radio, but he resisted, except for one time when he more or less snuck into the bedroom so that no one would see him and get upset. But even that one time, the Steinmacht was no better. There was no change. It was just like on Saturday. The reception came in, but it wasn't what it should be. It wasn't what it should have been for the cost, and for the fact that it was a Steinmacht.

On Monday, Jesse tried hard to concentrate on his work at the factory, and not make matters worse. Silently, he dropped Audrey and Ralphie off at school, and then Meg off at work. He was pretty much the same at his own work. He went into the factory, took his seat at his machine, and began polishing and buffing, minding his own business. At lunch, he tried to talk with some of the other workers, relax, enjoy himself. But, at the end of the day, after punching out, he got back into his car, picked everyone up, and drove straight into the next town to the giant store, Superworld, where he had bought the Steinmacht. He had packed it in the trunk of the car Sunday night.

When they got to Superworld, the parking lot in front of it was not nearly as crowded as it had been on Saturday afternoon, and when they were in the store itself, it was even less crowded. Holding the Steinmacht in its carton in front of him, with his little family hurrying behind him, Jesse made his way to the section where he had bought it. They had to walk across most of the first floor of Superworld, take the escalator up to the second floor, and then march halfway across the second floor to where the electronics section was. Getting there, Jesse saw, to his momentary chagrin, that the same young salesman who had sold him the radio was again behind the counter. He was waiting on a customer, but he did glance up to see Jesse, the radio, and the family, sigh, in no good humor, and return his attention to his customer. The sigh was enough to increase Jesse's angry frustration and resolve. Seeming to take his time, the salesman continued to wait on his customer, a lady about in her 50s, in no apparent hurry. Jesse became more and more agitated. Meg and the children stayed behind him, silent.

Finally, the salesman was finished with his customer, who walked away in the opposite direction, and turned his attention to Jesse, steeling himself for what he could very well guess was coming.

"Yes?" he asked Jesse, on guard, prepared to stand his ground. He looked at the radio in its carton, torn open, as Jesse wanted it to appear. "What can I do for you, sir?"

The two men just didn't like each other. It was perfectly clear.

"Well, what you can do for me," Jesse said. "Is to take this damned thing back. It doesn't work right."

There were a few other customers nearby, but Jesse certainly didn't care. Meg and the children backed away a little, and pretended to be looking at some of the other electronic merchandise.

The salesman raised an eyebrow. "It doesn't work right? That's impossible. It's brand new, and every one of those radios is checked over and over in the factory before it is shipped. It has to be working right."

"Well, it isn't," Jesse insisted. "I don't care what they do in the factory. If they check it, or checked it, a million times. It just doesn't work right."

The salesman wasn't impressed.

"And maybe now I know why it was on sale," Jesse said.

The salesman simply did not feel like, and was not going to, give ground. "And why is that, sir?"

Jesse made out as if he were spelling to an infant. "Because … it … doesn't … *work!*"

"Please, don't shout, sir," the salesman said. "Let me see it."

Jesse put the radio and the carton down, and pushed them at the salesman. "Sure," he said.

Slowly, deliberately, the salesman took the radio out of the carton, other customers paying some attention to what was going on between the salesman and Jesse.

"We have to put it together, of course," the salesman said, not looking up at Jesse.

"Fine," Jesse told him. "Put it together."

"We have to take it over to the other counter, where there is more room and outlets."

"Let's go there then," Jesse responded, ready for anything, ready for war.

Putting the parts of the Steinmacht back into the carton, almost willy-nilly, the salesman carried it to another counter behind the one they were at, Jesse and his family following along, at a bit of a distance. At the second counter, the salesman again unpacked the radio, assembled it quickly, as if an expert, and plugged it into an available electrical socket. The radio burst into noise, and the salesman as quickly grabbed one of its dials to bring a station in.

"Hmmmph," Jesse uttered, in vindication.

When he had found a station, the salesman listened to its sound carefully. Then he twisted the dial to another station, listened, and then repeated this process several times. Each time the station came in, and the salesman nodded his head.

"There's nothing wrong with this radio," the salesman said. "You can hear for yourself. I've tried several stations, and they all sound fine. And we're inside the store with all this other electrical equipment, as well."

"You thought that was *clear?"* Jesse asked the salesman. "You thought that was the kind of reception that the best radio in the world should have?"

The salesman stayed firm, speaking almost with his mouth closed. "Yes, I thought it was perfectly clear. What do you want?"

"I want what I'm paying for," Jesse said, his anger starting to increase by the second. "I want what is going to be worth a year of payments, one hell of a lot of money."

"Well, you have it, sir." The salesman was stony. "There is nothing wrong with this radio. I don't know what you want. Would you like to speak to the store manager?"

Jesse took a very deep breath, and leaned forward toward the salesman menacingly. "That would be just fine with me. You go and get the store manager. Go and get the owner of the whole damn store." More people now were listening to what was going on between Jesse and the salesman, and a few had collected around them. Jesse was aware of Meg and the children staying even farther away from him and the salesman.

"I don't care if you get the goddamn president. Nothing's going to change. I want out of my contract. I'm not going to pay all that money for this thing. You go and get your manager and have him tell me that I'm out of the contract. That you're going to take back this thing." Jesse waved at the Steinmacht, as if to wave it far away from him.

The salesman, who had started to come out from behind the counter, paused. "That's not going to happen, sir. So, you'd better forget it. The manager isn't going to say anything different from me. There's absolutely nothing wrong with the radio, nobody's going to tear up the contract. The radio is yours."

"Oh, it is, huh?" Jesse said, suddenly moving over to where the salesman was, and grabbing onto him by the shirt. "It is, huh? Well, we'll see about that, buddy." Jesse was now pulling the salesman completely out from behind the counter. The man seemed stunned and terrified, as if even in his own anger and stubbornness he had not been prepared for this.

"Jesse, Jesse," Jesse could hear Meg calling, from behind him. "Jesse, Jesse, please."

He also could hear that Ralphie and even Audrey were starting to cry.

But he couldn't help himself. He couldn't stop himself. He just wanted them to take the radio back, to be out of the contract. He just wanted everything to be all right, to work out. That's all he ever wanted, for God's sake.

He could feel the salesman start to crumble under his grip, and his own life start to come apart. But he couldn't help it.

The Value of a Virtual Term Abroad

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Introduction

Participation in a term abroad provides a cultural experience that develops critical skills students need to be globally competent and marketable in today's workforce. For business students, an international experience helps them to understand international business practices and could be preparation for an international business career. This experience also provides the broadly applicable advantages of expanding international and cross-cultural perspectives, and increased interpersonal and communications skills (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson, 2004). Houser, Brannstrom, Quiring and Lemmons (2011) found that even short-term international field experiences had a positive impact on student learning, explained primarily by increased engagement with the course content and new social networks.

Unfortunately, only a small percentage of students participate in study abroad programs and many groups are underrepresented. There is little diversity in race, gender and ethnicity, nor is there access for nontraditional, lower socioeconomic groups, those with disabilities and first-generation college students (Fischer, 2012). From our initial experiences in Panama, we believe even virtual interaction between students in different countries contributes to some of the objectives of a study abroad experience. The eventual goal of this study, then, was to develop a framework that would enable all SUNY students to participate in a virtual term abroad.

Empire State College's programs in Latin America were built on a blended learning model, with mandatory weeklong residencies. In the Dominican Republic and Honduras, we didn't have enough students to merit sending instructors to conduct those residencies. As a solution, we looked to using virtual tools to connect our DR and Honduran students to the residencies we offered with the larger group of students in Panama. Feedback from end-of-term student surveys indicated the experience had been positive but improvements were needed to make the experience more meaningful.

At about this time, news came of the SUNY Innovative Instructional Technology Grant (IITG). Our interest corresponded to the SUNY goals of "creating globally competent students … providing international exposure throughout all courses and degrees … and using social and emerging technologies to network students and faculty throughout the world" (State University of New York, 2009, pp. 18-19). We successfully submitted a proposal for a Tier 2 grant and received $20,000 to explore the use of technology and analyze the benefit of a virtual term abroad. This article will focus on the collaborations and the value of a virtual term abroad.

Theoretical Framework

After analyzing numerous theoretical frameworks, we decided that the work of Etienne Wenger, Trayner and de Laat (2011) in *Promoting and Assessing Value Creation in Communities and Networks: A Conceptual Framework* was the most appropriate framework to assess the value created by a virtual international experience. The value creation framework identifies five value cycles, which are not sequential and may overlap (see image on next page):

Immediate value – Activities and interactions

Potential value – Knowledge capital

Applied value – Changes in practice

Realized value – Performance improvement

Reframing value – Redefining success. (pp. 19-21)

Lorette Pellettiere Calix

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In this essay, we will address our findings related to the following research questions:

1) What is the level of value creation demonstrated by students of different cultures when collaborating in a virtual term abroad using virtual meeting tools, mobile devices and mobile apps?
2) What are students' perceptions related to the value creation of using virtual meeting tools to collaborate with students in other countries?

Value Creation

(Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat as cited in Bozarth, 2012, para. 3)

3) What are faculty perceptions of the value creation within a virtual term abroad?

Methodology

The participating students varied in age from 19 to 50, with 90 percent equally distributed across the 20s, 30s and 40s. Overall, 60 percent of the total participating students were female, although the Latin American students were primarily male. The students in Panama and the Dominican Republic were a cohort participating in a blended learning program with both online and face to face components. The students in the United States were, in some cases, in traditional classroom-based courses, and in one case, in a fully online course. Of a total of 95 enrolled students in the eight courses we analyzed (four collaborations), 31 participated in the surveys (32.6 percent).

Empire State College's program in Panama was appropriate for this pilot project because the students move through the program as a cohort, allowing us to evaluate difficulties and develop solutions over a 14-month period. During the grant period, we worked with a cohort of students who had already experienced two terms of academic work in the program and completed another three academic terms during the grant period. This allowed them to give us valuable feedback on the differences they perceived before and after the course collaborations.

Course Collaborations

The guidelines for the collaborations were broad enough to let each faculty team create assignments that fit within the context of their courses. The guidelines for the purposes of this study suggested a two- to three-week collaboration with a minimum of two virtual sessions, a cross-team assignment and an asynchronous blog discussion. For the purposes of this pilot, faculty were not asked to create assignments connected to specific global competence goals. We planned on using blogs rather than having a group discussion within ANGEL. This allowed open access for the students without the constraints of having to be enrolled in the course. We allowed faculty to choose whichever teleconferencing equipment they preferred, since our goal was to analyze the value of the collaboration and not the specific tool used. Tools suggested included Skype, Blackboard Collaborate, Zoom and BlueJeans. We allowed faculty to coordinate when the collaborations would take place, but they had to be announced in the syllabus prior to the start of the class, giving students adequate time to prepare.

Activities were designed to assess the value of the collaboration and assess how closely a virtual term abroad could simulate an on-the-ground experience. Faculty facilitated the virtual sessions and all activities were designed to encourage meaningful discussion between the students, and a team project that met both the academic expectations of the course as well as meaningful cross-cultural interaction. Assignments included paired interviews, the development of a website, posting research and discussing on a blog, and discussion of case studies. The following is a description of three of the collaborations:

Empire State College – College of Westchester (Collaborations 1 and 2 – See Table 1)

Each collaboration started with an asynchronous icebreaker. This gave students a chance to introduce themselves to one another and share something about their culture. The icebreaker session was followed by a virtual session that was moderated by the faculty. For the first collaboration, students were asked to research the other country prior to the start of the session and prepare a question to ask. The plan for the session was to alternate students from each country and have them pose a question to another student. On the day of the session, there was a blackout throughout the city of Panama. Approximately five minutes before the session was to begin, the power returned and almost the entire class logged in for the session. The blackout did prevent the students in Panama from researching a topic, but the session did result in a lot of lively discussion between students from the two countries. We paired students up to do an interview. The students were allowed to choose the online tool they would use for this activity. They then had to submit a summary of the actual interview and a personal reflection on what they learned. The process of pairing up students and their connecting for the interview went well; there were no major issues. In the second collaboration, the Panama students had difficulties connecting with their College or Westchester counterparts and only one team completed the assignment. It is not clear why there were issues in the second collaboration that did not arise in the first.

During the virtual sessions, the CW students were all together in a classroom while the Panama students logged in from their homes, jobs and in some cases, cars. As part of the second collaboration, we arranged for the first virtual session to take place during the residency so that the Panama students would be together. On the night of the first virtual meeting, all of the universities were closed in Panama due to a lack of rain resulting in an energy shortage. Faculty packed up all the equipment and set up a classroom at the hotel. We were able to hold a successful session.

The second collaboration used case studies as the primary assignment for the virtual sessions. The faculty felt the first collaboration was so successful they wanted to increase the number of virtual sessions. When looking at schedules, we were only able to find three times for virtual sessions. Students were asked to read an assigned case study as preparation for the session discussion. The discussions were guided by faculty and specific questions related to the case study. In the second collaboration, students from two CW courses participated with two faculty facilitators.

Empire State College – Slovakia (Collaboration 5 – See Table 1)

As part of work related to another grant, SUNY COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning), Patrice Prusko Torcivia worked with an ESC instructional designer who was living in Slovakia in the design and development of a co-taught, co-designed Internet Marketing course. The course was developed in Moodle, which was being used by the university in Slovakia. This allowed all students to work in the same learning management system throughout the entire 15-week, full course collaboration. At the start of the course, there were 25 students from Slovakia and nine from ESC Panama. When creating the teams, we tried to balance them by including a student who had some expertise in website design, English language skills and years of education completed. While the course was a requirement for the students from Panama, the students from Slovakia were taking this course at no cost and it was not needed as part of any degree program. The lack of a vested interest in course completion impacted both the participation throughout the course as well as completion of the course.

Due to the time difference and having students in both classes who worked, virtual sessions were held on Sunday afternoons at 3 p.m. EST. The participation by the students from Slovakia in the virtual sessions was low. It is not clear if this was due to a lack of vested interest in the course or because they were held on a Sunday. The sessions were mandatory and the quality of student participation was included in the determination of their final grade. The team assignment was the development of a website for Habitat for Humanity in Slovakia.

Examples of guest speakers included Trudi Jacobson, who spoke about transliteracy skills and Adam Ceresko, CEO of Appek (mobile applications), who spoke about what it takes to start an Internet company, highlighting the importance of being innovative, having vision, taking risks and ownership and accountability of one's actions. Students in Slovakia presented the final website to Habitat for Humanity. Due to the time difference, we weren't able to do this as a team presentation. As part of this collaboration, students used Facebook as a way to discuss assignments, work on team projects and share articles of interest.

Results

Student Experience and Perceptions

The average participation rate in the blogs was 72 percent, with a range from 52 to 89 percent. Students participated from one to seven times in each blog discussion, with an average of 3.7 posts per student. The most active blog discussions were the initial icebreakers. Interestingly, except for the icebreaker discussion, the groups that had less synchronous virtual contact were more active in the online blog space. Instructors indicated there was more active participation during the collaborative exercise. Sixty-five percent of the students also indicated they believed there was more participation during the collaborative exercise. The relatively higher number of posts during the collaboration compared to other course discussion forums supports value created in the "Immediate value" cycle.

The quality of the posts, or "educationally valuable talk" (EVT), as analyzed using the Bliss and Lawrence (2009) framework (educationally valuable posts/total number of posts) varied from a low of .11 to a high of 3.5 EVT posts per participating student. Uzuner (2007) defined educationally valuable talk as "a particular interactional pattern in online discussion threads characterized as dialogic exchanges whereby participants collaboratively display construction, and at times, critical engagement with the ideas or key concepts

Table 1. Course Collaboration Descriptions

#	University	Virtual Session	Team Project	Asynchronous Discussion
1	ESC-CW	Zoom – guided discussion	Paired interview	Blog
2	ESC-CW	Zoom – case study analysis	Paired interview	Blog
3	ESC-CW	Blackboard Collaborate – case study analysis	None (Individual assignments shared with group)	Blog
4	ESC-ESC	None	Internet Market plan/website	Moodle forum
5*	ESC-University of Brataslava	Zoom – guest speakers	None	None
6*	SUNY/Cortland	Skype – guest speaker		

*Data not included in analysis

that make up the topic of an online discussion, and build knowledge through reasoning, articulations, creativity and reflections" (Threaded discussions section, para. 1). The icebreaker discussions, whose value was in forming a sense of community and identification with the students in the other country, were not counted as EVT. Student post-collaboration survey results indicated that 70 percent of the students thought the quality of the discussions during the collaboration was higher than during other discussion forums in the course. This also affirms value created during the "Immediate Value" cycle.

Initial data analysis indicates increased value in multiple virtual term abroad experiences. Numerous students from both ESC and CW in Collaboration 1 also participated in Collaboration 2. The second time the students met in the blog they expressed recognition for the other students and indicated they were happy to be working with them again:

> *I believe that there are some familiar faces from our previous collaboration, it's great to be working with you guys again! (Panama student A)*
>
> *Last term, we had a collaboration with you guys and it was really interesting. I learned a lot and was glad to have met two of you guys through our interview assignment. So, I am glad to work with you guys again. (Panama student B)*
>
> *I'm glad to be back. It is very exciting to know that we are going to have another time to learn from each other. I felt last time we didn't have enough time for our discussions. (U.S. student A)*
>
> *Hi, my colleagues in Panama. I am looking forward to once again collaborating with you. (U.S. student B)*

Despite this enthusiasm, the online participation was much lower the second time that students participated in a collaboration (89 percent participation and 4.7 posts per student the first time, vs. 53 percent participation and 1.1 posts per student the second time). These were the students who also had more contact in virtual sessions where they were seeing and speaking to one another. Data analysis indicates that more personal contact in the virtual sessions was more exciting and satisfying to the students than the strictly asynchronous communication. The second time, when students were already familiar with one another, there were fewer posts related to getting to know one another.

This observation is echoed by the data from online forums in the courses that did not have as much (or any) virtual contact. The students who primarily communicated through the blogs had higher participation rates and a greater number of posts per student, and similarly, had a higher number of quality posts. Lacking the opportunity for virtual contact, students made greater use of the asynchronous online discussion forum.

Results indicate that the Panamanian and Dominican students had higher participation rates and a higher number of posts per student. This may have been because of a greater comfort level with the tools, but also may reflect a culture in which values establishing personal relationships and high levels of communication serve as a precursor to "working" together. An exception to familiarity with the tools is the course First Peoples of America taught by mentor Rhianna Rogers, which already incorporated blogs as a routine part of the course learning activities. Even in this situation, however, the Latin American students, who were less familiar with blogging than the U.S. students, posted more often with an average of 7 posts per student compared to 5.75 posts per U.S. student and a proportionate difference in EVT.

Student Perceptions of Value Created

Analysis of student survey responses indicates most of the value created was in the first cycle: Immediate value (activities and interactions). Survey responses indicated students found the project to be fun or inspiring, they made connections between the collaboration and their course content, they found the activity to be relevant, and they made connections with new people. Nonetheless, one of the second ranked values was from Cycle 5, Reframing value: "I see the value in sharing and learning with people from other cultures." The third ranked value created was from Cycle 2, Potential Value (knowledge capital): "I have gained confidence in my ability to engage with people from another country or culture" (See Table 2).

The least impact on value creation was in Cycle 3: Applied value (changes in practice). Four of the bottom five ranked questions were in Cycle 3, with students indicating they didn't feel they got to know the students in the other country well enough to build trust and confidence. This may be due to the short length of the collaborations, since it takes a significant amount of time and interaction to build trust. Cycle 4 (Realized Value – performance improvement) also showed only moderate

TABLE 2. Student perception of GREATEST value created

VALUE CREATED	% STUDENTS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE	% STUDENTS WHO NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	% STUDENTS WHO DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE	AGREE MINUS DISAGREE	CYCLE
The project was fun or inspiring	77.4	22.8	0	77.40	**1**
I made learning connections between the collaborative project and other course content.	77.4	19.4	3.2	74.20	**1**
I see the value in sharing learning with people from other countries and cultures.	77.4	19.4	3.2	74.20	**5**
I have gained confidence in my ability to engage with people from another country or culture.	73.3	26.7	0	73.30	**2**
The activity and interaction were relevant to me.	74.2	22.6	3.2	71.00	**1**
I interacted or made connections with new people.	76.7	16.7	6.6	70.10	**1**

Student post-collaboration survey results 2013

TABLE 3. Student perception of LEAST value created

VALUE CREATED	% STUDENTS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE	% STUDENTS WHO NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	% STUDENTS WHO DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE	AGREE MINUS DISAGREE	CYCLE
I trust students in the other country enough to ask them for help.	41.4	48.3	10.3	31.10	3
I know students in the other country well enough to know what they can contribute to my learning.	48.4	41.9	9.7	38.70	3
I feel less isolated.	48.4	51.6	0	48.40	3
I have access to documents or sources of information I would not otherwise have had.	63.3	23.3	13.4	49.90	4
I have gained access to new people	61.3	29	9.7	51.60	3

Student post-collaboration survey results 2013

levels of value creation, with the criteria of having access to new information also in the bottom five (See Table 3).

Initial results support the impact that even a short-term collaboration can have on value creation. Survey responses showed that students found strong value creation in the fifth cycle: "I see the value in sharing and learning with people from other cultures." This is the essence of the value of a study abroad experience: increased understanding and appreciation of another point of view.

Faculty Feedback

Preliminary results from the faculty surveys echoed the student responses. While, at the time of this writing, we have still not completed a final analysis of faculty survey responses, preliminary results from the faculty who participated in the first collaborations confirm value created through the virtual term abroad experience. One hundred percent of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the student's greatest value creation results (Table 2). In addition:

- 75 percent of the faculty felt the students had greater participation
- 75 percent of the faculty felt the students demonstrated more learning
- 67 percent of the faculty perceived greater student engagement
- 67 percent were more satisfied with the course that contained a collaboration compared to other courses they teach.

No faculty disagreed with the above statements. One faculty member commented: "I found the level and substance of student engagement made this an invaluable project" (Faculty post-collaboration survey).

Faculty did report that the course collaboration represented a significant increase in workload, and sometimes did not achieve the results they had hoped for. One instructor, disappointed with the results, speculated that the collaborations might lend themselves better to theoretical or cultural courses rather than courses of a more technical orientation. Nonetheless, that same instructor felt the overall experience was positive and added, "It is great to have another teacher from the other side [who] brings some [other] perspectives and opinions" (Faculty post-collaboration focus group).

Despite the additional workload and problems with technology and communication, when asked if they would do it again, 100 percent of the faculty said "yes."

Discussion

Initial data analysis indicates limitations of our research and areas that warrant further research.

- A study designed with collaborations that have learning objectives tied to the activities. It is recommended that the activities and objectives be tied to the Association of American Colleges and Universities rubrics (Rhodes, 2010).
- Survey instruments that would be more reliable if piloted. While we did test the instruments and made some modifications, after applying, we discovered some flaws. For example, we did not limit the course choices that would have helped us distinguish differences between the students in different countries. As a result, some students named both the course in which they were enrolled as well as the partner course. As a consequence, all of our data is global, separated only into student and faculty results.
- Tools that provide the opportunity for students to both see and hear one another at all times promoted greater engagement and verbal discussion. If the students had the option to turn off their cameras or use a chat box, they tended to hide in the chat, rarely using their microphones.
- Icebreaker discussion that builds enthusiasm among the students.
- Close communication between the participating instructors; defining the roles and responsibilities of each.
- Testing the equipment in advance; have a Plan B.
- Giving students sufficient advance notice of scheduled virtual sessions.
- Collaboration that would be required and factored into a student's overall grade.
- Virtual sessions that include student participation and activities encouraging engagement.
- Providing more faculty training and student orientation.
- Providing faculty with more support because of the additional workload created.
- The use of tools that are mobile device friendly. While most of the students and faculty used their computers to access the collaboration activities and participate in virtual sessions, there were always some students who used mobile devices. When there were technological difficulties, mobile devices saved the day!

Future Research

There is sufficient evidence of value created with a virtual term abroad to merit further research. In addition to expanding the sample size to corroborate our preliminary results, other research questions to explore are:

- Are there differences in perceptions of value created between the students in different countries? If so, what might explain those differences?
- Did the perceptions of students who participated in more virtual sessions differ from the perceptions of the students who did not experience as many virtual sessions?
- Would asynchronous voice thread tools affect student perceptions?
- Would longer collaborations create more value?
- Is the impact of the virtual term abroad long lasting?
- Is student learning and engagement impacted beyond the period of collaboration?
- Did differences in instructor interaction and intervention impact student perceptions of value created?
- Are some "types" of courses better suited for virtual term abroad collaborations than others?

Ultimately, we believe Empire State College can offer a unique opportunity to all SUNY students, as well as students at other universities. We have international partnerships established in several countries that can provide a platform for numerous course collaborations, even full term virtual study experiences. As a next step, we would like to see International Programs courses with strong online components incorporated into the college course catalog, and freely offered for enrollment of SUNY students and collegewide. This could be the only opportunity for an international experience that many of our students may be able to acquire.

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Declaring Adulthood: A Conversation with Joseph B. Moore, Part II

Ed Warzala, School for Graduate Studies

All About Mentoring #43 *included the first part of an interview with Joseph B. Moore, the second president of SUNY Empire State College, who left ESC to assume the presidency of Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2007. This conversation with Ed Warzala took place in Cambridge in August, 2012. Thanks again to Ed Warzala and to Joe Moore for their help in editing this text. The entire Moore-Warzala dialogue can be found at http://cml.esc.edu/publications/aamextras.*

Ed Warzala: Are the traditions of Empire State College and the legacy of Ernest Boyer more influential in the case of Empire State College than they might be in the case of other institutions? Is there something about that particular founding and Boyer's leadership and stature that set Empire apart from the rest?

Joe Moore: I think for a certain number of people, there is intensity to that – of its birth and its evolution – that is pretty specific to Empire. That being said, many institutions carry with them very compelling narratives and core values for the people who have worked there 20 to 30 plus years. Very often the faculty and staff of an institution see their institution as particularly unique. There's a borderline between a genuine appreciation and affection for the special mission and nature of your institution, and a debilitating hubris. I've always enjoyed that spectrum. Here at Lesley, there are people who believe this is the most unique, interesting, value-driven institution in American higher education! So I think: OK, good, that's great, and quite often, the implications of that are positive. But every once in a while, they're a little less than positive.

E.W.: Lesley is actually quite unique and does things very differently as does Empire. If you contrast either one of those institutions with any of the 13 comprehensive colleges in the SUNY system, they are very different from the top down. One wonders if those in the SUNY System Administration and a chancellor who came in from a more traditional institution might ask themselves: "What is this thing?"

J.M.: Relatively, I think you're right, and Empire more so than Lesley. I think anybody objectively looking at ESC would say that. The question is: When is that perception of specialness an asset and when does it become a liability?

E.W.: When did you take off and begin to see Empire State College as your own college to lead and help shape?

J.M.: I think it was in the second year, and frankly, it was the same thing here at Lesley. Generally speaking from my experience, a presidency is felt when you get to your fourth, fifth and sixth years. You need to go through one strategic planning phase early in your second year and work with the community strategically and get through that. Then when you start thinking about a second planning process, you've got a much deeper foundation of information. By then, your relationships with everybody are even stronger, and the odds of you being closer to doing strategically what that institution needs at that moment are perhaps greater than at any other point in time.

E.W.: What do you consider your most significant accomplishments as president of Empire State College? Or what would you do differently if you had a chance to do it again?

J.M.: I'd need a hundred do-overs! I think people may think of the facility stuff and the term calendar and lots of things like that, but to be honest with you, I think what I feel best about is the work with my administrative colleagues. I don't just mean in Saratoga, but I mean the whole crew with the deans and others. That work was trying to address the quality of the leadership throughout the institution, and I'd taken

Joe Moore

that seriously – knowing that the deans and others would get my support on anything that had to do with academic quality. We needed to take on those issues. I think a lot of presidential leadership is not high profile. What's written about presidents when they leave is how many buildings were added, what the enrollment was, or how they grew the endowment. They don't talk about the daily decisions and how an administration serves student learning by way of its daily work.

I think, in the final analysis, the facility stuff is thought of as creating space where academic work goes on. That's the purpose; it's not successful because you got an appropriation from the state. It's successful because there's academic quality delivered in the work of the center. I think working with Bill Ferrero on facilities and Joyce Elliott on issues of academic quality are what I consider important accomplishments. But there are other people who actually do the mentoring and engage in the conversations about it.

Much effort went into all of us working together to try and deliver high quality education for as high a percentage of people who chose to put their money in Empire State College. I think if I had a do-over, it would be to have said that more often. I feel like I've come to appreciate Empire State College more. Some of the most compelling stories came from people who I would meet somewhere in my travels around the state with a connection to Empire. I heard detailed facts; I heard "this experience changed my life." I think it was the nitty-gritty work behind the scenes, often low profile, which I hope contributed to enhancing the odds that we actually could deliver on our mission. You have to have a good college to pull that off, so that to me was the test. The other stuff was just high profile and what many people will remember and may write about.

E.W.: In terms of the SUNY system and the state legislature, would you say that you had to be a very strong advocate and defender of the college, a bulldog for the interests of the college?

J.M.: I think you've got to enjoy a sense of competition with it. You have to know when to hold back and you have to be patient and you have to be willing to waste some time. People don't know the number of times I went down to the legislature, where I sat there reading and waiting for two hours to speak with someone for five minutes when they came out of a committee meeting.

E.W.: You began your presidency in the SUNY system at Empire State College; now you're in a private university. How is the job the same and how is it different?

J.M.: It's more similar than what people might think. When I interviewed for the job here as one of the finalists, one of the faculty said to me: "Well, you've been predominantly in the public sector; what do you know of fundraising and private higher education?" I said to them: "That's a really good question, if it were 1980. What's happened since the '80s is that state appropriation percentages across the country have dropped precipitously. We're all tuition dependent, so this linkage between us and what we think is the marketplace out there is the same. What's going on with for-profit education is that the for-profits are the fastest growing sector in higher education. This is hurting public and private education, not just enrollment, but it's bringing down a regulatory environment that's going to hit the rest of us because of their abuses in recruitment, admissions and their administration of financial aid. The fact is that almost all revenue in for-profit education is originating through the federal government and coming through students who don't graduate. They represent a disproportionate amount of the loan defaults. So we're all in this same thing – public and private.

E.W.: The legislature seems to have been much more of a focus for you than was SUNY. You've talked about the legislature and the political realm and hardly made reference to SUNY or SUNY chancellors or SUNY System Administration or the State Education Department. Were these other centers of power of little concern to your administration?

J.M.: There is a means to an end. I think if you talked to people at State Ed. and at SUNY, they knew me. I went down and was in their offices. But if you drew a direct line between the changes in Empire and something going on outside of the college, you'd have to look at legislative appropriation for facilities and that kind of thing. In the final analysis, SUNY is, to some degree, a regulatory agency, and so is the State Education Department. It is the ultimate regulatory agency, so we had to deal with them when we started the Master of Arts in Teaching and the nursing programs. There is a regulatory agency involved for good reason, but I had a really good relationship with the then commissioner of education, Rick Mills. He and I knew each other in Vermont; we started the MAT program at Empire because of my relationship with Rick. We ran into one another at a gas station on the New York Thruway and he heard that I was at Empire. He wondered whether we could help adults to become teachers, to teach in the urban schools where we had large numbers of people teaching with no teacher's license, and that's what started it. We had tremendous help from SUNY counsel on a variety of legal issues here and there. The attorneys who were assigned to us were always responsive; we had good financial advice. I'd say, I don't mean to discount SUNY, but that's what a system office should do. There were some highly competent, good people who were in the background, who made things happen that helped us a lot. I didn't see those at SUNY as change agents for Empire; that was us, we decided at Empire what we wanted to do.

E.W.: Can you imagine a SUNY that is much more prominent in the business of the colleges? I mean, last year there were six SUNY campuses that were informed that they would be sharing presidents. I don't know if there were actions like that in my recent memory. That's pretty bold, wouldn't you say?

J.M.: I hadn't been there during that, but I'm not impressed with that kind of stuff.

E.W.: Doesn't that mean that SUNY System is starting to assert itself, to act in new ways with regard to the campuses?

J.M.: I think the notion that you're going to be more efficient and thus knock off some presidencies at institutions is quite silly when you look at the budgets of all SUNY institutions and SUNY System. I think it's a high profile move, but it doesn't get at the core issues – issues of affordability, program delivery and that kind of thing. Having been at a system office and worked around system offices at the Pennsylvania system and then in Vermont, I have a bit of a contrary notion about the role of the system office. In my view, it should be small. It provides for the institutions and it should do everything it can to help those institutions grow in terms of both quality and quantity. It should be phenomenally focused on the needs of an educated population, and that's not the dynamic behind most systems. Let's just leave it at that.

E.W.: Did you have any frustrations or challenges in representing Empire State College in SUNY?

J.M.: I think the thing that's important to recognize is that in the vast majority of people's minds, when they say the word "college" or "higher education" or a "university or postsecondary education," they have in mind a traditional institution with residence halls, football and soccer teams, drinking problems and questions about whether they should let students have cars or not. They think of dorms and dining costs, federal financial aid that is customized around parent's income, and expected family contribution. The whole thing is geared this way. As I said to a friend, "You will never have the adult learner be the first thing in mind, because of the Final Four. March Madness, in essence, reinforces to the country, as does the football season: young people going away to college." At SUNY, that same thing goes on. Anybody who becomes chancellor probably didn't get his or her degree at Empire or Charter Oaks College, or even at a community college. They just don't know, so formulas for funding are set up based upon FTE [full-time equivalent]. At Geneseo, the head count and the FTE are almost exactly the same. I'll make up a number: 5,000 students at Geneseo and 5,000 FTE. What does that tell you? All the students there are full time. At Empire, which had the highest ratio of any SUNY institution, it was about 2.5 to 1. So you get a head count of 18,000 and an FTE of around 6,000 or 7,000. What does that mean for the institution? Our records office is dealing with 18,000 people. SUNY thinks we're a little bit larger than Geneseo on paper. Advising, transcripts, everything, is three times what they think. I pointed this out to them a zillion times because it comes from a huge bias. To me, that was the inherent challenge of Empire State College and that's why in the final analysis, Empire State College has to have its own good plan.

E.W.: Shifting a little bit: The publicly traded, for-profits are clearly beginning to be an alternative to public higher education and to more traditional private higher education. So what do you think this means, not only for Empire State College, but for your own university, as well? Isn't this is a very new higher education environment?

J.M.: It is dramatically new and my thinking on it has changed even in the last few years. I used to suggest to people that this was not all bad; that rather than just having a knee-jerk reaction against the University of Phoenix and other for-profits, there were certain practices that they were involved with that I thought were good practices. Some practices were good, in terms of adoption and design of curriculum, some in terms of training adjuncts, some in terms of websites and access to information. While some of that may still be true, I'm less interested in saying that now. I think the federal government is abrogating its responsibility to set up distinctive regulatory systems for its for-profit side. The motivations of the for-profit leadership, meaning the investors and CEOs who gain on pure profits, are such that the incentives are aligned with them to enroll as many students as possible every semester, without regard for whether they will finish or not. It's the only way to generate the profits that are necessary to increase volume, because they can't increase the tuition rates too much anymore. It's volume over rate. It's people who know numbers and benefit from taking advantage of people who do not know numbers. It's the new civil rights issue. People are taking on debt and they're not sure what exactly it is and what it's going to cost them. Disproportionately, they're not finishing their degrees. They're ending up with no degree and high debt, and as a result, investors are walking away with a high turnover in enrollment that they have to keep sustaining. This is why the projection for them in the last few years has been somewhat diminished, and bad press is catching up to some degree. Where you have institutions in which 90 percent of the revenue is coming from the federal loan program, you have a problem, and that's what's been going on. The feds have not been as attentive or quick to regulate this because of the power behind those for-profit firms, dominantly supporting the Republicans and Republican candidates with big money. So as a result, the government is not moving on it.

E.W.: Maybe what many traditional colleges do is becoming obsolete. Maybe the future is in certificates and badges of skill sets. Maybe what we're seeing is the beginning of a paradigm shift and we're just living and working in the decaying paradigm.

J.M.: I don't think so. I think the numbers are telling a different story. The University of Phoenix, Capella and Corinthian, all of them – they and their students – for some reason believe the same thing we do: It's the power of the degree. This is why they're buying more and more smaller, private accredited institutions. This isn't just online learning. They're literally buying small institutions all over the globe, not just in this country. There's money to be made there because the rest of traditional higher education has convinced everybody of the correlation between income and educational attainment, so they're riding that wave. There's more talk around the edges about competency, certification and badges, but not a lot of us would be saying to our kids, "Don't bother going to college, get a badge." I've always found that argument about whether the paradigm is changing presented by someone who has a postgraduate degree.

E.W.: Touché! But this leads us to your neighbors in town here. What are your thoughts about the Harvard and MIT edX venture, to which I believe they've committed $60 million?

J.M.: It's not for credit.

E.W.: Well they're discussing hiring 30,000 adjuncts (without benefits), to certify that learning and to accredit it in some way.

J.M.: "In some way," is the key phrase here. I found this absolutely amusing and I don't mean it in a condescending way. MIT makes its courses available online and gets great press. Do you know anyone who has taken and completed an MIT course online?

E.W.: My understanding is quite a number of people have, though most not in the U.S. MOOC [massive open online course] participation is about 85 percent from Asian and other countries, I believe, and people are learning. There seems to be endless new learning models out there.

J.M.: Let's describe what MIT is doing as a form of digital content that is available for you in the form of a self-tutorial; there's no instructor, there's no interaction, there's no engagement. It's like me in the late '70s finding a syllabus from Empire State College's correspondence course. Let's say it's an English course by William Kennedy, and so I find it and say "Oh fantastic!" I follow the syllabus and do all the readings – great. We've got that going on with MIT's courses. Probably people in different colleges and universities may be using their materials as a reference point for the design of their courses – all good. Is it expanding access to higher education? Is it getting more people to degrees? Is it engaging more people in a form of engaged writing? No. Then Harvard and MIT announce edX and then also about the same time we have the case at the University of Virginia, where the president gets fired purportedly because they're not making a lot of moves to distance learning. Then, she gets hired back because, guess what, they had some conversations with Coursera, and she documents they had conversations with provosts and deans. Then in the next year they were going to have four courses online. Four courses! Let's just put this in the context of one sector: public community colleges. For how many years have they had full online degree programs educating hundreds of thousands of people? Why is it that a noncredit arrangement between Harvard and MIT gets all this press, but what Dutchess County, Herkimer County, Hudson Valley and community colleges across the country do goes unnoticed? Why is it that what public regional colleges and universities and places such as Empire are doing go largely unnoticed?

E.W.: Perhaps it's the name recognition and the $60 million. Suppose the student from edX takes part in this learning experience and submits a portfolio to Empire State College to have that portfolio reviewed, and that student is granted credit through the prior learning assessment process?

J.M.: Terrific, and that's the next stage. If you look at adult learning, we make the assumption that all learning has to occur within the college. My point is: If I'm a mentor in Buffalo and there's a really good course at UMassOnline or a Penn State World Campus or Western Governors, why wouldn't a student take that course? I don't want them to be charged a lot of fees or anything else, just take it as a non-matriculated student, then transfer the credit in. We'll count it toward your degree if it is consistent with the degree plan. Well that's easy, it's an accredited institution. We have ways of transferring credit and we can do it. Now, let's look at a different situation, Khan Academy. I have a student who's a little math phobic and wants to do this math and it seems to be working for her. Great! Do we do a CLEP test, do we do a portfolio, how do we sense that she's actually learning? We're now entering the age of digital content, unrelated to credit. So how can an institution like Empire or Lesley make it part of an individualized degree plan? What means would we have to guarantee quality and how would we train mentors who have no background in this? No one does, and we already know that there's legitimate content out there. So edX and MIT courses are just examples of this larger issue. Go to the National Geographic website or go to other places where you can engage in certain studies that are college-level learning. If I have a mentor or an advisor who can help me structure that learning, I can present for you a digital research paper that will knock your socks off, in terms of college-level work. Do I deserve credit for that? You bet I do, and that's coming.

Why is it that what public regional colleges and universities and places such as Empire are doing go largely unnoticed?

E.W.: My research points to an emerging paradigm shift that we're just coming to grips with now. I worry that public higher education is not up to the task, is not keeping up.

J.M.: You're right, but most institutions won't allow it. They're too conservative; they don't want to take on the issues that Empire has in terms of accreditation, financial aid and how does this count toward a faculty member's load? What do you mean "prior learning"? What do you mean "a portfolio"? We're used to a traditional model, so one of the tasks for Empire is to remind people how cutting edge it is, much, much more often, in order to have us all relax a little bit about the internal debates. Those internal debates were at a much more sophisticated level around these issues that other institutions don't even talk about.

E.W.: There is a lot of interesting stuff going on out there with open learning. So, given this beginning of a transformation in higher education, or maybe it's a paradigm shift or maybe not, how, if you were the SUNY chancellor, would you deploy a system resource like Empire State College?

J.M.: Well, I wouldn't; I would take a different approach. I wouldn't do that with any of the institutions. My job there would be to administer the state appropriation, to administer the capital appropriation, to provide centralized legal services. I'd help with the human resources personnel system since you're employees of the state of New York. I'd be very careful on the academic program, because when we say "deploy" Empire, what about deploying the community colleges? What about deploying the research universities? That I can assure you is not on the agenda of the presidents of those institutions. The University at Buffalo has a tangential relationship with SUNY, and the community colleges are really a reflection of their leadership and their focus on their communities. I think what's needed in system offices are more and more chancellors who understand the appropriate constraints for the system office. Systems need to become highly effective and efficient and small organizations that support the individual campuses in realizing their missions.

E.W.: If you were the leader of SUNY, wouldn't you feel a necessity to have a capacity within your system, a capacity that doesn't exist now? Wouldn't you as a system executive feel obligated to offer something better and less expensive to your state's citizens? Isn't there a place in public higher education for something equivalent to what the for-profits are doing very badly?

J.M.: Sure, and there are some examples of it if you look at some of the collaborations in different states. You've got the Illinois collaborative, you've got UMassOnline, Penn State World Campus, University of Maryland University College. They have developed a more robust online operation. You've got examples of that, but why does that need to be SUNY? Why can't it be anybody?

E.W.: It seems that within SUNY, Empire is best positioned to meet what appears to be a societal need for alternative, adult higher education.

J.M.: Because Empire sees itself differently, it may be setting up a discourse through which Empire, as the distinctive institution within the SUNY system, has to play its role. But in point of fact, these issues are relevant for every SUNY institution. What I suggest to people here at Lesley is that this is where mission and budget complement one another. We need more people learning and we need to think of ways we can grow moderately in order to sustain a financial foundation so we get to deliver on our mission. What are the ways we can do it? We can't do it with traditional programs; we can't do it by growing undergraduate traditional students. So, it's a strategic plan and I've got my own notions about what strategies are going to be successful and which aren't going to be.

E.W.: Do you imagine a convergence of the traditional and nontraditional student?

J.M.: I don't, for a whole slew of reasons. I think the country still has the need for the phenomenon of the traditional residential college experience, for those who can afford it, that time between 18 to 22, where you go away. I think we're competitive and we try to compete in that arena a little bit. But then, to be honest, the grad students are just like the Empire State College rank and file student: adults working, raising families, engaged in study for a particular outcome, most of them job related, occasionally purely educational or altruistic, but most often ends toward means. It's an enormous amount of fun to have both.

E.W.: Can American higher education adapt to the demands out there in the marketplace?

J.M.: All the data tells me the answer is no. Gerald Heeger, the former president of the University of Maryland University College, and I went down to D.C. to lobby on the hill, to make loans available to adult students who were going less than half time. We met with the staff of the key congressional committees, both House and Senate. Jerry and I were sitting there and wondering … everyone we were talking to there was under 30; they all went to highly selective institutions. What did they know about adults? One of the young people said, "Well the data on the adult learners is that many of them don't complete their degrees. If they don't complete their degrees, when would the long payback time start, after the six-month waiver period?" I said, "They don't need to wait until the degree is done; they have mortgages, they have car loans, they just need a short-term loan to pay the bill." Have them start paying it back at the end of the semester for God's sake! I don't care how you do it, but change your way of thinking here. Impossible!

E.W.: There has always been a tension in higher education's role between professional and workforce development and the traditional liberal arts education. Do you think the American university, with its traditional emphasis in the liberal arts, will remain viable, given shifts in the global economy?

J.M.: I think the traditional liberal arts institution is among the minority of all institutions. I would argue that American higher education institutions are actually a diverse set of groups of institutions. From a diesel training institute in Cleveland, Ohio to Amherst College, there are a lot of different sectors here. Look at the sectors that have a tighter correlation between the curriculum and employment, and also to some degree, technical training institutes and community colleges. These were uniquely American forms of education, and the growth of that sector's enrollment has been a phenomenal success in this country, even given the low graduation rates in urban community colleges. But a lot of people go there for short-term training, certificates, x-number of courses and they gain employment. Some of them get good jobs, some of them bad jobs, some with moderate pay, some with low pay. But the community colleges and some training programs are a place for people to start. Generally, these institutions have been lower cost, sensitive to adults. Then, you also have regional public colleges and universities that have served their regions. Many of them began as normal schools, training teachers, and then they expanded their curriculum into business and other areas of study. They worked liberal arts into the core curriculum, but they evolved into institutions that got people the jobs. Many of them, like community colleges, came to it a little bit later and became more liberal arts-oriented. Now, New York community college presidents say they don't train for jobs; they train for transfer. So you'll see some community college presidents building dorms, and not even thinking about offering bachelor's degrees. This, interestingly enough, is where Empire State College comes in. With many of the community colleges it was the shift to the liberal arts orientation, the reverse 2+2, the upside-down degree. So it's a complex, interesting environment that could make it tough for a consumer to figure out which door to enter. I think the notion of the liberal arts versus occupational training, is again a dichotomy that doesn't reflect the university that is genuinely there.

E.W.: Well, if I took the advice of some of the advisors I had, we wouldn't be having this conversation right now!

J.M.: Empire doesn't market itself, nor does Lesley, as an occupational school. Let's be clear in our marketing materials what we are, and if you talk about the adults who complete at Empire or Lesley, just talking about adults: They know what they're doing to a large degree. But to return to the thread, I think the diversity of institutions is one of the strengths of the American system. Somebody who wants to become a chef can go to the CIA. You could alternately go to the community college, and work your way to your goal, given your passion, and the time and effort you put in. If you want to become an oil burner technician in the digital age, go to Hudson Valley Community College with the vocational center that they've got there. Go to Vermont Technical College. What about the 18-year-old who says, "I'm not sure yet, but I love history." An advisor could say, "You should come here; we've got a good history major and we have fascinating internships with a group called Facing History and Facing Ourselves. In our museum of fine arts, where historians can work in some non-profits, you can do some internships, and figure out different ways this applies to your career objectives. You can go anywhere." Are we obliged to tell them "Here's point A and point B?" No, I think this is a classic tension in American higher education. It also gets at who owns or who thinks they own higher education. Governors say "Jobs, jobs jobs, I'm going to create some incentives for financial institutions to behave this way." Then we get someone else in as governor who says, "Liberal arts are the strongest thing we can do for the economy." As we look at China and Japan with programmed curriculum and rote learning, they're realizing the limitations on creativity and collaboration. They're now looking to import American ways of learning. So looking again, it's a wonderful tension between factual learning, recitation, documentation, and the issues of creativity and collaboration. One of the downsides of the classic Empire model, which is a part of adult learning that everybody doesn't talk about at Empire, is the isolation of the adult learner. If you read the work of Pat Cross and others who are part of the adult learning culture, collaboration is critically important to adult learners who are entering a collaborative work environment. Whatever you call it, a study group, an online class, however it works, that's a powerful learning experience at any age. To me, collaboration is part of the liberal arts versus the other. What's the brand of your institution? Forget the marketing side, the brand is the promise; this is what we promise, this is what we try to deliver on.

E.W.: I heard you speak at a Genesee Valley Center graduation about the dominant ideology and it was one of the more moving graduation presentations I've ever heard. Would you talk about this a little bit for the folks back in Saratoga Springs and others who will read All About Mentoring?

J.M.: As I've said earlier, this dominant ideology of leaving high school, leaving home, going off to college, living on campus is reflected in the entire sports world, in family narratives, and in people who are in positions of power and influence on boards and in legislatures. They're disproportionately represented by people who completed college in four years, and they are a minority of the population. Positions of influence, research distribution – whether it's state government budgets, higher institutions themselves, system offices, boards of trustees, federal government financial aid – 30 percent of the population or less have a bachelor's degree. This privileged orientation is overly represented in all of those positions, and of those, the vast majority completed college right out of high school. So what does that do? It gets reinforced by the media, movies, TV, media stars, local press. What happens is the adult learner who has kids sends them to a traditional campus. Think of all the adult Empire State College students who come back when their kids are in school or college. It places the dominant ideology in their minds as they pursue alternative education with Empire. It corrupts their thinking about their own learning, so they have to overcome that. It makes them see themselves as nontraditional, when in point of fact, they're the majority. The language reflects the dominant ideology. Who coined the phrase nontraditional? I suspect it was people who went to college right after high school and who are in positions of influence. They may have been well-intentioned higher education researchers. That was one of my post-Empire reflections about what I could say as a graduation speaker. I'm always a big fan of the graduation speaker addressing the graduates on something that is important to them, but I also wanted to say something that was important to Empire. So that is what I arrived at for GVC. We should have signs posted, which say: "Leave your dominant ideology outside of these walls; you're coming into a different place and this place is based upon these core values. You're going to see what these core values mean operationally, in a variety of ways. You're at the center of it, and it's different." It is just so different from mainstream higher education, which is batch processing. Not that it is bad, it's just different, and it influences the "Empires" of the world negatively.

E.W.: Where do you think this dominant ideology originates? Are we talking about social class here, and some level of class analysis?

J.M.: Yes, given that it's historical, it's class-based. If you think about who went to college when, it's a recent phenomenon that most college students now are women. It is an incredible turnaround from not so long ago, when most people who went to college were men, as recently as the middle of the 20th century. You had the growth in the '50s and '60s of higher education enrollment, but it's still class and less so, gender-based. Though changing, higher education is a phenomenally stratified sector of the economy, so I think it is class-based. The dominant ideology in the final analysis feeds rampant inequality. We have

It corrupts their thinking about their own learning, so they have to overcome that. It makes them see themselves as nontraditional, when in point of fact, they're the majority.

the greatest degree of inequality of any industrialized nation right now, and that answers the broader question about changes in higher education. David Brooks called higher education "an engine of inequality": it's statistically very true.

E.W.: In some ways, that also brings us back to strategies like edX. In terms of global inequality, people around the world are taking advantage of MOOCs and open educational resources. People who never had access to American higher education now are taking courses from some of the finest institutions.

J.M.: Do you think that is why Stanford, Harvard and MIT are they doing this?

E.W.: I guess that you don't think they're trying to educate the world.

J.M.: I believe that many of them think that they are, but I think it's about brand. I think it's a huge brand play. It's significant and they're doing the same thing with that in Coursera. Some of the digital-related startups are doing this sort of teaching. And it was written about in *The Chronicle;* we don't know where the money is going to come from. It's suggested that this is a good idea, and then a week later, another article comes out informing us that they also will use the learning site for commercial advertising.

E.W.: Finally Joe, we're at the end, and I can't believe you gave me this much of your time. But it's important to preserve the historical record and this is one way we can do that. What could we look forward to for you in the future? Where is Joe Moore going to be? Are there any other positions you might aspire to?

J.M.: No, no. I'm now 62 years old. I'm starting my 6th year her at Lesley. It's the last year of my second three-year contract and the board and I are talking about another one. Beth and I have built a house on the Maine coast, so we're going up there once in a while. This is my last job if health and everything works out. This is the job that I want to end on. Then my goal is to potentially do some teaching on a part-time basis, either here or in Maine. I'd like to study and have a chance to intellectually involve myself more than I've been able to. I've been so involved organizationally that I'd like to step back from this and do other things. I'd like to read more fiction; I'd like to see more movies. [My wife] Beth and I want to do some form of study and travel. She's got things that she wants to do as well, once we're unhooked. So no, there's no new resume. I don't look at *The Chronicle* in terms of the jobs. I'm just really enjoying what I do.

E.W.: You never know who might call.

J.M.: That's true, and I've always been open to this. In fact, I hadn't thought I'd be leaving Empire. My goal was to do somewhere between eight and 10 years there. I do think it's important for institutions to get a new person and a new perspective; it's much healthier. As you can see from this interview, Beth and I had thought, "One more gig somewhere." We thought we wanted to stay in the Northeast for family reasons, so when this opportunity came up – and I had not sent a resume out to anybody – the consultant knew me well, called me and said, "There's a place here and it matches you so much, that I just wanted you to know." That was a tough decision to throw my hat in that ring. At one point, it was either this, or continue at Empire. That would have been wonderful too, and perhaps later at a certain point, another gig at some place before I retire. This position at Lesley just happened to come up a year or two earlier than anticipated.

E.W.: Cambridge is just charming and enchanting and one of a kind. All of the things you must be able to do locally, and you're not far from Maine, where you want to be. A lot of people at Empire are certainly happy for you. When you come to Empire events, you have a lot of friends who want to see you, to say hello and see what you're doing. I think they'll appreciate your thoughts on the topics we've discussed. And I think having your ideas on record will be beneficial to the institution.

J.M.: I love visiting, but I try not to do it very often, because I really think it's important for everybody to differentiate from administrations in the past. But I love seeing the people, no matter where we might meet.

> "When we recognize that our predecessors generalized too far from too few, *and too often not only generalized but universalized with only the few in mind, we open ourselves to diversity that can be arrayed before us in all its challenge to our minds, our imaginations, our hearts, our dreams with and for humankind."*
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> *– Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich,* Transforming Knowledge
> *Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990, p. 184*

Painting in Florence: History and Inspiration

Betty Wilde-Biasiny, Metropolitan Center

My proposal for a half-year sabbatical from my work as a visual arts mentor at Empire State College's Metropolitan Center began during the summer of July 2012 and, in keeping with many creative projects, has resulted in the urge to do more work. The opportunity to engage in a creative project to produce a new body of artwork has become a seed to expand the range of my work and to scratch the surface of my intended theme: the itinerant landscape, history and inspiration. The first challenge was to become inspired, which is really an artist's way of saying "to get to work." Unlimited time is a gift: it allows for looking at new subjects, reflecting upon them and ordering them in some way. As an artist, my incessant need to find order and sequence reveals itself through making work, navigating both the emotional and physical requirements. The process calls for discipline, yet also daydreaming; rigorous technique with playful experimentation; fearless process with tentative step taking. Sabbaticals in and of themselves lend a serious tone to the project: expectations to produce, achieve and accomplish. Without that feedback loop, I am convinced that I would have become unmoored, drifting down the river Arno, seeing too much art, eating too much ice cream, getting lost in the labyrinth of the Boboli Gardens.

The opportunity to be an itinerant artist caused a rupture in my comfort zone even within my rural Hudson Valley studio. With the fear and trepidation of a freshman foundation student, I quickly busied myself with drawing, painting and journaling. I also spent endless hours envisioning just what I would do in Florence, which was both exciting and daunting. My first challenge: to secure an artist's residency where I could travel and be inspired by historical artists, cultural influences and new materials was happily granted by SACI (Studio Art Centers International), where I had been selected in 2011 for a solo exhibition of my digital paintings, "Arcitectonica." My proposal resulted in an invitation for a residency, right in the middle of my sabbatical, that would provide a studio and access to their digital printmaking facilities. For this article, my focus is on the most itinerant part of my sabbatical: a one-month residency at SACI in Florence, Italy.[1]

The historical basis for my sabbatical proposal emanated from my MFA work at Columbia University, where, in addition to engaging in the practice of painting and printmaking, my studies included the art history of 19th century prints and photographs, taught on site by curators at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The definition of itinerant was formed during this time period of increased worldwide travel, as one purpose of the early landscape photographers, as well as printmakers, was connected to the *carte de visite*[2] (postcard); its purpose was to document the accomplishment of travel and safe arrival to share with family and friends.

Prior to this explosion of photographic documentation, 18th century artists such as Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900) made numerous trips to foreign lands, reflecting journeys to places such as South America and the Near East.[3] In fact, to me, many of the Hudson River paintings are reminiscent of Renaissance works depicting the river Arno in Florence, Italy, reflecting the similarity in both rivers' significance to commerce and the social life of the culture.

To prepare for my travel experience, I increased my pace in making drawings, watercolors and oil paintings from my local and surrounding environment in the Hudson Valley, north of New York City.

Betty Wilde-Biasiny, Corn Field, 2012. Watercolor on Arches paper, 18 x 24". Photographed by Steven P. Harris

My preliminary research entailed reviewing several Hudson River School artists, such as Archibald Robertson (1765-1835), a lesser-known but prolific draftsperson. His textured linear style is very close to some of the work that I have created through printmaking, specifically in detailing surfaces with intricate crosshatchings. I also investigated the work of the American luminist Martin Johnson Heade (1819-1904) and made several *homage* drawings to his work; this examination allowed me to explore the idea of a close-up element of the landscape, used to vignette or frame a more overall view. I spent many enjoyable hours with my sketch book, making all kinds of drawings that opened up my vocabulary and artistic language; some led to several finished watercolors and a series of oil paintings that capture the cool summer light on warm corn fields, native plants and my own immediate rural environment.

After a very productive summer, blessed with good weather and unpressured time, I traveled to Florence at the end of September with my husband, photographer Charles Biasiny-Rivera. We spent a few days acclimating to our little apartment facing a garden populated with native greenery and flowers, which led to a traditional family kitchen where we could have coffee and meals. Shopping the local markets yielded everything from fresh pasta to *fungi* (mushrooms), which were then in season. Armed with a somewhat cryptic bus map, we eventually learned that most of the buses traveled in circles, so there was never any problem about getting on the wrong bus – it eventually circled back and provided a grand tour of the surrounding environs outside of the old city (such as Fiezole, a quaint mountain town with panaromic views of Florence). We tried to see at least one monument and church or museum per day, as well as general walking and enjoyment of the river Arno. We could easily cross the river to explore one of our favorite neighborhoods, the *Oltrarrno* (literally, the other side of the Arno), where we sampled the *ribollita* (bread soup), the *caffé* and the *biscotti.*

My residency began shortly after with a meeting with SACI's dean, David Davidson, who spirited me from the main SACI *palazzo* to the facility called the Jules Maidoff Palazzo, named after the founder of SACI. This building was in a different part of the city than the building that housed the part of the art school where I first showed my work, and it was literally behind the Signoria, site of the Duomo (cathedral church). I met with graphic designer/digital lab master, Federico Cagnucci, then with Professor Lorenzo Pezzatini, who showed me my studio and introduced me to some of the SACI "post-bac" students, who became my pleasant studio neighbors and guides to all things coffee and art supplies. In addition to having access to the digital printmaking lab, I was given a beautiful alcove studio with a little patio filled with olive trees that were in full bloom.

My work in the studio began midmorning, after a walk or bus ride to the school, stopping along the way for art supplies or provisions for lunch. The space was relatively quiet during the day, as the students were in classes or off on serious field trips, the type that covered entire towns in one day. They usually appeared for the "night shift" when I was heading home for evening time, mostly quiet dinners or walks with my husband.

Betty Wilde-Biasiny, The Ascension of the Olives, 2012. Archival pigment print on watercolor paper, 19 x 13". Photographed by Steven P. Harris

Weekdays had a rhythm that focused on drawing and painting, enhanced by quiet time sitting on my patio or looking out onto the old city. When I went out to wash my paint brushes on the back balcony, I could see a sliver of the Duomo and the cascading planes of the ancient roofs punctuated with cypress and olive trees; this became the place where my mind became most receptive, reaching back into history and fantasy of a sort that began to enter my artistic project. What fascinated me about the Florentine landscape were its undulating planes, its texture, its vestiges of ancient architecture, the balminess of the air. I could smell the history, see it and, most challengingly, make it palpable in my work.

At first, I focused on native plants, almost as a way of processing the bombardment of imagery. Once more settled in, I began to incorporate the geometric planes of the corrugated roofs with undulating branches of the olive trees; together my compositions were often puzzles that I did not easily solve; rather, I just became more comfortable with the jumbles of form and challenged myself to making a new kind of work, a little freer, though still retaining a sense of order amidst the visual panoply. My

Photo on the left: Betty in the studio at SACI, 2012. Photo on the right: Betty going to work in Florence, 2012. Photographed by Charles Biasiny-Rivera initial idea was to select a theme for each week in order to focus my work; however, the constant stimulation and lush imagery caused me to work in four different though related mediums: watercolor, color pencil, egg tempera and digital printmaking. For one month, this was somewhat ambitious, though in the end, I am happy that I did not hold back and returned home with numerous field studies and watercolors.

The first work that emerged was based upon my connection to the olive tree on my patio. There was something about the way that the olive leaves fluttered and pointed upward, the elegant asymmetrical shape of the leaves themselves that together framed and pointed to the sensuous olives bouncing on their branches. I informally printed several close-up photographic views of the olives on nice watercolor paper, pinning them together into a cross-like form that eventually resulted in an editioned archival pigment print called *The Ascension of the Olives*. This seemed in keeping with the idea of the ensuing harvest, which for me had become a representation of Italian culture. That the work presented itself in the form of a cross was not a coincidence, as the parallel action of my time in Florence was to see as many monuments and church interiors as my eyes and mind would permit. The architectural design of the Gothic church, formed as an apse bisected with a cross, influenced the form of this digital work.

A real stretch for me was to experiment with egg tempera paint *(tempera all'uoevo*[4]). Seeing the beautifully nuanced frescos in the churches and in random street corner altars, I longed for a kind of texture and coloration that would subtly express my excitement over this historical Florentine painting. At Zecchi (pronounce *zeki),* the most popular art store, I acquired a beautiful wooden box of egg tempera paints, a wooden palette and a porcelain paint tray, just like the ones I saw at the Museo di San Marco, where I viewed an exhibition of large format books painted by the monks, complemented by pristine showcases of their art tools and materials. Around the corner from the special exhibition of books were 44 preserved individual private quarters, decorated simply with a painted mural of one of the friars, Fra' Angelico, reproduced on the walls. I was inspired to paint with these seemingly simple egg tempera paints. (One of the SACI students noted that I was not really doing fresco painting since I was not using cement in the mixture and plastering it onto a wall; so I came to call this material "fresco light.") One of the qualities of the egg tempera (sans cement) was that it could be completely washed off of the smoothly gessoed wooden panels if the image did not appeal. Since this "erasing" happened a bit too often for me, I decided to pack up my beautiful egg tempera set and to persevere more intently on this medium when I returned to my home studio. I eventually did produce what amounted to egg tempera sketches, which I later combined with acrylic paint/glazes to make them more stable. The process influenced the way I handled paint and resulted in more transparent layers in my subsequent work.

Arriving stateside only one day after Hurricane Sandy, re-entry was chaotic. We were saddened to hear of the destruction

Betty Wilde-Biasiny, Olives Ascending, 2012. Egg tempera and watercolor on paper, 20 x 16". Photographed by Steven P. Harris

Betty Wilde-Biasiny, Fiezole, 2012. Egg tempera and watercolor on Arches paper, 11 x 14”. Photographed by Steven P. Harris

by nature and it took several weeks to gain equilibrium, retrieve our dog from Staten Island, and make sure family and friends were OK. Decamping to my upstate studio, I began using acrylic paintings on canvas that, because of my recent experimentation with egg tempera, I found to be a very smooth transition. The paint was both fluid and transparent at first, but with overlays, it became more plastic and opaque; consequently I painted over each canvas way too many times and decided to release this energy over a larger number of canvases. I likened my experiences of being transplanted back to another reality to writing a book: the sketches from Italy became my notes, inspiring a momentum that enabled me to begin the work of painting on linen throughout the year.

My overarching goal was to develop various bodies of work that would become the harvest for future exhibitions and public presentations as a midcareer artist. Having achieved the rank of associate professor and the support of my academic community, this sabbatical came at a point in my career that encouraged me to expand my range as a painter and to seek more outside opportunities and venues for my work. I have learned that my process is cyclical, opening my creative process to plant new seeds, cultivate more thoughtfully and glean the results over time. As I reflect upon my overall experience, the integration of my work with my teaching is the next chapter in my journey: My mentoring areas of digital painting, watercolor and advanced studio practice have all been renewed through this sublime opportunity to work and to more fully understand my creative project.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

[1] SACI is an accredited American art school, founded in 1975, that sponsors study abroad students and will begin its own MFA program in fall 2013.

[2] The original purpose of the *cartes de visite* (2 1/2 x 4-inch albumen prints mounted on card stock) was to capture a likeness (portrait) of an individual traveling to foreign lands to send them back to their families as evidence of their travel. “But perhaps out of necessity (for example, a frontier photographer limited to a single camera), *cartes de visite* were also made of groups and landscapes and even as pioneering examples of photojournalism. Sometimes it seems as if the early photographers who made these small images were trying to capture the world around them on a tiny patch of paper and cardboard” (para. 4; The American Museum of Photography, 2004, “A Brief History of the Carte de Visite,” retrieved from http://www.photographymuseum.com/histsw.htm).

[3] John K. Howat, 1988, *The Hudson River and its Painters* (Random House Publishing).

[4] Egg tempera is a water-based paint made from extending the natural pigments such as cadmium, cobalt et al. with egg as an extender; it was used extensively throughout the Renaissance and even earlier as the primary medium of painters, especially on murals and frescoes that entailed painting with a pigmented cement.

Politics, Ecology and Social Change at the Top of the World

Eric Zencey, Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, The University of Vermont


PHOTO CREDIT: CENTRE FOR BHUTAN STUDIES

Eric Zencey (second row from bottom, just left of center) with the International Expert Working Group in Bhutan. The king and queen of Bhutan are seen in the back row, right of center.

The morning of Monday, January 28, 2013 found me in a window seat on a Drukair flight from Delhi to Paro, Bhutan, enjoying the view of the craggy, snow-capped Himalayas as we flew over them. Then began the descent: the mountains slowly rose up as we made our way into them. As the plane continued to descend, it began banking this way and that, following a series of valleys as it traced its way to a landing. The plane came down, finally, on a strip of concrete that ran between two mountain ranges and was backstopped by a third. During the descent, there were times the mountains seemed to be only a few dozen feet off the plane's wingtip; at one point, I could see clearly into the windows of a hillside house that we passed. (Later, I discovered that those mountains were indeed very close: online there is a video shot from the cockpit of a Drukair flight landing in Paro; you can find it by searching "most dangerous airports.") Bhutan is a tiny mountain kingdom between India and Tibet, and the country simply doesn't have that many places in which a jetliner could find enough room to land. Word has it that the Paro landing is so difficult that only eight pilots in the world are qualified to fly the route. The pilot can't even see the runway until a minute before landing, as the approach path sweeps from one valley to another – turns a corner – and is suddenly upon it.

I had gone to Bhutan to take part in the ongoing work of a UN group convened and chaired by Bhutan's prime minister, Jigme Thinley. The group's task, as described in the General Assembly Resolution empowering it, is to articulate a New Development Paradigm. The idea is that development should no longer aim to increase the monetary income (and resource use) of the peoples of the world, but should look beyond that instrumental end to the ultimate end it supposedly serves: increasing the happiness and well-being enjoyed by humans. And in a world at the brink of ecological collapse, achieving sustainable economic development is a practical and moral imperative. By these new standards, the old categories of "developed," "underdeveloped" and "undeveloped" have to be swept aside. No nation on earth is ecologically sustainable; every nation faces a daunting development challenge.

The work of articulating the new development paradigm began with a special high level meeting at the UN in April of 2012, which was attended by more than 600 delegates, scholars, theorists and activists. It continued with a meeting of the 30-some members of the working group in New York in November 2012; and in January 2013, the same group was meeting in Bhutan to continue the work of defining what the new approach to development could be.

We met in Thimphu, the national capital, with the prime minister presiding over our sessions. The prime minister is an unusual statesman, as befits a man who serves a Buddhist nation that has rejected use of standard economic measurements, like gross domestic product, in favor of an alternative measure, gross national happiness (GNH). That name is a bit of a misnomer, and unfortunately it is misunderstood by many who hear it for the first time. What the Bhutanese measure is not the short-lived hedonistic state that many of us (particularly those of us who have been exposed to decades worth of commercial advertising) think of when we hear the word "happy." They mean to maximize a deeper kind of life satisfaction: the experience of a harmonized congruence between one's life and one's physical surroundings, one's community, one's family and culture, and, further, with all sentient life. They're Buddhist, after all, and don't have a commercial culture in which profit-seekers use media to convince us that our happiness depends on what we purchase, own and consume. "What we want to measure is not happiness, directly, but the capacity of our social and economic system to offer our citizens the opportunity to be happy," is one way Karma Ura, head of the Center for Bhutan Studies and one of the chief architects of GNH, puts it.

"Total national well-being" is probably a more accurate translation — but "total national well-being" doesn't have the same kind of ring to it that "gross national happiness" does.

And besides, "gross national happiness" is the actual phrase that Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth King of Bhutan, used in his coronation speech in 1972, when he said that his monarchy would take it, rather than the gross national product, as the value it tries to maximize.

What started as an interesting and casual turn of phrase in a speech was eventually given actual policy weight, as Dasho (or "Sir") Karma Ura and Michael Pennock (a Canadian health care epidemiologist) collaborated to design a survey research instrument that would gather information about the well-being enjoyed by citizens of Bhutan. The survey asks questions in nine large categories – "domains" – only one of which, "living standards," relates to economic well-being. The others: physical health; psychological health; community vitality; cultural vitality; good governance; time use; education; and ecological diversity and resilience.

Since the inception of GNH just a decade ago, Bhutan has generously shared its work with the world, primarily through a series of international conferences, including the Fifth International GNH Conference in Brazil in 2009, which I attended, and the sixth International GNH Conference in Vermont in 2011, which I helped organize. Lately, though, the Bhutanese have shifted their emphasis from international conferences to the working group convened through the auspices of the United Nations. Behind that move lies a sense that the concepts are ready to be taken out of the realm of talk and into the realm of broader policy application – and a sense of urgency that as the world faces the results of a burgeoning consumer society that is neither ecologically sustainable nor especially effective at bringing greater well-being to a majority of the human population, the world needs what Bhutan has to offer.

The first three days of the meeting in Thimphu consisted of a smaller group-within-a-group: just 20 of us, each of whom had prepared draft materials for various parts of the final report. I'd written a draft of the chapter on "Ecological Sustainability, Happiness, and Well-Being" and on the second day of the meeting, I made a short presentation of its major points. The main one: survey research that asks residents whether pollution is a problem, as the GNH instrument does, can tell us what people think about the status of the environment, but it can't tell us what the actual status of the environment is. Survey research in this area needs to be augmented by objective markers of ecosystem health, which the field of ecological economics has been developing as it measures ecosystem services. A broad sampling of those measures finds its way into the genuine progress indicator, an alternative indicator that is finding increased adoption (including in my home state of Vermont; I'm coordinator of the Vermont Genuine Progress Indicator Project at the University of Vermont). A blending of methodologies, combining both GNH and GPI, would be stronger than either indicator is separately.

Others who were there for this pre-meeting had written on such topics as the scientific basis for distinguishing between needs and wants; the psychological literature on happiness and stages of emotional development; the distribution of income around the world and how income does or doesn't relate to other measures like maternal mortality, life expectancy and ecological footprint; and various measures of good governance, of time use, of community and civic vitality. Our task was to clarify the fundamental assumptions of the new paradigm, so that these could be communicated clearly to the larger group that would convene on Thursday – the group that the Bhutanese had given the unwieldy and somewhat embarrassing title of International Expert Working Group (IEWG) for the New Development Paradigm.

As it turned out, the IEWG for the NDP also was interested in clarifying fundamental assumptions. Rather than taking the small group's work as a given, the larger group spent quite a lot of time hashing over a very fundamental issue: To what extent would the new development paradigm rely on the ideas and categories of GNH, and to what extent would it be built on the assumptions, terms and categories of ecological economics? My proposal for a blended methodology (outlined in an essay titled "Sustainable, Happy, Efficient," available online at *Policy Innovations*[1]) figured in some of these conversations.

I'm happy to report that the days we spent discussing the differences and areas of overlap between these two visions were fruitful, and produced a shared understanding that represents a blending of the two approaches that is satisfactory to the group as a whole. GNH uses the nine domains (identified earlier); ecological economics talks about the necessity of retaining four kinds of capital (built, natural, social and cultural) if we are to have a sustainable society. My feeling was that both conceptual structures are needed if we're to have development for sustainable happiness and well-being, but partisans of each were reluctant to give any sort of ground at all. An ad hoc committee was empowered to find a way to blend the two. It met frantically for a day or two, and finished its work on the day that we were scheduled to be presented to the King and Queen of Bhutan, when the *dashos* among our Bhutanese colleagues wore their best, most ceremonial *ghos* (traditional robes, which Bhutan law enjoins all men to wear while they are at work). Because our conference hall had to be reconfigured to turn it into a fitting place for a state reception — and because it needed to be swept by uniformed officers before the king and queen arrived — we were invited to remain outdoors, under our luncheon tents, for the continuation of the meeting that afternoon, the meeting at which the ad hoc committee would make its report. No slick audiovisuals, not even a chalkboard: the committee members had to make their presentation by writing key terms on pieces of paper and laying them out on the ground, with coffee cups and saucers on them to keep them from blowing

PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC ZENCEY

At the IEWG meeting, Dasho Karma Ura questions Enrico Giovaninni about the work of his ad hoc subcommittee.

away. I think it was Tom Prugh, from the Worldwatch Institute, who helpfully found some twigs that could be used to indicate the flow from concept to concept, and how the four kinds of capital and the nine domains would relate to each other. Dasho Ura, head of the Centre for Bhutan Studies and chief architect of GNH, stood attentively with the rest of us, his ceremonial sword behind his back, while the blending was explained. He asked the first questions – skeptically at first, then with increasing appreciation as he approved of what he heard. Those answers came from ad hoc committee member Enrico Giovannini, president of the Italian Statistical Institute, former director of statistics and chief statistician for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Their colloquy stands for me as a key moment in the week, and a symbolically powerful representation of what the meeting was about.

The next step in the IEWG's work is to polish the draft material for communication to the UN group that is working on updating the Millennium Development Goals. In the past, those goals have been shaped by traditional assumptions about development – assumptions that I've been encouraging people to think of as "infinite-planet" assumptions. The traditional assumptions include some that are demonstrably wrong. These include the idea that environmental quality is a luxury good that nations can purchase more of, after they develop and raise their GDP (which is the idea behind the so-called Environmental Kuznets Curve); that it is possible to have infinite economic growth on a finite planet because economic activity doesn't have to use energy or material resources; that for countries at the low end of the current income scale, debt-driven development and sale of raw materials to developed nations is the path out of poverty. (I've been attacking these assumptions in print in various places.)

As I see it, the task of the International Expert Working Group is to get realistic about development – to articulate a set of design principles and development goals that work, and that are suited to the planet we have, which is most definitely finite. One development that will have an unknown effect on the work is the July 13 election in Bhutan, in which the People's Democratic Party came to power, displacing Prime Minister Thinley's Druk Phuensum Tshogpa Party. The PDP took a dim view of Thinley's GNH work, suggesting that he should have been attending more closely to matters of more immediate importance to Bhutan. But GNH has strong support from the king (a constitutional monarch with little direct power, but a powerful symbolic head of the country) and the Centre for Bhutan Studies is insulated from political influence. And the basic idea behind GNH – that we humans had better change the way we measure economic progress – is too powerful, too necessary and too widely accepted internationally to be disabled by a regime change in any one country.

As I write this in the summer of 2013, the Working Group's final report is moving toward completion and publication; stay tuned!

Note

1. The essay, "Sustainable, Happy, Efficient," can be found at http://www.policyinnovations.org/ideas/innovations/data/000238.

Remembering Nicholas Cushner

Colleagues from Empire State College

Longtime ESC colleague, Nicholas Cushner, died on 25 September 2013. Nick, a mentor in history, came to the Niagara Frontier Center in 1975. Former Jesuit priest, Fulbright Scholar, prolific author of books and articles on Latin American history, booster of Buffalo through his "Walk Buffalo" guidebook and liaison between the college and the Buffalo Hispanic community, Nick worked with a wide range of students at NFC and in FORUM/West. His care for this college and its mission was deeply felt by many.

Anne Bertholf, former associate dean and dean, Niagara Frontier Center

Before he joined the Empire State College faculty in 1975, Nick Cushner had enjoyed a rich intellectual and academic life. A Jesuit priest, he was a well-published historian and a faculty member at Canisius College in Buffalo. His scholarly output continued throughout his career: there are 13 or 14 volumes, most devoted to the history of Latin America or the Philippines. Given that background, it might seem unlikely that a nontraditional institution would suit him, but ESC proved to be a good fit as he left both the priesthood and traditional academia behind. Perhaps it was this leap that made him a natural supporter and mentor for students in the midst of major change: he understood that energy and concentration were necessary for such shifts of focus.

As a mentor, Nick relished opportunities to pursue his academic discipline, but learning contracts devoted to local, state, U.S. or European history far outnumbered those in Latin American studies. He directed contracts dealing with the full range of historical studies, and he was an enthusiastic primary mentor who particularly enjoyed business students, police officers – any student who was professionally focused. Interested in "cutting edge" change, he enjoyed the "insider" status and the broadened knowledge of their fields gained from friendships with his students, and he believed that exposure to a broad range of liberal studies invited and sharpened necessary critical thinking skills. Something of an entrepreneur, he designed, wrote and marketed materials for self-guided tours of historic Buffalo, doing business as "Walk Buffalo." He was a good salesman for ESC, too, and he particularly enjoyed presenting information sessions in area workplaces.

Nick viewed himself as a scholar of history, and he was proud of his accomplishments, pleased when the college noted his work. Conversely, he was impatient when college policy, in his view, interfered with or diminished the academic life of the faculty; when curiosity and zeal for learning were not encouraged or honored, but instead kept in check by practices that he perceived as interference and over-regulation. The most irksome example was the requirement that faculty submit monthly time sheets. He thought it ridiculous that the hours devoted to research and writing or to interaction with and evaluation of students could be enumerated. As the conduit between "Saratoga" and the Niagara Frontier faculty, I heard his views on this matter more than once! Happily, though he could be passionately eloquent, his opinions (and my inability to correct what he perceived as a glaring error) never created a rift in our solid friendship. From his perspective, I needed to understand his aversion to time sheets, and I needed to communicate his views to the architects of that requirement. Since I fulfilled those mandates, we remained respectful colleagues and good friends throughout the years of our mutual service. Like so many who knew him, I will miss him. His absence makes the world less interesting.

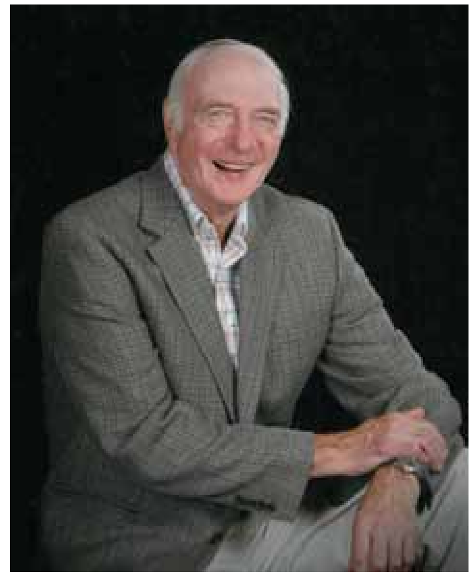

PHOTO CREDIT: *THE BUFFALO NEWS*

Nicholas Cushner

Bob Gerulat, mentor, Niagara Frontier Center

I first met Nick in the early '90s when I was a graduate student at Empire State College. I had been trying to finish a master's at the University at Buffalo but was finding it difficult to schedule courses when I could take them because I worked and had a family – the typical ESC student! Nick was assigned to be my mentor. He was a great mentor! We shared a love for history and I ended up doing a MALS that combined history with business. Nick's office was amazingly cluttered, but he knew where everything was. Quickly, he found three old journals from a local pioneer and gave them to me. They formed the basis for my thesis, as well as a book later on. Nick also was very entrepreneurial; that was another common interest. On the other hand, sometimes the tables turned a little, and I found myself trying to bring him back to reality.

Nick is really the reason I went on to a Ph.D. and also the reason I joined the college. Years after I was his student, after I had finished my doctoral program, I asked him if there were any adjunct teaching positions available at ESC. He apparently gave my resume to the dean, and soon thereafter, I was interviewing for the FORUM director position. The rest is history in that regard. When I started to expand FORUM/West, I asked Nick to join the program and teach history to our FORUM business students. He was the perfect choice. His entrepreneurial nature combined with his knowledge and infectious love for history inspired many of our students to study more history. He could mesmerize a room full of people during his lectures. Members of the FORUM faculty would sit in sometimes just to hear him talk. He is what you would envision to be a real professor – from the white hair to slight English accent – he was the perfect educator.

Nick was part of those pioneering mentors of this college – the generation of the ’70s and ’80s. He was well respected by everyone – students and colleagues alike. He was one of a kind. His background was amazing, too. Prior to teaching with us, Nick was a Jesuit priest. He left the priesthood and eventually married. Nick wrote several books and was quite a scholar, as was recognized by the Fulbright program. I miss him. We all will.

Tina Wagle, mentor, School for Graduate Studies

Nick and I met my first year here at Empire State College, 2003. While everyone at the Niagara Frontier Center was incredibly warm in receiving me, he was one of the first people to hold steady conversations with me and invite me to lunch. We bonded over a shared love for Spanish and Latin American history, culture and literature. I can still hear him walking down the hall, calling “Niña,” his nickname for me. I would respond with a “Señor!”

Nick had an abundance of interests: travel, Buffalo, writing novels, writing walking guides of cities; the list goes on. He was never dull in conversation and was never without a funny anecdote. He constantly had a new idea or project in the works. I also remember that all of our conversations over his “burgers (pronounced burjers) and diet something” involved loving mentions of his family. He adored his wife and stepchildren. He was a scholar, a family man, a go-getter, and a friend. I will think of him fondly and remember him with a smile.

Tom Rocco, former dean, Niagara Frontier Center

Nick Cushner was already a senior, full-time, tenured faculty member at the Niagara Frontier Center in 1983 when I was appointed dean. Indeed, he was about to embark on a sabbatical that would take him to Peru and to the Vatican Archives, where he would conclude his research on a new book on the role of the Jesuit Order in South America.

As a result, I would not begin to get to know him well for another six months, by which time I was feeling very familiar with the faculty and the routines of an Empire State College center. Nick returned at the same time as two other mentors, all liberal arts scholars, changing the range of expertise and the palpable commitment to research among the faculty. I was both concerned and enthusiastic about this change because of the very strong bias toward individualized mentoring of students as the primary mission of the college that I had come to share. My concerns were soon dispelled, and now looking back over 30 years, I see clearly just how important Nick’s passion for research was for our students, how much they had to learn from studying with him and other scholars, no matter what area of study they were concentrating on. It was not just a good thing to take another Historical Studies contract with a senior mentor to balance a degree program. Nick’s primary mentoring brought real texture to the learning of many hundreds of students in Cultural, Educational and Interdisciplinary Studies. He also was often a successful mentor for BME, CHS and Social Science students.

Nick continued his research and publication in Latin American and Iberian history throughout his career in ESC and beyond. I remember his particular pleasure in being asked to author quite a few articles on South America for an encyclopedia. He was an active presenter at faculty convocations, which were often really conversations about work in progress. He also was very supportive of the scholarship of his colleagues at the center.

In the years after he retired, Nick devoted great effort and considerable time supporting the ongoing work of a historian from another SUNY institution, who had become seriously ill and increasingly disabled. I also knew him very well and stayed in touch with him throughout the years. He often spoke of how much he owed to Nick’s encouragement and editorial work. Nick’s assistance enabled Dr. Marvin Lunenfeld to complete two manuscripts in exceptionally difficult circumstances, one of which was published. His devotion to his friend and fellow scholar was inspiring, and it was a continuation and extension of his life as a mentor.

By chance, my wife and I were able to visit Nick just a couple of weeks before his death, when we were in Buffalo for a couple of days to participate in a memorial service for Marvin Lunenfeld. It was a bittersweet experience. He was surely getting ready to die and yet we had moments of pleasure recalling our long shared commitment to the college and a few highlights from those years. I think it was important to Nick that we had those moments. I know it was important to me. Nick Cushner was a delightful man, a friend as well as colleague. He also was a gentleman and a scholar and a mentor.

Core Values of Empire State College (2005)

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

We value learning-mentoring goals that:

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

We value learning-mentoring processes that:

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

We value learning-mentoring modes that:

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

We value a learning-mentoring community that:

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

We value a learning-mentoring organization and culture that:

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

Submissions to *All About Mentoring*

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

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

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

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

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