"It was once thought that the best years of life for learning were over by the time a person had reached intermediate school. But such thoughts sprang from a conception of learning as the assimilation of information, rather than as the transformation of experience into ever more maturing insights and the development of the self into an ever more responsive and responsible participant in a mutually fulfilling society. Now that the larger possibilities of learning begin to be clearer, we must rethink that old limitation, and with it we must reconsider the resulting restrictions which, in that mistaken belief, were put upon the institutions of learning."

– Morris T. Keeton (1917-2014)
"Credentials for the Learning Society"
In M. T. Keeton & Associates (Eds.)
Experiential Learning: Rationale,
Characteristics, and Assessment
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976, p. 11

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A Dichotomy That Hurts

Much to our detriment, we live in a world of dichotomies. Right now, one big dichotomy we face is between the so-called "structured" and its opposite, the "unstructured." We identify some studies or entire programs as "structured;" and, by default, other activities become "unstructured." The terms themselves not only have significantly complex roots, but serve as placeholders for deep emotional and value-laden commitments. They are much more than they seem to be.

For some of us, the structured is about meaningful organization, attentiveness to the day-to-day academic and personal realities of students' and mentors' lives, about professional and institutional leadership, and about the proper expression of academic expertise. For others, the structured is about rigidity, a falling back on conventional claims of the professorial prerogative and about the perpetuation of the institutional silencing of student voices.

For some of us, what is deemed the opposite, the so-called unstructured, is about choice, the nimbleness and responsiveness to the sometimes quirky shifts in a learner's journey, and about the challenges of mentoring and the possibilities of individualization. For others, the unstructured is about academic irresponsibility, a mushy sentimentalism about student empowerment, and about a mentoring ideology that has been beaten down by what we face every day.

We are stuck in this language game and, even more, with the feelings associated with the words and their mindsets. There must be some way out of here.

Here are some considerations:

First, we need to ask: What is the context from which the current call to structure has emerged? It is the result of numbers, the experiences of some of our students and the institutional urge to control. When a mentor is faced with too many students for whom she or he is responsible (let's say 80 to 100, as some colleagues regularly know it), relying on a finite number of pre-crafted studies or on area of study guidelines that do not guide but prescribe seems to make good sense. When a student is faced with too many questions and too many options and too little time, relying on structured studies and prepackaged degrees seems to make good sense. And when an entire institution is concerned about wobbly academic quality and about the vagaries of open-ended interpretability, a new orderliness seems to make good sense.

We need to be able to respond to what seems to be the only way to go.

Second, we need to ask: What is the origin of the very notion of the "unstructured"? The difference between a "learning contract" and a syllabus; the reason that the phrase "degree program" was chosen over the more conventional term, curriculum; the importance of thinking about a "concentration" as distinct from a major, or of a "study group" as a learning space different from that of a class – all of these differences were never intended to be the difference between order and disorder, between freedom and chaos or between a student's (or a mentor's!) success and her or his failure. The new language

at the very core of Empire State College's creation was carefully crafted to help us imagine new kinds of structures and new ways of considering modes and experiences of teaching and learning. Yes, certainly, at the heart of the ESC experiment was a significant critique of the academic structures (perhaps "strictures" is a more precise term here) that were understood to be impediments to good learning, to good teaching and to the democratization of access and knowledge. But such a critique was never about idealizing structurelessness.

We need to be able to respond to this worry and to those who imagine that our only way to go is to return to what is assumed to be the academic order of things.

With a mindset informed by the structured/unstructured dichotomy, we are always jumping too fast. We too quickly stereotype each other's work and blame people for the choices they make; we too quickly assume that the students of 2014 are radically different from the students of 40 years ago; and we too quickly become obsessed with the need for more rules and more policies that we equate with fairness and that we fantasize can cover every moment of confusion, every academic conundrum, every move we make.

To get out of this stuckness, there are many questions that we must ask ourselves. Here are a few:

What are the particular structures that will best support the learning of particular students? What scaffolds must we build for students to hang onto? At what point – at what workload – is it impossible for a mentor to meaningfully listen and respond to the interests, strengths and limitations of her or his students? How can we create opportunity structures, whether at the individual study or at the degree plan level – big and/or little openings – for a student to participate in important decisions about her or his education? What language can we

use to effectively and confidently explain to those within and outside of our college what we care about, how we work and, in good learning contract-spirit, what criteria we use to evaluate everything we do? What are the core values that should inform the academic and institutional structures that we choose to put in place – that we determine together need to be in place?

In the end, it is the quality of structures, not their presence or their absence, that will make a difference for us as mentors, for our students and for our college. The dichotomy between structured and unstructured is a false one. It only hurts us.

"It is a matter of posing questions on both sides and of loving the questions that merge with one another, questions about living in the world and creating communities and collectivities, caring for each other, making each other feel worthwhile."

– Maxine Greene (1917 - 2014)
Variations on a Blue Guitar:
The Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on Aesthetic Education
New York: Greene and the Lincoln Center Institute, 2001, p. 159

Commitment and Connection: Teaching and Mentoring in Groups

Shantih E. Clemans, Metropolitan Center

How do Empire State College mentors think about and practice study groups, while navigating the college mission of individualized learning? What are the rewards and challenges for mentors in their work with students in groups? More broadly, what distinguishes Empire State College within the current landscape of adult higher education?

What follows are some of my findings from my Center for Mentoring and Learning 2013-2014 reassignment project, The Experience of Teaching and Mentoring in Groups. When I came to Empire State College in 2011, I wondered if individualized learning meant less emphasis on students connecting with other students or on mentors engaging students in groups. I wanted to understand how mentors navigate the college mission of individualized learning in their work with students in groups. I wanted to learn about mentors' experiences in groups: their dilemmas, strategies, struggles. I especially wanted an opportunity to listen to mentors talk honestly about their work at ESC.

The cornerstone of my research was in-depth interviews with mentors – by phone, in-person and online. I interviewed 25 mentors, at least one person from each of these locations/centers of the college: Metropolitan, Center for Distance Learning, Center for International Programs, Central New York, Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, Hudson Valley, Long Island, Niagara Frontier, Northeast, School for Graduate Studies and School of Nursing. The mentors come from several areas of study: Community and Human Services; Cultural Studies; Historical Studies; Social Science; Business, Management and Economics; Public Affairs and The Arts. Additionally, some mentors straddle more than one area of study, do not identify with an area of study or are program administrators with teaching and mentoring responsibilities. I use the term

"mentor" to include all participants and to maintain anonymity. No names or any other distinguishing information such as center, location or area of study is included.

In the course of my interviews, four core themes related to teaching and mentoring in groups emerged: 1) deep commitments to students, 2) creating connections, 3) valuing groups and 4) strategies for groups. I also include reflections on mentoring as ESC's distinctive practice, especially "magical moments" in working with students. I intentionally focused not on the stress of mentoring, not on the high workload, the paucity of hours in the day, nor on the anticipation of changes in the college, but on the positive, meaningful, and inspirational aspects of teaching and mentoring.

Through my conversations with mentors, I learned just how different mentors can be in our approaches to working with students, our unique professional styles, how we think about our fields of practice, how we engage students, and our philosophy about teaching, learning and higher education. However, it became clear as my interviews progressed that mentors at ESC are more alike than different. One powerful commonality is the deep commitment to students and student learning. Part of this commitment is related to mentors creating connections with and among students.

Deep Commitment to Students: "Focusing on the Whole Student"

In conversation after conversation, mentors revealed a core philosophy framed by a strong commitment to students and student learning, as one mentor explained:

There is a bad myth [at ESC] about [mentor] differences. Faculty across the college are interested in engaging students and helping them learn. This has been my experience.

Shantih E. Clemans

Recognizing the inherent challenges of mentoring and teaching, especially with ESC's emphasis on individualized work, this mentor asked a question that likely will resonate with other mentors:

[I ask myself] How can I best serve my students using the paradigm that we use? I am always looking for ways to make the learning meaningful for my students.

Mentors spoke enthusiastically about their commitment to student learning that begins and ends with the student-mentor relationship, as this mentor explained:

I want a real relationship with each one of my students, so I get a sense of them as much more than a digester of subject matter. I want to know who they are, I want to know what they care about, I want to know their purposes, because I want to shape, fasten, construct the learning so it is something that they keep, or cherish or use after they get the credit. I want the experience to matter to them.

Commitment to students is seen in this reflection from a mentor for whom teaching begins with recognizing students as complex people with learning goals, but also histories, needs and challenges.

I want to see my students transform and grow as people and students. That's who I am, that's what I want to spend my time on. I have students who want to have conversations; they talk, they email, they tell me about their lives, their problems, their divorces, their daughter's wedding … their son in prison, their husband's heart attack. I get that. It is not irrelevant to their anxiety about learning or their progress. They are human beings. I love that we get to relate to our students as human beings. But I want it acknowledged that it is a big part of what I do, part of a process of transformative education. … I have come to see myself as a teacher focusing on the whole student.

Mentors' commitment to students is sometimes deepened through the exploration of specific student interests, as articulated by this mentor:

I really enjoy those students who explore their interests. That's how it was for me when I went to college. I didn't know what I wanted to study. I really try to work with students to tease out their interests, particularly with a research project. If I can help them find a topic that is really meaningful to them, they see the power of education. When I get them to hit that, it makes me happy.

Mentoring is much more than advising. The commitment mentors show toward their students through listening, exploration of interests and appreciating them as whole people is part of this dynamic process.

Creating Connections: "It's Really Important to Me That Students Don't Feel Isolated"

I was specifically interested in understanding how mentors reflect on their connections with students. Combined with a commitment to students, mentors are genuinely invested in fostering connections among students, in whatever method or approach is meaningful or available. Not only were study groups mentioned as a way to achieve this goal, but also other modes of connecting students to each other came up, such as residencies, blended studies or mentoring meetings with more than one student. The emphasis is on connections, among students and between mentors and students, as this mentor stressed: "It's really important to me that students don't feel isolated."

Consistent with ESC culture, student-mentor connections develop in flexible ways, as this mentor with a heavy independent study load explained:

I require students to talk to me on the phone, to hear my voice. Students need to connect to a real person.

Likewise, this mentor who teaches online, uses phone conversations to establish meaningful connections with students:

I don't [physically] see my students, sometimes until graduation, but I really know them. We talk all of the time. Some of them I speak to every week.

In addition to phone calls, other connection strategies, for example social media, were mentioned as tools to increase connections among students, as this mentor said:

We are attempting to use any tool possible [such as Facebook] to increase the connectedness with students, with the course, with each other, with the teacher. The key is to find ways to connect.

For faculty and students, there are positive aspects of teaching and learning online. However, for a few mentors, there was a wish for connections not easily replicated in the virtual world, as this mentor reflects:

Online is great, but I have not yet figured out how to master it so I get the same experiences online as I do when people are physically sitting together in the same room.

A similar sentiment was expressed by this mentor who spoke from the experience of many years at the college, witnessing changes in connections with students:

I got a lot of love and nurturing from [my students]. When I went into the online world, [my students] needed just as much, but that relationship went away. It became more professionalized, but it also became more distant.

On the other hand, the online environment is an equalizing force in making connections with students, as this mentor explained:

I thought [teaching online] would be difficult because I come from a traditional background and sometimes I miss the face to face with the student, but I was recently having an interesting conversation with one of our new faculty members and I said 'isn't it interesting how well you get to know your students in the online environment?' It's fascinating. I never thought it would be so intimate with them. Part of that is when you are face to face, in the classroom setting, you get to know the students and observe nonverbal behavior, for example, in a discussion, unless you are calling on everyone, not all students participate. If you are doing an online discussion, everyone participates and the shy person who won't speak up the classroom has gems of wisdom, wonderful stuff to share. I can't tell you if that's the shy person unless they self-identify. Everyone has something to say. But there are not those classroom dynamics to handle, like the shy one, the know-it-all. …

Fostering connections among students serves a dual purpose: reducing isolation and managing workload, as this mentor described:

My goal is managing my workload through grouping students. I will invite students to form a study group.

Mentors across the college want students to have connections with them and with each other. That is, although mentors often work with students individually, they also want students to connect with other students.

Valuing Groups: "Students Ask Questions and Build Community"

Beyond mentors' desire to create and sustain connections with and among students was the recognition of groups in all their manifestations – in-person, online, blended, cohorts, residencies – as valuable modes of study beneficial to students and faculty.

This mentor summed up the benefit of groups for students taking Educational Planning as a cohort:

Students benefit because they are not alone. They ask questions and build community. The students develop friendships. The groups are good in a social aspect. Students also stay on track.

In-person study groups in a "classroom" environment can be a powerful way for students to grow in their learning process. This mentor, who teaches in a structured program, reflected on this:

I prefer the classroom because I like the interaction with students who are physically there. I also feel that students get more learning in the classroom, not only learning from the teacher and the text, but also learning from each other. I think they also grow in that environment, I think that they will grow more, because you can banter and dialogue with so many people, and hear ideas that you didn't have because we have all different backgrounds and we learn and understand in very different ways.

This mentor agrees that groups offer an interactive dynamic that is an essential part of the learning process:

The interactive piece of the learning, which is I'd say is 80 percent of the learning, propels the learning, really brings the theoretical aspects to the forefront because, ultimately, students will go into the … field and become

practitioners, so I consistently work with them from that perspective.

Students learn ideas and skills from each other, but also from the mentor. The teacher, as someone in a position to emulate, is important, as this mentor explained:

Students want interaction with the teacher, they want to know that you are there. ESC's model is that students learn from each other, and that is there, but they also want your feedback, they want your approval; [they ask] 'Am I on the right track?' … I am a huge believer in that social dimension of learning; it sets a whole atmosphere.

The group dynamic is one of many benefits of study groups. From the perspective of some mentors, content areas such as history are more suitable in a group setting, as this mentor explained:

There are things students really need to know and they can't necessarily decide for themselves. I don't believe in student-centered learning. Traditional classes are the way. Students do well with guidance and this happens more in groups.

Not only are groups valuable for students to learn specific subjects, they also offer rich opportunities to learn from and about human diversity, as this mentor shared:

I feel lucky to be here [at the center]. We do so many study groups, and we have a lot of students, huge variety, this is a real strength of the college, when I can have an Orthodox Jew and a woman who has served time in prison for selling drugs, who is sitting next to a correction officer … It makes for brilliant learning in the classroom.

Diverse voices and perspectives in a safe and supportive community are among the virtues of groups. This mentor shared an appreciation for the dynamic that is created in a group where students' differences are embedded into the learning that happens in the study.

Last night, we looked at a film and saw 12 different ways of seeing it emerge, and I think that is really

instructive, so much more instructive in a group, especially when I am dealing with issues of representation, with issues of race and class and gender, so it really helps a student get beyond a sense that I think everybody has about their own ideological commitments, that they are just a given.

Study groups that provide opportunities for meaningful student interaction may need to have a certain composition. For example, this mentor identified a specific group size that works best:

I love study groups that are 8-10, that is a beautiful size, people get to know each other, and they are more relaxed. I really like when people get to know each other in the class.

There are locations across the college where study groups are not offered or are not adequately enrolled. Some mentors prefer working individually with students, while others want groups but have difficulty meeting their enrollment targets through the use of groups. Even in locations where groups are rare, mentors want them and value their role in their students' learning, as this mentor explained:

I feel lucky to be here. … We do so many study groups, and we have a lot of students, huge variety, this is a real strength of the college, when I can have an Orthodox Jew and a woman who has served time in prison for selling drugs, who is sitting next to a correction officer … It makes for brilliant learning in the classroom.

I have tried to start several groups here, but they haven't been enrolled. I had three people enrolled in one independent study and I asked them to meet three times as a group and by doing that, one of their papers would be cut. It's very hard to get people willing to drive here and park their cars. It is remarkably hard.

Whether study groups are part of a center's culture or not, mentors expressed interest and enthusiasm about grouping students in one way or another. For some mentors, groups not only help students in their learning, but also are useful in managing mentor workload.

Strategies for Groups

Teaching and mentoring students in groups requires mentors to be thoughtful and purposeful in their approach to their work. As with all aspects of mentoring, there are challenges and rewards. One challenge related to groups is how mentors recognize and meet individual student learning needs in the same study group. For example, one mentor identified the initial frustration of having a student ready for graduate-level work and another with high school academic skills in the same group. I wanted to learn the strategies mentors employ to simultaneously recognize and respond to student differences while maintaining the cohesion of the study group. What helps mentors establish connection among their students in groups? Mentors identified a full menu of strategies: encouraging full participation, "checking in" with the group at the beginning and end of the term, and flexibility in designing individual assignments within the group learning contract.

Introductions are purposeful for this mentor who uses this routine classroom practice as a way to build community through students getting to know each other:

I require students to memorize three names of their classmates and I never allow them to say, 'what she said'; no, know this person's name. That way they get to know each other. If you have the name, and you see that person's face, you have a different kind of relationship. I specialize

in intimacy and relationships, so I'm interested in relationships and responsibility in those relationships so it's important for me that students know each other's names.

Offering different assignments within one study group is consistent with the college mission of student-centered learning, as explained by this mentor:

I try and encourage students to do things that are meaningful for them, so if a student is struggling with writing, let's work on their writing. But if I've got a student with fine writing, but who really needs to learn Prezi or PowerPoint, or really wants to learn to set up a Web page, then let's do that instead.

Safety emerges through students fully participating, as this mentor explained:

I spend the first few weeks really trying to get everyone comfortable. Occasionally there are students who threaten that sense of security. That has been a challenge that I have tried to learn from. I also try to make sure everyone speaks in every meeting, even if I have to call on people, although I explain why I prefer not to do that. One of the challenges is that I don't stay happy and content with what the engaged students are doing, but also that I really try to pull in the students who are quieter, or who may not be engaged or may not be enjoying the material and who may need more time and attention.

Eliciting participation from everyone in the group can be difficult, and mentors sometimes use themselves as role models, as this mentor explained:

I ask the group, 'Does anyone agree or disagree? I also remind the students, 'Don't talk to me, talk to each other' … I begin with a conversational style to set the tone and I use go rounds each time where I ask students to talk about their work, where they are stuck, and they ask the group for feedback.

Hearing various student voices is important, as is paying attention to how students reflect on their experience from meeting to meeting. This mentor gathers student feedback at regular intervals in the term to "take the pulse" of the students' learning:

One of the things I do in my groups is to distribute index cards where I ask students to tell me their expectations for this study. 'What would you like to learn?' I take the card back and return it [to] take a temperature of the class – to take the pulse.

Mentoring: Empire State College's Distinctive Practice

Closely entwined with the philosophy and practices of working with students in groups, my conversations with mentors suggest that it is mentoring – the complex, complicated process – that is ESC's distinctive practice. As one of my mentees said to me recently, "Adult students need someone to believe in them too."

Magical Moments

Mentoring and teaching at ESC are sometimes interchangeable processes of engagement with study material, with the college, with students and with oneself. Mentoring is about balancing overwhelming workloads with the desire and commitment to provide high quality and student-centered services. Beyond simply "positive" aspects

> *Mentoring is about balancing overwhelming workloads with the desire and commitment to provide high quality and student-centered services.*

of mentoring, I wanted to understand those intangibles, the ethereal elements that embody meaning for mentors. A love of the creativity and flexibility of the faculty

role at Empire was one example, as well as the experience of mentoring as more than a job. Moreover, mentors used words such as "magical," "transformative" and "exciting" when reflecting on what gives them meaning in their work with students.

Adult students come to ESC with unique histories and motivations. For mentors, there are surprises when the unexpected happens, and it is especially meaningful to witness, as this mentor explained:

The magic happens – and it really is magic – when the person who feels totally unprepared realizes that they have just taught something to the person who is at the top of the class. It is an exciting moment.

Being a part of a dynamic and evolving educational process for students is especially meaningful, as this mentor reflected:

[What is most meaningful to me] is helping [students] become who they are already and they don't know it yet, seeing their faces start to glow when they start to get it, [when they see that] they are smarter than they think, the world is more exciting and interesting than they think, helping them find and embrace what excites them, helping them turn that into something solid in terms of earning a living and becoming deeper and broader themselves. That's it for me. It's so cool to see that happen and to be a part of it.

Recognizing and respecting ESC as a college where adult students are able to genuinely participate in their own learning, especially through prior learning assessment, was a sentiment expressed by this mentor:

I see PLA as really powerful – to have a stay at home mom with a child with autism get credit for all that she has learned. That's transformative.

The fact that ESC is part of the SUNY system is not lost on this mentor who recognizes the inherent power for adult students to be at the center of their learning experience, a privilege most often reserved for traditional-age students at elite colleges:

This is a public college and I just don't know many public colleges where students get to create their own degree plan and engage in intellectual debates.

Students need to connect with mentors they can relate to, mentors who understand their experiences, mentors who see them for who they are. When that recognition happens, it's amazing, as this mentor described:

I was working on a PLA project and we were doing a Learning Tree and my mentee was talking about the root of her tree, [that it] was wrong, [that] she was wrong, her ideas were wrong, her demeanor was wrong … we were adding things to her tree and finally I said, 'this is her tree.' But it was the universality of the experience, she spoke to me afterward and said she felt welcome, she felt acknowledged, she felt heard.

Many Roles, Overlapping Identities

For some mentors, the practices of mentoring and teaching are difficult to separate from each other. Faculty across the college, with many things in common, also are distinct. Some identify more as teachers, others as researchers. As my interviews wrapped up, I asked one final question: "How do you most identify at ESC?" Or, to put it another way, "What role is most important to you, if there is one role that stands out?"

[I am an] advocate. I strongly believe the students of color need a voice and someone to relate to.

I am a teacher. That is why I spent 11 years in graduate school. I spend

all of my time thinking about ideas. I want to teach. I want to share ideas.

I try to be a nurturing person and I think of myself as everybody's cheerleader and I bring that to my mentoring role.

I think it would be in my capacity as mentor, but that includes my role as teacher as well. I talk about this a lot with my students, about where the word 'mentor' comes from and what we as academic mentors can be. [Therefore] my role as mentor is what is most important to me.

Reflections on the "ESC Difference"

My research intentionally did not focus on mentors' struggles and challenges, as I wanted to highlight the experiences of connection and identity. It is worth noting, however, that high workload was identified as the most stressful part of the faculty role at ESC, as summed up this way by one mentor:

My biggest challenge is time and trying to fit everything in and have it be at the level I want it to be.

The connections we make to students, the integrity we show in our mentoring practices, the careful attention we pay to our students in person, online, individually and in groups are elements of "the ESC difference." How we embrace and promote our signature role of mentoring, including mentoring in groups, is an especially timely and important question.

My research has broader implications beyond Empire State College. What can other colleges learn from ESC? What can we learn from other colleges that serve an adult student population? How can ESC safeguard our trademark mentoring philosophy and practices while being flexible to change? How can ESC strengthen our identity in the dynamic landscape of higher education without compromising what we do so well?

Politics of Memory and Memorialization

Penny Coleman, School for Graduate Studies

"Those who control the present, control the past, and those who control the past, control the future."

– George Orwell
1984 (1949)

What follows is a version of a talk delivered by Penny Coleman at the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, Saratoga Springs, New York on 06 February 2014. She is the coordinator of the Advanced Certificate in Veterans Services program, and the author of Flashback: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Suicide, and the Lessons of War *(2006, Beacon Press).*

S o we're talking about "war stories" tonight. And in a building specifically dedicated to the preservation of artifacts that represent the history of New York State's military forces.

This is the third time I have had the privilege of speaking here about stories that are not represented in the museum's collections. And for that, I want to thank you. I appreciate the willingness to engage in conversations that raise difficult issues and difficult questions about the role of museums in preserving and memorializing the collective heritage, not just of a community, or even just of New York state, but of our nation. I recognize the uniforms, the flags, the weapons, the documents and pictures as evidence that connects us to real events that happened to real people. They deserve to be remembered and honored.

But museums can't collect everything; the history they are charged with preserving is too big, too complicated. Choices have to be made about what artifacts are worth preserving and memorializing. And artifacts aren't content neutral. There is always a context, explicit or implicit, and the context is important because it's the context that gives the story a shape and a meaning.

More often than not, and especially in the case of war stories, the context is determined by what we want to remember. And what we want to remember tends to be the good stuff, the heroes and heroines, the victories, the successes that feed our civic pride, that make us feel good about ourselves, that encourage the "We" in "We the People," and the "our" in "our side," "our veterans."

Not the nastiness and the mistakes, which so many of my students have experienced so immediately and personally. Those experiences have not always been so honored, which I believe accounts for their insistence on writing the word "veteran" with a capital V.

I see two principles at work in the way traditional war stories, including museum artifacts, have been edited.

One is that we tend to like our history, especially the war stories, simple: battles between good and evil, the wise prevailing over fools, with inspiring heroes, simple plots and happy endings.

And the second is that some stories are considered appropriate as public art, and others are not. Public art tends to privilege the leaders, the statesmen, the generals and the warriors. Other stories, and they are often women's stories, have been considered too private, too emotional, too personal to be included in the official history.

Wars, however, are never simple, the heroes never perfect and the endings, well, they work out well for some, but for others, not so much. It takes a lot of editing to tidy up the nastiness of war.

And just because men have made up the majority of the combatants doesn't mean they have been the only casualties. War has been hard on women, even when they are not on the front lines. Silencing the voices of women has been more than deeply hurtful to them as individuals. It also has allowed a certain idealized story about war to persist

Penny Coleman

in ways that have been deeply destructive of the social fabric, or moral center, the sense of collective identity and civic pride that museums are supposed to foster.

I want to talk about two stories, both of which are older even than this venerated museum. They are as old as war itself, and rarely included in official histories or memorialized in museum collections. They are both very much in the news today, but both are being treated as a current phenomenon, not of a culture in need of serious reformation. I would say that this is precisely because some of the most revealing stories, stories that have the most to teach, have been repeatedly left on the cutting room floor.

The first is about military suicides. When my husband Daniel came home from Vietnam in 1969, there was no such thing as post-traumatic stress in the official diagnostic lexicon. He had all the classic symptoms of traumatized soldiers through the ages. He self-medicated creatively and expansively, couldn't keep a job, couldn't sleep, exploded unpredictably and wouldn't talk about his

war. Like tens of thousands of other young couples, I now realize, we thought we were making a mess of things all on our own. None of us understood what we were up against, so none of us were prepared for how things played out. No matter how often our soldiers threatened to kill themselves or how serious their attempts, we were all blindsided – stunned – when they actually did. Impossible. Just like that. End of conversation. End of story.

We all tried to blame them, ended up blaming ourselves, believed that what had happened were our personal failures, *our* shame, *our* guilt, *our* isolation. We were alone in our sorrow.

It was the rumors going around in the '90s that more Vietnam vets had killed themselves since the war than there were names on the memorial Wall that finally woke me up, started me thinking, rethinking. I wanted to believe I was a war widow. It made sense. It fit. But I couldn't really let myself off the hook without some evidence. And there was nothing out there. No data. No studies. No proof. No museum.

One of the things about stories is that they bring people together for comfort, yes, but for validation, too. I started to put up notes in veteran spaces. I advertised in magazines like *Gold Star Wives,* asking for women who had survived similar deaths to get in touch with me if they wanted to talk. And they started to come. For two years, I collected stories – our artifacts – and I wrote a book.

I learned something important in the process. When you believe that something is true but there isn't any evidence, that doesn't necessarily mean you're wrong. It just might mean that the narrative has been pirated, the evidence squirreled away or never gathered.

Arguing from anecdotal evidence, without the credentials that give you access to the experts or the archives, was tricky, but there was some history and a few experts who took my back. The more I looked, the more I realized that there were disconnected bits conveniently buried in disconnected archives, and I got stubborn. Like when I scoured every page of the *Trauma and the Vietnam War: Report of Findings from the*

National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (Kulka et al., 1990), which was so big and so comprehensive it claimed to represent every segment of the veteran population. When it was published, nobody even noticed that it simply ignored suicide. Suicide was central to all the casebook studies on which it was based, but the authors and every researcher I spoke to insisted I hadn't read it carefully. Not there. Never mentioned. Tricky.

> *We all tried to blame them, ended up blaming ourselves, believed that what had happened were our personal failures,* our *shame,* our *guilt,* our *isolation. We were alone in our sorrow.*

Anyway, I wrote the book and a few months after it came out, I got a call from the chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs telling me that he had been walking around with a copy of my book in his pocket for weeks, and he wanted me to come to Washington and talk to the committee.[1]

That was a month after CBS came out with their investigative report on veteran suicides, based on the kind of data that only an organization like CBS could squeeze out of official hiding places, and proving that 18 vets were taking their lives every day in the U.S.[2]

You would think that report would have loosened the grip on the official narrative a bit, but as they say in the military, battleships turn slowly.

For over a decade now, the Pentagon has been funding study after study, and every one comes back with the same conclusions. One that came out last year in the Journal of the American Medical Association (2013) stated:

> The findings from this study do not support an association between deployment or combat with suicide, rather they are consistent with previous research indicating that mental health problems increase suicide risk. (para. 6)

Mental health problems? What they're talking about is drug and alcohol abuse and depression, and those, they claim, are usually the result of a failed relationship (McKnight, 2014).

So the story is still that it's the soldiers' fault. And their girlfriends'. But the Pentagon is pleased with the results because, as Charles C. Engle, MD, MPH, of the Pentagon's medical school (USUHS) wrote in an accompanying editorial, these are "disorders for which effective treatments exist."[3]

We'll see how that works out for them. I hope they're right. And I hope they make the treatments available. But nobody I know is taking them seriously anymore, though it prompted a useful observation from *The New York Times* (Dao & Lehren, 2013):

> Another question lingers: Is the current trend unique, or typical of war throughout the ages? Because detailed data on military suicides was not collected until after Vietnam, it is impossible to know, though many experts believe that suicides rose during and after the two World Wars, Korea and Vietnam. (para. 15)

Why do you suppose?

Lingering questions bring me to the other story I wanted to talk about – the extent to which rape and sexual assault have been ubiquitously tolerated and condoned among military forces, not just in the U.S., but around the world. If *I* had to wait for validation, the heroines of this story have been waiting a good deal longer. It's the story of the 200,000 East Asian women, "comfort women" as they were euphemistically called, who were trafficked and forced to provide sex for Japanese soldiers during WWII. The city of Glendale, CA is among several American cities that have erected memorial statues to these women in the past few years, all of which have provoked furious emails, mostly from Japan, and most recently, a comment from

the mayor of Osaka to the effect that the comfort women were *necessary* to keep up the spirits of the Japanese soldiers – which in turn provoked worldwide criticism and even censure from female lawmakers in Japan. The unveiling of these memorials have been opportunities for some of the remaining 58 survivors, all in their late 80s, to travel and speak openly about their experiences and their feelings. "Why didn't I die?" asked Ok-Seon Lee. "Why am I alive? I lived for this long, and that's why I can at least say something about this. But think of what sorrows the other women must have died with. We need to speak for them, too" (Schrank, 2013, Echoes of an International Controversy section, para. 11).

Their stories are being given attention against the backdrop of our own epidemic of military rape and assault. Is this, too, a current phenomenon, or typical of war throughout the ages?

Actually, it only takes a little research to show that the patterns of military sex crimes go back generations, and though we prefer not to remember, they are present in the U.S. military, as well as in the military of other nations.

Going back only as far as the second World War, and I am again using the Army's official history as reference, *Stars and Stripes* used overt sexual propaganda to motivate GIs before the Omaha Beach landing. *Life* magazine chimed in with the promise that American soldiers would find that "France was a tremendous brothel inhabited by 40 million hedonists who spent all of their time eating, drinking and making love" (Weston, 1945, p. 20). And American GIs took those invitations very seriously. In France and Germany, fraternization became a euphemism for rape, and though Eisenhower repeatedly expressed "grave concern" over the magnitude of abuse, not to mention the incidence of venereal disease, in letters to his commanders, it was to little effect. Patton characteristically responded, "(T)ell the men of the Third Army that as long as they keep their helmets on they are not fraternizing" (Persico, 2013, p. 412).

Those stories have been buried as deeply as the suicide statistics. They were intentionally kept from the American public, and though recently historians like Rick Atkinson (2013) in his acclaimed *Liberation Trilogy,* and many others, have gone back to the media and archives of that sacred time and uncovered some of the statistics, the individual stories have largely been lost. Erased.

What we have been left with is nostalgia for the good war and the greatest generation – and an excuse to claim surprise, if not consternation, about the current situation and to blame what's happening now on the soldiers, who are admittedly not blameless, but allowing the culture that has promoted and condoned such behaviors for generations off the hook.

Now, however, something has changed in that women in substantial numbers are serving alongside their male counterparts. Before that, civilian women, allies and enemy alike, bore the brunt of behaviors deemed acceptable, even necessary, in practice if not policy.

And consequently, more than 500,000 U.S. service members have been raped or sexually assaulted in the military *since* WWII (Dick, 2013); more than 95,000 just since 2006 (Kors, 2013). Last year, the numbers were up almost 50 percent (Steinhauer, 2013). More than 20 percent of female soldiers are sexually assaulted during service (O'Leary, 2014). A female soldier is far more likely to be raped by a fellow service member than killed in combat (Kors, 2013).

What does the military do? They prosecute about eight percent of accused sex offenders, compared to 40 percent of civilian complaints (Christoffersen, 2010). And after they file a complaint, 90 percent of the assault *victims* are eventually involuntarily discharged (Ellison, 2011).

And they have renamed it. Like "shell shock" became PTSD, a personal disorder, and "brain injuries" now hide behind TBI (traumatic brain injuries), since 2005, MST (military sexual trauma) has become what we used to have perfectly good names for: rape and sexual assault. A rape isn't a trauma – it causes trauma – and moving out of the criminal realm into the medical allows it to be *her* injury – or *his* – to be fixed, if we can find the resources.

It could be stopped now if those who were responsible for punishing such acts of primitive violence actually did their jobs. Why hasn't it?

> *It could be stopped now if those who were responsible for punishing such acts of primitive violence actually did their jobs. Why hasn't it?*

I don't have an answer to that question. Thoughts, but not answers.

But who do you think benefits from keeping those stories hidden? And who suffers?

There is a wall in Washington that memorializes the soldiers who died in combat, but not those whose deaths were equally the result of their war. And where is the museum for the survivors of military rape? What would it look like? And who would come to pay tribute?

Notes

[1] This testimony during the hearing, "Stopping Suicides: Mental Health Challenges Within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs" can be accessed at the following links:
Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMBzSRJQwbw
Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZhNXVN8Jvo

[2] The CBS story came out over a few months, during which time Veterans Affairs first denied the numbers, and then corroborated the information. See http://www.cbsnews.com/news/va-hid-suicide-risk-internal-e-mails-show-21-04-2008/ and http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/pdf/VA_email_121507.pdf .

[3] Charles C. Engle, MD, MPH, of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (which is a department of the Pentagon – its medical school) actually wrote the JAMA editorial that

accompanied the study release. And the exact quote is: "These findings offer some potentially reassuring ways forward: the major modifiable mental health antecedents of military suicide – mood disorders and alcohol misuse – are mental disorders for which effective treatments exist" (http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1724254).

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Adult Learning and Responsiveness to Life Contexts, Challenges and Crossroads: Gender and Sexual Orientation Intersectionality as Opportunity

Julie Gedro, Central New York Center

Julie Gedro was the recipient of the 2013 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 26 March 2014.

T he subject of my remarks is a construct that, although I have not until relatively recently had language to describe it, I have been fascinated with in one way or another for my entire life. This construct is something that we all have. It can change over time; it can be something that is imposed upon us from an external or organizational source, and it also can be something that becomes quite intentional on the part of an individual. This construct, the subject of this talk, is that of *identity*. Some of us have more than one, which is a sub-topic that I will explore in just a few moments. The Collins English Dictionary defines "identity" as "the state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other person or thing."[1] Identity is "the condition of being oneself … and not another."[2] Perhaps because I have traversed multiple career paths in my adult life, perhaps because my research tends to have a focus on invisible populations, and perhaps because I relish the opportunity (and I am quite sure I have plenty of company in this room) to work with adult learners as they negotiate new or refurbished identities as college students, and then, as college graduates, identity is a persistent fascination for me. I will explain some recent management scholarship and then offer some insights about learning. In particular, I will provide some information about ways in which adult learning happens

in the absence of formal or structured learning opportunities to assist with one's negotiation of the organizational or corporate environment. In such absence, learning is necessarily nonformal. I will conclude with some ideas around identity, and opportunity.

In their manuscript "Shattering the Myth of Separate Worlds: Negotiating Nonwork Identities at Work," authors Lakshmi Ramarajan of Harvard Business School and Erin Reid of Boston University (2013) explored the "dual forces of pressure and preferences that vary from inclusion … to exclusion" (p. 621). The authors observed that for several decades, the "myth of separate worlds" has served to roughly define our identities that are considered relevant to our work lives such as "managerial" or "occupational." In the case of Empire State College, this could be translated into identities such as "staff" or "faculty" or "PE" (professional employee) or "M/C" (management/confidential). There are, according to the myth, identities that are not relevant to our work lives, such as religious, or national, or gender or family. However, according to Ramarajan and Reid (2013), we are experiencing a blurring of the distinctions between work identities and nonwork identities due to three factors. First, declining job security and the "now precarious nature of work" (p. 623) and the trend toward serial employment across many organizations, punctuated by periods of unemployment, has destabilized the historical (and, the authors argued, mythical) stratification of work and nonwork identities. Second, the increasing diversity of the workforce, brought about because of the entrance of women and minorities, generational shifts and

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globalization, have changed the composition of the workforce. Diversity, according to the authors, does not result in women and minorities assuming leadership positions in proportion to their increasing presence in corporations and organizations. Images of the "ideal worker" (p. 623) are resistant to change. Rather, what these shifts mean is that women and minorities, because they are aware that they do not fit the ideal worker image, are quite aware of their nonwork identities. Additionally, increased diversity makes non-work identities more relevant because people are placed, increasingly, in "interactions with demographically different colleagues" (p. 623). Finally, the proliferation of communications technology, which has changed how and where work gets done, has blurred the lines between work identities and nonwork identities. The reason for this is that communications technologies create conditions by which

workers are expected to be "on call" "in times and places formerly protected from work" (p. 624).

Identity is a construct that is pervasive and it impacts one's work life.

Depending on the culture and characteristics of an organization, some employees (or prospective employees) have an easier time aligning the identity that they bring to the workplace with the workplace. Others have to engage in negotiation strategies in order to achieve a proper "fit." Because of the blurring of boundaries between work and nonwork identities, it is becoming increasingly important for organizations to create inclusive cultures that respect and understand the variety of identities that are present in prospective new hires, current employees and those who are identified for upwardly mobile assignments. Inclusivity allows people to use their energy on their work, and not on negotiating an environment that may not be welcoming or understanding or interested in learning.

Now, let me get specific about identity and assumptions about a particular type of identity. I am making a shift, now, to the subject of gender and sexuality.

Because one of the default assumptions in an organization is heterosexuality, negotiating identity in the new world of the gray space, the blurring between work and nonwork, brings with it a different type of challenge with respect to sexual orientation. A heterosexual person does not have to intentionally disclose that his or her nonwork identity is that of a heterosexual. However, for someone with a nonwork identity as a sexual minority, there are a series of disclosure decisions. Identity as a sexual minority in an organization is a constant process of, and I will use a metaphor befitting our weather situation in the Northeast this winter, trying to drive just outside of the tracks already made in a very snowy or icy road. You can do it, but it involves alertness, skill and monitoring because it is slippery. You are on the same road with everyone else, but you are having a different experience.

Over the years, when conducting lectures or workshops or teaching my course, LGBT Issues in the Workplace, I have found myself examining (for and with my audiences and students) how and why sexuality is a workplace issue at all. It presents itself in otherwise innocent and even perhaps mundane conversations about what people did over the weekend, how they spent their holidays and other matters such as attending to sick family members. It shows up, too, in ways such as the pictures of family members that are displayed in offices or cubicles.

Now, given that there are assumptions about sexuality, and given that there are sexual minorities in the workplace, and given that there are few, if any, formal training or educational resources available (except of course, Empire State College's LGBT Issues in the Workplace course) to help business people – particularly lesbian business people – understand how to negotiate identity, there is a method by which this population learns. Now, I am going to turn to some of my research about identity. There are unique challenges that lesbians who aspire to senior leadership positions face, related to identity and the relationship between their minority gender status, and their minority sexual orientation status. It is beyond the scope of the time allotted for this presentation to explore the disproportionately low rates of women in senior leadership positions in corporate America, but I must mention it because lesbians, being women, are challenged (in part) by the biases and limitations that face all women. With respect to sexual orientation identity, it bears explaining that the development of a minority sexual orientation identity does not necessarily occur in a linear fashion, and it can be a complex and stressful process.[5]

Vivienne Cass (1979), an Australian psychotherapist, developed a model of homosexual identity formation. There are six stages of her model: a) identity confusion, in which individuals begin to question and experience a sense of confusion about their sexual orientation; b) identity comparison, in which individuals begin to externally explore and compare their thoughts and feelings about sexual orientation with those of others; c) identity tolerance, in which individuals present themselves as being heterosexual in non-gay environments while establishing increased contact with the lesbian and gay community; d) identity acceptance, in which individuals

develop and embrace positive attitudes toward their gay or lesbian identity; e) identity pride, in which individuals feel proud of lesbian or gay identity; and f) identity synthesis, in which individuals are willing to disclose their sexual orientation and can deal with the range of positive to negative reactions it may elicit from others (Cass as cited in Mobley & Slaney, 1996). All of the women in my 2010 research study have reached the identity synthesis stage of identity development.

In the absence of books, other types of materials and formal workshops or courses, lesbians have had to learn to thrive in their careers and ascend into the top ranks of organizational leadership through other means. With respect to negotiation in organizational environments and negotiating their career development in a nation that continues to lack federal protections in employment for sexual minorities, lesbians have learned to be successful through their own experiences and through their own devices. The concept of informal and incidental learning provides an appropriate explanation of the mechanisms that these women use to negotiate these settings. By definition, the women in my research are thriving in their organizations. Therefore, there are some means by which these women developed understandings and strategies to negotiate their workplaces on their own.[6]

The workplace is heterosexist, so lesbians in corporate America today, as well as in 2000, work from a position of "otherness." Watkins and Marsick's (1992) theory of informal and incidental learning provided a framework for understanding and explaining how these women have learned to negotiate the heterosexism of the organizational setting. Rather than take a class, read a book or attend a seminar on negotiating their organizations, my participants instead learned informally and incidentally how to negotiate their organizations. Informal learning is learning through means that are not structured and prearranged – in other words, not institutionally sponsored (Watkins & Marsick, 1992). Informal learning includes trial-and-error learning, mentoring and coaching. Incidental learning happens as a byproduct of another activity. The operational difference between informal

and incidental learning is that informal learning is characterized by learner intent, whereas incidental learning typically happens spontaneously and occurs after the learner has reflected back on and processed the meaning of an experience.[7]

I have conducted two national research studies, approximately 10 years apart, both that seek to understand what the experiences, and the insights, are of lesbians who are succeeding in corporate and organizational America. My first work was a qualitative study of national elites: 10 lesbian directors/managers/executives in corporate settings in the U.S. That work resulted in a model of learning that I have presented in many ways over the years and that I will not repeat here because I want to focus on some of my relatively recent work. Approximately 10 years later, I doubled the size of my study, and conducted research that focused on sexuality, gender expression and leadership style. There were 20 participants in the 2010 study. Their locations included the Northeast, Pacific Northwest, West Coast, Southeast, Southwest and East Coast. The industries represented included technology, consulting, finance, insurance and utilities.

I would like to share some of the findings about lesbians who are succeeding in leadership positions in corporate and organizational contexts, and the perhaps counterintuitive findings that I determined. The interview guide that I used in one on one interviews asked participants the extent to which they are "out." I asked them to explain their success. I asked them the extent to which they feel gender conformity, and their own conformity or nonconformity, affects one's opportunities in their organization or profession. I will present the themes in approximate order of these questions.

First off, these women demonstrated high self-efficacy and a strong work ethic. The participants expressed positive self-assessments about their careers and their ability to get things done within their organizations. (Self-efficacy is the "belief in one's ability to accomplish a task"; Moen & Skaalvik, 2009, p. 33.) Second, lesbian identity is not a career impediment. Although there was little to

no discussion of the "coming out" process, it bears mentioning that because of the ubiquitous assumption of heterosexuality in organizational America, coming out remains an iterative process.

Finally, and perhaps surprisingly, professionalism has nothing to do with gender expression or gender conformity. I have previously noted the implicit pressure in organizations for leaders to demonstrate traditional gender roles (Gedro, 2010). That is, there is an unspoken expectation for leaders to demonstrate gender conformity – for men to behave in masculine ways and for women to behave in feminine ways. By "behavior," I mean in dress, speech, mannerism and style. These women refute this notion. In my interviews, I addressed the issue of gender conformity and explored the issue looking at the gender conformity of the participants themselves. I also asked them, based upon their own experience and observations, to comment upon the extent to which gender conformity does or could affect one's career progression in one's organization and/or industry.

These lesbian corporate leaders' resistance to societal expectations about females' concern with body image and attractiveness sends a crucial message. This message has significance not only for lesbians, but for all women. By "breaking the rules" of cultural conformity to gender norms and yet ascending in organizational leadership nonetheless, the women in this study are blazing a path for other females to traverse. That path is wider and freer than what is taken for granted and tacitly accepted as an expectation for women who aspire to leadership. The gender expression of the 2010 participants ranged from feminine to androgynous. None of them indicated that they dressed or groomed in ways that were not comfortable or authentic for them. None of the participants indicated that they ever felt they were playing a role that was not consonant with their own sense of self. They stressed the importance of professionalism, but the construct of professionalism for them lies outside of the bounds of a constrictive binary of masculine and feminine. Other than appropriate polish and professionalism, there is no single "look" or "behavior" with respect to lesbian gender expression. When I asked the direct question

about whether or not a very "butch" lesbian could become successful in their respective occupations and organizations, the feedback was positive. Although I am not ready to offer a "dress for success" checklist as part of this chapter, I do think that it is accurate to conclude that the same rules for dressing for work apply to lesbians as they do for anyone. Those rules include learning the culture of the organization and becoming familiar with the norms for workplace dress and behavior.[8]

Workplace expectations for gendered appearance and behavior are long embedded. In her book *Men and Women of the Corporation,* Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1997) long ago identified the necessity for complicity to organizational expectations for work-based identity and organizational norms for gendered behavior along functional lines. She also explained the social construction of gendered behavior as a necessity for organizational functioning:

Managers, secretaries, and wives must all choose a stance that solves the problems created by their position in the network of organizational relationships, but the roles come to serve organizational functions that

> By "breaking the rules" of cultural conformity to gender norms and yet ascending in organizational leadership nonetheless, the women in this study are blazing a path for other females to traverse.

make change difficult. We also see that 'masculine' or 'feminine' images embedded in the roles are inherent neither in the nature of the tasks themselves nor in the characteristics of men and women; instead, they

are developed in response to the problems incumbents face in trying to live their organizational lives so as to maximize legitimacy or freedom. (p. 5)

Using some of the ideas about authenticity, and transgressing organizational or occupational norms for work identity, I would like to offer the bold notion – one that I often communicate to students – that they consider transgressing norms and exceeding expectations. Whether those expectations are self-imposed, or occupational or familial, I think that there is evidence presented by my research to suggest that there is a wider berth than one might first perceive, to select a profession based upon one's interest, and to resist the cultural norms that might otherwise limit one's choices. There are ways that showing up with a lack of demonstration of orthodoxy that can be helpful.

If you are a "first," you have an opportunity to blaze your own path. This pertains not only to lesbians in organizational America; it pertains to any group or individual who is a first. In the case of Empire State College, in my experience, we often work with first generation college students. In their book, *The Meritocracy Myth,* McNamee and Miller (2009) critiqued the "American Dream" and the promise of education as the "engine" of meritocracy:

A vastly different view of the role of education sees education not as a cause but as an effect of social class. Children receive education in direct proportion to their social class standing; working class children get working class educations; middle class children get middle class educations; and upper class children get upper class educations. In each case, children from these different class backgrounds are groomed for the different roles that they will likely fill as adults. In this way, education largely reproduces the status quo. (p. 107)

When I began to realize that the path of my research would involve a subject that was, at the time somewhat taboo, it felt frightening. Yet it felt *right*. Several years later, I still find myself fascinated by, and researching, subjects that while perhaps not taboo, are somewhat challenging. It feels more like wading in, rather than jumping off. Currently, I am conducting two research projects: alcohol and addiction recovery and career development, and an international project on organizational trust between employees and management.

If there are few expectations or templates for your success, one can look at it in two ways. You can sit there and lament, or reach for your lack of opportunities as a very handy rationale for your poor performance. Or, you can see the fact that you are a "first" as an exhilarating opportunity, a freedom. An open road can be scary, but it also can be exciting.

When aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, age, gender are de-coupled not just from stated criteria for positions, but also from the actual selection patterns for leadership positions, then I think we are headed in a good direction.

I don't come to this inspiration naively.

I know that Equal Employment Opportunity and other employment laws are insufficient to make our world right-side up. I am aware of the paradoxical nature of my research findings: These women are thriving in corporate and organizational environments in which there not only continues to be gender inequity, but also, there continues to be a conspicuous absence of federal anti-discrimination legislation. In corporate America today, although women comprise nearly half of the workforce, we comprise only 8.1 percent of the top earners, and less than 5 percent of the CEOs (Catalyst, 2014).

I realize that the playing field is persistently uneven; the starting blocks in the race are staggered. But I think we can agree that an orientation of hope might be a preferred way to approach our work of emancipatory education. Hope is acted upon any time that we communicate our message of flexible, accessible and high-quality learning to someone otherwise discouraged due to the clouds of the present from imagining a sunnier future. Hope is acted upon any time a student realizes the power of being able to design a degree program that is either "off the trail" of what is previously imagined as a degree, and conversely, when a student is able to construct and pursue a degree that is consistent with one offered by a traditional, famous or otherwise prestigious school. Hope is acted upon when we help students identify and write prior learning assessment

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submissions, and when a prospect for our School for Graduate Studies realizes that he or she can pursue graduate work with us. The fact that Empire State College students are allowed, and encouraged, to blur boundaries between their identities, in order to imagine new identities for which we may serve as an academic and intellectual midwife, is an precious practice of social justice activism.

For me, my excitement and passion for the work we do at Empire State College only intensifies over time. We offer a transgressive model of higher education that addresses constricting notions of orthodoxy, of status quo, of the past as a predictor (and limiter) of the future. I hold steady to the notion that being a "first" can mean freedom and opportunity. In so many ways, Empire State College is a first.

Our identity as a trailblazer in higher education is uniquely ours.

Notes

[1] Identity [Def. 1] – http://www.collins dictionary.com/dictionary/english/ identity.

[2] Identity [Def. 2] – http://dictionary. reference.com/browse/identity.

[3] Adapted from Gedro (2014).

[4] Adapted from Gedro (2014).

[5] Adapted from Gedro (2014).

[6] Adapted from Gedro (2014).

[7] Adapted from Gedro (2014).

[8] Adapted from Gedro (2014).

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*"The old question for schools and colleges has been: **How do we get more students, especially younger ones, to take the courses we offer?***

That is, in effect the old question of the corporation about how to increase its traditional market. Ours was the youth population. Now it has become the broader world of the whole spectrum of learners from those youth through the remainder of the life span, but especially through the ranks of the workforce.

*The new question is: **How do we redefine our business as schools and colleges to fit our enlarged clientele and the distinctive needs of adults seeking employment security and personal fulfillment as well as the youth preparing for first jobs and for the first assumption of adult responsibilities?"***

– Morris T. Keeton (1917-2014)
"Joint Ventures: A New Agenda"
CAEL News, *September/October 1986, p. 46*

Scenes from Academic Travel in Panama: The Impetus for Transformational Learning in the Field

Richard Cattabiani, International Programs and David Lemmon, Department of Biological Sciences, SUNY Ulster County Community College; Kevin L. Woo, Metropolitan Center

"Goin' places that I've never been.

Seein' things that I may never see again.

And I can't wait to get on the road again."

> – Willie Nelson, "On the
> Road Again" (1980)

Introduction

Courses that involve travel can provide the opportunity for transformative education to students who have limited world experiences. Moreover, the ability to provide an integrative and collaborative study offers students many academic and personal opportunities to enrich their outlook on important global issues. In January 2014, SUNY Ulster invited SUNY Empire State College to join its Tropical Field Ecology course in Panama. Along with three faculty (Dr. David Lemmon, Richard Cattabiani and Dr. Kevin Woo), nine students from both institutions collectively participated in a two-week field course that covered a diverse range of terrestrial and marine ecosystems typical of a tropical biome. In addition, the students were introduced to various indigenous cultures, and in contrast, also were exposed to urban populations. The experience allowed students to engage in the content of the study in the field, while interacting with local culture. In this essay, the authors describe the role of collaboration between the two institutions, the nature of the course and the importance of Panama as a hotspot for biodiversity, and our personal reflections on mentoring students for an academic travel study.

"Systemness" and Shared Services

"When we look to the future we steer by stars that are still in motion" (Cattabiani, 2012, para. 1). So it is with *systemness*.

In her State of the University Address on 9 January 2012, Chancellor Nancy Zimpher (2012a) noted *systemness* as "the coordination of multiple components that when working together create a network of activity that is more powerful than any action of individual parts on their own " (Discovering Systemness section, para. 5). By "promoting collaboration across campuses to coordinate program offerings and services, striving for common goals, and working together to count student successes as mutually beneficial" (Goldrick-Rab, 2012, para. 5), systemness is an overarching theme of SUNY's future.

In January 2012, The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government at the State University of New York at Albany published an explanation of Zimpher's application of the term systemness to the SUNY system:

> Acting alone, each of our 64 campuses can and has made great achievements. But think of what can be accomplished when we leverage all of our individual strengths and act as one formidable force armed with an ambitious yet disciplined set of goals that promise to create not just a stronger public university system but also a better way of life for all of New York. (Zimpher, 2012b, para. 6)

ESC and SUNY Ulster are doing just that with Tropical Field Ecology – combining forces to become a stronger unit. A strength of systemness draws on the diversity and services offered by each school.

Known for open access admissions, the community college and nontraditional four-year institutions have been the pathway to higher education for many underserved populations in the U.S., as well as for many first-generation college students. Academic travel both overseas or within the U.S. for community college students is not a gimmick solely for the purpose of collecting tuition. Why should Ulster County Community College students – and those nontraditional learners at Empire State College – be deprived of an international experience? Both institutions are constantly evolving and are quick to change to meet the needs of the their students and the workforce in the U.S. Collaborative partnerships educate the workforce and provide students with an important new learning opportunity.

Panama: A Biodiversity Hotspot

SUNY Ulster's 3-credit Tropical Field Ecology course had its genesis in 2007 with one of its stalwart adjuncts, Dr. Ralph Ibe. The course has run 15 times since then. This rate has been sustained because administration has been very supportive of the efforts, and because the course was immediately popular, growing from its initial destination in the Brazilian Amazon to include Panama. The course has drawn students from several colleges and universities, and community members are always represented among participants. Like other courses of international study, this course provides students with something they can't find in traditional courses: a stretching of horizons by immersion in a different culture and environment. This may be particularly impactful for the community college population, where some students may have traveled little outside their home area, let alone out of the country.

The Amazon site is still very much on the books, but has expanded to Panama for a number of reasons. SUNY Ulster has endeavored to keep trip costs as low as possible in order to be as inclusive as possible of the student population, twisting the arms of vendors to find every available savings. Organizers have managed to keep trip costs flat for about the last five years. Students often receive some parental help covering the cost of the course, but there also are many students who take on extra shifts at work to earn the funds. And it is not infrequent that some have to drop the course for financial reasons. Plans to establish a scholarship for such students are in their early stages, and Panama is a particularly welcome additional site because it can be offered for 15 to 20 percent less than the cost of the Amazon.

Of course, the cost savings with Panama are not the only consideration. Panama is a biodiversity juggernaut in its own right. Although few (if any) places in the world are as species-diverse as the Amazon, Panama is the most biodiverse Central American country.[1] And although there is potentially more to see in the Amazon, students typically see more in Panama. At many sites visited, wildlife is habituated to gawking humans – affording great observation opportunities. On the Panama course in January 2014, a large troop of mantled howler monkeys was feeding in a low canopy above a trail, ignoring those who were jostling for a viewing position below. Most primates in the Amazon would have been long gone. Additionally, the Amazon Basin can't compete with Panama in one respect: habitat diversity. When the course runs in Panama, it can expand coverage of topics to include everything from mountain top cloud forests to coral reefs.

The authors would be happy to provide any support or information to anyone interested in pursuing a similar academic travel course to Panama, or to Brazil – either in collaboration or independently.

Reflections on Mentoring

Richard Cattabiani: If you have ever traveled abroad and have had the priviledge of spending some time in the splendid cathedrals throughout Eastern and Western

Europe, you will have noted an architectural nuance called *sedilia*. These are the seats on the south side of the sanctuary used by the officiating clergy during the liturgy. *Sedilia* is the plural of the Latin *sedile,* a seat. Now consider the root of the word *assessment*. It is from the Medieval Latin *assessus,* to sit beside. What is mentoring but "sitting beside" your student on a one-to-one basis and helping the student with a genuine assessment. It is only when the teacher and the student have a meaningful dialogue that real learning can take place. The Panama program is place-based learning and mentoring at its best. Building global citizens is important. Sitting beside each student and enjoying guided inquiry is very rewarding. Mentoring is quite at home with short-term academic travel. Whether it is within the United States or abroad, it is a good way to work with students as well as to internationalize your curriculum.

David Lemmon: For the science instructors among us, we know that students "come into their own" in a lab setting. This is both from the perspective of interacting with their peers, but also, importantly, interacting with the instructor. This two-way flow is either nonexistent or limited in many lecture settings. Our Tropical Field Ecology course could be viewed as one giant lab, with contact hours going beyond the typically prescribed three hours and extending to the whole day, and often into the evening. We have found that discussions with students invariably go beyond the material at hand. Many of us have had long discussions with students about life and careers that just simply would not have occurred – to the same extent at least – in an on-campus setting. Sharing an adventure is a sure way of getting to know one another and an opportunity for the older of us to provide some perspective, and even direction, to the younger ones in the group.

Here are two short, tangible, examples of how this has worked with Tropical Field Ecology. On our first visit to the Amazon, led by Ralph Ibe, a student had little background in biology, but with Ralph's attention and encouragement throughout the trip, pursued a master's degree in entomology and is now a professional entomologist. And on our most recent trip to Panama, a student was able to channel

her considerable existing motivation for rainforest conservation into a concrete project. Toward the end of the trip, after a long day in the field, discussions with the

> *What is mentoring but "sitting beside" your student on a one-to-one basis and helping the student with a genuine assessment. It is only when the teacher and the student have a meaningful dialogue that real learning can take place.*

student continued into the evening about one site of threatened cloud forest we'd visited early on in the trip. On and off conversations about the cloud forest finally gelled that evening into a plan to raise funds to purchase additional unprotected cloud forest in the area. This SUNY Ulster student is now spear-heading a fundraising campaign that she plans to take SUNY-wide.

Although it's certainly possible that either of these outcomes could have come about in a campus setting, we argue that our Tropical Field Ecology course represents one form of an efficient incubator for them. Of course, the vast majority of students on these trips will not become biologists or environmentalists. But, we bet many will be the more environmentally-literate consumers and decision-makers of tomorrow.

Kevin Woo: It seems like commonplace in the United States for students to take an academically progressive path through their degrees. From high school, it is almost expected that one should enroll in a tertiary institution and complete their degree within a prescribed period. However, if the person discovers that he or she may have entered college at an inappropriate (or really

impossible!) time, they may likely suffer in their grades and in their motivation to continue. This may ultimately cause the person to cease their studies, and enter a professional field to simply earn wages to support themselves, and secondarily to gain occupational experience. In contrast, a common strategy for high school graduates in many European or British Commonwealth countries is to engage in a 'gap year,' thereby taking some time between secondary and tertiary study to travel abroad and gain global experience. Although travel courses also are common at other colleges and universities in the United States and around the world, there seems to be a slight disconnect between the content of the actual course, the likely cultural experience one is expected to gain from their participation and the notion of global citizenship.

Previously, I considered how we might use our local environment as an instructional laboratory (Woo, 2012), as well as a means for broader enrollment into the sciences (Rieucau & Woo, 2013). However, in this instance, we must still contemplate how to optimally use our surrounds as prime pedagogical tools (e.g., Panama, or any other "field" locations), and to ensure that we are able to convey important ideas and current issues in the discipline to our students. As David mentioned in his reflection, we may not be able to guarantee that all students will stay in the natural sciences, but we may opt to mentor in a way that provides them with the knowledge to be more informed. In the classroom, students often get a limited exposure to their instructors, who are often constrained by a scheduled time. There may be other opportunities for engagement, such as tutorial or office hours; however, these periods, too, are often dictated by specified time allotments. In the field, instructors and students work side by side nearly 24 hours a day, and seven days a week. It is likely that this level of attention also enables the student to become more engaged in the material.

Classroom learning can move into the field, and we can couple traditional textbook learning with cultural emersion. Sampson and Smith (1957) best described "world-mindedness" as, "a value orientation, or

frame of reference, apart from knowledge about, or interest in, international relations. We identify as highly world-minded the individual who favors a world-view of the problems of humanity, whose primary reference group is mankind" (p. 99). However, quantitative studies, such as the study by Younes and Asay (2002), have suggested that studying abroad is transformative, and students retain the notion of global-mindeness long after. This was further confirmed in studies that evaluated short-term (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011) and long-term (Kehl & Morris, 2008) experiences, and the connection that students make between their travel experiences, the course content and global awareness. Like Zajonc's (1968) mere exposure effect, students having a brief or one stimulus exposure to such a pedagogical format may further enhance their overall academic experience. However, in the case of international travel abroad study, the package may have several reinforcing features.

My first experience with a field course was in the winter of 2000, when I accompanied my undergraduate academic advisor, Dr. Paul Forestell, to Costa Rica. I enrolled in a Wild Dolphin Behavior course, and the focus was to observe and monitor two resident groups of bottlenose dolphins *(Tursiops truncatus)* and tucuxi *(Sotalia fluviatilis)*. My global experience at that point was limited to a single visit to my ancestral country of China when I was 4 years old. As a 19-year-old junior classman at the time, and with many years between international voyages, I recall being scared, intimidated and naïve. To add to the insecurity, I barely completed my high school Spanish class, and marginally passed the New York State Regents Exam for foreign language. However, I suspect these issues, coupled with the prospect of visiting a country so figuratively and literally foreign to my confidence, provided an overall romantic picture of the adventure. This trip was the likely catalyst for many future global adventures, a re-evaluation of poor ethnocentric views and expeditions for personal growth.

When Richard and David invited me to join them on their Tropical Field Ecology course, I felt grateful and moreover, fortunate for

the opportunity to be part of their program. Although it had been many years since I visited Central America, this was my first trip to Panama. David had refined the curriculum annually, basing the material on the principles of ecology with a focus on the tropical biome. David also updated the itinerary and cultural arrangements based on recommendations from our naturalist guide, Roberto Medina, and feedback from students who previously registered for the course.

I believe the aim for study abroad and international field courses is to foster global citizenship. There are alternative ways to engage students, such as service learning projects (Kiely, 2004), which consider content-driven material, but place an emphasis on a project-focused goal. However, whether the implication is to adopt the classroom into the field or consider project-based service, the fundamental point is that we must provide all students with the opportunity to engage in another culture outside their own country. Kehl and Morris (2008) recommend that it is vitally important that all institutions create and therefore provide undergraduates with the opportunity for a global experience. The recommendation is geared toward two functions: 1) to create an objective student growth in open-mindedness and 2) to consider it as a requirement for all students' degree plans. It is exactly this kind of initiative that will enable students to think about broader cultural, political, economic, educational and environmental issues that affect citizens of other nations. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for open-mindedness and systemness.

The Student Experience

On January 2, 2014, we landed in Panama City and set up our "base camp" in the suburb of Gamboa. For two weeks, we toured across Panama (Figure 1). Our first three days consisted of visits to the national parks around Panama City, such as *Parque Nacional Soberanía and Parque Nacional Chagres*. It was within the latter that we visited a village inhabited by the indigenous *Emberá* people. We then traveled down to Pedasi, and spent the following day at Isla Iguana. We then returned to Gamboa, and prepared ourselves for another tour. We

left for the San Blas Islands (an archipelago of 370-plus islands), a semi-autonomous region occupied by the Kuna Yala people, and stopped at Carti, Big Dog *(Perro Grande)* and Little Dog *(Perro Pequeno)* Islands. We then traveled to Chucanti, which borders Panama and Darien provinces. During our trek up to Chucanti, we ascended approximately 4,800 meters into the cloud forest (Figure 2). Lastly, we traveled back to Panama City for an evening in Casco Viejo, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

At the end of the trip and the course, we surveyed our students (Figure 3) for feedback on their experiences. Reading the students' assessments of the trip really underscored the notion of mentoring. One young woman, who will be joining Ulster's Tropical Field Ecology summer 2014 trip to the Brazilian Amazon, said:

> *This trip is an easy 10 out of 10 not only for the things that we did, but for the dedicated teachers who tutored us. For example, each instructor, including our guide, had his area of expertise to share. And often, even when we were eating our meals or resting on a trail, our conversations revolved around the flora and fauna we had seen that day.*

Another young man reported that,

> *I couldn't have asked for a better group of students or better teachers. Being together 24/7 gave us such a great opportunity to work closely with everyone. Sure, we couldn't avoid each other, but we didn't want to. David and Kevin know so much about biology and they were eager to share. I would have liked to soak in more. The trip should be longer.*

Many students addressed the size of the group and all agreed that 10 to 12 students was a key to the success of the trip. "We were able to connect with everyone and each teacher brought his particular expertise to the table."

For ESC's inaugural involvement in the Tropical Field Ecology course, a Long Island Center student, Steven Donnellan, participated in the program. Following our trip, Kevin also asked Steven four questions about his experience:

What was your overall impression of the trip and the course?

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was great to work in a different country and to learn about the environment and culture. I also enjoyed meeting other students with similar interests that I have, as well as learning under multiple professors. Since the group was small, we were able to get individual attention while being in the tropics.

How did you view the mentoring relationship that you had with me?

My mentoring relationship with you was excellent. I really felt the small group setting was helpful, and was probably the most beneficial and best school experience that I've had to date. You were professional, patient and extremely knowledgeable on all topics.

What was the view of the mentoring relationship that you had with Richard and Dr. Lemmon?

My mentoring relationship with Richard and David were also great. They were both extremely helpful, knowledgeable in many similar and other aspects of science and culture, and were just

PHOTO CREDIT: WILLIAM FALL

Figure 3. A group photo on Chucanti. Back row (l-r): Roberto Medina, Danielle Moruzzi, Dr. David Lemmon, Michelle Linneman, Christopher Stuppy, Evan Leahy, Dr. Kevin Woo, Steven Donnellan, William Fall and Elizabeth Salvino. Front row (l-r): Brianna Hafner and Aidan Ferris.

PHOTO CREDIT: GOOGLE MAPS

Figure 1. Topographical map of Panama

PHOTO CREDIT: KEVIN WOO

Figure 2. Cloud forest in Chucanti

great people overall. I learned a tremendous amount of knowledge under both of them, and their guidance for academic and personal goals was something you can't get within the short period of a class, or simply visiting an instructor for a brief meeting.

Do you feel that the collaboration is good for you and future students, and why?

I absolutely feel that the collaboration is a great project for both colleges. I feel this would benefit any student who decides to undertake this course and project. I've gained a first-hand understanding and new appreciation of the culture of Panama.

When it comes down to it, having one-on-one time with Roberto, our guide, and the instructors of record, was a unique and distinctive experience. It was, in effect, mentoring and, at times, counseling, at its best. By the end of the day, we may have felt exhausted, but sitting beside each other reflecting on the day's events proved to be a genuine, unaffected, open and indisputable testament to mentoring as an efficient and expert way to learn.

Conclusions

Panama has proved to be a great addition to the Tropical Field Ecology course, and the mechanics of actually running the course in Panama have gone very smoothly. There is no visa requirement, fewer vaccination issues and the U.S. dollar is used as currency. These important factors remove some potential complications for international travel. No small part of our success in Panama has been our tour company (Advantage Tours Panama: www.advantagepanama.com), which has provided excellent value for the money and a far better price than most of the competition while supporting a great itinerary.

The original program that was created by SUNY Ulster provided the framework for transformational learning in the field. The

collaboration with Empire State College exemplifies shared services between SUNY institutions, and has implications for how we may likely consider future iterations of the course to expand on the model, and incorporate more interdisciplinary perspectives. Although tropical ecology is clearly embedded in the natural sciences, peripheral themes also are prevalent, and hence may be important considerations for future offerings. Including aspects of sustainability, education, social justice, literacy, language-learning and economics is a future possibility. By expanding on the program to include these additional dimensions, it is likely that future students will be provided with a more enriched pedagogical experience.

Note

[1] Photographs of the diverse fauna of Panama, and additional images relevant to this piece are available at http://cml.esc.edu/publications/aamextras.

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Louise Whitbeck Fraser: Music Therapy Pioneer

Rebecca Fraser, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr.
Center for Labor Studies

I n his article on Ira Altschuler, William Davis (2003) pointed out that "biographical studies of prominent early music therapists are essential to understanding the growth and development of music therapy as a legitimate profession. Unfortunately, many of the men and women who contributed time, energy, and talent toward the goal of creating a viable health care profession remain obscure." (p. 248) Clair and Heller (1989) also noted that, "in the 1920s through the 1940s, many individuals did outstanding pioneer work in this field, for which they are not particularly well remembered by music education historians" (p. 165). Louise Whitbeck Fraser, an early music therapist whose work was with the intellectually disabled population, was one of these individuals. Her biography provides a keen view into the history of the music therapy field as it developed and grew. Research for this article involved culling the extensive historical archives at the Fraser School, going through family papers, conducting interviews with those who knew Fraser, reading her writings, and digging deep into the Hubert Humphrey files at the Minnesota Historical Society to follow the correspondence between the Humphreys (both Muriel and Hubert) and Fraser. Additionally, Fraser conducted numerous interviews for newspapers and radio, which served as rich sources of her reflections on her work and the history of her work. Her son and my father, Wesley Allen Fraser Jr., also was a rich source of information about Fraser's home life and the early years of the school she founded. Louise Whitbeck Fraser was my grandmother.

Fraser's Life

Fraser was born on January 30, 1894 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. In 1897, both of her parents died of tuberculosis and she was taken in by an aunt in Rochester, New York. As a true granddaughter of early western pioneers, she resisted the proper social strictures she experienced in her aunt's home. Upon the death of her uncle in 1908, she returned to Grand Forks and remained in the Midwest for the rest of her life.

After high school and a couple of years as a nanny/mother's helper, she enrolled in the teacher training program at Valley City Normal School. A year later, she graduated with an elementary school teaching certificate and began teaching at a small prairie town school in Niagara, North Dakota. Wesley "Allen" Fraser, a friend from Valley City and principal at an even smaller school in Fergus, North Dakota, struck up a correspondence with her. On the lonely prairie, their friendship quickly deepened and in 1918, just before he enlisted in the Army, they were married.

Louise gave birth to their first child, Mary Lou, while Allen was away; he saw the baby just once before he shipped off to Germany. Their second child, Jean, was born exactly one year after his return and almost immediately, the baby contracted spinal meningitis. Louise remembered Jean being so small that they had to carry her around on a pillow. The damage caused by this illness would not be discovered for years to come, but in her care for her very sick little girl, we can see the beginnings of what would become Louise's vocation.

Louise gave birth to a son, Bobby, in 1922; in 1925, he fell out of the car his father was driving and was killed instantly. To put this horror behind them, Louise had a second son, Wesley Allen Jr., in 1926, and they moved to St. Paul, Minnesota so that Allen could take a job as a prohibition agent. This new life would not last long, however, as Allen was murdered by a bootlegger on January 2, 1928. Now both a widow and a single mother, Louise was faced with the difficulty of raising three children, one of whom had still undefined difficulties. Louise resisted doctor's recommendations that Jean be institutionalized, even though she found

Rebecca Fraser

little support or understanding from schools, where Jean was ostracized by teachers and teased by classmates.

In about 1932, Jean was finally correctly diagnosed as hearing impaired, and suddenly many of her difficulties and frustrations became clear.[1] With this diagnosis, Louise began to work anew with her daughter and started to notice the powerful calming effect music had on Jean, who could feel the vibrations in the floor. As news of her successes with Jean spread throughout the neighborhood, Louise received requests for help from parents of children with a variety of needs, including mental retardation support. Soon she was traveling around the city, working with seven different children. This led to the founding of the Home Study School, located in her home, in 1935.

Louise's oldest daughter, Mary Lou, had been a deep source of support and joy in Louise's life during this period. Mary Lou was valedictorian of her high school and had enrolled in a pre-law program at the University of Minnesota in 1939 when she contracted a rare and virulent staph

infection that led to her sudden death. In a short autobiographical essay, Louise noted that this death was the most difficult one for her to recover from.[2]

It was at this time that 19-year-old Jean began to work at the school with her mother, helping with the small children, taking photographs of school events and documenting the history of the school in large scrapbooks. In 1945, Wesley Jr. was drafted into military service, and the potential loss of yet another child was traumatic. Letters from Germany reveal Wes's care and concern for his mother and sister. After returning safely from the war, Wesley married and provided his mother with five grandchildren to dote on. She was a grandmother's grandmother, still lovingly referred to as "Granny" for over 35 years after her death in 1976.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Louise's 20 years of work in both the music therapy and the mental retardation worlds suddenly gained much needed attention and support from the public, as both fields seemed to explode around her.[3] From the beginning, she believed parental involvement at the school was essential, and so her large volunteer corps was a natural part of the national parent movement in the mental retardation world. In the music therapy world, she attended the first NAMT (National Association for Music Therapy)[4] conferences in the 1950s, made connections with others doing similar work, and began presenting papers, chairing panels, serving on the public relations committee and serving as host of the 1968 national conference.

Many tributes were given to Fraser when she died in 1976. Two that represented her life and work the best were given by Vice President Hubert Humphrey (whose granddaughter was a student at the school) and registered music therapist Doris Robison. At the Great Lakes Regional NAMT Conference, Robison (1976) said,

> Today we pay special tribute to one of the 'giants' [of the music therapy field] … a lovely and gracious woman whose years of creative work with retarded children have helped hundreds, perhaps thousands, to live happier and more useful lives … Mrs. Fraser worked with

those she called 'special children,' so profoundly handicapped in so many ways that no other day school would accept them. Mrs. Fraser used music successfully in teaching them to write, and music later became the basis for the school's entire educational program. (p. 12)

And at her memorial service, Humphrey said, "Mrs. Fraser made you feel that anything was possible … and more importantly, she wanted to make you do things better than you ever dreamed you could do them."[5]

Fraser's Pedagogy and Music Therapy Approach

While many parents in a similar situation might have chosen to institutionalize their child, Fraser chose to read everything she could get her hands on regarding the education of the "feebleminded." For 14 years, from the time her daughter Jean was sick until she founded her school, Fraser "studied and worked on ways to help Jean make the most of her abilities."[6] To Virginia Brainerd, reporter for the *Minneapolis Star,* Fraser said, "I could understand suffering. I knew what it means to be hurt. I could understand the hurts a child faces when he is limited… I decided that here was a need and I would make it my life's work. I felt I was qualified as a person who had gone through this and as a parent who could see in a child things an ordinary educator wouldn't see."[6] Fraser's compassion, empathy and her ability to understand suffering were central to her work in both of the fields she worked in: music therapy and special education.

As she worked with her daughter, Fraser began assisting other children in their homes, traveling around the Twin Cities via bus and streetcar. Of her use of music with these students, she wrote, "I began working with music … long before I knew music was called a therapy, just because I believed it to be the only way to reach the whole child and the only way to get the child to relax and let go of his tensions."[7]

In her reading and study, she built on her teaching certificate from Valley City Normal College, and the teaching experiences she had from 1915-1918. It was there that she discovered she had a special

touch with the most difficult students, and she gained a reputation in the school district for having success with so-called "slow learners." Before she knew it, she was essentially running an early special education classroom. Of this experience, Fraser said, "I must have had a knack for helping problem children because my room became a 'dumping ground' for all the children with problems. Looking back now, I think I might have had an insight into their behavior – the reasons they were naughty or sullen or apathetic."[6]

Since Fraser was self-taught and there is no record of her reading, tracing the development of her pedagogy and therapeutic methods is difficult. Fraser explained that "She worked out her own program. She took courses from time to time, whenever she found a course which she thought would add to her knowledge. She read anything on mental retardation."[6]

Fraser said, "I tried this and that. I found the thing that went best was piano music. I couldn't play well but I could drum out a march, get the children up on their feet marching around. One girl who had stayed in a corner came forward and was very interested when we sang 'Good Morning, Merry Sunshine.' I welcomed her to join the group and she shrank right back. So I learned, don't say anything; let the spell of music work" (Baker, 1973, p. 2). Clearly, one of the ways she developed her methods was by observing and listening to her students – she let them teach her.

It is possible to see that Fraser grew over the 40-plus years of directing the school. In the beginning, she worked mostly in isolation, her only support coming from parents of her students and the reading she ferreted out and studied. Forging this pathway – teaching students with severe disabilities – was difficult, to say the least. Fraser met resistance from neighbors, doctors, and even from a place where she thought she might find direction and collegiality: The Institute of Child Welfare at the University of Minnesota. In the late 1930s, perhaps having heard of the work being done in the model classes at the university, Fraser made an appointment with Dr. Florence

Goodenough. What she probably did not know was that she was stepping right into a veritable snake pit.

Goodenough was a faithful student of Louis Terman, creator of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Quotient test – what is essentially today's IQ test. In the 1930s, Terman and Goodenough were deep in battle with Beth Wellman and her colleagues at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station (University of Iowa). During this time, Wellman demonstrated that a person's intelligence quotient is alterable depending on stimulation from the environment – particularly that schooling increases one's IQ and that the lack of schooling can cause an IQ to fall. Her findings shook Terman and Goodenough's world of psychology and psychometrics and prompted them to accuse her of falsifying her research. In a personal letter, Goodenough wrote about Wellman and her research: "Terman thinks that she has deliberately attempted to present her data in a way calculated to deceive the reader. I cannot agree with him in this. ... I am personally entirely convinced of her sincerity. What has happened is, I am confident, that she has deceived herself … the situation is entirely comparable with that of a religious fanatic who hears the wings of angels in every rustle of the dishtowels on the family clothes line."[8]

Goodenough also wrote about those who taught the feebleminded and what she thought of them: "Damn the educators! ... I know of no other group that so perfectly fits [Kurt] Lewin's description of the feebleminded, i.e., those who are unable to make adaptations in their thinking and whose concepts tend to be almost exclusively of the all or none order. Actually I think one needs no better demonstration of the 'inflexibility' of the IQ than they provide, for certainly you can't teach them anything."[9]

It was within this context that the appointment between Fraser and Goodenough took place. Fraser was aware that she had little academic preparation and no degrees for the work she was doing, at the same time knowing that her work was profound. She witnessed lives changed – the lives of the children, their parents and their siblings, and she knew that research and

study was going on at the university. She hoped to discuss her work and successes, and find some guidance. In her meeting with Goodenough, Fraser was told that the work she intended to do was impossible and that she should leave it to the experts. In fact, Fraser's son reported that her mother came home from the meeting furious and stated that Goodenough told her that the work she was doing was no different than training monkeys (W. A. Fraser, personal communication, August 12, 2009). This would have struck right at Fraser's heart, since she firmly believed that "normal" children and children with disabilities were more alike than they were different. But the experts at the time were directing parents to institutionalize their children – in facilities that were already overcrowded and services that were substandard.

It is unlikely that Fraser was aware of the nature/nurture debate that was being fought rather viciously when she told Goodenough about one student, a boy of 13, who was unable to speak; after two years at the Home Study School, he was talking and reading. All that survives of Mrs. Fraser's appointment with Goodenough is what made it into newspaper accounts.

Baker (1973), a reporter, recounted the conversation,

> 'Well,' said the psychologist. 'You've taught him to read, "See the dog jump." And how old did you say he is, 15? Isn't that marvelous! What you've done is nothing. If you can go home and put a charge on this, you're not honest.'
>
> Louise Fraser's eyes narrow and her lips tighten, just a little bit, as she recounts the incident.
>
> 'I went back and told the parents there would be no school.'
>
> Then she starts to twinkle.
>
> They said, 'Oh no! You've got to keep going!' (Family Life section, p. 1)

Music therapy and the schooling of the intellectually disabled came together for Fraser, theoretically, through the work and writings of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze (1865-1950). Jacques-Dalcroze was a Swiss composer/educator and the inventor of "eurhythmics." He explained that "The object of the [eurhythmics] method is … to create by the help of rhythm a rapid and regular current of communication between brain and body."[10] From early on, Jacques-Dalcroze proposed music as the basis of all learning. In one passage that would have stood out for anyone working with a population with special needs, Jacques-Dalcroze explained, "Neurasthenia is often nothing else than intellectual confusion produced by the inability of the nervous system to obtain from the muscular system regular obedience to the order from the brain. Training the nerve centers … is the only remedy for intellectual perversion."[11]

In the 1950s, Fraser was working with a diverse student population: "spastics, cerebral palsy cases, controlled epileptics, hydrocephalics, other types of brain damaged children, schizophrenics, children with auditory disturbances, the emotionally maladjusted, and mongoloids."[12] She

Louise Fraser practicing music therapy with her students in the mid-1950s.

understood, intuitively, the importance of physiological experiences for these children, bringing together mind and body for educational and therapeutic purposes. She

demonstrated her deep understanding of these ideas by making music the foundation of her school's curriculum.

In 1955, Fraser was named the "Minnesota Mother of the Year." She used her acceptance speech as an opportunity to educate the public about music therapy and its role at her school:

> We use music as an 'in' because music lends itself to learning. It meets with little or no intellectual resistance and does not need to appeal to logic to initiate action. ... Music very definitely produces measurable effects on the brain and mind. … We can stimulate the passive child into action and subdue the high-tensioned child into a passive mood by choosing our music. We feel there is definite indication that music is breaking through the barrier of mental blocking.[13]

In the 1950s, as the community of music therapy practitioners and academicians grew and became organized, Fraser found colleagues – others to learn from and to whom she could share her own praxis. At the NAMT conferences of the 1950s, she spoke on panels with Eugene Doll, Betty Isern Howery, Barbara Denenholz and Juliette Alvin, among others.[14] In 1968, she hosted the NAMT conference in Minneapolis, securing Muriel Humphrey as the keynote speaker.

The articles from the NAMT proceedings, 1950-1961, provide evidence that the use of music with the intellectually disabled population had two purposes: education and therapy, and occasionally a combination of both.[15] Fraser was one of the few who emphasized the essential combination of these two purposes. In reading her writing, it is difficult to determine where therapy ends and education begins – or vice versa.

Fraser's School

Fraser's decision to found a school came about mostly out of necessity: she was a widow and a single mother of three, and she had a hearing impaired and brain-damaged daughter. She founded the Home Study School in 1935 in Minneapolis – possibly one of the first schools to employ music therapy as a curricular cornerstone.

From 1935 to 1949, the school moved many times for reasons ranging from space needs to community resistance. Beginning in Fraser's home, the school variously occupied an abandoned Victorian home, a storefront, a lodge, a church and finally a converted machine shop.

We use music as an 'in' because music lends itself to learning.

The conversion of the machine shop in 1949 illustrates one aspect of Fraser's ingenuity in working with her students. The work was all done by parents, who volunteered their work in exchange for tuition credit. One parent remembers that Fraser was very specific when it came to laying the floor, even fighting a bit over her idea with the architect, also a parent. She insisted that they lay rubber buttons underneath the floor, so that the children would feel the vibrations from the music in their feet; this was especially important for the hearing impaired students. Even though the architect was resistant to her idea, he and the other parents followed her instructions so that the school very early on had an acoustic floor. (While not a musician herself, from the beginning, Fraser included musicians to teach and therapeutically engage with her students.)

According to Fred Heitke, an original board member, the Home Study School was incorporated in September of 1955 out of concern for Louise's age and the potential loss of the school if she died; she was 61 at that time. In 1956, a board of directors was created – consisting of parents, as well as Fraser's son and daughter-in-law – and they became actively involved in the management of the school. In that year, the corporation bought the school property and equipment from Fraser for $25,000. Fraser was appointed executive director for the annual salary of $7,200. Annual tuition was set at $350.00 for the enrollment of 52 pupils.[16] Prior to this move, Fraser had essentially run the school out of her own pocket, even

mortgaging her home to buy the machine shop and often forgoing her own pay to cover school expenses. The first accounting sheets in the Fraser archives are from 1950 and show $61.78 as cash on deposit. The parents of the first six students at the Home Study School, in 1935, had paid $4.00 a month for both tuition and transportation to and from school.

In 1965, the school was renamed the Louise Whitbeck Fraser School, upon a motion from the shareholders and approval by the board of directors, though Fraser was humbly opposed to the idea.[17] At this time, discussions also began regarding the building of a school designed to meet the many needs of the students and the growing number of children on the waiting list.

In 1966, plans were drawn up for "an exciting new building [to] accommodate 40 additional students, for a total of 100, provide a much-needed gymnasium, include pre-vocational training facilities, and improve the visual/audio program."[18] The new school building was dedicated at a ceremony in June of 1967. The local newspaper reported that 3,000 people toured the school that day.

In 1968, when she hosted the NAMT conference, one of the important activities was a tour of the Louise Whitbeck Fraser School. By this time, tours of the school had become routine – benefactors included public school board members, local legislators, local Kiwanis clubs and even some more famous personages who became acquainted with the school through Mr. and Mrs. Humphrey's relentless fundraising and support. For example, when he was in town for a concert, Danny Kaye spent an afternoon at the school singing and performing with the children. Frank Sinatra sent the school a check for $5,000. In an article in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Muriel Humphrey stated that the person she most admired was Louise Whitbeck Fraser.[19] During a tour of the school with E. Thayer Gaston, among others, Fraser met Dr. Robert Kowalczyk, who became the next director of the school. Subsequently, Fraser was named "director emeritus" and she remained an active, even daily, presence until her death in 1976 at the age of 82.

Today, the Fraser School, where music therapy continues to be programmatically foundational, is one part of a very large and progressive nonprofit social service organization called "Fraser." As one of the largest centers in the Midwest for people with autism, Fraser now employs 780 teachers, social workers, group home directors, psychologists, administrative staff, occupational and physical therapists and music therapists. The life and work of Louise Whitbeck Fraser continues to transform the lives of thousands even 38 years after her death.

Conclusion

Louise Whitbeck Fraser accepted and educated the intellectually disabled using music therapy at a time when neither the intellectually disabled nor music therapy were recognized by the public. When she started the Home Study School in 1935, "different" children were not educated but instead were often locked in asylums, some of them housed in filthy cages like animals. Her life as a single parent and pioneer is an inspiring story for all who know the difficulties and joys of using music therapy with intellectually and physically disabled children and adults.

From the time I was young, I understood intuitively that my grandmother, besides being a warm and loving Granny to me, was a student-centered teacher for many other children. When she would visit us in New Jersey at Christmas time, she would pull out from her deep purse a thick stack of school pictures of "her babies"; one by one, she would tell me each child's name

From the time I was young, I understood intuitively that my grandmother, besides being a warm and loving Granny to me, was a student-centered teacher for many other children.

and describe that child's most recent success at school. I was fascinated by the pictures of all these children and perhaps even a little jealous of the time they got to spend with her between Christmas and our summer vacations together. And when I reflect on my own pedagogy today, I know that it was shaped early in my life, at the side of my grandmother, who understood that education was about what students bring to the classroom and not about what they are lacking. And she knew very well the integrative power of music to develop a person spiritually, emotionally, physically and intellectually. I am thrilled to carry on this great legacy in the teaching, mentoring and learning I do with my students from day to day to day.

Notes

[1] Even this diagnosis (which seems obvious to us today) was progressive for its time; Nineteen years later, *The New York Times* reported on the continuing misdiagnosis of deaf children and the cost of that misdiagnosis. See "Faulty Diagnosis Seen Child Peril; Youngsters Are Held Deficient Mentally When They Merely Are Deaf, Says Educator" by Lucy Freeman, *The New York Times,* 26 May 26 1951, p. 27.

[2] This undated, three-page essay is in my private collection of her personal, unpublished writing – it is simply titled "Autobiography."

[3] For an excellent perspective on the history of mental retardation in the United States, see James Trent's *Inventing the Feeble Mind,* 1994.

[4] Now known as the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA).

[5] Quote from the transcript of an audio recording of Louise Whitbeck Fraser's Memorial Service, 1 February 1976.

[6] From Virginia Brainerd's *Minneapolis Star* article, "She Knows What Suffering Means; That's Why She Helps 50 Children," published 26 May 1954.

[7] This quote is from my collection of her papers: an undated, handwritten speech that Fraser prepared and delivered in the 1960s.

[8] Florence Goodenough to Leta Hollingworth, 5 April 1939. From the Goodenough papers in the University Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

[9] Florence Goodenough to Hazel Cushing, 13 Nov 1941. From the Goodenough papers in the University Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

[10] From Emile Jacques-Dalcroze's *The Eurhythmics of Jacques-Dalcroze,* 1912.

[11] Also from *The Eurhythmics of Jacques-Dalcroze.* Additionally, "lack of will power" was one of the early proposed causes of "feebleminded." See Édouard Séguin (1812-1880), whose work with the feebleminded was based on physiologics: the belief that the key to "curing" the mentally incapacitated was activity – daily regimens of work and exercise.

[12] See Fraser's *Music Therapy for the Retarded Child: Fifth Book of Proceedings of the National Association for Music Therapy Conference,* 1955.

[13] From handwritten notes in my personal collection of her writing.

[14] Fraser's resulting articles, published in *Music Therapy,* a series of books of conference proceedings (edited [in whole or part] by E. Thayer Gaston), included: "Music Therapy for the Retarded Child," 1955; "Reaching the Brain Damaged Child Through Music," 1957; and "The Use of Music in Teaching Writing to the Retarded Child," 1960. She also authored, "Music Therapy As a Basic Program for the Handicapped Child," in Gaston's *Music in Therapy,* 1968.

[15] Also reinforced by Betty Isern Howery's chapter, "Music Therapy for Mentally Retarded Children and Adults: Overview," in Gaston's Music in Therapy, 1968.

[16] According to the "Minutes – First Meeting" of the Louise Whitbeck Fraser School, Inc. Board of Directors, 18 November 1955 to October 1957.

[17] The progression of the school's name was "Home Study School" to "Louise Whitbeck Fraser School" to "Fraser School" to "Fraser."

[18] From an untitled Appeal Booklet published by the Louise Whitbeck Fraser School, circa 1966.

[19] April 1972. As it turns out, this was a much read issue of the magazine, as it also contained the famous centerfold spread of a nude Burt Reynolds.

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"A most notable need in respect to access for learners to appropriate education and to efficient service delivery to them is the need for all-encompassing local or regional systems. These should provide the prospective learner with several things: an overview of his or her options, reliable and pertinent information about the costs and benefits of the various options, practical and flexible means of drawing upon the various resources to create individually tailored learning programs, and assurance that among the various colleges and other enterprises providing services there is an efficient use of community resources. The arrangements should avoid making the learner captive of any of the institutions involved, but should make feasible the use of the best choice among their various offerings."

– Morris T. Keeton (1917-2014)
"Credentials for the Learning Society"
In M. T. Keeton & Associates (Eds.), Experiential Learning:
Rationale, Characteristics, and Assessment
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976, p. 8

Letter to the Editor

Dear Alan,

I appreciate and identify with your editorial in the 44th issue of *All About Mentoring*. If higher education is going to play a significant role in our troubled times and challenged democracy, "going against the grain" comes with the territory. Our "public intellectuals" make significant contributions by calling attention to naked emperors and dysfunctional social policies with points of view anchored in solid scholarship and research. The publications and public testimonies of the Association of American Colleges and Universities also call for significant educational changes that would help create a citizenry capable of responding to our current domestic and global issues.

Despite the useful contributions of the British Open University, which was, in many ways, consistent with Great Britain's dominant educational practices, we believed that this model would not serve our diverse adult learners well. We believed that higher education needed a new and more educationally powerful approach, and that the influx of adult learners might help drive significant changes. Most of us who led the creation of what was then called the Council for the Assessment of Experiential Learning (CAEL) shared this sense of a larger mission that would go against the grain of many problematic higher education conventions.

When I helped create Empire State College back in the '70s, we challenged some of those basic conventions. We believed that batch processing could not respond to the wide-ranging educational needs of New York state's diverse adults. We believed that those needs could not be well served by forcing all content and desired outcomes into the Procrustean beds of traditional semesters, but that the length of contracts should vary, within reason, depending on their purposes. We recognized that "credit hours" were not anchored in any generally agreed upon standards and that "grades" given for similar levels of achievement varied greatly across diverse institutions. And it was obvious that a single number or letter could not capture or express the richness and complexity of student learning, nor its shortfalls when those occurred. Then, of course, we respected the fact that many adults brought college-level learning based on prior work and life experiences.

Effective "mentoring" was the cornerstone of this new approach. That meant that recruiting initial faculty members who were competent teachers with wide-ranging intellects, sympathetic to this new kind of teaching, and willing to tackle it, was critical. I was getting foot-high stacks of resumes from very diverse candidates. Jeanne Brockman came up with a brilliant idea. We created three fictional students whose purposes called for learning in the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences. We sent all the candidates basic information about ESC's educational approach and asked them to select one of these students and design a hypothetical degree program and an initial learning contract. This had the immediate practical effect of reducing the number of candidates by about 80 percent. For those who responded, we had a good sense of how well they understood what we were about and how competent they were to work with us. We invited the most promising to come for interviews and this process gave us very strong faculty members for our initial learning centers.

I have used the word "we" above. I must recognize, as Richard Bonnabeau's excellent history, *The Promise Continues* (1996) documents, that there was opposition to the challenges built into our original approach. After I left the academic vice presidency and the college, that opposition gathered momentum and has moved toward increased conformity with traditional practices. But, as you suggest, those changes do not mean that the original propositions were erroneous, nor does it mean that they are so today. In fact, as Catherine Marienau's chapter, "From Traditional Students to Adult Learners," in my recently released *Cool Passion: Challenging Higher Education* (2014) book, indicates, those principles, 45 years later, are alive and well.

As that book also shows, I have spent 50 years going against the grain in higher education. It has been a personally and professionally rewarding career, despite some of the slings and arrows those challenges provoked. So I admire and respect your own persistence, Alan.

With warm best wishes,

Art Chickering

Arthur Chickering was the founding academic vice president for Empire State College.

Technology to Foster Cross-Cultural Student Collaboration

Lorette Pellettiere Calix, Center for International Programs;
Patrice Torcivia Prusko, Cornell University

In the previous issue of All About Mentoring (44), *we presented the results of the value created through short-term international course collaborations. This essay follows up with our assessment of the tools used and their impact on a meaningful student experience. The goal of this phase of the project was to resolve some of the technical issues related to the use of technology to support international classroom collaborations and analyze learner engagement and cross-cultural and/ or international interaction, eventually facilitating the successful participation of students in a "virtual term abroad (VTA)." Researchers found that virtual meeting tools allowing participants to see and hear one another were the most important element for a meaningful VTA experience. When students couldn't readily see and hear one another, they tended to limit their communication. Instructors reported that virtual meeting tools increased student engagement, contributed to student learning, helped instructors feel more connected to their students and added to overall satisfaction with the course. Analysis of the data supports the importance of making sure any tools used are accessible from mobile devices. Mobile devices were an important alternative for participating in course collaboration activities, and provided access when other alternatives failed. The majority of students who used mobile devices to access course activities acknowledged that they spent more time on course work because of this access.*

Introduction

Only a small percentage of college students participate in study abroad programs, and many groups are underrepresented. There is little diversity in race, gender and ethnicity among those who do participate, and little access for nontraditional, lower socioeconomic groups, those with disabilities and first generation college students (Fischer, 2012). Campus internationalization is becoming increasingly important at universities across the globe. According to the State University of New York (2009), "To create a globally competent student body, we must increase the opportunities for international exposure throughout all courses and degrees" (p. 18), and "through social and emerging technologies" we can "network students with faculty and peers from across the state and throughout the world" (p. 19). In this paper, we discuss our use of virtual meeting tools as a way to create a virtual term abroad (VTA) as an opportunity for all students to have a meaningful international experience.

Empire State College's programs in Latin America are built on a blended learning model, with mandatory weeklong residencies. In the Dominican Republic (DR) and Honduras, the program didn't have enough students to merit sending instructors to conduct those residencies. As a solution, we used virtual meeting tools to have students in the DR and Honduras join the residencies taking place 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. One of the goals of this phase of the project was to resolve some of the technical issues related to using virtual meeting tools during international course collaborations, and to analyze the use of technology to support learner engagement and cross-cultural and/ or international interaction in a VTA.

Implementation of a VTA that provides a meaningful international experience for students required testing a range of technology usage during the international course collaborations. ESC´s program in

Lorette Pellettiere Calix

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Panama was appropriate for this pilot project because the students move through the program as a cohort, allowing the evaluation of challenges and development of solutions over a 14-month period. During the study, we worked with a cohort of students in Panama with experience using

Skype and Blackboard Collaborate, and completed another three academic terms using the tools piloted in this study.

Methodology

Faculty in Panama, Slovakia and New York developed three- to four-week course collaborations that included: 1) cross-team assignment, 2) blogs and 3) synchronous virtual meetings between the students. We assessed a variety of tools and devices during the virtual sessions to see which provided the best connections and interaction between students.

Faculty and students were surveyed both before and after the course collaborations to determine:

- previous experience and level of comfort with technology

- previous knowledge and experience using specific tools

- type of Internet and other data services they used

- perceptions of which tools worked the best and were easiest to use

- devices they most frequently used to participate in the collaborations

- perceptions of which tools best encouraged meaningful international experiences and student engagement.

Course Collaborations

For this study, course collaborations were organized between instructors in the ESC Panama Program and instructors at other New York-based universities, in addition to one university in Slovakia. All students enrolled in the courses participated in the course collaboration activities, but participation in the study, by completing pre- and post-collaboration surveys, was voluntary and anonymous. We used the data from four of the Panama-New York collaborations, representing 42 students and seven instructors. Instructors also completed pre- and post-collaboration surveys, as well as participated in a follow-up focus group.

Virtual sessions were observed by the investigators as well as technical support staff in each location. The technical support staff set up the sessions, solved problems as they arose, kept a log of the problems encountered and how they were resolved, and provided a final technical evaluation of the virtual meeting tools.

Prior to each collaborative session, we allocated 20 to 30 minutes of lead time to make initial connections and ensure connectivity. Preparation time to properly arrange our classroom tables and chairs was done to provide optimal viewing for participants on both sides. Using a projector provided ample viewing of both classrooms. Connecting a stereo grade speaker(s) provided clear audio. The setup time for the equipment varied, based upon the configuration(s) in Table 1:

Participant Profile

Sixty percent of the participating students were female, and 62 percent were between the ages of 25 and their early 50s. Sixty percent of the students considered themselves to have a fair amount of experience with technology, described as the equivalent of participating in an online course, but almost one-quarter considered themselves to have little experience, equated to using email and common word processing programs.

The participating students had high levels of "connectivity." Almost all of the participating students (over 93 percent) reported having high speed Internet

Table 1

Course Collaboration Descriptions

Collaboration	Countries	Universities	Virtual Sessions	Blog	Team Project
1	Panama – U.S.	ESC College of Westchester	Zoom – guided discussion	Yes	paired interview
2	Panama – U.S.	ESC College of Westchester	Zoom – case study discussions	Yes	paired interview
3	Panama – U.S.	ESC College of Westchester	Blackboard Collaborate	Yes	
4	Panama – Slovakia	ESC University of Economics in Bratislava	Zoom – guest speakers	Yes	design and development of a website
5	Panama – U.S.	ESC ESC	No	Yes	
6	Panama – U.S. – Turkey	ESC SUNY Cortland Anadolu University	Blackboard Collaborate, Skype – guest speaker	No	

connections at home. Almost 70 percent had unlimited data plans for their phones. Over 35 percent had an air card or modem, providing them with "anywhere" Internet access. Twenty-one percent of the tablet owners had data plans for their tablet devices, while the rest of the tablet owners used wireless Internet connections.

A 2011 survey of Panama students showed that none of the students had used virtual meeting tools prior to their experience with ESC; by the time of this 2013 study, 43 percent of the students reported previously using virtual meeting tools. The majority of the students also reported at least occasional course-related use of a variety of tools, ranging from Blackboard Collaborate (87 percent), Google Docs (82 percent) and Skype (81 percent) to Voice Thread (10 percent). Fifty-seventy percent of the students reported at least occasional course-related use of tools like blogs, wikis, Facebook, Diigo and WhatsApp.

Students and faculty reported a preference for using their computers (desktop or laptop) for all course-related activities, but mobile devices, especially smartphones,

provided important accessibility. Thirty-nine percent of students reported preferring their smartphones to connect with classmates, and 24 percent said smartphones were their preferred device to communicate with instructors (emails or text messages) and to look things up during class. Smartphones and tablets were reported to be used equally (10 percent each) for both participating in online discussions and taking notes during class. Smartphones also were used more than tablets for watching course-related videos and doing research; five percent of the students even reported using their smartphones to write assignments. Students reported using tablet devices primarily for reading.

Instructors with varying levels of comfort with technology volunteered to test these tools and adapt their course materials accordingly. Sixty-four percent of the instructors responding to the pre-collaboration survey had taught blended or online courses 10 or more times, while 23 percent had taught them four or fewer times. Correspondingly, 52 percent of the instructors considered themselves to have a

fair amount of experience with technology and only 5 percent to have little experience. A much higher percentage of faculty (43 percent) than students (17 percent) considered themselves to have substantial or extensive experience with technology. Faculty owned more devices than students, but students had more facility to connect "anywhere, anytime," as a result of the fact that students have better Internet service at home than faculty, more unlimited data plans for their phones and more frequently have data plans for their tablet devices (see Table 2).

Assessment of Technology

Prior to this study, we explored the use of Skype and Blackboard Collaborate (Elluminate, at the time) for virtual meetings. These tools were initially chosen based only on availability and convenience. SUNY Empire State College supports the use of Blackboard Collaborate for student/ faculty meetings. Some faculty had already begun using Skype for virtual office hours and individual meetings.

The use of these tools had shown promising results for increased learner engagement and meaningful international experiences. In a 2011 survey of Panama students by Calix (survey available upon request), almost 70 percent said that Collaborate sessions helped them stay more engaged and on schedule with their course work, and over 50 percent said they felt courses with Collaborate sessions contributed more to their learning than courses without Collaborate. Despite these favorable numbers, the Collaborate sessions and other tools resulted in feelings of frustration, generally related to technological limitations. Investigators sought recommendations from faculty, information technology staff and vendors at several conferences on how to overcome these limitations, and weighed many options as a result. In the end, all of the tools used were low cost, making the project easily replicable in other locations.

From a technology standpoint, there were many challenges, although we were able to overcome most of them and still connect. During our very first collaboration between Panama and New York, there was a complete blackout in Panama. Students in

Table 2

STUDENT AND FACULTY FACILITY TO CONNECT

	STUDENTS	FACULTY
Have high speed Internet at home	92.7	85.7
Have high speed Internet at work	65.7	95.2
Have unlimited data plan for phone	68.4	47.4
Have air card or Internet modem	34.4	38
Have a data plan for tablet (when applicable)	20.6	11.1
Use both a desktop and laptop computer	33	77.3
Have an iPad or other tablet	33.3	40.9
Have an iPhone or other smartphone	61.9	68.2
Have an iPod or similar listening device	21.4	30
Have an e-reader	4.8	100

Note: Forty-four students completed the initial survey, while only 31 completed the post-collaboration survey. Twenty faculty members completed the initial survey and indicated interest in being part of the study, although only 11 were able to participate; faculty who participated in more than one collaboration only completed the initial survey one time.
Source: Student and faculty pre-collaboration surveys, 2013

New York sat eagerly awaiting their Panama counterparts, and just as class was starting, the power came back on. About half of our students in Panama were able to connect. During our final session in Panama, there was a water shortage that resulted in the closing of all universities. We packed up all our equipment and set up a classroom in a hotel. On the New York side, there was no Wi-Fi in the classroom for one session, and the students connected individually on their tablets and smartphones.

Connecting the teleconferencing equipment was one of our first challenges, as it only works peer-to-peer or through an IP (Internet Protocol) Cloud hosting service, which can be quite costly. Working with the equipment's engineering, we were able to configure the device and appropriately test. During continued use of the teleconferencing equipment within the Westchester College private network, we lost the device's IP address and were unable to connect to outside entities. The teleconferencing device needed to be set up with a reserved IP address so a new IP was not generated each time we attempted to connect.

Although we had tested the equipment prior to our first session, there were times when we had sound but no video (and vice versa). We were lucky to have IT support during our sessions and to have them there to help us troubleshoot problems.

Video conferencing equipment required all of the students to be together in one location with conferencing equipment in each room, or the use of a special program that allowed them to connect to a video conference from remote locations. Using video conferencing equipment provided the following advantages:

- it didn't require participants to download anything or set up an account

- movement of the camera could be controlled remotely (pan, tilt and zoom; good for panning the groups and focusing on specific speakers)

- voice and video were clear

- built-in microphones provided good reception from anywhere in the room.

Table 3

COMPARISON OF VIRTUAL MEETING TOOLS

	Video	Audio	Connectivity	More Than Four Users	Internet Consumption	PROS	CONS
Blackboard Collaborate	**	***	***	****	***	All of the information on one screen (whiteboard, participants, chat); can handle a large number of participants	The user log in is more complicated; the camera image of the speaker is very small
Aver Video Conferencing System	****	****	****	**	****	Especially designed for video conferences, the audio and video quality are very stable	It requires a public IP address and special programs to connect participants when they are not viewing from a location with similar equipment
Zoom	***	***	***	***	***	Multiple ways to connect; simple log in; compatible with various devices	Audio and video not as stable as with Aver equipment
Blue Jeans	***	**	***	****	***	Can connect using a variety of programs (Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.)	Numerous connections made; communication very slow, but that could be because we were using a demo version; very expensive for only occasional use
Skype	***	***	***	**	****	It works on every device; it is stable and reliable	The free version doesn't allow more than two people to connect

KEY: * = POOR ** = AVERAGE *** = GOOD **** = EXCELLENT

Source: R. Ball, tech support, Panama, 2013

The use of video conference equipment provided the following disadvantages:

- when connecting the teleconferencing equipment in each location, firewall ports had to be opened in order to connect; there were more difficulties establishing connections

- while we used free trials to test connectivity from remote locations, the programs that allow people to connect to a video conference using any tool (Skype, Google Hangouts, Jabber, etc.) are currently too expensive for limited use.

Limitations of a webcam and microphone in a classroom setting (using Skype, Zoom or Google Hangouts) were:

- students needed to come to the front of the room to speak into the microphone

- there was a limited view (no ability to pan or zoom the camera).

An advantage of tools like Zoom and Google Hangouts was the ability to view multiple videos at the same time. During our initial usage of Collaborate, we noticed there was a lot of back channeling between students going on during the session. When we asked students to speak, they tended to still use the chat function rather than turn on their microphone. Something unexpected when we used Zoom, though, was that students started speaking. We attribute this to their being able to see one another and it feeling more like a face-to-face conversation. More research comparing the use of tools with and without video is warranted.

An advantage of Zoom and Blue Jeans, another online video conferencing service, was that it didn't require students to set up an account or download anything. The

need to set up multiple accounts and track multiple passwords is a barrier to students using technology in their classes.

Results

Course Collaboration Use of Tools and Devices

Student survey results were viewed globally, not by country or by course. The data showed no significant difference in the responses based on age or gender. During the course collaborations, 26 percent of the students reported using mobile devices to attend virtual sessions, and we observed students using phones and tablets to connect to almost every virtual meeting during the project. An equal number used their mobile devices to participate in the blogs. Students most frequently used their phones during the collaborations for direct communication with classmates: 32 percent of the time to

Table 4

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TOOLS

Percent used		Easy to use		Helped feel connected	
Blackboard Collaborate	81.5	Google Chat/Hangouts	85.8	Facebook	75.4
Blogs	75.9	Facebook	84.6	Google Chat/Hangouts	75
Skype	66.7	Google Docs	84.3	Google Docs	75
Google Docs	64	Skype	82.2	Blogs	72.6
Wikis	56	Twitter	75.6	Wikis	71.4
Facebook	48.1	Wikis	75.1	Twitter	71.2
Google Chat/Hangouts	48	Blogs	62.1	Blackboard Collaborate	68.1
Other Virtual Meeting Tools	33.3	Other Virtual Meeting Tools	58.3	Skype	66.6
Twitter	29.2	Blackboard Collaborate	49.9	Other Virtual Meeting Tools	62.5
Diigo	25	Voice Thread	-52.2	Voice Thread	50
Voice Thread	25	Diigo	-66.7	Diigo	33.6

NOTES:

mid-point

"Easy to use" and "Helped feel connected" are calculated as a percent of students who reported using that tool. Voice Thread and Diigo are negative because more students reported them as being difficult to use than easy.

Source: Student post-collaboration surveys, 2013

Table 5

FACULTY PERCEPTION OF TOOLS

TOOLS USED IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY OF USE	EASE OF USE	CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING
Blogs	Very easy, intuitive – 100%	Very helpful 80%; somewhat helpful 20%
Other Virtual Meeting Tools	Very easy, intuitive – 50%; Easy once learned – 50%	Very helpful 50%; did not hurt nor help 50%
Google Docs	Very easy, intuitive – 50%; Easy once learned – 50%	Somewhat helpful 100%
Skype	Very easy, intuitive – 100%	Very helpful 100%
Google Chat/Hangouts	Very easy, intuitive – 100%	Very helpful 100%
Facebook	Very easy, intuitive – 100%	Did not hurt nor help 100%
Wikis	Very easy, intuitive – 100%	Somewhat helpful 100%
Blackboard Collaborate	Very easy, intuitive – 67%; Easy once learned – 33%	Very helpful 100%

NOTE: Percentages calculated over number who used each tool.

Source: Faculty post-collaboration surveys, 2013

send messages to classmates in the same course, 23 percent to send messages to students in other countries and 23 percent to interact with other students during the virtual sessions (for example, messages in the chat box). Mobile devices also were used during the collaboration to access the online course (19 percent), to access course-related pages in Facebook (16 percent) and to tweet on Twitter about something related to the collaboration (3 percent).

Overall, 47 percent of the students used their phones at some time for collaboration-related activities, and 20 percent used them almost every day or multiple times daily. Twenty-four percent used their tablets for collaboration-related activities, almost half of those using their tablet almost every day or multiple times daily. Sixty percent of the students who used mobile devices said they felt the ability to access collaboration activities via mobile devices increased the time they spent on the course (representing 29 percent of all student participants). During virtual sessions, we observed that when there were Internet or firewall problems interfering with connections for the session, students successfully used their phones to connect

to the sessions, salvaging the scheduled activity. Between 3 percent and 10 percent of students reported using mobile devices to connect to each virtual session.

Contrary to the students, after laptop and desktop computers, faculty most often used tablets for collaboration-related activities instead of phones. Forty-three percent reported using a tablet versus 29percent using phones. Faculty also used a wider variety of devices, reporting using e-readers and iPod or similar listening devices for collaboration activities (14 percent each). The greater use of tablets may be in part because we provided faculty in the Panama program with tablet devices for them to test with the different tools. Faculty used mobile devices most frequently to check student activity (72 percent), to email students (57 percent), to take notes during class (57 percent) and equally (43 percent each) to watch videos, do research and do reading. In all cases, the use of tablets predominated, except for email, which was equally done on phones and tablets. While all instructors used a computer to conduct the virtual sessions for which they were responsible, 14 percent attended virtual sessions as participants using a tablet. Overall, 100

percent of the faculty reported at least a slight increase in their use of mobile devices during the collaboration period, again, probably because we had encouraged their experimentation by providing tablets.

Feeling Connected and Perceptions of Tools

Since the primary purpose of this project was to find ways to facilitate a virtual term abroad experience, it was important to know which tools helped the students and faculty feel more connected to one another. The majority of the students reported that almost all of the tools they used helped them feel more connected to the other students and faculty. Among the students who used them, the tools that stood out as contributing the most to feeling connected were the very easily accessible Facebook (75 percent), Google Docs, Google Chat and Google Hangouts (75 percent each). These were followed by the blogs and wikis (73 and 71 percent, respectively), Twitter (71 percent), Blackboard Collaborate (68 percent), Skype (67 percent) and other virtual meeting tools (62 percent). (See Table 4.)

Many students did not acknowledge the use of any virtual meeting tools other than Blackboard Collaborate, even though instructors used other tools frequently. The fact that they so easily adapted to the different formats is a positive result encouraging the use of virtual meeting tools. Another point to note is that although students reported Blackboard Collaborate as the tool most frequently used, Collaborate ranked in the bottom half of the tools in terms of ease of use and helping the students to feel connected, while Google Hangouts (which provides more visual identification) ranked in the top on both points.

In addition to learning from the course collaboration activities, one student commented: "I like the fact that I was introduced to new tools of communication" (Student post-collaboration survey, 2013).

Another student added:

> In international business you can't always be face-to-face with the person you are communicating with. Technology has really helped to shorten the gap and make communication easier. I feel like in the classes we were constantly having problems with technology: a microphone wouldn't work, the video wouldn't stream, or the Internet connection was not stable. But that is the way it is. While doing my internship at [name removed], I had to communicate with other countries every day and I would have the same problems. I have learned that I need to be patient and deal with the occasional flaw in technology because it is key to communicating with other countries. (Panama student, 2013)

Faculty reported experience using a variety of tools in their courses prior to this study. Blackboard Collaborate and Skype were the most commonly used tools outside of the college's learning management system. Thirty-two percent of the instructors reported using Blackboard Collaborate and 29 percent used Skype very frequently for course-related activities compared to only 5 percent who had never used Collaborate and 24 percent who had never used Skype for their courses. Blackboard Collaborate is supported by the college, so it was not unexpected for ESC students and faculty to have experience with this tool. Despite the frequent use of Blackboard Collaborate, only 52 percent of the faculty felt proficient in its use, compared to 73 percent for Skype.

Other virtual tools with which the faculty had experience were Google Docs (60 percent - used very frequently by 21 percent of the instructors) and Facebook (60 percent - used very frequently by 17 percent of the instructors.) Even though Google Chat and Google Hangouts were used very frequently for course-related activities by only 6 percent of the instructors, 55 percent felt very proficient in its use. This discrepancy may speak to the ease of use and intuitiveness of the latter tools compared to Blackboard Collaborate. It also may be a result of faculty having greater familiarity with the other tools outside of their academic work.

In general, faculty found the chosen tools to be very easy to use. The tools that they felt made the biggest contribution to student learning were those that offered visual contact between the students (see Table 5).

In addition to contributing to student learning, faculty also reported that virtual meetings helped them feel substantially more connected to their students than when only teaching online between face-to-face meetings (versus 29 percent who felt there was no difference). Compared to courses in which they have not held virtual meetings, instructors felt that virtual meetings helped student engagement with their course work, with 67 percent indicating a substantial increase in engagement, 17 percent expressing somewhat more engagement and only 17 percent not noting any difference in student engagement (see Table 6). One instructor commented "the level and substance of student engagement made this an invaluable project" (Faculty post-collaboration survey, 2013).

Overall, 83 percent of the instructors were more satisfied with their courses using virtual meeting tools compared to other courses they teach in any other format, versus only 17 percent who said their satisfaction was about the same as with other courses.

Faculty found the greatest difficulties experienced with the virtual meetings were scheduling (57 percent) and technical problems (43 percent). Twenty-nine percent cited issues with their own ability to use the tools effectively, while 14.3 percent indicated some concern over student behavior during the virtual sessions. One instructor noted "Everyone not being comfortable with the technology and/or operating at different experience levels made the task more difficult" (Post-collaboration faculty survey, 2013).

Recommendations

Best Practices

Throughout this study, we encountered numerous technology-related challenges, ranging from a complete power outage in Panama, to the electricity being turned off due to a water shortage, to the Wi-Fi and equipment not working properly in New York. We strongly recommend testing all equipment prior to your session and having a backup plan. If you are doing a classroom to classroom session, we suggest doing a test run of your classroom layout to ensure that participants can view the monitor and be seen by those at a distance. The importance of testing cannot be overstated here. It also is important to plan ahead and consider differences in holiday and school schedules as well as time zones.

Table 6

FACULTY VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Contribute to the student learning experience	100%
Increase student engagement with course work	83%
Help instructors feel substantially more connected to the students	71%
Greater instructor satisfaction with courses including virtual meetings	83%

Source: Faculty post-collaboration survey, 2013

There are so many factors that influence the audio and visual experience. Largely, the best connection was a direct IP connection to Panama, since there was not a dependency on a hosting service (facilitating the session) and the equipment was of higher grade than our webcam.

It is important to consider the Wi-Fi capacity of the classroom you are using. Hard wire is the most reliable. If students are in the classroom together and logging in via their own devices, consideration of the Wi-Fi is critical. In Panama, because of broadband issues, virtual sessions were more successful when students participated from home rather than a shared classroom.

The number of people connecting to the session varied, anywhere from five to 12 individual connections. The clarity of each individual's connection varied based upon the quality of their webcam with an integrated microphone. Lower end pixel counts on the endpoint would lower the clarity of the video feed. Also, at times, the video and audio were not synchronous. Although noticeable, this did not appear to be a big issue during our sessions.

If at all possible, it is best to try to agree on the use of a single method of communication such as Zoom, Skype, Blue Jeans, etc. This simplifies the setup and reduces the dependency on IT support. (But always have a second compatible method as a plan B.)

We found Zoom to be the most complete and user friendly virtual meeting tool. Connecting was not an issue for participants joining the meetings. Once the meeting was launched, invited participants were able to connect through email links (invitations). We found that if the endpoint participant's webcam was not operational, they still could participate with audio only. It also was possible for the participant to call in using a phone number provided for each meeting. There is a chat box function for back channeling or to communicate about connection issues.

Recommendation for Those Starting With a Low Budget

Since the project builds upon technology and equipment already existing at most SUNY campuses, there would be little further investment needed to replicate and expand this project. Other national and international locations could replicate the experience with a small investment, creating an attractive network for international interaction.

With our experience to date, we can recommend that organizations or individuals who wish to replicate our experience connecting classrooms on a low budget should consider:

1. a reasonably priced webcam with an integrated microphone (Around $250, such as Logitech BCC950 conference camera)

2. utilizing Zoom's free service (limited to 25 participants and 40 minutes). They offer a range of paid service plans including one for education

3. a personal computer equipped with a reasonably priced speaker

4. the use of an overhead projector connected to a personal computer establishing the connection.

For sessions in which all participants will attend remotely, a laptop with incorporated microphone and camera, or a webcam with a microphone or headset will suffice. A service like Zoom is excellent for connecting groups of up to 25 participants. Participants who do not have a camera or microphone can call in from a phone.

Conclusions

Our research demonstrates the importance of making sure any tools used are accessible from mobile devices. While both student and faculty participants used laptop or desktop computers for most of the course and collaboration-related activities, mobile devices were an important alternative and provided access to course activities when other alternatives failed. The majority of students who used mobile devices to access course activities acknowledged that they spent more time on course work because of this access.

Virtual meeting tools allowing participants to see and hear one another are the most important element for a successful virtual term abroad. Instructors felt they increased student engagement, contributed to student learning, helped instructors feel more connected to their students and added to overall satisfaction with the course. Being able to see and hear one another was the element students most appreciated. When students couldn't readily see and hear one another, they tended to limit their communication. All of the participating faculty indicated that they would like to repeat the experience, saying:

> I would like to expand the experience to include faculty/students from other regions. I've found that my students have gained learning insights that they would not otherwise have experienced. (Faculty post-collaboration survey, 2013)

> It was a wonderful experience for [me] and the students. I think it gave another dimension to the class. Online classes can become boring and I think this added interest to the course. (Faculty post-collaboration survey, 2013)

While the focus of this project was how to best connect and encourage interaction between students in international locations, the use of virtual tools and the lessons learned could similarly enhance any online or blended course. The experience with mobile devices certainly supports adopting mobile-friendly tools and formats for any program. Moreover, the project demonstrates that with very simple technology and little expertise, instructors can incorporate successful international interactions into their courses.

Notes

of Westchester; Roberto Ball, Quality Leadership University, Panama; Erin Catone, SUNY Empire State College International Programs; Sean Capossela, The College of Westchester; John DeLuca, SUNY Empire State College International Programs; Jaqueline Flynn, The College of Westchester; Peter Janacek, University of Bratislava, Slovakia; Oto Jones, SUNY Empire State College Center for Distance Learning; Kagan Ozdemir, Anadolu University, Turkey; Katarina Pisutova, SUNY Empire State College and Comenius University, Bratislava; Nazik Roufaiel, SUNY Empire State College Center for Distance Learning; Rhianna Rogers, SUNY Empire State College Niagara Frontier Center; Lisa Snyder, formerly of SUNY Empire State College School for Graduate Studies; Janet Thompson, The College of Westchester; German Zacate-Hoyos, SUNY/Cortland.

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"It is always tempting for the established institutions of a historic period, and here I include ours as such a period, to think that they can meet emerging crises by modest accommodations in current practice. I urge that we in today's education establishment not make this mistake in relation to the current needs of adult learners. We must be ready to create joint venture centers, to introduce career guidance services into libraries, to work out coalitions of vocational schools and community colleges that are viewed without hostility or suspicion by parties of both parts, and to find a way to provide information and advocacy services for older adults that are not available in any adequate form today."

– Morris T. Keeton (1917-2014)
"New Ways to be Responsive to Adult Learners"
CAEL News, *November/December 1986, p. 37*

Dreaming Mother Into Existence

Robert Congemi, Northeast Center

Allow me to introduce myself, dear reader. I care to be thought of as a modest gentleman, in my late 60s, of sound mind. "Of sound mind" is an especially important descriptor, as you will soon see. Retired now a few years, I passed my professional life primarily as an advertising man. I confess to you, somewhat to my shame, I used whatever abilities God gave me to sell *products,* "things," the material world, the idea that one might achieve happiness, serenity, redemption, through the consumption, say, of Coca-Cola, underarm deodorant, sleek cars. Decade upon decade, I sat at my desk in one agency or another, rather anxiously, I must admit, at the thought of failure and destitution, laboring to find rhymes and slogans that would please my supervisors and clients. I helped them convince the "mind" of our culture that those fundamental considerations of life, which bedevil us so in the middle of sleepless nights, are appropriate to hide from the light of day.

That is why, therefore, I have set out to indulge myself, without any sense of disapprobation, to invent for myself … a mother. Yes, a mother. To dream myself a mother into existence. There, I've said it. Please don't think me odd, or worse. I feel I have ample justification. I think of having a mother, before my time on this earth is over, as a reward, for an honest, hardworking life, if for nothing else, a turn of events upon which you might even bestow your imprimatur.

The source of my difficulty is of course my mother's early death. What can I tell you? It was just one of those random, inexplicable things – she died, I'm told, a few weeks after giving birth to me. Her health was never good, but she wanted a child, took a chance, disobeyed the doctor's orders.

"Oh, Luther, how she loved you while she was alive," I was told many years later by an aunt, at that time a little old, gray-haired lady, who lived in Soho. "You were so tiny, so premature, she had to feed you from an eye dropper. Imagine that?"

Imagine that.

I was brought up by my father – if you can call living in the same apartment being "brought up." We were two silent men dissatisfied with each other. I left home after high school and scarcely looked back. I took a series of odd jobs in the Midwest – a dishwasher, a waiter, a bell boy, a part-time worker in a library, a young man trying to sell magazine subscriptions door-to-door. I returned to the library, shelving books, securing books, doing paperwork. One day, someone told me about college.

Robert Congemi

"Make something of yourself, Luther. You've got the brains. Go for it. There's a good junior college just down the road."

After junior college came a local university, my degree, and then a job as a copywriter. I went to a big city, found out I could make a living writing copy, and – to come to the point – returned to New York and wrote copy and then scripts for the rest of my professional life. I became better and better at this work, moved up the proverbial ladder a bit and then retired.

Not that I had any excessive romantic notions about having a mother. I am not utterly emotionally disturbed, I'd like to think, and do know of sad tales regarding sons and mothers. For instance, I remember a wedding several years ago, of a cousin of mine – a quintessential, blond, self-absorbed girl from the New Jersey suburbs. Never an extraordinary mixer at social events,

I had found a seat at the bar of the huge restaurant where the reception was being held. The image-maker in me watched the dancing and the socializing in the ballroom opposite the bar. As I ordered my third drink, another cousin of mine, the bride's older brother, asked if he might join me. He was an intellectual, a writer, a nice-enough looking man, about 30 then, named Jonathan. I had heard he had been living in Russia for years and wrote for newspapers there.

"Where are you now, Jonathan?" I asked him, as he slipped onto the barstool next to mine. "Moscow?"

"No. Saint Petersburg. More culture. Peter the Great's vision by the sea."

He seemed distracted, pre-occupied.

"You all right?"

"Yes, of course." I noticed he, too, watched the dancers. "I was just thinking … how much I miss some of these people," he explained. "Especially my other sisters. And things about the States. I am not anti-American."

He ordered a scotch and soda.

"Well then, why don't you live here?"

I'd heard he didn't make much money in Russia. And there was the deplorable medical situation, and of course the political one. Vladimir Putin was just at that time becoming the latest dictator in the Kremlin, Soviet KGB or not. I tried to be diplomatic. "Isn't it cold? I've heard Saint Petersburg's winters are freezing."

Jonathan laughed, a little wry. "Ah, Luther. No, it isn't the cold, or Putin, or the lack of decent hospitals." He looked at me directly. "Can you keep a secret?"

"Sure," I said.

"Luther, dear cousin, I am in Russia, halfway around the world, because of your aunt, my *mother*. If I could go farther, I probably would."

"What do you mean?"

"Count your blessings."

He smiled, and swirled his drink. He was being dryly amusing.

"I prefer political dictators to emotional ones. At least Putin is philosophical. Not bordering on the psychotic."

"Come, Jonathan."

"And then there is the materialism, her boundless materialism. Do you know what that does to the poet in you?"

Nor did I neglect trying to have a real flesh-and-blood mother, "borrowing" one, so to speak. I did *that* about 40 years ago. You see, there was this friend of mine, someone I knew in high school. We were about as close to being best friends as I could manage. We shared interests, we were both pretty much on the quiet, withdrawn side. I was interested in history and artistic things, and it was the artistic that particularly interested Richard. For me, for some reason, history made me comfortable. It was fixed, done, something I could hold on to with some measure of security, perhaps even understand, though of course later in life, I have come to understand that knowledge of the truth of the past is as much an improvisation as anything else. It is as fugitive a truth as is the *seemingly*

intelligible, palpable world itself, as are the very fundamental particles and forces of existence themselves.

As for art, Richard really took the lead there. There was something almost desperate about his dilettante's passion. Apparently as unsettled an introspective adolescent as I was, he talked about the *arts* and *literature* to the point of arousing suspicion in anyone he was talking to, though what he had to say was valid enough. During lunch period, as seniors, or after school, we would go to a diner a few blocks from our high school and sit in a booth, drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes, perhaps wishing we could stay where we were forever, at least for hours.

"Visse d'arte, visse d'arte," he would say with a flourish to amuse me.

"I know, I know," I would reply back, in mock indignation.

"But I'm serious, Luther. To make something beautiful, extraordinarily beautiful, which has never existed before, *that's* my dream. Or at least to *appreciate* such things. That's a 'stay against confusion,' as Frost put it, or rather a stay against despair. These are things that almost beguile you into thinking you haven't spent still another day of your life wastefully."

It was Richard's mother who was the object of my attempt to have this real, flesh-and-blood mother of my own. I had always liked her very much. Mrs. Walsh was in her late 30s when I first met her, an undeniably attractive woman, who enjoyed the fact that I liked Richard, invited me to dinner and generally made me feel as if I were always welcome in her home. We even flirted, or almost did, or could be *thought* to have, I now realize. I remember once during dinner, which I fancied she always seemed to make a bit special when I was present, I talked about current politics, which I saw as the latest chapter of history, and told her how upset I was about Vietnam, the war at the time.

"Why must we mind everyone's business?" I managed to say, not shy in her presence. "It's one of the oldest ploys, or delusions. We tell ourselves we're in another country for democracy, for our way of life, while so many other people are convinced that we're merely protecting our own interests."

I would have looked to Richard, but I knew it would have been to no avail. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw his mother glance at him, perhaps for some surprise. There was none; Richard did not dwell on such things. There was no time or room in his heart; he was so preoccupied with *The Iliad* or Michelangelo's *David*. So Mrs. Walsh joined me in my feelings.

"I agree, Luther. I'm almost ready to do something because of it. However modest."

Richard kept silent.

And then one day she *did* do something, with me, when we found ourselves alone together. I'm not sure exactly how it happened, but for some reason Richard wasn't home this time when I showed up at their house. He may have been out with

> *But I'm serious, Luther. To make something beautiful, extraordinarily beautiful, which has never existed before,* that's *my dream. Or at least to* appreciate *such things.*

his father – his father was a lawyer – and sometimes Richard did intern work at the firm where his father was a partner. Anyway, I showed up, when the United States had just invaded Cambodia. For a lot of people then, this was simply too much.

"They call it an 'incursion,'" I told Mrs. Walsh, my thoughts spilling out of me to her, despite myself. "But it isn't an 'incursion.' It's an *invasion*. Boy, talk about playing with words. How far do we go? We can invade *any* country we want to? Whenever we want to? What about plain old women and children, and men, who have nothing to do with anything? They just go along scared. Do we just kill them because we think it would be a good idea? I read history all the time, Mrs. Walsh. These people have been ruled by foreigners for

a century. Isn't it time they had a chance to rule themselves? At least by their own people? Good God, what happens if we're completely wrong? What happens if years from now they are completely prosperous? If their lives seem at least as good as ours? Then why are we doing what we're doing? Why are we propping up a decadent government that's at least as bad as anything else they can get?"

Finished with my outburst, I calmed down, and took a deep breath. I was embarrassed.

"I'm sorry," I said to Mrs. Walsh.

She smiled and put her hand tenderly on my shoulder. "No, Luther. I think exactly as you do." Was I surprised? "Thanks for putting it into words. I'm just more private about it. Especially in this house. Your best friend and his father do not agree with you, you know."

In the end, I actually asked her if she'd accompany me to a demonstration occurring at that very moment in front of government buildings only a few miles from our neighborhood, in the city proper.

"Certainly. Why not?" she told me. "It's about time I put my money where my mouth is, as they say."

Within the hour, we were on the edge of a demonstration – people were waving signs and chanting slogans. We listened to a series of speeches by young men and women, with continuous applause from the crowd, of which we were a happy part, helping to punctuate the rhetoric and the imploring. Several times we became very emotional, and once we both clapped like people possessed. When we got back to her house, Richard and his father were waiting. Mr. Walsh seemed terribly displeased. Richard was furious. He said nothing to me directly about what his mother and I had done, but he was quite withdrawn, and finally I went home. I let a few days pass. But even when I talked to Richard in study hall, he was still aloof and told me he and his parents were making a series of visitations to colleges in New England, a sudden happening that surprised me, and that he wouldn't be home or available for some time. I don't think I ever saw Mrs. Walsh again. I also gave up the idea of taking someone else's mother for my own.

Over the years, I also have had my share of women *friends,* but nothing much ever came of that, either. Sometimes I think women wearied me. Or maybe that's only what I expected and therefore created my own fate. I was not eager to be disappointed or hurt or desperate for someone's undying affection. At any rate, whatever the causation of the past, I am now indubitably of a mind to create my *own* mother, dream her into existence – indeed I have already done so to a fair degree – to sit here in my armchair and tell you that *she did not die.* She survived my birth. She simply could not let herself die. Her allegiance to her infant son was simply too strong. She explained it all to me recently, in my dreaming:

"Oh, Luther, how could I go and leave you? Through all my pain, through all my sickness, I thought to myself that I cannot die, I cannot do this to him, especially to a mere baby. How can I condemn him to a life of misery – of weakness, confusion, despair?"

And with that, in my fantasy, she rose from her bed, took her child in her arms, and walked forward into the future.

Not that it was easy, by any means. She still *was* a sickly woman. There was no denying that. She was not about, able, to prance, to dance around like a robust young woman. She was clearly weak. You see, dear reader, even in this, my dream, my mother does not move quickly as in good health, but is tentative, searching, her eyes upon you, perhaps looking for assurances. I have to help her with shopping, taking grocery bags from her hands. Or I need to assist with housecleaning, taking mops or supper dishes from her. She'll be walking down the street, or up the stairs to our apartment, and I fly to her rescue, her knight:

"Oh, Luther, I am just fine," she tells me. "You have your own things to think about."

"Nothing is more important than you," I tell her.

Yet I also do not want to mislead you. If I am a help to my mother, she is of course a godsend to me. That's certain, especially during my adolescence. In my dreaming, there is not a Richard, or a Mr. Walsh, or even, alas, a Mrs. Walsh. But there surely is my mother. Of course, this imagined

adolescence is, for me as it is with most everyone else, in any kind of lifetime. I worry if I am good enough, athletic enough, nice-looking enough, etc., etc. Do I run fast, am I liked by others, am I tall?

Of course, in my dreaming, I also am terribly in love. Hasn't creation itself fashioned us males just that way? To look at a girl, to notice something about her eyes, her shining hair, the feminine way she moves, and to be instantly ready to give up everything in life for a few moments of her attention? To cherish forever these moments in gratitude? In my dreaming, for months I think of simply nothing else but the object of my affection, and when finally I decide to tell her of my love, I am crushed by her rejection. But my mother is there for me, as I have been, to the best of my ability, for her.

"Luther, what boy, or girl for that matter, escapes this fate sooner or later? But out of hurt comes strength. This is well known."

"Of course," I say to her, when back to my senses, I lean to put my head on her shoulder.

How lucky I am to have her!

Yes, how lucky I am – though I wish I could say that I always treat her well. In fact, probably much to your surprise, dear reader, in my dreaming, I soon treat her badly. Inevitably, again human nature, I suppose, I begin to turn my youthful attention to still further considerations other than my mother. In short, I continue farther and farther down the road of life. I drift from her, continue on with my youthful self-absorption, my fretful concern about looks, ability, social desirability, but I also rebel, in my fashion. I go on the road, looking for "myself," my own "destiny," taking jobs as those I referred to in my real life, working my way resolutely up the ladder of success, trafficking with the people of my professional life. At times, in my fantasies, I am even guilty of *forgetting* my mother – until, that is, one Saturday afternoon, say, many years into my professional life, as I and a number of my colleagues are creating ads for a major New York City firm, I suddenly think of my mother, her image finally coming to me despite my own narcissism. I see her ill again, abed, shuffling as best she can in her small room, certainly

too shy, too much interested in only my well-being to call to me. My colleagues and I proceed with our routine, improvising as we go, thinking up camera shots or lines of dialogue, asking actors for ideas. But again and again, my mother's image comes back to me. Abruptly, after hours of work, I turn to one of my colleagues and inform him I am leaving.

"Leaving now, Luther? We're still in the middle of the shoot," he observes. "We need you. We pitch the campaign on Monday."

"I'm sorry," I reply, going for my coat. "My mother needs me."

"Your mother?"

Everyone in the studio pauses to hear my explanation.

"Yes. She's very sick. I've tried to work. But I must leave, catch a plane back to the East coast, be with her."

"Well … all right. I suppose," he relents. "God knows, if anyone deserves some slack, it's you, Luther."

Then I find her, of course, just as I have envisioned while at work.

"Why didn't you tell me?" I scold her, rushing to her bedside.

She smiles weakly, but happy.

"I didn't want to trouble you. You have your own life to live."

"But, no, I don't. I understand that now, seeing you ill once more. I think I have always known that. Your fate is my fate."

She looks at me in love.

Following this, I never leave her side. Being away from her, having any other life besides one with her is simply out of the question. I attend and nurse her, I heal her. She leaves her bed, and we go outdoors into the fresh air. We go *everywhere* together – shopping, dinner, to friends, to other lands. We travel to England – I have always wanted to visit London, Canterbury. We cross the Channel to the European continent. Italy, Germany, France. These are her favorites. She fancies quaint, little German villages, the kind on Christmas cards. Or the art galleries of Paris. We linger in the Tuileries. We rent a car and motor through Tuscany – its hills are so soft and green. I show her Pisa and Genoa and Florence. We stare together, in the Uffizi Gallery, at Michelangelo's *David*.

In short, we live happily ever after, are living happily ever after, and now I am like everyone else.

Finding Balance

Barbara Isaman-Bushart, Genesee Valley Center

A commonly expressed concern for Empire State College students as they begin their educational journey is how they will find time for studying when they also have employment, community and family responsibilities that call for their attention. Even those students who begin with a purposeful plan in mind are frequently surprised at the time commitment necessary to succeed in their studies. Near the end of each term, there are numerous incoming emails and phone calls about how life has spun out of control, leaving inadequate time for study, often followed by requests for extensions. (Some students take a more creative approach to their requests and these can add a note of humor to the mentoring experience. My personal favorites: "If I stop working right now, what would you give me for a grade?" and "I will hand in all 'A' quality work if you just assign that grade now and the missing work will be there very soon after the term deadline.") Humor aside, finding the delicate balance of life is serious business and struggles in that regard can lead to academic discouragement or difficulties, personal stress, or even health problems for our students.

And students are not the only ones with busy schedules and divided responsibilities: Mentoring, whether full or part time, is a job without clear endings. I have never left the office feeling like my work is completely done. There are always more papers to be read, current resources to research for content studies and student questions to address.

I wish I could say that my own life is so well ordered and managed that I never feel the need to revisit questions of proper balance, but a recent diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes has been a sobering reminder that knowledge of healthy habits is very different than practicing those same habits. In addition to my instructor/mentor role at Empire State College where I hold a 60 percent

line in Community and Human Services; I am an ordained minister, providing pastoral care to a local Rochester congregation; a daughter to an aging and chronically ill parent; a disability awareness and rights consultant; a wife and mother; and a new grandmother. When students share their apprehension about the many roles they play and how college only adds to their stress, I can relate with more than just a theoretical understanding of what that is like!

Barbara Isaman-Bushart

Because the issue of life balance is such a frequently expressed student concern, I have recently begun to develop a resource handout to give students at the beginning of the educational planning process that speaks of the pursuit of a *healthy balance* as an integral part of educational, personal, and professional development and achievement. I do not want to sound like a would-be medical professional doling out advice or someone who has lived so healthfully that I am in a position to judge others, but I do seek to gently acknowledge that life is full and self-care is an important consideration for us all. My goal is not to dictate what a "healthy balance" means for each individual student – this would cross a line into a very personal domain – but to encourage them to explore on their own how the student role fits with the rest of their lives, and what makes them feel personally satisfied.

Acrostics and acronyms admittedly are tired and overused mnemonics, yet they can be *memorable*, so in the handout, I have organized these suggestions for various aspects of "balance" with the use of the acronym, HELP:

H is for *health*. Taking good care of our bodies and minds is something that everyone acknowledges is important, but fewer develop the actual habits necessary to live healthfully. For most of us, a busy week means less exercise, less quality rest and consuming faster, less nutritious food. Consecutive busy weeks can eventually take its toll when these unwholesome choices are consistently substituted for healthy alternatives. It can seem overwhelming to overhaul an entire lifestyle, but even small, incremental changes are beneficial, and success in one area can lead to the needed motivation to tackle another. Starting small can still reap better health and avert chronic illnesses.

Some possible considerations for us all:

- Nutrition: Though it may seem impossible to make a home-cooked, nutritiously rich dinner every night, it might be possible to cook several healthy things on a day off to use

throughout the week. Stocking up on healthy snacks also can make good choices easier to find.

- Rest: Adequate rest is one of the body's best defenses against depression and muscle injury, so it is helpful to experiment until you know your body's needs in this regard and seek to meet your personal need as often as possible.

- Stress Relief: Many people find that meditating, praying, yoga or practicing some form of deep breathing exercise daily helps the body unwind and relax.

- Positive Outlook: Practicing optimism is another possibility for stress relief. For a helpful resource, see *Breaking Murphy's Law* by Suzanne C. Segerstrom, Ph.D. (2006, Guilford Press).

E is for *enjoyment*. Some people (myself included) have a difficult time relaxing or forgetting about duties when there are tasks left undone at the end of the workday or when unplanned interruptions have left the day's target agenda untouched. However, life is always in an unfinished state and adequate relaxation and enjoyment are not frills, but necessities to healthy living. Taking a break to do something that refreshes and enriches a person provides physical and mental energy when tasks are resumed. Breaks in the daily routine may be scheduled, like a weekly or even monthly coffee date with a friend that is unfailingly kept on the calendar; or they may be spontaneous, when an opportunity for refreshment beckons unexpectedly. From whichever manner that enjoyment comes, take advantage of it! The old adage, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," could be expanded to an unhappy boy, a tired boy and even a sick young man (and, of course, the same holds true for girls and women). In my role as a pastoral counselor outside of ESC, I have found that people often come with such emotional intensity surrounding the presenting issue they want to address that it seems to consume them and saps their joy and optimism. In addition to working on the identified need with them, I often suggest they do something just for pure enjoyment, and while this is met with initial shock, clients have related how permission to experience enjoyment

helps to balance the difficulties and renews their energy to heal or achieve personal development.

L is for *learning*. Here, I am including the content of what students learn in their studies, but also how students must learn about themselves in the process. Taking a "learning style profile" test is an excellent way to begin educational planning because through the use of such tools, students often learn how to study in ways consistent with their strengths. For example: spatial learners may find note taking laborious if done in an outline format, but may actually enjoy and remember the material better if they can draw the material in diagrams or creative pictorial representations. Free versions of these learning style self-tests are easily found online (for example, several excellent resources are available at www.learning-styles-online.com). Once a student has identified his or her personal learning style, a consideration of their daily rhythm is extremely helpful; some people are naturally "morning people" and others are "night owls." Finding the right time of day (or night) to study is critical for success. If a student is predominately a morning person, but only schedules time to study in the late evening after children are in bed, discouragement will undoubtedly follow. Personally, I am fresh and most creative in the mornings. I can read in the evenings and retain the information, but to produce something from my own imagination, I need to sit with the sunrise. When students tell me that they are reading material two or three times before they understand it, I often will ask when they are working and if they have a sense of their personal rhythm. The educational planning process lends itself so well to learning about "self," and in my opinion is one of the most valuable opportunities for students. Self-exploration is encouraged so that the end goal is not simply a degree, but education that represents personal strengths, passions, future ambitions and a self-awareness that will guide students throughout their lives.

P is for *people*. While college and even careers are temporary, the relationships in our lives are enduring. Frequently students, particularly women, will tell me they feel guilty that they are not able to "be there" for their families in the same way they were

before college. Their concern is obvious. Balancing relationships is perhaps the most difficult of all, but comes with the most rewards when given attention, and real risks when ignored. It can be helpful to engender the assistance and support from one's family or support system, and to plan group rewards when assignments are completed or goals achieved. Modeling good health, study habits and balance can be beneficial to everyone in the student's social circle, and the realized aspirations of a completed degree (and the steps that lead to it) can be celebrated as a shared achievement. Significant people in students' lives also can act as accountability partners to help them keep on track with studies and other personal goals. Carving out even brief moments to spend with loved ones can help the student stay in touch with those who matter most to them.

Recently, ESC has developed a student wellness initiative offering information and residency opportunities on the topics shared here, as well as many other beneficial components of well-being. I have heard only positive remarks from students who attended residencies of this nature, and I am proud to be a mentor in an institution that views students holistically and provides such rich resources for personal growth.

I know that nothing written here is groundbreaking news. But even though these things are generally understood and accepted as "healthy habits" and just plain common sense, my guess is that students and mentors alike struggle to fully implement the balance that makes life satisfying and promotes well-being. For myself, I am accepting the diagnosis of diabetes as a gift – a wake-up call – to reexamine the balance in my own life and to work on some areas that have been ignored for too long. Balance: it is hard to achieve, and maybe even harder to maintain, but worth the effort!

Note

I am still in the process of developing my HELP handout, trying different things to see what best fits the needs of students. I would be happy to share this resource in its current stage, and would be grateful to receive feedback from colleagues. I can be reached at Barbara.Isaman-Bushart@esc.edu.

Mentoring Studies in Dying and Bereavement: Issues and Challenges

Margaret Souza, Metropolitan Center

What makes students register for a study in either "dying" or "bereavement"? Although some students would simply like to have the knowledge and skills to work in these areas, most come to these studies having dealt with a personal loss. These students come to resolve or understand the issues that have surfaced for them, but many arrive without recognition of the remnants that their experiences of death and/or loss have left with them. Thus, mentoring in these areas (like in other areas of the human services and in human development) presents a significant challenge: How can mentors maintain the academic and scholarly focus of the study while balancing the needs of the students to deal with the emotional responses they often have? Put in another way, the mentor is not serving as a therapist, yet still, much of the study may be therapeutic for the student. In this essay, I will share ways in which I try to balance these competing demands of the study augmented with some examples from my experiences from Empire State College, as well as from my adjunct experiences at Fordham University Graduate School of Social Science.

One of the first lessons I have learned from my years of teaching is not to combine studies of dying and bereavement. When combined, students tend to focus on issues of bereavement and not of death. Since their experiences usually are of loss, they can connect to that topic readily. And, despite the hospice movement and palliative care initiatives in the United States, the process of dying remains a somewhat invisible process and a taboo topic. It is thus not surprising that students want to focus on loss and bereavement and not on dying.

Studies on the Dying Process

A study that attends to the dying process is important. Some students who have experienced the death of kin or a friend may come to the study with strong memories of these experiences. In these situations, the experience may be one of hospice, which for many was a blessing and for others was horrific. Still others may come to the study after they have tried multiple interventions to save their loved one from death, but death has occurred nonetheless. How students construct their experience also varies. Focusing on issues of dying can often be of great discomfort to them.

Why is focusing on the dying process important? Since in the present environment, dying usually occurs after a long and/or chronic illness, there is much to understand and learn. For example, only 20 percent of all deaths occur suddenly; the other 80 percent occur after an illness of long duration that has many acute episodes with a diminishing of functioning ability. Considering that a long process occurs prior to death, it is essential for professionals, for people experiencing the process and for our students to understand the context, the challenges and the opportunities. A good study in dying can provide this information.

What do students need to understand and learn? Knowledge of "advance directives" is basic since it is the way in which individuals can make their wishes known. What these are for and how to complete them are among several questions that need to be addressed. Although directives tend to be part of the process when anyone is admitted to the hospital, knowledge about the earlier questions is actually quite limited. Unfamiliar with state laws and the health care system, most people believe that another relative will be able to make health care decisions when and if the patient is unable. Family members of the elderly and/or cognitively impaired sometimes believe they can execute an advanced directive or sign a health care proxy for their elderly relative. Knowledge of federal and state regulations regarding decision-making is important. In my professional experience, I have found some nurses who do not know the required manner in which such forms need to be completed. Although one cannot make assumptions about all persons in a given category, doctors have differing beliefs about the types of interventions a person would want if they have a DNR (do not resuscitate) order or how to determine when a person is considered brain dead. Thus, it is essential for students to be aware of the state and federal regulations and the proper completion of the documents and processes involved.

However, knowledge of directives and their existence does not ensure, as it is supposed to, that the process of decision-making will be easy and smooth in these circumstances. Often, patient advocacy is imperative. Understanding the multiple issues that may surface and the many choices that are often not visible becomes important. Making life and, what appears to be, death decisions is an emotional experience that individuals do not realize until they are called upon to enact the wishes of another person. Since the dying process is often hidden, most do not have a sense of what occurs as dying

Margaret Souza

becomes a reality and the dying person and kin must interface with the health care system. Families at times are fearful of what the experience of dying is and thus are often afraid of being present when someone dies.

Still, it is exactly at these moments when personal experiences can surface and students may recognize experiences from their past that bring up strong emotions. A student reported that she drove home crying when she learned that turning a dying person in bed to position or clean him could cause death to occur. Her husband died when she was turning him and she felt she was responsible for his death. The shared experience can enable the mentor to support the student's feelings of distress. However, it also provides an opportunity – one so relevant in end of life care – to focus on the individual's fear that, in some way, they were responsible for the death. Additionally, since dying has been hidden from families in the past because it has often occurred in a health care facilities, individuals who now are providing care at home or are in attendance with the dying person often hold themselves responsible. In this sense, there is a lack of recognition that the individual is actively dying and there is nothing that can be done – certainly not indefinitely – to hold death at bay.

Another student recognized that several years earlier, her mother told her to go to the hospital because the physician who was caring for her grandmother had some papers that needed to be signed. As a result of her learning contract, she recognized that she had signed a DNR for her grandmother. This student discussed how close she was to her grandmother, even sleeping on the floor in her grandmother's room to offer her any assistance she may have needed to try to prevent her grandmother's death. Once again, supporting the distressed feelings the student has experienced is essential in the study. Discussing the way that advance directives and DNR are supposed to be handled can help the student recognize that she had no knowledge of what she was doing; her grandmother was dying and she had provided as much support under the circumstances as anyone could. These emotional moments can enable all students to be aware of the kinds of situations that do exist and how to help individuals in these

difficult times. It can help other students recognize that death is not something to be feared but is often a painful experience of loss. And, such a study offered in a group setting that allows students to verbalize their concerns to their colleagues helps others to recognize common feelings that limit a person from being able to be present for a dying person. Supporting students, but always trying to bring the focus back to the framework of the study content, enables all students to see the emotional components of the issues while understanding them in a broader theoretical context. In this way, engaging in discussion about the realities and the timing of death is essential to such a study.

Many different choices certainly affect the dying process – a process that only rarely can be reduced to a single act. However, learning about the process from multiple viewpoints can enable a student (or students together) to grapple with the realities they could face in helping others professionally, as well as in their own lives. Indeed, the distress of students who have had a problematic experience provides an opportunity to illustrate how painful it is for those who have gone through the experience when their knowledge of death is inadequate. It also is possible to study and make visible the long-term effects that this process can have on individuals.

The reality of decision-making must be embedded in the recognition of the significance of the beliefs of the physician who is directing the course of treatment. Some physicians, who I will call "interventionists," want to pursue most options to save an individual's life. Here, I cannot adequately explore the issues of how physicians respond to dying and their motivations, but I think it is fair to say that there is a continuum between the "interventionists" and those physicians who focus on end of life care. The latter strongly recommend that the direction of care focus on what they call providing a "good death." In this way, they focus on comfort instead of interventions to sustain life. Anthropological literature provides research illustrating that when such a choice is made, death is hastened (Cassell, 2005; Chapple, 2010). Certainly, for individuals who want to sustain the

life of their loved one, this approach is undesirable. For most individuals who are not familiar with the health care system, the notion that the physician provides objective scientific knowledge masks the reality of the orientation to life and death that the physician maintains as he or she practices and makes recommendations for care. It also keeps invisible the personal and economic interests of the attending physicians and the institution (if the dying person resides in one). Layered over that is the issue of health inequality. Inequalities can be based on the physicians' assumptions about the dying person's attitude, as well as that of the family. However, larger issues of inequality in health care have been documented as those issues relate to the cultural and social environment (Rouse, 2009). It unfairly affects minorities who are often provided unequal treatment (Budrys, 2010). As the study progresses, all of these kinds of issues need to be explored with the student.

> *… the distress of students who have had a problematic experience provides an opportunity to illustrate how painful it is for those who have gone through the experience when their knowledge of death is inadequate.*

In particular, focusing on communication and the various ways in which the multiple participants talk about dying underpins much of the content. Most people do not use the legalistic terms and are confused by the medical jargon embedded in health care decision-making and advance care planning. At times, medical practitioners may indicate that a specific issue for a dying person is resolved but the overall condition and terminal prognosis is not part of the communication, leaving the kin unclear as to what is happening. In a group setting,

providing students with role playing and opportunities to unpack the difficulties in communication within the health care system can provide clarity. Above all, students need opportunities to understand that they have the right to ask questions. One role of the mentor is to regularly indicate the wider issues that need to be addressed in communication that can help to eliminate some of the misunderstandings that occur at this intense time.

Studies on Bereavement

In teaching about death and dying, issues of loss and bereavement are topics unto themselves. As noted above, if such topics are joined in a study of dying, the issues inherent in the dying process often become obfuscated as students deal with the realities of the death and the loss of someone in their lives. Certainly, it is most likely that adults have experienced loss in their lives. I have found it interesting that students, well into their 50s with families of their own, still experience the loss of a parent in a very intense manner. It also has happened that *during* a term, a student experiences the death of a family member or friend. A group context provides support for the individual as he or she experiences the loss, but it also provides students with a recognition of how little public support exists when death occurs. By being able to highlight the ongoing grief of students whose losses occurred long before the study, as well as more recent losses, the study group itself becomes a reflection of the persistent realities of the experience of loss.

Most of the literature about bereavement comes from the discipline of psychology (Freud, 1959; Bowlby, 1980; Parkes, 1972; Worden, 1991). These theorists suggested that so-called "healthy bereavement" requires a detachment from the person who has died. Providing information and reading about the ways in which previous societies provided clearly demarcated roles, rituals and public displays of loss illuminate the ways in which grief can be accepted as an ongoing part of life without, for example, labeling it "depression" and trying to limit its expression. Building on the foundational book and notion of *Continuing Bonds* (Klass, Silverman, & Nickman, 1996), the study I have developed provides the student

with more recent understanding that grief is an ongoing process after the loss of someone close to them.

Unfortunately, the notion of "moving on" after a death has occurred affects the way in which many individuals still understand bereavement. It limits the ability of those who have experienced the death of someone they care about to find a way in which to express their grief, talk about the deceased person (which is an ongoing need) and have support, particularly when they do have public moments of displaying their sadness. Recognition of continuing bonds validates for students the realities of the ways death affects survivors. It enables students to understand the process of loss and its long-term effects on individuals.

Since within the larger cultural environment loss and grief still remain private issues, it makes it difficult for individuals to express their grief publicly. One of the reasons for silencing one's experience is the frequent lack of response received in a society that valorizes happiness and wants to avoid sadness. Assisting students to become comfortable in the presence of sadness and tears enables them to support others in their grief.

Construction of the Studies

To enable students to engage in the content of these studies while also providing them the opportunity to understand how the process affects individuals in both areas, I use memoirs and books written from either the experience of dying or bereavement perspective. I might select one text, but also often use several ethnographies. As an anthropologist, I gravitate to such materials. I think that in working with ethnographies, students are able to connect more fully to the experiences that individuals have and to gain insight into how the context affects their experience. Current ethnographies also can provide information that acknowledges the depth of the experience from diverse contexts and multiple perspectives.

Student journaling throughout the term enables me to evaluate how much of the material students are grasping, as well as gives me an opportunity to clarify issues and support their learning. It also can reveal students who are having emotional difficulty

with the study. Importantly, the process of journaling encourages students to connect their experiences with the broader issues covered in the content.

For both studies, I ask students to select and engage in an experiential project of interest to them. The goal of the assignment is to have students make another connection – between the material from the study to the experiences of individuals. This helps them enhance their understanding of the content. In this spirit, I do accept papers that students write reflecting on their own personal experiences, but expect that they draw links between that experience and the content of the study. These projects can be helpful as students are urged to reflect on their experiences in a new way.

Since these studies are designed at the advanced level, I require an academic research paper toward the end of the study. Encouraging students to think of a question that has emerged from their reading and to pursue research on it calls on them to explore – in depth – issues of importance and of interest to them. In a group format, students are able to share their questions and their research, and to expand the knowledge base of the entire group.

Ritual tends to be diminished in our society, but it is of importance particularly at the end of life. Thus, when I do this work in a group format, I have students work in small groups to develop a ritual that they believe addresses the issues in the content of the study. This exercise has provided some wonderful opportunities for students to recognize the importance of ritual, but also is therapeutic for many who carry significant emotional baggage regarding these issues.

Lastly, at the end of the term, I ask students to do a reflective paper referring back to the study goals, and describing how they understand the purpose of the study and what they have learned. As both an anthropologist and a social worker recognizing the importance of termination (no pun intended), remembering what a person was thinking or asking at the beginning of her process, and how she now understands the issues that were laid out in the study, provides a sense of achievement as well as closure. It also provides me with an opportunity

to know what each student takes away from the study in order for me to enrich the opportunity for future students. Most importantly, it enables me to rework any issues in the study that have not provided clarity and assistance to the students.

As I hope I have made clear, for both of these studies, the work needs to begin with students' experiences. A final reflection on attitudes, experiences and questions opens the students to an understanding of the way in which they can continue to reflect on these issues, impact the ways in which they approach them and think, again, about their expectations for the study. In order to assist others in either the dying or bereavement process, students need to develop a sense that their expectations and ideas may be fine for themselves, but that they need to become aware of their own attitudes and values in an effort to not impose them on others.

Studies in This Area

The areas of dying and bereavement are rich with literature that opens up many studies that could be pursued according to students' interests and needs. To provide some thoughts for development of such studies in this field, here are some of the learning contracts I am doing or have done:

- How Others Die is a study I provide that deals with dying in non-Western societies. It also fulfills the general education requirement for "Other World Civilizations."

- This summer I am leading a study group titled Working with Children Who Have Suffered A Loss Through Death. At our Staten Island Unit, there are many paraprofessionals who work in the school system, and I hope the

information and insight that they gain from this study can provide them with skills to respond to the students with whom they work.

- I also will be doing an individualized study with a student whose concentration is anthropology; we will co-construct The Anthropology of Dying.

- I have worked with another mentor who had a student who wanted to create an entire concentration that she has called Dying and Bereavement. Developing such a concentration is certainly a viable degree design option and would be of benefit to students who wish to work in this area after graduation.

Conclusion

As I mentioned at the start of this essay, mentoring in studies that have strong emotional content for students is often, if not always, challenging. The balance between therapeutic and academic work is essential. When the academic process, however, can provide a holistic experience, a student's intellectual and emotional life is enhanced. The studies also can be gratifying for mentors. Death and bereavement are processes that all individuals experience in their lives. To provide practical tools as well as a context in which students will be knowledgeable in these areas can assist them in their professional capacities. At the same time, students have the opportunity to understand and process their own experiences, promoting personal empowerment. Thus, the knowledge they will gain from these studies will benefit their professional and their personal lives.

Note

If any mentor would like to communicate with me (Margaret.Souza@esc.edu) about his or her own experiences in these kinds of study areas, I would be delighted. "End of life" is my area of research and scholarship, so this kind of dialogue is most welcome.

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Arlecchino
Aquaplast, waxes, various acrylic bases and paint powders, 8" x 7" x 6"

Performing Masks

Holly Adams, Artist-In-Residence, Central New York Center

Balinese people say that a good mask has "taksu"; it is a "spirit house." I think that's why people are drawn to masks. Masks seem to have a life of their own; they have their own passions, movements, intentions, personalities. The better the mask, the more intensely we are excited, nervous, frightened and intrigued by them, as well as by the idea of wearing them and *performing* them.

Adams working on horse mask of Aonbarr.

After all, why do people wear masks? To conceal identity … but that concealing also is a revealing, a taking on of specific and "honed-in" characteristics and implications. For example, the Lone Ranger and Zorro both wore simple black masks, not red sequined masks with feathers or scuba masks or Scooby Doo ones. Simplicity of action and intent is part of what is implied by the mask, and the color and *lack* of distinguishing features imply something perhaps in the shadows.

Why else do people wear masks?

To play a specific, sharply defined character or one markedly different from oneself (as in Halloween masks and *Commedia dell'Arte* masks); to play a part largely enough to be seen from

Old Man C
Aquaplast, various acrylic bases, 12" x 9" x 6"

Storm, Wind, Water Sprite for *The Tempest*
Aquaplast, various acrylic bases and paint
powders, 8" x 9" x 8"

farther away; to become a character beyond human experience – gods, animals, trees, legendary creatures, even personified ideas. Performing a mask also frees the self by demanding a higher level of commitment and releasing of identity than do other kinds of performing. The character of the mask is not only more sharply defined, but also more powerful, as the intents and emotions are amplified. Who the performer is becomes irrelevant – men, women, children of any ethnicity, language and physical

ability can become the character. It's sort of the opposite of being a movie star, because the character has more life/importance than the performer, and different people can play the same part. How awesome is that?

There are more reasons, of course, but these are the ones that drew me to masked performing while growing up. I was deeply, almost pathologically shy as a child, constantly afraid of taking the wrong action, saying the wrong thing. Becoming an actor helped

enormously, but exhilarating freedom came from discovering, "listening to" and embodying a mask's clear demands. Mask making was a natural extension for me. Although many people buy masks to hang on their walls (and some are even intended for that), my masks are meant to be lived in, performed. Imagine these masks in motion, looking at you, thinking, planning, *doing*.

I have made masks out of many materials using a variety of techniques,

Don Gayferos for *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*
Paper, glue, fabric, various acrylic bases and
paint powders, yarn, 14″ x 10″ x 7″

from traditional (wood, leather, fabric, papier-mâché, feathers, etc.), to 20th century (latex, neoprene/acetate), to my current favorites that other mask makers are now also choosing: Aquaplast (medical plastic) and believe it or not, manila folders. Several examples of my Aquaplast masks can be seen in this portfolio. Others, such as *Foxy* and a goofy pink/orange mask, are examples of manila folder masks that can be seen on my website (http://shearwaterproductions.com/masks/); I have made other masks of horses and

dragons that are almost three feet in length, and still light and strong. Lately, I have become especially interested in manila folder mask making, and spreading the love and use of this amazing material. Manila folders are inexpensive, can be used in schools and arts programs with limited resources, require no water, are nontoxic, recyclable and so easy to clean up.

Making masks like this involves creative problem-solving, geometric/architectural thinking and the artistic process!

The arts and art education are for everyone. I hope the spirits of these masks intrigue the viewer enough to suggest a mask performance at a local school, or a mask-making project as part of a history unit or in an elder care facility, or for anyone to take a secret afternoon and call forth a creature from your dreams, bringing it to life with the materials in your hands.

Photo credit: Thomas Hoebbel Photo-Video

For *Antigone*
Aquaplast-polymer, various acrylic bases and paint powders, gold leaf, 10" x 10" (at widest) x 6"

Wood, Tree, Land Sprite for *The Tempest*
Aquaplast, various acrylic bases and paint powders, sand, 8" x 10" x 6"

Having it All? Responding to the Challenge of Balancing Professional Life at Empire State College

Peggy Tally, School for Graduate Studies

Recently, I came across a piece that Elaine Handley and I wrote almost 20 years ago for a college publication that followed closely on the theme of the children's story, "City Mouse/ Country Mouse." Elaine and I each had a young child at the time, and when we would see each other at college functions, we would compare our experiences as new mothers and the challenges of raising toddlers. As Elaine lived "upstate" and I lived "downstate" in Brooklyn, we mused over the different kinds of upbringing her son and my daughter were having in these different milieus. We also would compare notes through the years on how our kids were doing, and I have been fortunate to get a lovely card from her each year at the holidays, where I can read how her son has grown into a wonderful young man. I can similarly report happy news about my daughters, and it really is incredible that so much time has passed; to risk the cliché, where did the time go?

With all the happy memories of having a young child and then another, in retrospect, those times of having young children and juggling work at Empire State College are not something I would like to go through again. Why? Because the combination of trying to raise a small child, while at the same time working toward tenure and traveling several times a year (at least!) to Saratoga Springs for college meetings, created a stressful set of circumstances that I would hope we would have resolved by now for our younger colleagues.

More generally, I have spent a good portion of my professional life thinking about how gender is "constructed" in popular culture; how gender and work roles are negotiated in different historical periods, and how the larger culture creates and assigns different meanings to these roles.

These representations offer, in turn, both a way for people to understand their lives and at the same time, arguably, play a role in shaping our lives. In the early 1990s, I wrote my dissertation on a television show called *thirtysomething*, and I looked specifically at the ways that work and family were being renegotiated for the men and women on the show, and the kinds of cultural conversations these stories generated for its audience.

One of the broader lessons I learned from this research is that whatever subculture we find ourselves in, we tell ourselves stories to help us cope with the changing sets of circumstances we live in. Either in fantastic or realist form, we use cultural "artifacts" such as a television series to make sense of our lives.

This lesson about the important role that culture plays in helping us craft a language to articulate and influence our social lives also can be understood in terms of the stories that we have told ourselves for the past 40 years in the subculture that is Empire State College. At the center of this culture is the notion of "student-centered" learning. Other cultural touchstones include our emphasis on helping our students become active citizens in their communities and empowering them to successfully combine the competing demands of work and family with their academics.

As I was listening recently to the debates occurring right now at ESC over how best to support the adult learner, I couldn't help but reflect on what is *not* being said in our particular conversations. Our culture, in other words, arguably honors the idea of allowing our students to have a semblance of a work, family life and an academic life, while we remain curiously silent about our

Peggy Tally

PHOTO CREDIT: BILL TALLY

own negotiations as professionals with similar needs to be caregivers, community members and partners.

In raising this question of the silence around our own needs to figure out how to juggle these various aspects of our lives, this is not to say that the importance of this problem should be minimized in any way for our students. Rather, I wanted to raise this question because it sometimes seems as if we are almost using this paradigm of "student-centeredness" as a way to legitimize the prevailing status quo – one that assumes that faculty and staff will somehow be able to "work it out" in balancing their own competing needs in order to preserve the primary focus on the student.

But what if there are more students than ever who need attention and support, given budgetary constraints that preclude hiring more staff? How do we balance these various areas of our lives when the scales begin to tip in favor of more students and fewer resources; more accountability, more assessments, more guidelines, more rubrics, more evaluations, more reviews, more searches, more task forces, more state-mandated requirements, and fewer faculty

and staff to honor these demands? At what point, to put it simply, do the demands of our work lives translate into a loss in other areas of our lives?

Workplaces are "greedy institutions," as has been said, and the needs of our organization, particularly in a time of severe budgetary constraints, mean that the question of attending to the needs of faculty to balance their professional and personal responsibilities, to have a semblance of a "normal" life, are difficult to raise. In all likelihood, this was the case even when there was not a budget crisis, and the reasons for this are many and complex.

Certainly, one factor was that in earlier decades, academics were often middle-class white males, and the assumption was that family needs were taken care of by the traditional division of labor, with a spouse at home. But I think a larger issue was that most organizations in modern society simply benefitted from not recognizing that workers had "personal lives." Fast forward to our historical juncture: Not only is the modern organization more diversified, but academia also has broadened its demographic profile to include more individuals of different races and ethnicities.[1] And while there have always been individuals who didn't self-identify in terms of a traditional gender binary, there is now arguably more freedom to forego these conventional labels and be more visible in the academic universe. In addition, at Empire State College, the percentage of full-time faculty who are women also has shifted, and is even higher than in American universities overall.[2] In sum, the traditional division of labor in modern society has altered, with profound implications for the organization of work and family life. We also need to be aware that there are all kinds of families at Empire State College with multiple and competing needs and struggles to balance work and family. These needs have not been sufficiently recognized, nor have the resulting levels of strain and difficulty that continue to exact a toll on our best and brightest new employees.

This "working it out" of our professional lives, I should add, is not simply something that is needed by our faculty and staff who have younger or even older children.

As we all know, many of our colleagues have multiple family and community and caregiver responsibilities to which they need to attend, and these must continually be juggled while at the same time fulfilling our responsibilities at Empire. Yet, why is there so very little discussion around the college about what concrete changes we can make in the way our work is organized to help us achieve that balance? More importantly, the argument I would like to make here is that as we move forward into a new era at Empire State College, we need to attend to these issues, as we strategize on how to maximize our resources and retain our most talented professionals.

Put in other terms, it is understandable that when there are fewer resources than ever in the college, it is hard to change the conversation from confronting budgetary realities to helping staff develop ways to find balance in their lives. Productivity is necessarily of paramount importance when it is imperative to survive financially as an institution. Credit counts are one measure of our productivity, for example, as is the 12-month contract. The point I would like to make, however, is that what we are as an institution is grounded in our ethical practices, and to turn away from addressing our own work-life balance issues compromises our central mission. More than that, we also risk alienating and potentially losing our most talented colleagues.

To the extent, finally, that faculty and staff themselves focus on the primacy of the student, and the nontraditional ways in which we have worked with students in the past, we may indirectly be contributing to the problem of stress and work overload. For example, if we try to work with students on the model of independent learning with one to one tutorials, we have to spend a good deal of time and energy on the student to ensure they are having a meaningful learning experience. On the other hand, we are expected to bring in a certain number of credits per year, as per our workload expectations from the college. By telling our younger faculty especially that they must remain true to the independent learning model, we are essentially telling them that they have to sacrifice other areas of their lives if they also are to fulfill their contractual obligations to the college. If this

Yet, why is there so very little discussion around the college about what concrete changes we can make in the way our work is organized to help us achieve that balance?

is questioned, furthermore, it is sometimes viewed as somehow not being faithful to the original goals of the student-centered model that has characterized Empire State College for so many years. The faculty, in short, are caught between a rock and a hard place, and too often we may end up silencing our own colleagues who have a very real stake in trying to bring some sanity to their workload.

To summarize these difficulties, it may help to outline some of the issues that we have inherited by virtue of the way our work lives have been organized, and the issues that pose a challenge as we move forward. Let me offer a few examples.

At Empire, we pride ourselves on having a different model of education. On a practical level, we also have a different workload model from most traditional colleges. The traditional model, which has its own workload issues, offers the virtue of a set number of courses, specific office hours and summers off. At Empire, by contrast, we are evaluated, in significant measure, by the credits that we generate; we have an 11-month work schedule, and the lines between office hours versus being onsite are intentionally blurred. For many of the faculty, this has translated into a kind of 24/7 academic model of delivery of service. This has obvious and negative implications for people trying to find balance in their lives.

In addition, as I mentioned earlier, because of our de-centralized model, faculty often have to travel to Saratoga Springs and Latham several times a year, especially newer faculty who feel compelled to serve on multiple collegewide committees. The

upheaval of traveling is something that faculty at traditional colleges don't have to do on a regular basis. It is hard enough to juggle work and other responsibilities when you are in the same location, but moving back and forth on a semi-regular basis creates a whole layer of stress that faculty at other schools typically don't have.

Added to this is the additional problem that some ESC faculty are not required to make the same kinds of sacrifices in terms of travel, either because they live closer to these meetings or because they choose not to attend. If you are a newer colleague, however, the option of not attending a meeting means that you will be viewed as not taking your job as seriously or indeed, not fulfilling your contractual obligations. More generally, it can create a sense of resentment and divisions among employees when some are more easily able to fulfill their obligations by virtue of living closer than others to the places where the meetings are routinely held.

Third, there is the question of "neo-liberalism" and "entrepreneurship" at ESC. While it may seem paradoxical that I am describing our faculty as being constrained on the one hand by travel demands, no summers off and credit count expectations, we all know that some faculty have been able to be more "entrepreneurial," in the sense that they have effectively developed strategies for making the job work for them. However, what may make a job workable for one person may, in turn, create confusion over what is expected and what is negotiable for the next person. And, exactly because these kinds of strategies for workload and everyday mentoring life management are conducted on an individual basis, they can contribute to a culture that divides, rather than unites us. Indeed, in the worst case, the strategies of one can sometimes result in additional workload for another, and this creates very real tensions that can further erode the workplace climate.

Finally, there is an issue that unfortunately is shared by many other colleges as well, and that is the kind of pervasive anxiety and stress that can accompany the time before one is granted continuing appointment. At ESC, however, the ways in which one is judged, not just by colleagues in your field, "department" – your area of study – but indeed by the learning center or program, as well as by the Academic Personnel Committee, and, of course, by the administration, means that you are essentially subject to the expectations and judgments of multiple individuals throughout your time at ESC. It is difficult to say "no" to requests for your time and energy, for example, because of the simple fact that you don't want to be perceived as somehow not "collegial," or not contributing to the important work of the college. Honoring these requests for fear of being perceived negatively oftentimes add up to a difficult period (one that can last for a number of years!) for newer faculty in particular. This quasi-hazing period is so engrained in our culture at ESC that we don't even question what kind of toll this can take on our colleagues.

I will conclude with a short anecdote and a call to action. There was one time many years ago when I asked whether there were childcare facilities available at the All College Conference. I was told that, for insurance reasons, there couldn't be daycare. This request was viewed as somehow "out of the box," and my need for childcare was seen as a private problem; I received the clear message that this was something I had to figure out on my own.

Now that I no longer need childcare, I can't help but think that we have not evolved very much in the 20 years I have been here. I would like to believe that as we congratulate ourselves for being on the cutting edge of innovative adult learning, of being pioneers in online pedagogy, of being all the things we are so proud of and that we recently collectively celebrated at the inauguration of our fourth president, Merodie Hancock, that we also have the courage to begin a public conversation about our own need to re-think not only workload but our work culture at ESC, as well.

What might this look like, this public dialogue about balancing our work lives? One specific way would be for those of us who have been here the longest and who have the most security to initiate these conversations, to indeed, take the lead. We would do well to begin by challenging ourselves to ask the hard questions. These questions include: "What is the trade-off in time and energy to work with our "traditional" models of mentoring? What are the benefits of this model in terms of flexibility for the mentor and student? There may be ways in which our traditional model exacts a human cost on mentors given the credit demands expected of us. If the more senior faculty, by contrast, have been able to make it work in terms of their own strategies for work-life balance, then we must nevertheless be honest about what this means for our newer colleagues in terms of the rest of their lives, in this current Empire State College environment.

We also might begin by challenging our administration to re-think how our workload is measured. What does it mean to ask us to continue to bring in X number of credits, and at the same time, fulfill other roles that traditional faculty are not required to do, including educational planning, credit by evaluation, intensive focus on

> *I would like to believe that as we congratulate ourselves for being on the cutting edge of innovative adult learning, of being pioneers in online pedagogy, of being all the things we are so proud of and that we recently collectively celebrated at the inauguration of our fourth president, Merodie Hancock, that we also have the courage to begin a public conversation about our own need to re-think not only workload but our work culture at ESC, as well.*

the individual learner, regular travel, etc.? We need to be creative, to be flexible, to be agile, etc.; but how do we measure and bring sanity to the pace and scope of the work we are asked to do?

These are just a few of the questions we might begin to ask. Additional questions might include how to encourage our midlevel managers to communicate the message from the top tiers of management that this is an important and critical area upon which to focus. If we are being asked to change other areas of our work life – basic questions about how we do our work as mentors – we need to hear a similar message that we will be provided the tools with which to gain a better grasp on balancing the other areas of our lives with our work life. In this way, we might be able to finally fulfill "the promise" of creating a sustainable vision of a full and happy life for our next generation of students, and for everyone who works at our college.

Notes

1   According to the National Center for Education Statistics publication, *The Condition of Education 2013,* "In 2011, of those full-time faculty whose race/ethnicity was known, 79 percent were white (44 percent were white males and 35 percent were white females), 6 percent were black, 4 percent were Hispanic, 9 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, and less than 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native or two or more races" (p. 175). Accessible at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013037.pdf.

2   The *SUNY Empire State College Fact Book 2011-12* reported that in the fall of 2012, women represented 64.4 percent of all full-time faculty. For more information, see http://www8.esc.edu/esconline/cdlrev2.nsf/pix/Fact%20Book%202011-12%20FINAL_updated%20AITM%20Cycle.pdf/$file/Fact%20Book%202011-12%20FINAL_updated%20AITM%20Cycle.pdf?OpenElement. In contrast, according to the *AAUP Faculty Gender Equity Indicators 2006,* women make up 51 percent of the faculty at community colleges, 42 percent at baccalaureate and master's degree colleges, and 34 percent at doctoral-level universities. See this link for details: http://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/63396944-44BE-4ABA-9815-5792D93856F1/0/AAUPGenderEquityIndicators2006.pdf.

"To break with the 'cotton wool' of habit, of mere routine, of automatism, is … to seek alternative ways of being, to look for openings. To find such openings is to discover new possibilities – often new ways of achieving freedom in the world."

– Maxine Greene (1917 - 2014)
The Dialectic of Freedom
New York: Teachers College Press, 1988, p. 2

What Happens When You Make a Summer Residency Optional? Reflections on the Lebanon Residency in Cyprus and Cyberspace

Jeannine Mercer and Karolyn M. Andrews, Center for International Programs; John F. Hughes, Office of Communications and Government Relations; Constance Rodriguez, Genesee Valley Center; Lisa Parkins and Victoria Vernon, Metropolitan Center

The Story

Jeannine Mercer

Introduction

Every summer term, the Lebanon Residency Program (LRP) holds a five-day residency abroad, usually in Cyprus. Cyprus is close to Lebanon – about a half-hour's flight away – yet offers a different cultural experience for the Lebanese students. The residency in Cyprus has always been a required component of the 10-week summer term, which has unfortunately limited enrollment to only those with the means and ability to travel; the remainder of the term is completed online. Some students, the majority of whom are in their early-to-mid-20s, are not able to take time off from work, while others have difficulty paying the travel expenses. Other potential LRP students travel abroad with their families during the summer, and are not close enough to come to Cyprus.

Karolyn Andrews, the LRP academic program director, has been thinking of ways to remove the barriers to student enrollment in the summer term. Thus, in 2012, she decided to hold the residency in Lebanon. This way, she reasoned, students who could not take time off from work could still enroll in summer courses. Since the students were only required to attend face-to-face meetings for their studies over a four-day period and they did not have to leave Lebanon, it attracted many students. However, these students were showing up only for the required group meeting times, and didn't spend much time with their classmates and instructors. Hence, they lost the bonding opportunities that the summer residency typically provides.

It was thus not surprising that in early 2013, I received a phone call from Karolyn. "I'm thinking of holding the residency in Cyprus, but making attendance optional," she suggested. "This way those who cannot travel will still be able to enroll in summer courses, and those who want to travel, can."

"But how will it work?" I asked, both curious and excited at the idea. "The students who can't attend will miss the course meetings and other activities. How can they make that up?"

This was truly a provocative and innovative idea. In all the years that the Lebanon program has been in existence, students have been required to attend a short residency. Making the residency optional could potentially upset our partners and challenge our blended learning model. We also ran the risk that none of the students would opt to come.

"I don't know yet," she said. "Right now it's just an idea. I haven't yet decided how to implement it."

As time passed, her plan evolved. At first, she considered streaming our course sessions and other activities live over the Web. But that would require an impeccable Wi-Fi connection at the hotel where we would stay (the LRP is held at a hotel), something that has not been very reliable or predictable in the region. This idea also would be dependent upon students in Lebanon being able to view the videos live. And with their harried schedules and horrible bandwidth, we worried about their ability to do so.

"We'll have to record them," Karolyn decided.

But how? We pondered the logistics, and not just in terms of technology. Our course sessions were typically two hours long. How would we get the students to view such long videos for each day of the residency – and for each course they were taking? As it was, MOOC (massive open online course) videos were quite short, about 10-minutes-long, in the spirit of maintaining student interest. Sure, we weren't creating a MOOC, but the philosophy was the same. We wanted students to engage with course content by viewing videos of lectures.

(l-r) Victoria Vernon (kneeling), Lisa Parkins, Constance Rodriguez, Jeannine Mercer, Hiam Sakr (AUST president), Karolyn Andrews, Hoda Maalouf (AUT program coordinator) and Nabeel Haidar (AUST provost) meeting at the hotel hosting the residency.

PHOTO CREDIT: JOYCE HADDAD

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The Residency Structure: Courses and Group Activities

There were four summer courses offered (most students took either one or two courses):

1. **Innovation in Managing the Market,** a marketing management course taught by Constance Rodriquez

2. **Brave New World: Humanity in the Era of Web 2.0,** a social media studies and society course taught by Jeannine Mercer

3. **Technology and the New Global Economy,** a course on the economic consequences of technology, taught by Victoria Vernon

4. **Interdisciplinary Arts and the Environment,** a course on eco-art taught by Lisa Parkins

Each course was scheduled to meet for one hour on four different days during the morning hours.

In addition to the course meetings, the students attended group activities in the afternoon. These also were attended by the faculty members, the academic program director, staff, and some of the partners. The students took photographs at each event, and shared them in the Facebook group.

Activity 1: Road trip to Troodos – We visited an ancient church and walked a short nature trail deep in the Cypriot mountain range, Troodos. Lisa Parkins recorded the sounds of nature.

Activity 2: Civil Marriage in Cyprus – Jeannine Mercer discussed the civil marriage industry in Cyprus. Many foreigners travel to Cyprus for marriage. This is a trend for couples in nearby Lebanon and Israel, where civil marriage does not exist. It is especially sought by couples of mixed religions.

Activity 3: Technology – Victoria Vernon discussed how technology is changing the world as we know it. Of particular interest was a discussion on how robots and 3-D printing are transforming the manufacturing process.

Activity 4: Evaluation of the Residency – Constance Rodriguez and Karolyn Andrews led a discussion about how students evaluated different activities at the residency, what they would change and why.

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The Plan: Part I – Videos

After the theme of the residency was chosen – Innovation – and the instructors and course titles were confirmed, Karolyn informed us that our courses and group activities at the residency would be recorded rather than streamed. The rest was left open for faculty to determine. The challenge of this, of course, was that until registration was completed, we would have no idea of how many students planned to travel to the residency. Would half of the students show up, most of them, or none at all? Every possible outcome would affect how we approached our meetings at the residency, so we could not plan our sessions until registration ended, approximately five weeks before the start of the residency.

In the meantime, John Hughes, director of media production and resources, was asked to work with us on the residency, and would travel from Saratoga Springs to Cyprus to so. He sent us some tips about how we could implement common pedagogical practices into video, and he later filmed a video of himself describing the equipment we would be using for the videos.

As soon as registration ended, Karolyn had a long talk with each one of us and helped us brainstorm what we wanted to do for the videos and for the overall residency.

Registration revealed that only around 25 percent of the students were coming to Cyprus. I would have only six students with me out of the 23 who had registered for my course. The other instructors had similar ratios except for Victoria Vernon, who had only one student out of 16 attending the residency. Therefore, we decided that we should place a heavy emphasis on the videos that we would make, as most of the students would rely on them.

We began sharing tips among ourselves on how to make teaching videos effective. Although we were encouraged to do whatever we felt best served the interest of our class, we agreed that it would be in everyone's best interest if we recorded a series of short videos each day rather than one long course video. This would make it easier to upload, download and maintain student interest. This suggestion also meant that we'd have a large number of videos for each course, and we wondered if the students would actually watch them all. For example, if I filmed four short videos per day for each of my four course meetings, that would make a total of 16 videos, but would only be a fragment of that week's work. The students would be required to submit other assignments in addition to viewing the videos.

Karolyn also had asked each of us to host one group activity during the week, in which all of the students and faculty would attend. She suggested that it have broad appeal and some connection to Cyprus, but once again, left it up to us. She also planned to film these meetings.

How We Filmed the Videos

I hadn't quite known what to expect in terms of the videos. Since the majority of my students would be dependent upon the videos to gain course content and write assignments, I figured I'd better play to the camera. I thought I'd have to do a MOOC-style video lecture, where celebrity-like faculty members with excellent onscreen presence lecture enthusiastically. When I entered the classroom, I was told to stand on a designated mark for the camera, which was indicated by a piece of duct tape on the floor. John Hughes also clipped a microphone to my skirt, which is why I

never wore a dress for class – there would have been no place to clip the microphone if I had!

As soon as I began to talk, I became well aware of my direct audience – the six students sitting in front of me. They seemed quite interested in the topics I spoke about, and wanted to discuss them more than I had anticipated. Therefore, I had to switch between camera focus to classroom focus, without deserting my cyber audience. Shifting my agenda, I decided to make three short videos for each session instead of four. We had a lively class discussion in the intervals between filming. However, each video did capture student discussion, so I tried to remember to paraphrase what students were discussing so that the others would not feel lost or frustrated by trying to follow the conversation.

All of these videos created a lot of work for John Hughes, and the editing took more time and effort than any of us realized. He was able to provide us with the links to the edited videos within 24 hours or less, but at an extreme cost to himself.

COURSE SESSION VIDEO STATISTICS

Course	Video	Number of video views	Number of students at residency	Number of students not at residency
Innovation in Managing the Market				
Innovation in Managing the Market	Video #1	29	5	18
Innovation in Managing the Market	Video #2	16	5	18
Innovation in Managing the Market	Video #3	18	5	18
Innovation in Managing the Market	Video #4	14	5	18
Brave New World: Humanity in the Era of Web 2.0				
Brave New World	Day 1, Video 1	72	6	17
Brave New World	Day 1, Video 2	45	6	17
Brave New World	Day 1, Video 3	37	6	17
Brave New World	Day 2, Video 1	41	6	17
Brave New World	Day 2, Video 2	27	6	17
Brave New World	Day 2, Video 3	24	6	17
Brave New World	Day 3, Video 1	31	6	17
Brave New World	Day 3, Video 2	30	6	17
Brave New World	Day 3, Video 3	22	6	17
Interdisciplinary Arts and the Environment				
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 1	33	4	17
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 2	20	4	17
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 2, Student Presentations	21	4	17
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 2, Student Presentations	19	4	17
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 3, Myth Reading	19	4	17
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 3, Student Presentation	2	4	17
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 4, Erysichthon Performance	23	4	17
Interdisciplinary Arts	Day 4, Performance 2	20	4	17

He worked most evenings alone in his room, late into the night. What did provide some helped was that Constance Rodriquez reduced the number of videos for her class; and Victoria Vernon, who only had one student in attendance, decided to tutor this student and forego the additional videos. On the third day of the residency, when we realized that we rarely saw John because he was constantly working on the videos, Karolyn announced that we didn't have to do the final course session videos unless they were needed. We also had agreed early on that filming the group activities, which were at least two-hours long, would not be pragmatic and would deter John from getting the course videos done quickly. He did, however, film the last group activity. Overall, he filmed and edited 36 videos in five days!

Overall, from the statistics alone, it seems that most of the students watched the majority of the videos. In many cases, the number of views outnumbered the number of enrolled students! I assume that is due to students watching the video multiple times, either due to bandwidth issues or to review the material. We provided the links to the videos within the online courses, so students who attended the residency also had access to the videos. It is possible that they also reviewed them while working on their assignments related to the residency topics.

I would attribute the large success that my course videos for Brave New World received on Day One was due to the content. We discussed cyberbullying, the vulnerability of young children and teenagers and the risks they take on the Internet when chatting with strangers. The students had written the most prolifically about these videos, and I assume this high level of interest resulted in sharing the video links. Partially due to this, I plan to embed some of these videos into the online portion of the course the next time I teach it.

The Plan: Part II – Facebook Group

We knew somehow that the residency videos would not be enough to engage students who did not attend in person. Even though we aimed to have each video ready for viewing within 24 hours, we had no plan in place to interact with these students synchronously. While it was of the utmost importance to have them view the material they needed for their courses, we also wanted them to feel part of the residency.

As a solution to this, Karolyn created a Facebook group for the residency. We systematically invited all of the students (in-person and online attendees), residency faculty and staff to join the group. We didn't make participation in this group required, but it was highly recommended. Karolyn suggested that the students at the residency use the group to somehow share what they were experiencing with those who could not be there.

How the Facebook Group Worked

Overall, 48 of the 63 students enrolled in summer 2013 courses joined the Facebook group. The Facebook group was created well in advance of the residency, but the students didn't begin participating until the residency commenced.

Students were asked to share their experiences at each of the group activities. One group activity was an excursion to an ancient church at a monastery in the mountains. This activity generated a plethora of photos being posted in the Facebook group. The other activities were classroom-based seminars on different topics. Students took photos of the faculty talking, as well as the conference table full of students and others, and posted comments about what was said. The other students then commented on the photos, or simply "liked" them. There were a few exceptions to this pattern that emerged. One student posted a photo of drawings he had doodled at a seminar, and another student took a photo of me lecturing in class. Because the class meetings were already being shared with the virtual students, we hadn't asked the students to share images of these meetings. Also, ironically, the morning after I gave a talk about the civil marriage industry in Cyprus, students posted photos of a civil marriage taking place at our hotel!

All of the students at the residency posted in the Facebook group, but the virtual students were more verbose. Perhaps the students at the residency felt less motivated to share their thoughts online because they had already participated in discussions about the topics being posted in the group. The faculty members did not participate much in the group; one suggested that the focus could have been on friendship-building activities rather than on the group activities.

I couldn't help but ask the students in the Facebook group if they felt they were more "a part of" the residency due to the shared discussions and photos on Facebook. Fourteen virtual students out of 36 responded affirmatively; this finding was further supported by student comments at the subsequent residency in the fall. Nine virtual students did not participate in the Facebook group, but these same students also did not participate much in their online courses.

The Adventures of On-Site Video Production

John F. Hughes

My involvement in the Lebanon Residency Program began with an almost chance encounter with Karolyn Andrews at the 2013 All College Conference. Karolyn was concerned with developing innovative ways to use technology to make the residency available to Lebanese students who did not have the means or the time to make the trip to Cyprus. Since I had a background in shooting classroom video from capturing lectures at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, I had a unique perspective on how we might make class content available to students

John Hughes recording a session.

on the Web. A few weeks later, Karolyn extended an invitation to become part of the Cyprus team and I gladly accepted.

The first phase of this was planning, preparation and packing. Since none of us really knew what was going to work best, I packed a versatile production kit that was light enough to accommodate international travel. The video piece was easy: I brought a newly acquired Cannon small format video camera that recorded content on memory chips, and a light but sturdy tripod. The audio portion was more complex. Usually with video production, people think of cameras and pictures. But sound is important, especially with educational content. Good audio is usually more difficult to capture effectively. All I really knew at that point was that we would be recording faculty who were lecturing (mostly), and there would probably be classroom discussion with students. I felt that capturing this discussion would be important. The students at home would want to hear the ideas and reflections of their colleagues in the classrooms. To accomplish this, I packed a wireless lavaliere (clip) microphone for the faculty member, two boundary (flush-mounted) microphones to pick up the students and a shotgun (long, narrow) microphone just for fun. We had recently purchased a two channel audio mini-mixer that was perfect for the task – very light weight and versatile. The final piece was two computer laptops that were used for editing and encoding the material for streaming.

One of the things I did in preparation was to create a short video to show the four faculty members what their videos would look like. I shot it using the Cannon camera, the same microphones we would be using, and incorporated minimal editing and PowerPoint slides. I uploaded the video into the Ensemble media management system for streaming. A secondary purpose for this was to have Karolyn look at the streaming quality in Greece (her home base for the Athens Program) in order to be sure that the system would work well in Europe and the Middle East. It did.

The trip to Cyprus went flawlessly thanks to the expert preparation of Karolyn and the International Programs staff. The trip was, however, exhausting: almost 24 hours door to door. The last leg from Paris to Larnaca, Cyprus was on a fairly shabby Boeing 737 that had seen better days. When the plane landed, the passengers broke into spontaneous applause and sang a short song to a clapping cadence! I wondered whether they were happy to be back in Cyprus or they knew something about the airline that I didn't. Either way, it was my first exposure to Cypriot culture and I liked it.

After an initial learning curve on the first day, the work flow consisted of:

I. Shooting the class videos between 9:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

II. Downloading the data from the camera chips to the computer

III. Editing the videos

IV. Adjusting audio where needed

V. Encoding into a streaming format

VI. Uploading to the Ensemble video streaming server

This process usually resulted in a 12-hour workday with some short breaks to float in the Mediterranean or visit ruins. As you would expect, not all classes were the same, so flexibility was needed to accommodate different teaching styles and formats. I also found I would be drawn into the role of "tech guy" for student presentations that required projection. Each of the days was pretty much the same as far as the work. One thing I did not anticipate was the exhaustion caused by the combination of jet lag and long, hard days. By the fourth day, I remember waking at 7:00 a.m. (actually midnight by my biological clock) and standing in my room a bit confused, wondering what to do next. The act of dressing seemed like a herculean task in the state I was in. In spite of all that, it was a great experience and I hope it added real value to the experience of our students back in Lebanon.

Thoughts on the Cyprus Residency

Constance Rodriguez

Facebook

I created a separate "me" on Facebook so that I didn't mix my personal side with the college side. I did read posts and loved the photos; while I enjoyed reading, I had no idea what to post. Overall, I wasn't comfortable in that forum in a student activity. If I was leading a non-business course, something that involved more interpersonal activities maybe I'd feel differently, but for the marketing course, it just didn't work for me. I think a different forum that focuses on the friendship-building focus of Facebook would be more appropriate.

I also believe that using a service like Moodle for discussions, where we can close out the conversation and users don't need to remember to delete the activities from their groups, would be better for academic use. Facebook is best used as a long-term platform; to get your profile deleted can be a challenge. It's not really meant to be a short-term use vehicle.

What was it Like to Physically Teach to Only a Portion of The Students?

It didn't really feel fair to the students who did not attend in person; they missed the conversation and laughs. While the group size allowed for more participation per student, I think they would have all had a greater benefit and experience if more students had attended. The ability to watch body language, hear the conversation around us and engage with each other was a big advantage for both me and the students.

What Were Your Challenges and How Did You Meet Them?

The No. 1 challenge was time: not having enough of it. Sometimes we had to chase down students at the residency when they failed to show up for the course meeting; that was disappointing. To make the most of the short amount of time allocated to the course meetings, I broke out the most interactive topics into small chunks so that students could get time to talk and share, and I attempted to bring virtual students into the conversation by running a simulation. While I believe that was enjoyed by the students, we never really did get a high level of interaction between the students who attended physically and virtually. If I would do that again, I would have an online "all hands on deck" meeting during the first week of the course.

What Advantages Do You Feel the Students Who Came to the Residency Had?

The No. 1 advantage was that students got to meet other students and faculty face to face. They got to talk together about the topics, but I'm not sure how much they absorbed because the venue was so wonderful (and thus distracting!) for students of their age. I can't say I'd have acted any differently. They came to each session very tired.

What are Your Observations or Reflections on How the Two Groups of Students (Present Versus Virtual) Compared – In Performance, Engagement, Personality, Etc.?

A week or two after the residency, they were the same. It was almost as if the students who attended in person forgot they had been in a class. Could it have been the hotel room versus a classroom? Could it have been they were more focused on fun? The only difference was that these students (those who attended in person) felt more comfortable contacting me and their communications were more detailed and friendly.

What Did You Think of the Videos of the Class? Were They Helpful to the Students Attending Virtually?

It was a great idea to have videos, but I don't think the students outside the session watched them after that week, and I'm not sure the students who attended in person ever watched them. Students who did not attend were supposed to watch the videos so that they didn't miss the content discussions. (Most people did not attend; we had 24 students in this study and only six attended.) Students who did attend could have used the videos for content reviews, although it wasn't really required. My course meetings were early in the morning. Almost every day, students had to be chased down because they overslept and then missed the first part of the session. Those students weren't what I would call "awake," and they could have benefited by reviewing the videos.

Several students said that they didn't have good Internet connections. If this is done again, the need for reliable Internet connectivity should be part of the "advertising" for the residency so that students look forward to the videos and understand the benefit. Also, I'm not sure in-person attendees really understood we were recording, although it was obvious. If we could make five-minute videos, especially if we could create some ahead of time, maybe that would work better?

What Would You Change/ Recommend?

I would:

- add more time in class

- offer classes in a classroom, not a hotel conference room

- require more advanced preparation by students

- hold Skype or webinar sessions the week before to get students excited and to answer questions

- recommend a Monday morning, all hands on deck session to kick-off the residency and commonly ground all students on the rules.

How This Has Impacted Me

A few weeks after we left Cyprus, there was a bombing only two miles away from one of our partner colleges in Tripoli, Lebanon. I contacted someone at the school to see if all was OK. Knowing those students and faculty, knowing that their lives are so impacted by bombs and war – this news becomes much more personal. When I see how Syrians are in refugee camps nearby, I wonder how our students are doing and how the events in Syria impact them. I have followed Lebanese events since 1983, when U.S. Marines were killed in the Beirut Barracks Bombings – wondering how children can grow up in such a violent environment. The events in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt give me more to ponder each day.

Group Activity: "Nature Walk in Troodos"

Lisa Parkins

"Too long, Miss! Too long!" exclaimed one student following the group activity on Day One of the residency – a nature walk in the mountains of Troodos. Certainly, everyone was relieved to be back at the hotel after our half-day road trip to "The Green Heart of Cyprus" (Troodos Tourism Board, 2011). The student had a point. We had estimated that it would take us about an hour to get to Troodos. But traveling by tour bus added an extra hour each way.

Some hours earlier: The tour bus crawls ever upward around hairpin curves along the narrow road. Several times, the driver has to pull over or back up for a car going in the opposite direction. Our program director, Karolyn Andrews, had scouted out the route beforehand, so I figure such driving maneuvers are to be expected, but still! Our destination is the nature trail in the village of Kalopanayiotis. This area is known for its healing sulfur springs, as well as the Monastery of Saint John Lampadistis. Dating back to the 11th century, the monastery is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site, one of 10 Byzantine monuments in the region (Papageorgiou, 2008, p. 5).

My goal was for the group to have a participatory experience of both natural and built- environments by means of an afternoon walk. In my course, Interdisciplinary Arts and the Environment, students learned about artists in different disciplines that make work informed by environmental themes. They had been introduced to "soundwalks," in which participants actively engage in walking, paying close attention to the sonic environment. Students were asked to take a different walk each week in their communities and record their observations. Four out of a total of 21 students made the trip to Cyprus for the residency.

En route to Troodos, I explained to the group that during our walk we should listen as well as observe. I requested that everyone keep silent throughout so as to have a more focused experience. We arrived in Kalopanayiotis and began walking. The mountain air was refreshing. The cobblestone streets, climbing vines and tiled rooftops of the traditional houses were postcard perfect. Karolyn had previously told me that Lebanese people like to talk, and that our students would have a hard time staying silent. She was right – people talked! We headed for the monastery that

Lisa Parkins recording sounds of nature.

features three churches under one roof. Entering through carved wooden doors, the dimly lit frescos dating from the 12th and 16th centuries, together with ancient relics and icons, were dramatic and compelling (Papageorgiou, 2008, p. 5). No photography was allowed in the church, though students did take some pictures. A priest sold souvenirs in the tiny museum shop.

Exiting the monastery, the group walked the trail alongside the river. I recorded ambient sounds on a field recorder with a shotgun microphone: rushing water, the wind in the trees, birdsongs. A few students tried on my headphones and realized how varied and intense the sounds were when miked. After a while, we headed back to the village. The rest of the afternoon was not trouble-free. I walked down an alleyway in search of new sounds. Soon, I turned back only to discover that people were looking for me. Meanwhile, a student had meandered away from the group. Where was she? Finally, the wandering one was found, and we boarded the bus. On the return trip, someone got carsick. What a day!

Students posted their photos and impressions of Troodos on Facebook. I had hoped that John Hughes, our resident media producer, would be able to record our walk to share online with those who did not attend in person. But John, busy with editing and uploading each instructor's daily session, couldn't join us. Video documentation would surely have facilitated a deeper understanding of this

unique activity for the students in Lebanon. Even so, they responded enthusiastically to their classmates' postings.

I've observed that LRP students tend to be religious, and it is likely that the monastery was of particular interest. The walking group, having recovered from our "too long" expedition, expressed their appreciation for the dynamic landscape, the old painted church and the window into village life.

Reflections on the Residency

Victoria Vernon

Fourteen students completed the Technology and the New Global Economy course. Two students did not respond to repeated invitations and failed to start the course. One student participated in the residency. His performance before and shortly after the residency was below average, but improved significantly in the weeks that followed, as the student completed all assignments on time and made up for the lost discussion points early in the term. He finished the course with a final grade of A-, which is above average. Five students received the same or better grades than the residency student, and seven students received lower grades. Overall, it is quite likely that the residency inspired the attending student to step up his performance. However, the sample size is too small for conclusions.

Why did only one of my students decide to come to the residency? Apart from the cost and job considerations, it may be that the content of my course attracted students who were busier and in need of exclusively online options. The course was available for review at the time of registration through a link to the course website, so potential students had an opportunity to check it out.

I designed Technology and the New Global Economy course to be based on online materials such as open educational resources, current news articles, videos

and TED talks. The course format was experimental: we used a private Google Plus community instead of Moodle for discussions. This social media setup worked very well for young students; we had lively discussions with over 40 comments per student throughout the course. All of the students had previous experience with social media, and many already had Google Plus accounts, thus, no technology training was needed for participating in the course. One important advantage of this format is that it is smartphone-friendly, which matters because students in developing countries use smartphones more frequently than they use computers. Most of my students participated enthusiastically in the Facebook group set up by Jeannine; daily residency updates made them feel connected to the rest of us.

Written assignments in this course were designed to connect students to their workplace, family, current news, the community and their professional goals by exploring the economic impact of technology in all of these spheres of life. For example, they interviewed a relative or someone older, shared stories about innovations at their workplace and came up with $100 startup ideas for their own future businesses.

My course was designed to include a rich set of video materials – about an hour of video resources per module – which I thought was enough. That's why I chose not to record additional video or audio lectures beyond my long recorded presentation at the residency. Students overwhelmingly preferred short videos due to the quality of their Internet connections.

Lebanese students are different from our U.S. students. They don't always think like U.S. students do, they grew up in a religiously-divided society, and many of them lived through a war. When I asked a question about life expectancy – "Why do people live longer now than they did in the past? – several students disagreed that people live longer now. I had to bring up statistics and spend some time discussing modern medicine. Also, I learned not to judge based on religiously-charged comments such as: "Technology is the greatest of God's gifts." It's usually better to move on to a different question or come up

with another way to pose the same question, for example, to ask more specifically for a fact or an example instead of an opinion.

The residency was exceptionally well organized thanks to Karolyn's unique program directing skills.

In preparation for the residency, I listened through an introductory audio course on the Arabic language. Guess what? The students laughed at my use of Egyptian words; the Lebanese version is a bit different.

After the residency ended, Lisa Parkins and I extended our educational journey to a day of exploring Nicosia, a city that is divided into Greek and Turkish halves by a simple checkpoint. Past the touristy street, the Turkish side resembled a Third World country, with crumbling buildings and no evidence of public services such as trash removal.

What is "The On-Site Residency Factor"?

Jeannine Mercer

I would say that the one thing the students at the residency got that the others did not was a chance to get to know each other. The residency truly provided an environment of camaraderie. I observed that they worked well as a group and they were so excited to meet each other. We assumed that because they are from the same ESC partner universities in Lebanon that they must have known each other, but was not necessarily the case. The only way they would have known each other is if they were taking a course together at one of these local universities: AUST (American University of Science and Technology) or AUT (American University of Technology). In many ways, as a group, they were able to reassure each other and to reaffirm their academic experience through their shared experiences, insights and frustrations.

I also believe that meeting their instructor in person was a meaningful activity. Unlike communicating online, they could see how tall I was, how I carry myself – walk, talk, and other indicative types of body language that does not transfer online. (Although I do believe the videos by John Hughes helped capture a big aspect of my personality, which I found interesting.) They seemed excited to meet me. So many students wanted to take a photo with me; they made me feel as if I was some sort of celebrity. I did work on my laptop in the hotel lobby in the evenings where the students congregated, and they took advantage of that opportunity to ask me course-related questions. In many ways, I felt as if the manner that I communicate with students online was simply transferred to real life. The questions were similar in scope to those I receive online, but instead of receiving emoticons, I was seeing their actual emotions on their faces – and they were seeing mine. (And considering it was later revealed that this group was online less often than students who did not attend the residency, perhaps this was quite helpful to them.)

It was surprising to observe that many of the students who attended the residency rarely participated in the course discussions throughout the course. This might imply that they tend to be the type who gets separated from the herd in the online environment, and are more in need of a social learning environment. Another finding that emerged was that the residency students performed better on their residency assignments, although it's not a large enough dataset for a thorough comparison. Perhaps the social learning provided by the residency (as opposed to independent online learning) was somehow more effective for them.

There is another topic that we shouldn't forget. The point of this reflection was to determine the added value for those students who attended the residency in

person, if there was such a benefit. Another interesting question that could be considered is, "What conclusions can we draw regarding the learning of those who only attended virtually?"

What's Next?

Karolyn M. Andrews

We all learned a lot from this experiment, and much of what we learned has already helped us improve the residencies we hold in Lebanon during the fall and spring. The recordings and the Facebook group effectively connected the students and instructors, so adding a synchronous visual element seemed the obvious next step. In the fall, we used a Web-based conferencing tool, Zoom, to synchronously connect instructors and students who did not attend in person with those who did. The difference with the summer residency was that in the fall, we had the majority of students present in Lebanon, and the instructors connected from abroad. In the summer 2014 term, we are using Zoom again to connect students who cannot afford (either the money or the time) to travel to Cyprus, with those who can; this will include students from New York, via the course Digital Storytelling, taught by Sheila Aird. The course is open to both New York-based ESC students, and those from the LRP, which we hope proves to be just the first of many collaborative efforts that offer students an opportunity to study abroad, from home.

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Touchpoints: An Approach for Mentoring, Teaching and Learning

Desalyn De-Souza, Central New York Center

Desalyn De-Souza and Central New York colleague, Peggy Lynn, were co-recipients of the 2013 Altes Prize for Exemplary Community Service. Peggy Lynn described some of her work in an essay, "Open to the Creative Process" (All About Mentoring #44). *In this essay, Desalyn De-Souza highlights her experiences in a community-based collaboration project geared toward children and families.*

Onondaga County is the sixth most populous county in upstate New York with a population of over 467,000. One-third of the total county population resides within the city of Syracuse, making it the fourth largest city in upstate New York (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Since 2007, over 6,000 refugees, including 2,000 children, have resettled in the city of Syracuse. Forty-nine percent of children under the age of 18 residing in the city of Syracuse live below the federal poverty level, as compared to 21 percent of children under the age of 18 in Onondaga County (United States Census Bureau, 2010). With a young, racially and ethnically diverse population, significant disparities exist for residents of the city of Syracuse as compared to the rest of Onondaga County.

Although infant mortality rates (infant deaths per 1,000 live births) among the African-American (11.5 percent) and Hispanic (7.8 percent) population residing in the city of Syracuse have greatly improved over the past 20 years, these rates far exceed state (5.1 percent) and national (6.1 percent) rates (Morrow & Shultz, 2013). The rate of self-reported illegal drug use by expectant mothers has increased between the periods of 2007-2009 and 2010-2012 among residents of the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County as a whole. Between 2009 and 2011, the rate for infants testing positive for drugs at birth was 248.3 per

10,000 births in Onondaga County as compared to 72.6 per 10,000 births in New York state (Morrow & Shultz, 2013).

Statistics of this sort have described Onondaga County and the city of Syracuse for decades. In an effort to buffer the effects of such disparities and promote healthy children and families, community stakeholders turned to the "Touchpoints" approach and to the renowned work of Dr. T. Berry Brazelton. In 2000, the Syracuse community was introduced to Touchpoints at a conference hosted locally where Brazelton was the featured speaker. As a practicing pediatrician for over 50 years, Brazelton observed predictable patterns in a child's development that would often evoke parental anxiety and cause parents to appear for an office visit. These predictable patterns revolved around developmental milestones, such as walking or talking, and were accompanied by bursts, pauses and regressions in previously acquired developmental skills. Brazelton viewed these periods of disorganization as "touchpoints": an opportunity for shared learning and connection with parents. By anticipating the next developmental milestone and period of disorganization, he could help parents better understand their child's behavior and support parental competence. Brazelton became a celebrity among parents with his Emmy Award-winning television show, *What Every Baby Knows,* which aired for more than 10 years.

The Touchpoints Approach

Brazelton, professor of pediatrics emeritus at Harvard Medical School, assembled a team of colleagues from Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School and the Harvard Graduate School of Education to develop a framework for teaching practitioners the Touchpoints approach. The Brazelton Touchpoints Center was founded in 1996; today, the center employs a multidisciplinary staff of over 30 individuals

Desalyn De-Souza

and has assisted in the establishment of more than 130 Touchpoints community sites worldwide.

The Touchpoints approach represents a paradigm shift in service delivery from a prescriptive, deficit model that views child development occurring in a linear fashion, to a collaborative, positive model that views child development occurring in a multidimensional fashion. As a child acquires new skills in one area of development (e.g., walking), there are costs to other areas of development (e.g., sleeping, eating). The child who once cuddled, slept through the night and had a predictable appetite, becomes infatuated with being on the move and no longer has the patience to cuddle, sleep or eat. Parents worry, experience vulnerability and self-doubt, and grow increasingly frustrated, unaware that this disorganization is normal and will soon pass once the developmental milestone is achieved. The practitioner utilizing the Touchpoints approach is able to join with

parents, meeting them where they are, to provide support during the period of disorganization and prevent derailment. Patterns of derailment – the inability to regulate disorganization and provide support for the child's natural developmental drive – have the potential to negatively impact the parent-child relationship.

The Touchpoints approach offers practitioners a framework by providing a set of eight guiding principles and six parent assumptions from which to operate. For example, through the guiding principles, practitioners are encouraged to focus on the parent-child relationship, look for opportunities to support parental mastery, and value disorganization and vulnerability as an opportunity. Practitioners also are encouraged to recognize what they bring to the interaction with parents and adopt the following assumptions: all parents have strengths, all parents want to do well by their child, the parent is the expert on his or her child, all parents have something critical to share at each developmental stage, all parents have ambivalent feelings, and parenting is a process built on trial and error. The Touchpoints principles and assumptions serve as tools for practitioners to focus on parents' strengths and foster collaboration. Ultimately, the goals of Touchpoints are threefold: optimal child development, healthy and functional families, and competent and healthy service professionals.

Touchpoints in Syracuse

After seven years of community deliberation, a Touchpoints site was established in Syracuse in 2007 with grant support from the Central New York Community Foundation. Our multidisciplinary team – comprised of five individuals representing the Division of Maternal and Child Health of the Onondaga County Health Department, the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, Success by 6/United Way and Empire State College (I represented the college) – headed to Boston ready to learn the Touchpoints approach. Under the advisement and mentoring of legendary faculty in pediatrics, mental health and education, we were immersed in eight days of intensive training. In small groups, we made site visits to the maternity

floor of Brigham and Women's Hospital to observe interactions with new parents, participated in role plays involving difficult cases, analyzed videos of parent-provider interactions, and taught sections of the curriculum back to the whole group to demonstrate our understanding of the approach. We learned the Touchpoints approach through experience; we applied problem-solving techniques, processing reactions to disagreements and conflict, and sometimes venturing out of our comfort zone. As professionals, our training experience mimicked that of the parent of an infant or toddler working through a period of disorganization.

… all parents have strengths, all parents want to do well by their child, the parent is the expert on his or her child, all parents have something critical to share at each developmental stage, all parents have ambivalent feelings, and parenting is a process built on trial and error.

Within a two year time frame (2007-2009), the newly-minted Syracuse Touchpoints team conducted over 12 trainings for practitioners working in Onondaga County. The Touchpoints training experience is interactive and intensive; sessions are co-facilitated over a three-day period by a minimum of three trainers with small groups of 25-30 participants. In the first year, we concentrated on reaching the entire staff from the Division of Maternal and Child Health of the Onondaga County Health Department, including early intervention

service providers, preschool special education service providers, home visitors, WIC staff, community health workers and all support staff. In year two of the grant, we turned our focus toward child care providers. In total, over 400 individuals providing services to children and families in Onondaga County were trained on the Touchpoints approach.

Follow-up booster sessions, held during the lunch hour, also were offered on a monthly basis. These sessions allowed practitioners time for reflection on practice and to discuss challenging cases, making the Touchpoints approach more than just a training that sits on a shelf.

In 2010, the director of parent education and the parent education program manager from Catholic Charities of Onondaga County completed the training at the Brazelton Touchpoints Center in Boston and joined the Syracuse team. Grant funding from the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York allowed the Syracuse Touchpoints site to expand its service area to professionals working with at-risk children and families. Three hundred practitioners from Catholic Charities programs (who work with children and families in foster care due to abuse and neglect, women with young children who are homeless or housing vulnerable, parents with an identified mental illness who have a child birth to age 5 years old, and children and families receiving services through the Universal Pre-K program) participated in Touchpoints training over the 2010-2012 grant period.

When children and families obtain services across multiple settings from practitioners who speak a "common language," a system of care is realized. "The Touchpoints model is not intended to stand alone as a program, but is designed, rather, to be integrated into ongoing pediatric, early childhood, and family intervention services" (Stadtler, O'Brien, & Hornstein, 1995, p. 28). Communities using the Touchpoints approach have found: improved parent-provider relationships, improved child developmental outcomes, enhanced maternal mental health indicators, improved problem-solving with providers and provider-provider relationships, and enhanced observation and

collaboration with regard to challenging children in care (Brazelton Touchpoints Center, 2014). Ultimately, the goal of the Syracuse Touchpoints team is to infuse the Touchpoints approach within all of the various agencies that serve children and families in Onondaga County. Through the experience of previously established Touchpoints sites, the Brazelton Touchpoints Center has found that saturating a community in the approach is the most effective way to realize practitioners using a "common language" with children and families, thus initiating movement toward a system of care.

Entering its seventh year, the Syracuse Touchpoints collaboration thrives, currently through the work of our now "volunteer" team and support of our agencies/organizations. We are always open to additional grant funding, but we are strategic in choosing grants that move the mission and vision of the collaboration forward. We continue to expand our service area, conduct ongoing training, and develop and refine our mentoring efforts for the cohort of individuals already trained on the approach. Our training team represents eight professionals from six community organizations and collectively, we have infused the Touchpoints approach into early childhood and human services coursework offered at Onondaga Community College, Syracuse University and Empire State College. The contributions that each of

the members of the team bring to this project has had a profound influence on my professional development and has positively impacted my own learning, teaching and mentoring. Through our monthly team meetings and planning sessions, we have the opportunity to reflect on our practice and learn from one another.

Touchpoints as Angragogy

I view the Touchpoints approach, particularly the guiding principles and assumptions, as being closely aligned with the assumptions underlying andragogy. For example, adults are motivated and ready to learn things they need to know for real-life situations; adults bring with them knowledge of previous learning experiences; and adults need to be treated by others as capable learners (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). These assumptions are tools that influence the design and implementation of collaborative educational experiences for adults. Using the "common language" of Touchpoints, adult educators are encouraged to view learning as a process of trial and error, focusing on the learners' strengths; and recognize that adult learners want to do well and have something critical to share, yet often have ambivalent feelings. Valuing disorganization and vulnerability as an opportunity within an adult learning environment can lead toward competence. As an educator with credentials, it's easy to believe that I am

the one with the knowledge to impart, but being mindful of this andragogically-spirited Touchpoints approach forces me to pay attention to how I convey the information and move toward mutual exploration and cooperative learning.

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Working With Challenging Students:
Some Academic and Personal Considerations

David A. Fullard, Metropolitan Center

What follows is a section from a much larger text. The beginning section of the manuscript focuses on the conceptual foundation for this orientation to teaching and learning. The section below (that has been edited from the original) deals with the more practical components of an "academic engagement to foster student retention/completion via multiple teaching modalities" within a group context. The full text is available at http://cml.esc.edu/ publications/aamextras.

As a mentor, I have developed a five-step process where study material is presented to students in an interactive manner. First, an **Overview** of the topic is provided to students, grounding them in the subject matter. Then, a **Critical Thinking Question** provides opportunities for student engagement. Next, what I call the **Lecture-Discussion** occurs, where the material can be examined in a more informal manner with student questions encouraged. At this point, an **Experiential Exercise** involves students emotionally with the topic by engaging one or more of the five senses. And finally, a **Case Study** of real-life examples is presented, again with opportunities for significant discussion. It is my sense that such a model can help all mentors not only respond constructively to the learning needs of the majority of our Empire State College students, but to those by whom we are more directly challenged as a result of their attitudes, educational and general knowledge backgrounds, difficulty in reading and absorbing more complex academic work, and, their overall demanding lives.

An Overview

The initial overview provides a basic introduction to the subject matter so that all students begin with a general knowledge of the topic and can function on a fairly level playing field, operating with the same knowledge and information skill set. Such

an overview is particularly important at a college such as ours, where there are no (or few) prerequisites for individual/study groups, and therefore groups are likely to include some students who have little to no knowledge of the subject matter and other students who have a great deal of knowledge or experience in the same area. I provide a range of source materials at different reading levels and from different media (print, visual, audio, audiovisual), and use popular culture to illustrate concepts and theories so that these ideas become less "cerebral," and entry into discussion is made easier for those students who have less academic experience and weaker critical reading ability (a not infrequent occurrence).

Using Critical Thinking Questions

The second dimension of my approach is to ask the group questions in order to foster critical thinking. This engages the students in the learning process, allowing them to feel safe sharing their thoughts and questions. There are two aspects to the rationale for this teaching element. First, new learning is fostered through the process of group brainstorming. Students have the opportunity to practice active listening themselves as other students ask questions, which may spark ideas of their own. Second, those in the group with more knowledge have an opportunity to share their ideas with those who are newer to the topic at hand. This sharing of knowledge lets students recognize that they can learn from each other, not just from "expert sources," such as the mentor.

For example, I asked students in a study group on juvenile delinquency a number of critical thinking questions, such as: "Why do people start/stop offending? What are the main reasons for offending? What factors encourage/inhibit offending? Is there a learning process involved? A decision-making process?" As the students answered these open-ended questions, I made efforts

David A. Fullard

to connect their ideas to specific findings by experts in the field (and to the vocabulary that such experts use), showing students that their own common knowledge or "street smarts" can give them solid entrée into academic study and, in effect, put them in dialogue with notable figures in the field of study. Such a process also gives students insight into how brainstorming can lead to critical thinking, can provide them with an experience of mastery, and, importantly, shows that this learning can come about in a more direct way than just through reading and research.

In a study group called Psychosocial Aspects of Substance Abuse, one student became visibly excited and directly engaged when presented with the question: "Does a person's social status affect whether or not they are viewed as deviant?" In particular, he was focused on the disparity between sentences for possession of crack and powder cocaine. Because of his own experiences (the student told us that a relative was serving time for crack possession and received a longer sentence

than a friend who was arrested for selling 10 times the amount of powder cocaine), it was clear that this student's engagement was deepened based on the critical thinking question. Such a question provided him with an opportunity to study more complex definitions and source materials, and as a result, he became a more active student in the group, sharing his ideas and research in our discussions, as well as in the essays that he wrote.

The Lecture-Discussion

Analysis of the material covered in the overview is deepened during the interactive lecture-discussion, where mentors can give an informal presentation of the primary topic, while also allowing the opportunity for group discussion. Such an approach allows students to focus on the subject matter and fosters deeper new learning. The important element here is the *interactive* nature of the process, where there is give-and-take between mentor and students, and ample opportunity for student questions and conversation.

This interactive lecture-discussion also is an example of mentors demonstrating *active listening* and Carl Rogers' notion of *unconditional positive regard* for the students in the group setting by encouraging them to ask questions about the material. This fosters an atmosphere where students will feel safe to learn, and provides an opportunity for what might be thought of, again, as Rogers put it, as the students' "actualizing tendency" to manifest. There is ample evidence that students who are engaged in this way and who feel respected and valued develop a more positive attitude toward the learning process and the material being presented; and, they are more likely to stay enrolled in their academic program through to completion. Of course, mentors may engage even further with more challenging students in one-on-one meetings in order to express their unconditional positive regard and empathy and by employing active listening techniques.

As noted above, making a more cerebral concept accessible to a wide range of students is important. Using cultural references that are familiar and easy to decipher is one way to go about this.

Thus, for example, when helping students understand the concept of "Reaction-Formation," even after describing the term and explaining to students that they, themselves, experience defense mechanisms in everyday life, some still lacked the language to describe the concept. We then listened to the Jim Croce song, "Operator," and, via the use of process questions that I presented, we began to analyze what we had heard. By the end of the analysis, the students had an audible "aha" moment as they realized that they did, in fact, understand the concept of "reaction-formation" very clearly.

Here is another example of a way in which students became more compelled to study and more engaged with the materials of the study as a result of this lecture-discussion format. Members of a Metropolitan Center study group on the topic of "deviance" were trying to understand how any behavior can evolve into deviant behavior. On the subject of smoking, my presentation to the group made it clear that smoking was once considered an enjoyable, empowering behavior. I contrasted the mentality and images of earlier, carefree days of smoking with current medical facts and concerns about smoking's lethality and the dangers of secondhand smoke. We looked

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at and discussed several relatable and relevant visual elements (such as vintage advertisements for cigarettes versus modern public service announcements regarding the dangers of lighting up). As in the case of the Croce lyrics, students in this group were offered materials to which they could immediately relate. Their understanding emerged more easily as a result of these concrete examples and the group's enthusiastic discussion of them.

The Experiential Exercise

The experiential exercise provides an opportunity to engage students on another level, possibly using a variety of senses, which can help bolster new learning. There are many types of learners: those who take in data from a text; those who absorb information from visual sources such as photographs or illustrations; those who learn from moving images such as films or animation; those who benefit from listening to audio sources such as recordings or live lectures; those who learn by using their bodies, such as dancers, actors, singers and athletes; those who retain new knowledge by imitation, such as copying work of the mentor or great masters; those who obtain information through rote memorization and so on. Providing an experiential exercise allows different types of learners to become engaged with the material and affects all students in a more immediate and emotional way.

During the portion of a study group on juvenile delinquency where police tactics within the black community were discussed, the students (mostly people of color, some white; some police officers) became particularly engaged. Some even had their own tales of experiencing scary or intimidating interactions with police over the years. Despite efforts to introduce new learning on other issues related to the subject matter, the group was clearly too impassioned to move on. The best course of action at that time was to present a role play, usually used only in a professional training environment. Role play is a technique designed to remove the person from his or her own mindset and have them think as the person whose position or mindset is usually in direct opposition to their own. In this case, the students

who were police officers took on the role of members of the black community, and the civilian students took on the role of officers. Five scenarios were used along a continuum that ranged from low to high threat of personal harm. Each scenario involved police answering the call to deal with "a large, shirtless man in a store, who is sweating, shouting and acting in an extremely bizarre manner."

As they tried on their new roles, there was a perceptible change in the students' thought processes. Their communication, interpersonal skills and mannerisms changed, especially as the personal harm threat level escalated. I felt that all of the students gained a much better understanding of "how the other side thinks" as a result of the role play. If done with care and attention to all of the students involved, this kind of immersive, experiential exercise can result in dramatic outcomes in terms of new perspectives, and a new level of empathy and understanding for the participants.

Real Case Studies

The final part of my approach is to provide students with real-life case studies of current events. Here, knowledge of the subject matter is heightened, and films or role playing may be used to add a vital human element to the topic(s) being studied. The case study is offered as another way to encourage students' engagement with the topic, to help them find ways to apply academic study material to their own lives, and, at the same time, to help them prepare for any academic requirements such as research, a paper or a final examination.

The reason for providing relevant real-life case studies is twofold. One is to help foster a deeper knowledge and felt understanding about the subject matter by letting students see how this topic exists in the world around them. The other is to address such questions as: "Why will this matter in the real world?" or "When am I going to use this knowledge in my life?" When students can see that the subject matter is active in the world around them, that it relates to and influences their day-to-day life experiences, they are far more likely to be engaged and interested in the topic, and to bear up and buckle down to the necessary hard work of researching

and writing. This provides motivation and encouragement to students to keep up with their studies and stay with them to completion.

For example, in a recent study group on juvenile delinquency, I used a real-life case study – and something that has been in the news lately – called the "Knockout Game." For this "game," young people try to knock someone down with one punch, usually an older person. Before even sending out the resource material, I had provided a context for them, describing the subject and asking students a number of questions to think about while reviewing the material. These questions considered why these assaults occurred, their impact on the victim and the victim's family, on the public and on youth in general, whether the student was impacted by this crime, if and how the attackers should be punished and whether the crime could have been prevented. The goal for these studies was to provide a "base level" of understanding, as well as a "running theme" to pursue as the students learned more about juvenile delinquency.

By asking students to think about these questions before even attending the group meeting on the topic, I tried to communicate value and respect for the students' views and opinions. We used a variety of source

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materials, including articles in *Business Insider,* the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* the NJ.com website, *The Wall Street Journal,* a blog at Syracuse.com and a video of a knockout attack. These real-life sources provided a context for the students as they continued their assigned readings in a textbook and wrote answers to essay questions that I provided them on this topic.

In another study group, this one on the topic of women and crime, we focused on the filicide (murdering one's children) as the result of postpartum psychosis. After my introduction to the issues involved, one student became very interested in the causal factors contributing both to a mother's actions and the resulting legal judgment. Her interest prompted the entire study group to delve more deeply into the subject and we explored several case studies regarding filicides, starting with the case of Andrea Yates, who had been found not guilty in the drowning deaths of her five children by reason of insanity (postpartum psychosis).

The details of the case study especially engaged this student by the ways in which it pointed to the importance of diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and its impact on criminal justice, as well as by the ways in which it considered potential opportunities for crime prevention based on responding proactively to advanced signs of a mental disorder. The student became very interested in learning about legal and medical information needed to understand this case study. What was obvious was that a focus on a concrete case encouraged her to gain new experience as a researcher (something new for her) and to improve her study habits and group participation.

Conclusions

This multi-part approach to working with those I call challenging students has yielded very positive results in terms of improving student attitude and engagement and increasing student retention. First, by creating personal engagement through developing, as Donald Winnicott might put it, a "good-enough" working relationship with students, based on proven psychological principles, mentors can gain student trust and encourage them to take a real interest in the subject

matter and the study process. The core principles that inform this relationship include unconditional positive regard, active listening, tolerance and empathic understanding. Employing these approaches can allow mentors to build positive relationships with their challenging students by being available, offering support and referrals, being nonjudgmental, and expressing respect and compassion.

Second, as I have tried to show in the examples here, mentors can build on this relational foundation by utilizing a number of interactive educational approaches to improve students' academic engagement. As earlier described, these include preparing and distributing detailed outlines of each group meeting's content beforehand and by providing a wide range of source material (in various experiential formats), including some with connections to relatable popular culture. Giving ongoing access to all of these materials online also offers students another way into the material. Finally, leading interactive lectures-discussions, providing relevant and interesting real-life case studies,

developing critical thinking questions that demonstrate to students how their own thoughts and ideas may be comparable to studies by experts in the field, and offering experiential exercises and a range of source material to engage students on a more emotional level – all of this together provides multiple entry points for those with different learning styles and varying educational backgrounds.

It is my experience that such a psychologically-based, multimodal approach has led to very positive outcomes in terms of student attitude, retention and completion of degree or certificate programs, even with those who started out as "challenging students" with negative attitudes, poor academic preparation and difficult life situations. The results of this approach – one that we have used in what we call the Black Male Initiative (BMI) at the Metropolitan Center – have been notable (for more information, please visit http://www.esc.edu/metropolitan-new-york/bmi/). Indeed, a number of students who might not otherwise have

completed their academic program have going on to earn their degrees and to serve as role models for those subsequently joining the BMI group. Students in these study groups have improved engagement, more positive attitudes toward academic work and shown persistence to remain enrolled through graduation, surpassing statistics for black college students in general. It is my hope that by working with other mentors in the basics of this approach, the reach of this assistance can be broadened to engage students from all backgrounds who might otherwise not be able to complete their studies.

Without doubt, results are dependent on having mentors and professionals available to work with our students. As mentors build trusting relationships with students, they need to be able to make referrals to support services such as student advisors, tutors, reading and writing coaches and learning facilitators, especially for those students with more serious academic deficits. The quality and availability of these services will directly affect student outcomes.

A Mathematical Journey – Experiencing Open Learning

Betty Hurley-Dasgupta, Center for Distance Learning

The world of open educational resources (OERs) is evolving quickly, moving from disjointed learning objects to full courses and programs. Repositories of OERs now exist, as do sites that offer full programs built on OERs, such as Saylor.org. A persistent challenge is finding effective ways to credential learning gained from the use of these abundant resources.

A few years ago, Empire State College joined OERu, an international network of partner institutions working together to provide accessible higher education through open resources and reasonably-priced credentialing (http://oeruniversitas.org/oeru-partners/). Through this organization, partners work to develop OER resources as well as cooperate in a credentialing model.

As part of that membership, each institution was asked to propose a course based fully on OERs. The ESC course proposed and accepted (through a review process in OERu) was Mathematical Journey. This course was developed for the adult learner, who may well have been away from formal education for many years and needs a gentle reintroduction to an academic approach to quantitative reasoning.

The course is built in WikiEducator (http://wikieducator.org/Mathematical_Journey), an open space for educators to develop and share educational resources in a wiki format using the model of Wikipedia. As an open resource, it can be used in whatever way makes sense to the learner.

These are the "aims" (learning outcomes) identified in the course guide:

"By the end of this journey, learners should be able to demonstrate their ability to do the following:

1. To use algebraic **tools** such as equation solving and graphing

2. To identify **assumptions** made in developing a mathematical solution and, from that, some possible limitations of a proposed solution

3. To articulate a problem in mathematical terms and identify a **model** for solution that includes the use of equations and graphs

4. To be able to **articulate** the why and how for methods used and to use terminology correctly, such as the following: variable, function, equation, linear, quadratic, line graph

5. To use error-checking strategies in order to **validate** the appropriateness of a solution

6. To have improved skills of **self-assessment** that will help identify next areas for improvement"

Several components are included in the course. Learners begin with a self-assessment using questions generated through the Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org). The Khan Academy is an effective resource since it includes the option to name a coach. The coach can be any person the user identifies; to be someone's coach, the user need only enter the coach's username. If the student is taking our course for Empire State College credit, the *instructor* is the designated coach. The coach can see work completed (to the level of how much time was taken to respond and what hints were given) and can therefore provide assistance, as if leaning over the student's shoulder.

After completing the self-assessment and getting feedback from the coach, as well as completing some tutorials on using a spreadsheet, the learner is ready to complete a series of worksheets to help develop basic algebraic skills. The worksheets include critical thinking questions that the learner

Betty Hurley-Dasgupta

places in a journal that is accessible to the coach. These were primarily developed by Susan Fall as part of her Empire State College master's degree project. These responses also become part of the application for a credential. Once these essential skills are mastered (using Khan Academy to assess that mastery), the learner completed the study with a final project.

The course is currently available for credit through the Empire State College's LOI (Learning Opportunities Inventory). Susan Fall has been the instructor (and, therefore, also coach) since fall 2013 after completing her degree. It has not yet moved over as an OERu course – more work is needed to move the worksheets from Mahara over to WikiEducator pages. Since the worksheets need to be put in LaTeX (a document preparation system), this is taking time. Alison Snieckus, a volunteer with WikiEducator and math educator, has been helping with this part of the project.

This placement of worksheets fully into WikiEducator should be completed by August.

Over 20 students have completed the course so far. The ability to customize their work has been a great benefit and students also have benefited from the journaling. The projects, based on students' "authentic problems," have been far-reaching, from planning for retirement to exploring climate change.

Anyone is welcome to use these materials. Please send feedback to Betty.Hurley-Dasgupta@esc.edu.

"The postsecondary learning of the future will and should differ markedly from that of today in content and meaning, in timing and accessibility to learners, in systems through which instructional services are delivered, in the balance between experiential learning and information processing, and in the ways it is combined with other interests and activities of life. Not, I think, that we will perceive radical discontinuities as these changes come about, but the signs of need for these transitions are already present in current learning systems."

– Morris T. Keeton (1917-2014)
"Credentials for the Learning Society"
In M. T. Keeton & Associates (Eds.), Experiential Learning: Rationale, Characteristics, and Assessment
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976, p. 5

Essays Before a *Syrtos*,[1] Part I

Eric L. Ball, Center for Distance Learning

"How far is anyone justified, be he an authority or a layman, in expressing or trying to express in terms of music (in sounds, if you like) the value of anything, material, moral, intellectual, or spiritual, which is usually expressed in terms other than music?"

> – *Charles Ives,* Essays Before a Sonata *(1920)*

Overture: Over*turn*! (*Turn*! *Turn*!)

"Harmony was invented as a conspiracy to sell pianos."

> – *Adrian, in the film,* Untitled *(2009)*

It is the best of times and worst of times. Life is good and life sucks. The more things change the more they stay the same. More people are free with equal rights, and more people have been freed so they can be equally exploited by the system.

Pete Seeger whispers in my ear. I nod and come out with three new rhymes[2] to emphasize my agreement:

Some music helps us cope with strife, some serves as a distraction,

Some music helps us understand, some spurs us into action.

Music can help us bear our woes, or briefly live without 'em,

Or figure out what's causing them, or do something about 'em.

There's music helps us to survive, there's music gives us solace,

There's music helps us learn to dance our way toward freedom's promise.

As someone frequently moved to make music, I often catch myself wondering how any contemporary musical practice might relish the incredible freedom unleashed by the advent of modern market relations

(by "voluntary" exchange) without also playing right into the hands of the massive repression-oppression supported by the particular *form* these market relations happen to take under capitalism.

It is quite a conundrum.

"Hey, musician, what might you play?"

The musician responds cheerfully: "I can play *anything! This* is freedom!"

The musician responds dismayed: "I can't play anything. Anything I play can serves as an accomplice to the system. Besides, to 'play *anything'* in this historical moment is to go along tacitly with the spirit of *'Anything goes; it's all good!'* and *'Live; don't fret so much about* letting *live!'* – which also helps to keep this system going." (The soundtrack is playing everywhere … *don't worry* … and you can't shut it off … *be happy.* …)

Music, and perhaps art in general, has never been so free *and* paralyzed.

Some musicians see only the freedom. Some see only the complicity. Some repress the unprecedented freedom and descend into paralysis. Some repress the unspeakable complicity and when they want to sing out, they sing out. Some oscillate wildly from one view to the other and end up medicated, or they self-medicate, and – especially if they happen to be a capital success – often end up dead way before their time.

Others – perhaps through luck or grace – seem to find a middle way.

Still others, like me, are trying hard to find one.

What have I figured out so far about a middle way? First of all, this: Play anything, provided you are putting your playing into a critical perspective – which may, of course, affect what your "anything" ends up becoming. There's never any way to know for sure if what you did was too complicit,

Eric Ball making a fingernail fiddle *(lyra).*

so don't sweat it. But there are many ways to interrogate your complicity, so you'd better sweat it after all. Sweat the process, but not so much the outcome. Worry; be happy. Don't worry; don't be happy.

Be the *pursuit* of happiness.
Be *not* the American *dream.*
Be American *tradition.*
Tradition?

Something else I may have figured out: A middle way seems to involve certain paradoxes or impasses – which is to say that it connects with concepts that could prove useful at this historical juncture even though their conditions of possibility are at once their conditions of impossibility.[3] *Tradition* might be one of these impasse-concepts. Another might be that of *passionate devotion to doing a good job for its own sake.*

The so-called archangel of Crete, Nikos Xylouris, sings out exuberantly the words of leftist Greek poet Yannis Ritsos, "[…] we don't sing, my brother, to stand out from the world; we sing to bring the world *together!"*

I admit that I can get as swept up by his performance as much as the next guy.

We are the world! We *are* the world! We are *the* world! We are the *world!*

And I do think that the moment of history has arrived when it is not only conceivable that we should extend our moral consideration and allegiance to all of humanity, but also that growing numbers of people on every continent desire to make this a priority.

But we don't know how.

Besides, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

No, I think I'll skip the hell-bound parade of the brotherhood of man. Instead I'll look to this or that tradition to which some part of me already belongs. I'll look cautiously, though, because the only traditions I could even consider relishing are those that tend to be as suspicious of tradition as they are respectful of it. If some traditions lead to a middle way, it must be because, on the one hand, they provide a grounding (let's call it *belonging)* that helps us cope with or resist the more unsettling aspects of capitalism (such as the accelerating imposition of diffuse unsettledness and insecurity) but, on the other hand, they do so without taking themselves *too* seriously – they do so without degenerating into reactionary nostalgia, without promoting blind allegiance to the past and without thinking that the boundaries of belonging are never negotiable.

Seeger plays a banjo, taps his foot, skips to his lou and coaxes us to join in, always with a smile that is a welcome incarnate. *Maybe* he's trying to bring the whole world together so we can get on with that misguided parade of the brotherhood of man. But I don't think so. I think he's really just trying to remind us that any one of us can break out into song, or join in on a song (singing or clapping or dancing or whatever), even if the system has conditioned many of us not to.

I am trying to be American tradition trying to be Cretan tradition. I am trying to be Cretan tradition trying to be American tradition.

Whatever …

I draw a bow decisively across the string of a Cretan *lyra* and see what it feels like when sound moves the essence of wood through my core.

For the time being, my goal seems clear: Become a competent musical artist engaged primarily with Cretan musical tradition. Or – Zeus willing – become a competent artist of the Cretan *lyra*.

(What an American thing to say!)

Roads-Modes (*Δρόμοι*[4])

Ever since I completed my food-related creative nonfiction[5] and returned briefly to Crete for the first time since my self-imposed exile from that island back in the late 1990s, my primary learning objective – when it comes to my so-called scholarly activity – has been *to become a competent musical artist engaged primarily with Cretan tradition, maybe even a competent artist of the Cretan* lyra. But what do I mean by this? It seems only right that if I'm always asking students (as academic apprentices) to articulate in detail their learning objectives, that I ought to ask myself (the academic mentor) to do the same thing. Explaining and re-explaining what I mean by this learning goal is something that continues to occur as an integral part of the process of pursuing it. And, much as I take a student's detailed and well-reasoned articulation of a learning goal (in a rationale essay, say, or in a plan for a project in a study) to be an important part of what constitutes that student's learning as academic, so too should my unpacking here yield tangible fragments of evidence that, whatever else it might be, my purpose is indeed a scholarly one.

Considering that my official publication record is comprised primarily of academic studies of the creativity (mostly literary and/or musical) of *others,* it seems fitting to start with a short digression to contextualize my larger trajectory of creative versus [social] scientific production over the years. Prior to the work of my Ph.D. dissertation about cultural production in Crete, I was participating in it: I not only hung out with amateur and professional Cretan musicians, I myself was learning to play, and even performed publicly on a few occasions; I not only collected the *mantinades* (the predominant form of everyday-life poetry

and singing in Crete) of local improvisers, but was writing *mantinades* of my own, several of which were eagerly published, along with my creative nonfiction essays, by a newspaper in Irakleio. This ultimately culminated in my coming out (in Crete) with a collection of "poetry" or "lyrics" in a version of Cretan dialect, together with brief philosophical essays on aesthetics and ethics that attempted to situate my writing in relation to the lively local discourse on what it means to "be" Cretan.

On philosophical grounds, I have long relished the distinction between the scientific and the artistic, and the distinction between the humanities and the social sciences, while finding fallacious any analysis that treats either pair, implicitly or explicitly, as an actual dichotomy. So, when I made the move in graduate school from primarily a participant *in* these artistic activities to primarily an analyst *of* them, it felt no more eventful than when I cross the border to Vermont at Whitehall, New York. As I see it, the artistic and the scientific, the humanities and the social sciences, are but moments – however distinctive in their methods and emphases – in the process of inquiry into human conditions.[6]

It's felt little different for me to re-cross that border in recent years back toward the more creative side of things. This began with my food-related writing – a project that I had initially conceived of as rather [social] scientific but kept beckoning me more toward more artistic modes of inquiry and expression, and ultimately developed into something I hoped also could be read as yet another conscious blurring of such boundaries. Having returned to the Cretan music tradition as my primary object of interest, I am focused on the artistic as much or more than ever.

I have stated that my purpose, in its most distilled form, is *to become a competent musical artist engaged primarily with Cretan tradition, maybe even a competent artist of the Cretan* lyra. But the use of words like *competent, artist* and *tradition* raises many questions. And so, to take a metaphor from the world of mathematics, this first approximation description of my purpose is just that – but a first approximation of an *infinite* series. And so now I will add a

few more terms to the series by starting to consider what might be signified by words like *competence, tradition* and *artist* in the context of my stated objective.

Competence

"Our Otherness was not an ineffable essence, but rather the sum of different historical experiences. Different webs of signification separated us, but these webs were now at least partially intertwined. But a dialogue was only possible when we recognized our differences, when we remained critically loyal to the symbols which our traditions had given us. By so doing, we began a process of change."

— *Paul Rabinow,* Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco *(1977)*

I have chosen the word *competence* as a double entendre.

On the one hand, I mean to imply that I have neither the talent nor enough time (given my "late" start) to aim for something as ambitious as mastery. I just want to become good enough so as not to make a fool of myself. *Competence* is meant to suggest a compromise between ambitious and modest achievement in terms of actual skill and musicianship. I suppose another way to say this might be as follows: I'll aim for mastery, but I'll be grateful if I can achieve competence.

I might add here that when I was living in Crete, I was a maybe-just-barely-competent but nowhere-near-masterful artist of Cretan mandolin in the context of everyday life gatherings. Masterful amateur *mantinada* composers and I would do what was expected, sometimes achieving *kefi* (a particular experience of deeply sociable high spirits) and ecstasy as a result. But rather than try to recover those skills and build on that base, I've mostly sworn off mandolins with their immovable frets. Instead, I've returned to the much more difficult (for me anyway) and far more important (for Crete anyway) *lyra*, an instrument that I have recently baptized in English as the *fingernail fiddle*.[7] In Crete, the fingernail fiddle reigns – along with, and in (sometimes unfriendly) competition with, the violin fiddle – at the top of local musical instrument hierarchies.

Two fingernail fiddles *(lyras)* and a bow made by Eric Ball.

On the other hand, *competence* is a key concept in sociolinguistics and social theory, which relativizes ability to social context.[8] So, by using the word *competent,* I also intend to draw attention to the ways that quality and achievement (and measures of such) are articulated by Cretan music musicians, critics and aficionados, and to the fact that these are always contested, negotiated and changing. In doing so, I mean to subject myself *to* various expectations, concerns and critical criteria of the world of Cretan music. I also mean to recognize the potential of my music to participate in *negotiations* of those criteria – though, by the same logic, this also means recognizing the potential for my music to be completely ignored, irrelevant, and for all intents and purposes nonexistent, especially as Cretan music per se.

It occurs to me that perhaps except for the most rugged individualist who cares not one iota for his or her relationship to *any* particular artistic tradition, many artists deal with these issues all the time, though maybe without all the extra fuss that I'm making. However, the fact that I wasn't born in Crete, am not of Cretan descent, am no longer connected to Crete through kinship (marriage), and no longer even live there sets me up in so many ways as an outsider to the tradition in question – a musical tradition most frequently conceptualized in terms of

such categories as geography and genetics – that in my case, the fuss is quite necessary. Except, of course, when my Cretan friends, colleagues or acquaintances recognize in me whatever they take to be Cretan-ness, and treat me as an insider – as "one of ours" – and grant me the many privileges and responsibilities that tend to accompany such recognition.

It might seem naive, if not downright arrogant or a matter of trying to commit cultural imperialism, for someone (a U.S. citizen, no less) who is in many ways an outsider to be so preoccupied with *negotiating* what counts as competence in Cretan music tradition. This negotiation happens whether or not it is intended, as it does when any person – insider or outsider – participates in any tradition. But what happened to the guy who, while living in Crete, declared in writing that he was happy to leave it up to Cretans to judge whether his writings in a quasi-Cretan dialect were to be considered Cretan or mere perversions of the Cretan? He's mostly still here: I have so much respect – not to mention awe – for the accomplishments made by so many artists of Cretan music that, on the whole, the last thing I'm interested in doing is making a point of challenging the tradition or innovating for the sake of innovation, or pretending that I know better in some really important way than do Cretans who participate in this tradition.

But I stop short of a *slavish* bowing down to even the most widely acknowledged masters for at least two reasons, reasons that I believe both resonate and are in tension with one another. First, I firmly believe that the artistic process should involve – to be something more than mere creative production – a dedication to being honest with and about oneself. I don't mean to say that art somehow requires an honest expression of one's true self, for this assumes there is a true or authentic, unitary self (and there may only be fragmentary selves inconceivable apart from their constitution by contradictory socio-historical processes), and it assumes expression itself (which, in the wake of poststructuralist theory, ought not be taken for granted). Nor do I mean to say that such honesty is ever achieved. Nor that what constitutes honesty is objective. Nor that honesty can be objectively

determined or measured. Nor that any measure of said honesty corresponds to the quality of the artistic product. Rather, I mean it as a statement about process, not outcome; about intentions, not achievement. Were I knowingly to adhere (in theory, but more importantly in my actual musical practice) to any articulation or sense of what *competence* means in Cretan music *merely* because it comes from a particular group of insiders, and in spite of the fact that it rubs me wrong for reasons (often stemming from my academic training) that I think I can explain – I would consider myself inappropriately disingenuous, dishonest.

Second, it's difficult for me to imagine any widespread Cretan notion of competence – not only in relation to Cretan music, but in terms of Cretan *anything,* even just "being a Cretan" – advocating consciously for a *slavish* bowing down to anything or anyone. Rebellion and revolution are frequently central to Cretan senses of collective self-recognition. Respect? Sure. Servility? Hardly. And in this spirit, it's about time that more Cretan professional musicians rebelled against the aestheticization (not to mention commercialization) of rebelliousness that is arguably occurring at the expense of the freedom-oriented truth, beauty and justice that rebellion and revolution are ostensibly valued for. All this is reason enough for me to reject outright any notion of subjecting myself to insider criteria of competence in Cretan music unless it is a "subjection" that explicitly acknowledges negotiation.

Although I haven't heard anyone else make this claim, my experiences with Cretan musicians (amateur, professional, in between or both), and my knowledge of contemporary Cretan and Greek culture in general, suggest that something that seems generally acceptable for artists in the U.S. is relatively rare, possibly even taboo, for artists in Crete: an inability or a reluctance to share significant reflections about one's own artistic practice. Indeed, one might even put forth the hypothesis that in the Cretan musical context, criticism and the arts have been only weakly functionally differentiated,[9] compartmentalized and turned into separate specializations. At any rate, my sense is that, as much as it is considered a sign of general social or civic incompetence (at least for males) to *not*

be able to discuss in detail and to debate certain historical topics or the political issues of the day (even with strangers), it would be considered a sign of artistic incompetence for an artist of Cretan music not to be able to talk in significant detail about his or her (so far, usually *his*) music, and to offer detailed interpretive and critical remarks about Cretan music in general.

And so here is where I end up rubbed the wrong way. (In many cases, I mean this with a very small *w* on the word *wrong.)* For reasons that I have discussed in some of my [social] scientific papers on Crete, and scholars in Modern Greek Studies have explained in detail for varied contexts, such interpretive and critical reflections in Crete are frequently influenced by – and they make creative use of – the ideas, categories and terminology of a range of influential modern intellectual and academic discourses, including those of romantic nationalism, folklore studies and a whole slew of aesthetic theories that have held sway here and there since at least the Enlightenment. And then here I am as an actual professional academic, versed in various discourses, terminology and theories that have, for better or worse, problematized, re-contextualized and sometimes rejected outright those ideas that, so far anyway, seem to be widespread among the nonacademic general public.

Because of this, it is all too easy for me to agree with almost every note a particular musician plays but to disagree (at least at some level) with almost every word he says about what he plays. And to disagree with his interpretive remarks or critical assertions about Cretan music in general, insofar as these are expressed in relation to certain foundational assumptions about genetics, the organic evolution of culture, geographical determinism, gender stereotypes, consumer capitalist notions of freedom-as-choice, possessive individualism, stereotypes about regions or nations, universal aesthetics and so forth. Or, to put it another way: In order to find a point of agreement with that Cretan musician's remarks, I have to read between the lines and read a lot *into* what he says in order to find what I think he is trying to get at using the discursive resources he has at his disposal – resources that he himself might

very well recognize are incapable of putting into words the meanings he wishes to convey, at least not without resorting to, or treating them as, poetry. Then, yeah, sure, I might agree with what he says.

Of course, just because I happen to be in the know when it comes to this or that discourse that, in (at least) North American academia, has supplanted another that continues to live and breathe outside academia, doesn't automatically make my interpretation of the music better. Obviously I do think it's better (but not merely because my knowledge is more "current") or I would just go with another interpretation! I, too, am interpreting as best I can with the resources that I have at *my* disposal. Hopefully I have better resources; hopefully my interpretation is better. But even if it is not, my point here is that I have to be honest with myself in the process – which means not ignoring the interpretive resources that I have at my disposal and I think are most relevant and true – and doing so even when this means negotiating or challenging what many insiders take to be most relevant and true.

And, in the meantime, it should be clear that I *do* share with many insiders the apparent assumption that a competent artist of Cretan music should be able and willing to articulate well-reasoned reflections about the musical tradition and to articulate his or her views on the subject.

Now, lest I give the impression that this is all just academic – in the pejorative sense; too far removed, say, from competence in terms of actually playing an instrument – let me mention one small example that illustrates how it may be relevant even when it comes to playing a single note!

Those familiar with classical violin know well the importance of correct intonation (making sure that you put your finger in the right place so you get the correct pitch – the exact note, plus or minus vibrato – to sound). Those familiar with the history of the Western art musical tradition and the science of music (acoustics and such) also know that the definition of *correct* or *exact* here is somewhat relative, and that where the notes are expected to fall has changed throughout history, and continues to vary in particular ways even today. That being

said, the 12-tone equal temperament (the way a piano is usually tuned) has long been the consensus. Even where there are plenty of deviations (e.g., bent notes, the guitarist with equal-tempered frets who re-tunes depending on what key the song is in, fretless string instruments), such deviations are frequently imperceptible *as* deviations to most listeners, even to many of the performers themselves. It is probably fair to say that *the contestedness of what constitutes an E-flat* would be taken as a rarefied topic for most (Western) musicians today. In Crete, and to varying extents around Greece, the subject may not exactly be a matter of everyday gossip – and it wouldn't normally be described in these terms – but relatively speaking, it is far less esoteric. The contestedness of the E-flat, as it were, comes up even among the general, non-musician public. And it's certainly on the minds of more than a few performers of Greek music.

Why? For one thing, many Greek musical traditions have connections with Byzantine musical traditions – Eastern music, in the sense that Byzantium was the Eastern Roman Empire. Byzantine music is theorized differently than is Western music and uses an entirely different notation, and many of its notes fall in different places (relative to one another) than in equal-tempered, or nearly equal-tempered, Western music. And, through the Greek Orthodox church – since more than 95 percent of Greeks are Orthodox, and Orthodox church services in Greece (including weddings, funerals and baptisms) are chanted in Byzantine music – it continues to exist in a daily way for Greeks even today. There may have been interactions between Greek folk musical traditions and Byzantine Greek music in earlier periods of history. Thus, for example, between any residual effects of such historical connections and whatever contemporary influence there might be from regular exposure to correct intonation as defined in sacred music, contemporary Greeks are regularly exposed not only to the equal-tempered pianos of a symphony orchestra and the fretted electric guitars of pop and rock, but also to this other system of defining where notes should fall.

In fact, it is even more complicated, which is unsurprising given the long history of Byzantium and subsequent conquests (e.g., Arab, Venetian, Ottoman) prior to the formation of the Modern Greek state. Although music historians have limited available evidence to enable tracing exactly who influenced whom, when and how, it is clear that the folk musical traditions of various regions of contemporary Greece, and other popular musical genres that have roots in one or more of them, have intonation habits that may involve connections with multiple non-West-European traditions (borrowings or re-borrowings – e.g., Byzantines influencing Ottoman classical music, Ottoman classical music influencing the folk music of Asia Minor Greeks, Asia Minor Greek refugees affecting the music of other Greeks upon arriving in the Greek State after the Asia Minor Catastrophe), all of which locate notes, and theorize scales, differently than Western European music.

To be sure, in modern times, and outside the church, modern Western musical conventions have gained significant ground in Greece, especially in terms of teaching (secular) music – even when it comes to teaching Greek folk and popular musical traditions. But the many violins and *lyras* (and movable frets of certain lute-family instruments – a disappearing if not extinct phenomenon), not to mention the human voice, can still be heard to follow, to varying extents, one or more indigenous conventions for defining correct intonation, and therefore sound out of tune or off key to some Western ears unaccustomed to them.

Given all this, the question of where particular notes should fall has not been settled to quite the same extent that it has been in much Western music. And, importantly, many Greeks are cognizant, at least in a general way, that this is the case. For instance, many Greeks will still be quick to point out that Byzantine music has more notes than Western music. (This is, of course, from a musicologist's perspective, an oversimplification at best.[10]) And, interpretations of intonation, for better or worse, are often connected to issues that seem to resonate with public discussions and debate over national and other cultural identities. For example, singing Greek folk songs with Western

intonation can be interpreted as *incorrect* because it devalues native tradition through Western cultural imperialism. As I lurk in online forums of Greek musicians who work in the *rebetika* tradition (sometimes glossed as *urban Greek blues*[11]), I find that nowadays some participants are quick to connect theories about scales and modes to the *maqam* and *taksim* of Arabic and Turkish music. In some cases, there also is a move to take this at face value and relish it in a sort of cosmopolitan, multiculturalist spirit (possibly with hints of satisfaction that all these traditions are *not* the tradition of Western hegemony). In other cases, there might be a move to highlight that the Greek modes are as Greek as, or more Greek than, they are anything else, and need not be thought of as particularly Arabic or Turkish simply because the modes happened to be called by Arabic or Turkish names – names likely brought by Greek refugees from Smyrna (Izmir). On the other hand, for other Greeks, singing the same songs with*out* Western intonation can be viewed as primitive (because this is how uneducated peasants sing, not those who have studied

> *But the many violins and* lyras … *not to mention the human voice, can still be heard to follow, to varying extents, one or more indigenous conventions for defining correct intonation, and therefore sound out of tune or off key to some Western ears unaccustomed to them.*

music in proper modern schools that teach Western music) or they can be viewed as impure (because it sounds Turkish or oriental) and such Anatolian elements ought to be purged in favor of the Western evolution that began in ancient Greece, and

which Greeks themselves were temporarily derailed from because of, say, the Ottoman Empire. Such views in fact correspond with points of view that have been, or are, held by various Greeks for more than a century, and are the musical analogues of modern debates in other areas of the arts, literature and even cooking.

Such observations also apply to Crete, where they play out in particular ways. For example, when the Swiss ethnomusicologist Samuel Baud-Bovy traveled to Crete documenting and recording music among the island's rural inhabitants in the 1950s[12] – and putting forth in his writings devolutionary interpretations that disparaged *any* noticeable modern Western influences on the local music – he did so using Western notation (that's what he knew), but he supplemented it with additional markings to indicate where certain notes fell slightly higher or lower than the conventional Western notes. Similar intonation can be heard today, to varying extents, in the singing and playing (on the non-fretted instruments that dominate) in Cretan music today. Also, the intonation sometimes seems to vary by region, though the extent to which the general public understands this is an open question. For example, I have seen user comments on YouTube videos disparaging Psarantonis (perhaps the most famous living artist of Cretan music) for his poor intonation, when my sense is that his intonation is right on in terms of what I've heard from other people singing and playing from the same region, especially people of his generation. On the other hand, a professional teacher of Cretan music I know emphasizes to his students a more pluralistic view: In one of my discussions with him (as he was demonstrating to me various techniques that I might want to learn), he pointed out how the two *lyra* players who are widely considered to have been *the* unrivalled virtuosi of the instrument each played the note "Fa" (note his use of Western music theory terminology) in different places (i.e., at different pitches relative to other notes in a mode or scale), and that *both* were correct and good to do so. Then we have the recent release (2011) and broadly positive public reception of a CD box set by a schoolteacher from Eastern

Crete – something of a rising star these days on the Cretan music scene – Dimitris Sgouros's *Tunes and Songs of Crete 1860-1910 from the Archives of Pavlos Vlastos.* Sgouros has studied Byzantine music/chanting, and he recorded (singing and playing *lyra)* these songs by working from transcriptions in *Byzantine* notation done by a Greek folklorist in the 19th century. Given his training, Sgouros presumably performed them with correct Byzantine, or Byzantine-influenced, intonation, and he has been interpreted as having done so on, for example, Greek public television.

In short, not only is the question of where to play a given note an open question in Cretan music today, every choice of where to play that note is inescapably connected with possible interpretations of correct or incorrect intonation that, implicitly or explicitly, connect to various sets of interpretive and critical assumptions having to do with a variety of influential and competing perspectives on the importance (or not) of Greece-as-Western, Greece-as-Byzantine, Crete-as-Greek, Crete-as-global-crossroads, Cretan-music-as-rural, Cretan-music-as-modern and so forth. My own competence in this regard will undoubtedly be a function of how I hear what I choose to listen to. (Given that I didn't grow up with it, it isn't clear that I'll ever hear it the way those who did grow up with it hear it.) But I think it would be naive to claim that this process just happens independent of all this other baggage. Consciously and unconsciously, I will be caught in the

> *Consciously and unconsciously, I will be caught in the middle of these issues in deciding where to play a given note, and I (or my fingers) will need to make judgments about how to play them.*

middle of these issues in deciding where to play a given note, and I (or my fingers) will need to make judgments about how to play them. How competently I play an E-flat, as it were, will be not only a matter of technical skill (does my finger land where it should?) but one of figuring out where an E-flat should go (in the melody in question), balancing my deference to tradition and to those whom I consider the masters with my refusal to subscribe to any evidently ideological equation ("this E-flat is Byzantine and therefore more authentically Cretan and therefore essentially superior to that E-flat").

So much, at least for the time being, for trying to unpack my use of the word *competent.*

In Part 2 of this writing, to follow in the next issue, I will turn my attention to trying to unpack two other key terms in my stated learning objective: *tradition* and *artist.*

Notes

[1] (Cretan) *syrtos:* a dance and the associated musical form.

[2] I call them *nightrhymes,* my own neologism for a certain kind of stylized rhyming couplet – by analogy with the Modern Greek *mantinada,* probably from the Venetian *matinada:* a song of the early morning (read: very late-night) hours.

[3] Impasse – *aporia* – in *Modern* Greek also means *wonder[ment].*

[4] *Dromos* is Greek not only for road, but also for "mode" in the sense of scales in music theory (e.g., the Aeolian mode, the harmonic minor scale).

[5] I am referring to my book, *Sustained by Eating, Consumed by Eating Right: Reflections, Rhymes, Rants, and Recipes* (State University of New York Press), which came out in 2013.

[6] Conditions formerly known as "the human condition."

[7] Because it's easier than trying to explain how to pronounce *lyra* or how to spell it, and then to explain why it's spelled differently (in English, not in Greek) and pronounced differently (in

English, not in Greek) than the ancient Greek *lyre,* and then to explain how the ancient Greek λύρα is a different instrument than the modern Greek λύρα, and then to note how the degree of their difference depends on what kind of classification scheme for musical instruments you buy into. (Indeed, I recently came across a remarkable photo from some country or another, probably Estonia, of a folk instrument that looks like the perfect cross of a *lyre,* a *lyra* and a violin.)

[8] Having mentioned the "r" word, I should I should note that it's not only the concept of ability that isn't

a given – contexts are not givens either, and are themselves constituted as such, and so also fraught with the very socio-historical processes and discourses that are in question. One corollary of this is that otherwise useful insider/outsider and *emic/etic* distinctions cause trouble when they are invoked dichotomously in order to advance particular arguments about ways of knowing or about various social science methodologies.

[9] Sociology jargon.

[10] Even *equal-*tempered music that is tempered at a finer level of gradation, like Ives's quarter-tone piano works, slightly complicates such assessments.

[11] See, for example: Holst, G. (1975). *Road to Rembetika: Music of a Greek sub-culture, songs of love, sorrow, and hashish.* Athens: Denise Harvey and Company.

[12] A good deal of this research has been recently disseminated in: Baudy-Bovy, S. (2006). *Μουσική Καταγραφή στην Κρήτη 1953-1954 [Musical Recording in Crete 1953-1954].* Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies & Musical Folkloric Archive of Melpo Merlie.

"How can the extinguished light be lit again so that teachers and learners can appear before one another and show, in speech and action, who they are and what they can do?"

– *Maxine Greene (1917 - 2014)*
Releasing the Imagination:
Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995, p. 44

Tears Over Ukraine

Victoria Vernon, Metropolitan Center

"Oh star! Star! – and tears fall.
Have you already risen in Ukraine yet?"

– Taras Shevchenko, Ukrainian poet
"Sontse zakhodyt', hory chorniiut'" (1847)

Once upon a time, almost a century ago, a new country was put together from western outskirts of the Russian Empire and swatches of land chopped from Poland, Lithuania and Hungary. It was named "Ukraine" after a part of its territory already known by this name. Ukraine did not get a chance to experience peaceful independence before it became one of the first Soviet republics. The new country increased its territory after World War II at the expense of portions of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, and later added the Crimean peninsula, a gift from Russia.

The population of western Ukraine remained more rural than in the east, and spoke Ukrainian. Eastern and southern areas of Ukraine were more urbane and spoke mostly Russian. About every fourth citizen of the country considered Russian their first language. The ideological split between the east and the west was not limited to language. Anarchist and nationalist movements blossomed in the west a century ago, and continued through WWII when some Ukrainian nationalists sided with the Nazis in the hope the Nazis would liberate them from Stalin's regime. Ukrainians had strong reasons to hate the regime: Stalin's collectivization of agriculture impoverished formerly wealthy peasants, Soviet food policies caused the devastating famine of the early 1930s, many families were broken apart and sent to Siberian exile as "enemies of the people" during the great purges of the late 1930s, and the Russian language was forced into the schools. On the other hand, nationalists killed their own people in the name of liberating Ukraine, and were traitors in the eyes of the rest of the country. The pro-Russian east never forgave the west

for siding with the enemy; tensions remained for over half a century, and are brought up today as easterners still call westerners "Bandera men" after their WWII leader, Stepan Bandera.

Comparable in population to Spain, Ukraine was the most prosperous republic of the Soviet Union. Its fertile black soil produced one-quarter of all of the grains, milk, meats and vegetables of the Soviet Union. Its total output was four times larger than the output of any other republic except Russia. This included a well-diversified mix of industries such as coal, food processing, heavy machinery, airplanes, and high-tech equipment. My favorite "hidden jewels" of the Ukrainian construction are the stunningly beautiful subway systems built during the Soviet times. On the following page is a picture of a subway station in Kharkiv, a city the size of Philadelphia, the city where I grew up.

My parents came to Kharkiv, the Russian-speaking "capital" city in eastern Ukraine, in 1970 from small villages in neighboring

Victoria Vernon

Russia to study electrical engineering. Engineering was the most desirable occupation in the 1970s – the skill most needed for a rapidly industrializing country. There was no monetary gain in engineering

Ethno-linguistic map of Ukraine

Ethnic Ukrainians
Mostly Ukrainian-speaking
Predominantly Ukrainian-speaking
Mostly Russian-speaking
Predominantly Russian-speaking
Rusyns (Carpathian Ukrainians)
Ethnic Russians
Ethnic Russian majority
Significant ethnic Russian population
Other ethnic minorities
Romanians / Moldovans
Hungarians
Bulgarians
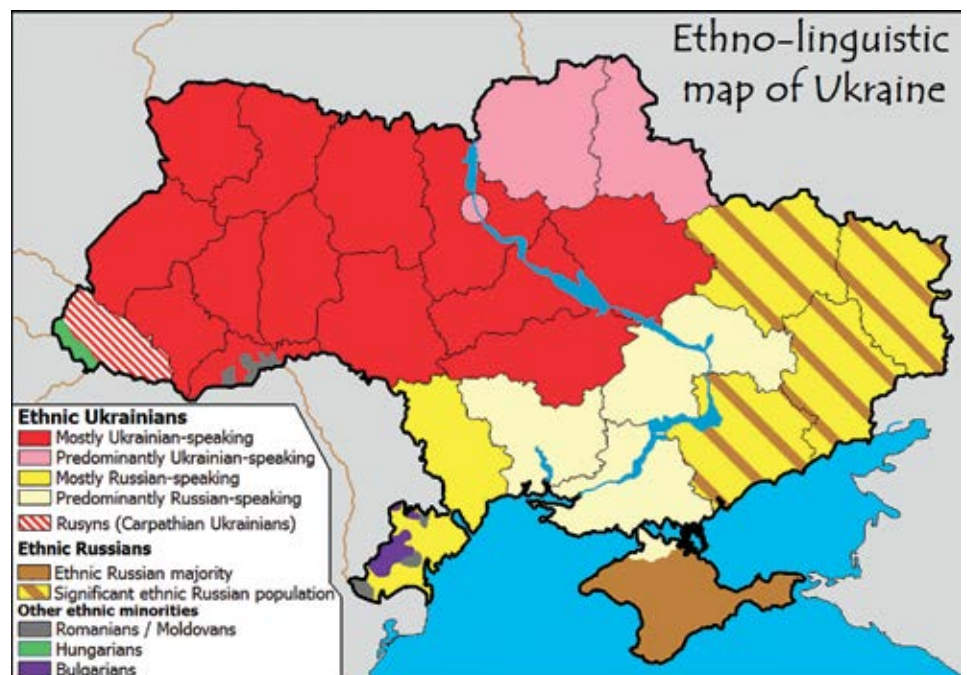
Kharkiv subway station.

because these jobs were in the state sector where wages were determined by a grid. Yet my parents wanted to contribute to building a better society and helping the country to win the Cold War. (They wanted to witness the world revolution, eventually, but that's a different story.) The government provided them a two-bedroom apartment in a block of flats; this is where my sister and I were raised. We had a very happy childhood with music, gymnastics and dance lessons, outdoor games, summer camps, frequent family trips to our grandmas' and cousins' houses, occasional summers in Crimea, school travel club trips to the Carpathian Mountains and hiking in the Caucasus. There also were annual rituals of planting potatoes in grandma's garden and canning fruit for the winter, as well as daily rituals of standing in line to get bread, milk and other basic necessities. Like everyone else in the Soviet Union, my parents were amazingly creative with the few material possessions they owned. Dad could repair any device and make any item of furniture. Mom could sew anything from scratch, a summer dress or a winter coat, and could make a luxury meal out of cabbage. Their disposable income was so small that they had to save all year to buy a pair of winter boots for someone in the family. Despite a lack of footwear, I was an enthusiastic kid and I also tried to build a better society. In middle school, I was repeatedly elected to be a leader of the "Young Pioneers" (a Soviet youth organization) from among 500 kids, until I got to seventh grade and realized that some of the slogans didn't make sense to me.

I left leadership, and planned to become a doctor to cure individuals. Then turbulent times came and I started to wonder what it would take to cure the whole economy.

The Soviet Union fell apart in 1991. This happened not because President Reagan brought it down, but because the economy could no longer function efficiently. In a collectivist Soviet-type economy such as this one was, compensation was not tied to results or even effort, so there were no incentives to work hard. Entrepreneurship and private property were not allowed and innovation was not encouraged, and thus products and services were of inferior quality. Resources – factories, land, energy and labor – were not cared for and were often wasted because market signals like prices and profits did not exist. In addition, central planning – down to every nail and button – became increasingly difficult as new products emerged, creating persistent shortages. Maintaining the bureaucracy, intelligence services and massive defense spending took their toll on the economy. By 1980, people's basic needs for food, housing and education had been satisfied, which meant that the population no longer needed the income insurance role of the totalitarian centrally-planned state. Thus, the Soviet Union had outlived its usefulness, became inefficient and then fell apart.

A national referendum was held in Ukraine in late 1991. Most citizens voted for the country's independence from the Soviet Union, and a new popular president was elected. The president and others in the government were all former high-level communist officials. They had many good ideas but lacked experience in the economics of transition. Transition from central planning to a market economy is a tricky process. It involves privatization of state property, letting go of price controls, making

sure that new higher prices don't throw the majority of the population into poverty, while simultaneously maintaining law and order. Transition also involves creating from scratch the institutions that constitute the backbone of a market economy: private property rights, taxes, bankruptcy laws, competition and an independent judiciary.

During the first eight years after independence, things went downhill for the majority of Ukrainians. The new government financed its spending by printing money, which resulted in prices doubling every day, and most families losing their hard-earned lifetime savings due to this hyperinflation. State property was privatized unequally. A group of oligarchs emerged who controlled the commanding heights. Energy was no longer subsidized by Russia. Newly privatized and state enterprises lost access to easy credit that had been available in the Soviet Union; many shut down. The country's total output fell by a half while the informal economy and the black market grew. Without access to credit, enterprises were deprived of money and most wages were paid only with huge delays. During that time, patients paid doctors in jam, eggs, chocolates and chickens. Many manufacturers paid workers wages in their factory's output, which employees had to then sell in the market – clothes makers got shirts, tire makers got tires, factory workers got what they produced. The department of electrical engineering at the State Polytechnic University where my mom taught engineering contracted with a local collective farm to weed and pick the carrots and cabbages in exchange for taking some of the produce home. I saw a lot of professors working in the fields for food.

During the early years of the transition, I was a student in the economic cybernetics department (now named the department of mathematical economics) of Kharkov State University. All college education was still free of charge. My class was the first cohort who did not study the history of the Communist Party, but we also were the last cohort who did not study proper economics. It was not until I attended graduate school in the U.S. that I learned basic supply and demand. At that time, new small firms were sprouting like mushrooms. Along with many of my peers, I worked

part time as an accountant for one of these startups. My salary of $15 per month was higher than my mother's teaching salary in the state sector. This tiny amount of money was enough to finance weekly get-togethers with my classmates and outdoor adventures with guitars, songs and wine in Crimea. I won a scholarship to study in the U.S. and left Ukraine in 1995 while my friends and family continued to struggle. Their struggles included securing a steady source of income, losing their money to pyramid schemes and living in a country without modern laws. My mom had an additional struggle of her own when Ukrainian became the official language and she was required to teach her classes in Ukrainian, a language neither she nor most of her students spoke.

Since gaining independence, Ukraine has had four democratic presidential elections. One of these elections, in 2004, sparked enough protests against possibly rigged results that it led to a re-vote. The protests were named the Orange Revolution. One leader after another would come into office and then fail to implement reforms. By 2013, the economies of many other former Soviet republics had doubled and tripled in size since the start of the transition, while the total production in Ukraine had increased by a meager 44 percent, with very little improvement in the standard of living for most citizens. Today, the average income in Ukraine is $7,400, less than one-half of Mexico $15,600 or Russia $18,100, and a fraction of the EU $34,500 and the U.S. $52,500.

The once-richest Soviet republic was barely able to pay for Russian natural gas and oil while billions of dollars of taxpayer monies were being diverted for the private gain of corrupt political oligarchs. The fourth democratically-elected president, Viktor Yanukovich, continued the divisive political struggles within the upper echelons while the oligarchs and his own family gained control over more assets.

Last year, the government of Ukraine negotiated a potential agreement with the EU. Ukraine was to become a candidate to join the EU, which would open up the prospect for Ukrainian citizens to get EU visas and gain access to the EU job market. The country would receive EU subsidies and the large EU market would open up for Ukrainian products. The promise sounded really attractive for desperate citizens. The problem was that it was entirely unrealistic, deceptive and misleading. Even if Ukraine were to become an EU candidate, how could it meet the criteria of EU membership and how could it reorient its trade westward given the lack of transparency in public accounting, the largely debt- and loan-based economy, and the uncompetitive products? It would take a miracle for positive economic reforms to take root in Ukraine within a decade. And, even if partial reforms could be implemented, Ukraine would still end up in debt and in an economic depression, such as what Greece has experienced. A deal with Russia, on the other hand, would offer natural gas subsidies but no euro passports and no hopes of reforms to overcome rampant corruption and achieve significant economic growth. The west gave Ukraine an ultimatum – side with the EU or side with Russia – and pressured Ukraine to make this choice, knowing how much discontent either outcome would create.

Last November, the Ukrainian government decided to postpone the signing of the Ukraine-EU deal and sign, instead, a cooperation deal with Russia. Unhappy citizens protested on the main square in Kiev, the "Maidan." This rally grew and turned into an uprising that attracted 500,000 people from all walks of life, all of whom wanted to see Ukraine in the EU and were fed up with inequality and ineffective government. Peaceful sentiments turned violent; for almost three months, protesters burned tires and threw Molotov cocktails at the police. Over 100 people lost their lives on Maidan, and many hundreds were beaten, burned and hurt. Three months of the standoff resulted in destroyed roads and sidewalks, broken windows, damaged buildings, lost productivity, interrupted transportation, closed universities and unavailable government services. The Ukrainian president fled to Russia, and an interim government was appointed. This was, indeed, a revolution.

While Maidan was a populist movement, many people believe that anti-Russian sentiments were instigated by Western powers as a part of their geo-political conflict with Russia. Victoria Nuland (2013), the U.S. State Department's point person to Ukraine, said the U.S. had "invested" $5 billion over the past 21 years in Ukraine-related affairs through the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy. That translates to about $1 million every work day, a nontrivial amount. Why would a country of 44 million residents with no nuclear weapons deserve so much attention from the U.S. foreign policymakers? To understand this, forget for a moment

Independence Square, Kiev. Rally for EU integration, 01 December 2013.

that we live today in the age of Twitter, globalization and commercial space travel, and think back to the Cold War, the West versus Russia, the two empires scared of each other, pointing missiles in each other's direction, dividing their spheres of influence and occasionally acting as occupiers. By courting Ukraine to join the EU, and thereafter NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), the West could place military bases "inches" away from Russia. Russia already found it threatening enough that the American anti-ballistic missile system is located in Poland; Russians think it is directed at them, and not at Iran. Thus, the actions of the EU in trying to draw in Ukraine were unacceptable to Russia. In response, Russian President Vladimir Putin made his geo-political move to annex Crimea, in violation of Russia's promise to guarantee Ukraine's borders in exchange for Ukraine having surrendered its nuclear weapons.

Since the start of the Maidan protests, the population of Ukraine has split into three distinct groups:

1) Nationalists or "Right Sector": They represent 10 percent of the population and call for a sovereign Ukraine, particularly western Ukraine, no matter what happens to Ukraine's eastern parts. Some right-wing nationalists proclaim "Ukraine for Ukrainians" and advocate exclusive use of the Ukrainian language. The interim government elected by Maidan represents this group. The pro-Russian side calls them neo-fascists and claims extremist parties like theirs would be banned in Europe.

2) Pro-Russian separatists: They represent 10 percent of the population from the Russian speaking south and east of the country. They rally for eastern Ukraine to become a part of Russia.

3) Non-extremists: This is the vast majority of the population, 80 percent; they speak or at least respect both languages and they want to preserve the territorial integrity of the country. Some favor introducing a federal system of government with more independence for regional authorities.

My family and friends lie within the last two groups. Like me, many speak Russian with a Ukrainian accent and speak Ukrainian with a Russian accent. Ukraine is their home and they don't want to be a formal part of Russia for various reasons: Russia is not a democracy, it does not allow civil liberties such as freedom of speech, and besides, why would you overthrow one autocrat just to pledge allegiance to another next door? Most of these people want the conflict and violence to end so they can continue on with their lives and resume their work in peace. I have cousins in eastern Ukraine who attend pro-Russia rallies and are trying to find ways to get Russian citizenship. I also have relatives in western Ukraine who speak Ukrainian and even participated in Maidan; they believe in Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and stand against corruption.

Ukraine is falling apart. Current events resemble a small-scale civil war. Dozens of lives were lost in Odessa when pro-Russian supporters were burned to death in this Russian-speaking, sunny city. Hennadiy Kernes, the mayor of my hometown, Khavkiv, was shot and wounded for taking sides in this game. Several unarmed people were shot by the nationalist military during the referendum for independence of eastern regions. Molotov cocktails are being used on a daily basis to resolve arguments.

Who is to blame? Some blame President Yanukovich for stealing money and selling the government to the highest bidders. Others blame local oligarchs for financing either side of the conflict for their own gain. Some blame the West for orchestrating the overthrow of the pro-Russian government and using Ukraine as a pawn in a geo-political game against Russia. One can blame Putin for fueling "anti-Maidan" moods throughout eastern Ukraine in the name of protecting Russian speakers. His annexation of Crimea turned Ukraine's politics toward nationalism as Ukraine lost an important piece of territory. One can blame the Ukrainian Right Sector for their hatred of other ethnic groups in the name of patriotism. A conspiracy theory blames the

"Military-Industrial Complex" on both sides for wishing to instigate a conflict and make more money on a new war.

I am sure neither side is clean. We can add human cruelty and indifference to this list. The experiences of the past few months, when compared to 50 years of peace with repression of dissent, shows that differences in opinions can be managed with a set of laws and institutions. When these institutions stop functioning, cruelty wakes up and can make brothers kill brothers with the silent consent of bystanders who don't even stop to interfere.

In the meantime, since the start of the unrest, the Ukrainian currency has depreciated against the dollar, the prices of imported goods have increased, the price for Russian gas has increased; the country's economy is going downhill and people are becoming poorer. Ukraine has lost its friendly relationship with Russia and is begging for subsidies from the West. A new president has recently been elected, and once again, there is a chance for true reform.

My tears are for Ukrainians who were hurt in this ridiculous disagreement. All of these issues can be resolved by talking, not fighting. My tears are for Crimea, my favorite part of Ukraine, now lost forever. My tears are for Ukraine. The country is on the brink of a civil war and may have passed the point of no return in terms of remaining in one piece. In the best case scenario, the country will remain united but several regions will gain significant autonomy. In the worst case, it will split in two: western and eastern Ukraine. The possible outcomes include Russia attempting to annex eastern Ukraine, and the rest of the world interfering in order to prevent that. Whatever happens, I hope the issues remain internal to Ukraine and that the rest of the world won't feel the need to escalate the conflict. We don't need another world war.

Reference

Nuland, N. (2013, December 13). *Ukraine in Washington 2013.* Address by Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland, U.S.-Ukraine Foundation, Washington, DC.

Found Things
Community and Human Services Manual: A Guide for Mentors and Students **(1976)**

*I*t was after 01 September 1975 that all newly enrolled Empire State College students were expected to complete between 4 and 8 credits of educational planning as part of their degree requirements. Prior to that time, students and mentors engaged in such planning, but the work existed outside the context of any credit-bearing activity. So after 1975, in addition to educational planning generating revenue for the college (which also meant that the credits for which students enrolled could be covered by financial aid), the planning process itself was given legitimate academic space in a student's ESC experience and in a mentor's workload.

In part as a response to this call for educational planning to carry academic weight, various area of study groups began to develop resources that might be

of value to both students and mentors in the educational planning process. Written in the spirit of "suggestions" rather than "prescriptions," these materials provided a fuller introduction to an area of study than the more limited "area of study guidelines" could offer.

Included here are excerpts from the "Community and Human Services Manual: A Guide for Mentors and Students" written by mentors Rhoda Miller (Lower Hudson Unit [soon after to become the Hudson Valley Center]), Pearl Mindell (Albany Learning Center [to become the Northeast Center) and Evelyn Wells (Long Island Center [and later, at International Programs]). The 40-page manual was published in October 1976. The text is divided into five main areas: Personal Development, Interdisciplinary Components,

Professional Development, Field Instruction and Additional Learning Resources. Each area includes a statement of "competencies," key "questions," as well as "contract areas, approaches and modes of learning."

We hope that the excerpts included here will provide a useful glimpse into this effort to guide students into an area of study, and to offer students and mentors little leads into deeper discussions about a student's developing degree program plan.

Thanks to Bob Carey for mentioning this document, Richard Bonnabeau for retrieving it, and to Richard and to Susan Oaks for discussions about the history and the value of this part of our mentoring work. Thanks, too, to Terri Hilton for helping us to present this document in All About Mentoring.

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COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES MANUAL
A Guide for Mentors and Students

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

The purpose of the <u>Manual</u> is to provide a practical guide for mentors and students. It is not meant to be prescriptive, but rather to be suggestive of the many facets of the Community and Human Services area. It is also not meant to be thought of as a complete document, but rather as an on-going process that is open, flexible, and responsive to the changes occurring in the field. It presents the underlying academic disciplines and knowledge base and skills needed by students who are in or who wish to enter the helping professions.

To this end the <u>Manual</u> is divided into three sections: Personal Development, Interdisciplinary Components, and Professional Development. These areas are not necessarily to be thought of as separate and discrete. They certainly can and should integrate the didactic with the experiential depending on the interest of the student and the degree program.

As the <u>Manual</u> is meant to be as helpful as possible, it has been constructed to include not only competencies but also learning activities. Thus, the <u>Manual</u> is developed in each section in the following categorical way. <u>Competencies</u> are listed first. They, in the first two sections (Personal Development and Interdisciplinary Components), represent learning in their most generalized form. The last section, Professional Development, refers to more specific learning. In all cases, Competencies are to be conceived of as significant and appropriate cognitive and affective objectives to be seriously considered by the student in the development of the degree program. The next category, <u>Areas of Study</u>, describes and discusses the various topics, with their descriptions, that can be studied to fulfill the Competencies. Questions are designed to serve as beginning points of learning. <u>Contract Areas</u>, <u>Approaches and Modes of Learning</u> follow the questions. This part offers <u>Suggested Learning Activities</u>, and <u>Resources</u> that can be used by the student and mentor to develop contracts and degree programs. It is hoped that these suggestions will be used as is and/or used as a catalyst for the student's further development and study. It needs to be realized that some of the <u>Suggested Learning Activities</u> are complete in themselves while others are partial ideas requiring further development. It is suggested that the student and mentor take an eclectic approach to the <u>Manual</u> using ideas from one or more sections to build substantive contracts according to the student's needs and interests.

Because of the extensiveness and scope of the learning involved in Community and Human Services, it was not always possible to annotate and directly integrate the resources with the <u>Suggested Learning Activities</u>. It is intended that the <u>Manual</u> will be seen and utilized as an on-going process to be updated and supplemented by the users.

The idea for this <u>Manual</u> originated with mentors and students who were questioning what components made up a Community and Human Services degree program. At our Community and Human Services area of study meetings, mentors

realized that any guide compiled would have to take into account the broad range of learnings and skills needed by human service professionals, as well as the individual program of Empire State College. At different times during the development of the Manual, it was shared with mentors in the Community and Human Services area and mentors in allied disciplines. Their suggestions were incorporated into the Manual where possible.

Finally, we wish to thank all the people who have helped and supported the development of the Manual. We are particularly indebted to Jean Davis, Jim Feeney, Bob Seidel, Jane Shipton, Lois Lamdin, Alan Mandell, Lois Muzio, and Carolyn Jenkins for their contributions. Bob Pasciullo and John Jacobson gave us the necessary support and encouragement. We also wish to thank Professors Shirley Jones and Frances Brisbane, SUNY at Stony Brook School of Social Welfare for their critique of the Professional Development Section.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The personal development of a human service worker involves focusing on the entire life process as it specifically relates to self. It includes an exploration of one's attitudes, perceptions, and feelings.

Competencies:

--Recognizing and understanding of one's strengths, weaknesses
   and motivations.

--Ability to identify personal values and attitudes.

Areas of Study: Personal Development

A. Self-development and awareness

   Students examine methods of self-exploration, i.e., analysis, psychological theories, esoteric traditions, Eastern approaches to fulfillment and enlightenment, and body and sensory awareness.

B. Socialization: Effect of Primary and Secondary Groups on
                   Individual Development

   This topic enables students to identify and understand the social and cultural forces that influence personal development. This understanding involves familiarity with basic concepts, language, skills, and ways of looking at the world, allowing the individual to see and understand his/her personal environment.

Questions:

    --How do I know who I am?

    --How do I see myself?

    --How do others see me?

    --How do I see myself in relation to others?

    --Is my "inner self" different from and/or in conflict with the
      way I present myself to the world; how and in what ways?

    --In what ways can self-actualization be facilitated; what are
      the risks and unanticipated consequences?

    --How much of "me" has been influenced and shaped by "the
      others" in my life and by my social and cultural environment?

    --What are the values and/or attitudes that have shaped and
      that are still influencing my decisions and direction?

INTERDISCIPLINARY COMPONENTS

        The competencies in this area reflect a variety of scholarly
perspectives in terms of factual content. Philosophies, theories, and
research studies are examined and analyzed for their implications for
individuals and groups to understand how they relate on past, present and
future societies.

Competencies:

    --Understanding of biological, psychological and social
      differences and commonalities of individuals and groups.

    --Understanding of the cultural, economic and political
      influences on individuals and groups.

    --The ability to interrelate the interdisciplinary components
      in a developmental pattern.

Psycho-Social Development

Interaction with others in such a way as to promote the development and unfolding of their potential.

Areas of Study: I. Human Growth and Development

A. General Psychological Studies

This is a study of the major topics generally explored in the field of psychology from a number of potential perspectives. Historical and philosophical beliefs, research, testing, measurements, and current roles that psychologists play are included. Stages of life (pre-natal, infancy, childhood, adolescence, middle years, and laters [sic] years) are also an important aspect of this topic.

The inter-relationship between heredity and environment is explored. Aspects of learning include the learning processes, intelligence, cognition, motivation, sexuality and personality and their integration in the developmental process of the individual.

B. Personality

Students examine major personality theories which include the psychoanalytical, behaviorist, and humanistic. Freud, Jung, Adler, Erikson, Fromm, Sullivan, Rogers, Maslow, Skinner, Laing, Dollard, Miller, Hilgard and Bandura are major theorists associated with this area of study.

C. Abnormality and Treatment

The historical and developmental modes by which criteria for distinguishing normal from abnormal behavior was established are analyzed. The basis of disorders, classifications and their descriptive characteristics, and the therapeutic approaches are included. Biological impairment, individual personal factors, and sociological conditions are an integral part of abnormality and treatment.

D. Social Psychology

This area studies the effects of one or more people on the behavior of an individual. It examines the formal and informal rules that pattern people's interaction with one another including social norms, status roles, and stereotypes. It further explores attitudes and attitude change, social influence, and group dynamics.

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Questions:

    --How do the psychological and physiological growth processes
      interrelate?  What are the implications when growth occurs?

    --What behavioral patterns and expectations are considered
      normal during the various stages of life?

    --What is normal and deviant behavior?  Who defines normality
      for whom?  What are the various areas (law, mental health,
      education) in which behaviors are defined?  How have concepts
      and definitions of normality changed over time?

    --Compare and contrast the major theorists in their perception
      and conception of the developmental process.  How does this
      relate to differing conceptions of normality and pathology?

    --How are treatment modalities determined?  What is your opinion
      of their effectiveness and why?

    --What have been the effects of the popularization of psycho-
      logical theories on everyday living and on people's concepts
      of themselves?

    --What is the relationship between therapeutic services and
      the civil rights of an individual or group?
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CULTURAL COMPONENTS

This area develops and questions the idea that learned behavior patterns are expressed in various ways depending upon the particular social and historical world in which an individual lives. These patterns are subject to gradual but continuous modification by succeeding generations.

Areas of Study II: Perspectives on Social Order

A. Concepts of Sociology

Students examine the societal processes and the discovery of the social order and structure of society. They study group structures and the ways they affect political, psychological and economic relationships.

B. Fundamentals of Social and Cultural Anthropology

This is the comparative analysis of the principles of social structures among a variety of societies. It develops the nature of cultures and their various customs, values and beliefs.

C. Cultural Forms

   Students study the variety of cultural formations and their significance within American society. Included are the areas of sports, literature, film, art, and music. Their connection to the mores and values of American society in a particular historical period are analyzed.

D. The Family

   Students analyze the family with its socially prescribed patterns of behavior and its socially endorsed values. Past, present and changing functions of the family are studied as well as the relationship between the family and society and between the family and its individual members. Attention is given to the family's relationship to other societal institutions and changes in the place and meaning of the family within the context of society as a whole.

E. Education

   This area examines the formal educational system in American society. It analyzes the function of transmitting culture, the selecting and teaching of social roles, social integration, and innovation.

F. Law

   Law as an institution of social control is examined. The implications of the legal processes and the court system for diverse socio-economic populations are analyzed. Included is the relationship of law and social change and its corresponding complex issues.

G. Religion

   The foundations and elements of religion and its changing structures and functions are studied. This study emphasizes the ways in which socio-cultural processes affect and are influenced by religious belief systems and organizations. The fall of organized religion and the rise of experiential alternative forms are important parts of this area.

H. Economy

   This area develops the economic organization of American society and its relationship and implications to/for social policy. It studies the effectiveness of the economic system and how well it serves the social values and objectives of this society.

I. Social Stratification

   The major dimensions of social stratification, power, prestige, and wealth, are examined with respect to their relationship to inequality, status and life styles, social mobility, class and society.

J. Social Order and Disorder

   This is a comparative approach focusing on the interplay between various forces within a society that promote or deter order or disorder. This includes the study of social theory and structure. The nature of social

change and control is analyzed through examination of formal and informal structures, such as governments and social movements.

Questions:

   --How has modern society affected the structure of family life?

   --How does social status assist or hinder an individual's opportunity
      for mobility? How does this process shape an individual's life?

   --How do attitudes and values concerning war, sex, work,
      school and marriage differ from generation to generation?
      What are the social factors that facilitate these changes?

   --How do different cultures influence norms, values, and roles?
      How do these factors influence an individual's experience in
      the social world?

   --What are the advantages and disadvantages of social control?
      What are the means by which social control is exercised in
      different societies? How do people, "individuals and groups,"
      come to recognize the forms of social controls in their lives?

   --How has the function/role of the family changed its meaning
      in contemporary life?

   --What is meant by the economics of poverty?

   --Why does man need law? Can you imagine a society without law?

   --What is the purpose of education? Is it to provide social
      harmony, religious edification, character-building?

   --Who educates a generation of children? How much does the
      family, school, mass media, community, etc., contribute
      towards the education of the child? What kind of sanctions
      are brought to bear in this educational process?

   --What is meant by formal and informal government?

   --Why have American notions of government developed? How
      have the foundations of government changed in America?

Areas of Study III: American Social History

A. Survey of American History

   This study is aimed at the development of a body of knowledge of past events, involving human affairs, that have shaped American society and culture and that will allow a person to place present development within a long-term context.

B. Society and Political Thought

    The dominant political and social ideologies, past and present, that have influenced American society and the traditions of other ideological movements that have sought to question and change these dominant ideologies (such as socialism, communism, etc.) are examined.

C. The Making of an American Community
      Its Traditions and Changes

    This area examines the bases of American communities. Industrialization and its supportive economic structure resulting in extensive technological development and immigration are analyzed and studied. Social, economic, and political problems stemming from the urbanization process are scrutinized as well as its effects on rural and suburban communities. Areas such as urbanization and the rise of cities, nineteenth-century and present-day communal movements, and the movement to the suburbs are included.

D. Minority and Ethnic Groups

    Focus in these areas is placed on the analytic, moral and strategic questions which relate to the place of minority and ethnic groups in American society. The historical development, special problems of adjustment and assimilation, and the present-day problems and trends should be included in a study. Rendered to analysis are the processes of dehumanization, prejudice and discrimination.

E. Social Problems and Social Movements

    Poverty and its multiple manifestations are analyzed through such areas as housing, health, employment, and education. The social movements that developed as a response to these problems and their ability to affect and influence same are studied. Labor unions, Civil Rights, the Women's and Peace Movements are examples.

Questions:

   --Why have most American ethnic groups gone through phases
     where there is a strong social movement for separatism,
     e.g., the recurrence of black nationalism?

   --What kinds of experiences have ethnic groups undergone
     in America? What forces have made their acceptance in
     this country difficult? What have been the consequences
     of these experiences?

   --What are the values and cultural forms of various ethnic
     groups which have existed as alternatives to the traditional
     forms of American culture? What are the ways that they have
     been manifested in our culture?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The professionalization of the human service worker includes clarification and development of ethical, ideological concerns and issues in the field as well as the skills and knowledge needed by most professionals in the helping services.

Competencies:

--Knowledge and awareness of human service ethics and values.

--Understanding of the range of roles and responsibilities in a particular human service (i.e., health care) and knowledge of the particular job within the field (i.e., nurse or health aide).

--Understanding of the meaning of professionalism and continuing to learn and grow within the profession.

Areas of Study I: General Topics

A. Principles and Ideology of the Human Services Profession

This area explores the major ethical and ideological issues facing the human services, i.e., causality and perception of problems, confidentiality, racism, client participation, advocacy, and manipulation. Implicit is the need to study the structure and organization of the institution/agency and its inherent relationship and effects in shaping the roles and functions of the service worker.

B. Philosophical and Historical Concepts of Social Welfare and Public Policy

Social welfare refers to the full range of organized activities of voluntary and largely public agencies that seek to prevent, mitigate, or alter conditions responsible for the causes and symptoms of social problems within our society. Focus is on the concepts and historical development of social welfare necessary to comprehend current philosophy, legislation, social policy, and service delivery.

Questions:

   --What does it mean to be a professional?

   --What are the qualities of an effective helping person?

   --How has "blaming the victim" become implicit in the philosophy
     and implementation of social policy, legislation, and practice?

   --In what way is the health care system in the United States
     illustrative of the "band-aid" approach?

   --What is advocacy; how does it relate to the consumer, the
     agency as a provider of service, and to social change?

   --What is the distinction between manipulating the client on
     behalf of the system and manipulating the system on behalf
     of the client?

   --What is overt and covert racism and how does it relate to
     availability, organization, and delivery of service?

   --What is the role and responsibility of the worker as a
     change agent; what possibilities, limitations, and risks
     are involved?

   --How does a worker deal with the following syndromes: frustration,
     lack of agency support, client apathy, powerlessness, and
     psychological and emotional fatigue?

   --Should social welfare be a right or a privilege of every
     individual in our society?

Competencies:
  Communication

   --Ability to listen and hear the expressed and underlying
     messages within verbal and non-verbal communications.

   --Ability to acknowledge, decode, and clarify messages in a
     non-judgmental way.

   --Ability to clearly record, organize, and communicate material
     in a written form.

   --Ability to express oneself clearly in verbal communications.

Area of Study II: Observing, Recording and Reporting

This area emphasizes the importance of effective communication. It includes listening to and observing behavioral interactions and their accurate recording and reporting. It pays attention to and respects the wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication and expression.

Questions:

--What are the different ways one communicates nonverbally?

--What are the ingredients involved in accurate recording?

--How do you know that you've communicated effectively; how do you know you've effectively received another's communication?

--How are feelings expressed?

--How do people use their environment as a tool for communication?

Competencies
Skills and Methodology

--Understanding of the principles and techniques of interviewing and the ability to conduct interviews.

--Knowledge of various theories of group processes and the ability to conduct meetings and group sessions.

--Knowledge of appropriate community resources and referral processes to meet consumer needs.

--Ability to use problem-solving techniques in a wide range of settings.

--Ability to collaborate and share knowledge with appropriate persons and/or agency.

--Ability to use advocacy as a method of mobilizing a variety of forces for the purpose of effecting social change.

--Understanding the modalities of intervention that enable the human service worker to function as a counselor, facilitator, and/or change agent.

--Understanding methods of inquiry and basic social research methodology and its validity and relevance in promoting social welfare.

Areas of Study III: Skills and Methodology

A. Interviewing/Counseling

   This area focuses on the basic theories, principles, techniques, and
approaches used in interviewing/counseling in a psycho-social context. It
includes the therapeutic processes from problem identification to referral,
to resolution and to termination stages. This process includes referral and
collaborative work with other agencies and disciplines. It also takes
cognizance of disparities in age, and of different ethnic and cultural
background of the situational context; and of the individual and group
treatment modalities from crises intervention to long-range planning.
Throughout, examination is made of the client-worker relationship.

B. Group Processes

   This area studies the major theories of group work. This involves how
groups function, the individual roles within the group, and the dynamics of
group behavior. It examines the various types of groups and ideological
styles involved, i.e., therapeutic, rehabilitative, personal growth,
educational, task, recreational, etc.

C. Advocacy

   Advocacy attempts to refocus the orientation from agency focused purposes
and policies to consumer-centered needs and benefits. It assesses and
marshalls forces (knowledge, people, resources). It penetrates the system
with social change as the objective. Implied is the utilization of relevant
laws, community resources and forces toward this purpose. Knowledge of
agency structure, organization and change agentry is addressed.

D. Research Methods

   This area attempts to demystify research and examine the organization,
values, ethics, and politics of social research. This includes studies in
research premise and design, data gathering, organization and interpretation
of data and the implications and recommendations of the study in a knowledge
of relevant statistics. This provides a tool for analysis and interpretation
of existing research material as well as development of one's own research
design.

Questions:

   --What are the major interviewing principles and techniques?
     Which am I most comfortable with and which do I find most
     useful? At what point is it appropriate for me to seek
     consultation and supervision and/or refer the clients
     to a more experienced worker?

   --How can group process be used as an effective tool in
     relating groups in which I am currently involved?

   --What are the different kinds of groups, and in which
     area or category does my interest fall? How can I learn
     about groups from literature, observations/participation
     in a formal agency setting, and/or past informal experiences?

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    --How do I know where to refer clients?  What are the criteria
      and process in making an appropriate referral?  How do I
      know the referral has been effective?

    --What does it mean to be an advocate?  What does advocacy
      mean in my setting?  What are the techniques and strategies
      one would use in an advocacy approach?

    --Is there an area or problem that I want to learn about and
      deal with that requires my utilizing a research approach and
      methodology?  How do I formulate the problem or task?  What
      do I think are the basic assumptions and outcomes of the
      question?  What are the basic components of a research
      design?  What are the ethical issues of how research is
      done and the implication for its interpretation and use?
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Competencies:
Planning, Organization and Provision of Services

    --Awareness of the various ways problems are defined in areas
      such as health, education, and welfare and how these
      definitions influence the kinds of programs developed.

    --Knowledge and understanding of the agency's goals, auspices,
      structure, and functions and how they affect service delivery.

    --Understanding social welfare legislation on Federal, State
      and local levels and its implicit/explicit effect on policy
      and program.

    --Understanding the processes and strategies pertinent to
      the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation
      of social welfare policy and programming.

    --Understanding the administrative and management processes
      that enable social agencies to become more effective
      providers of service.
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Areas of Study IV: Planning, Organization and Provision of Services

A. Community Planning and Development

   Community planning and development assumes the active social support and
participation of its population. It implies, as a consequence, an effective
level of functioning by strengthening the community's knowledge, techniques,
and ability to determine and meet its needs. Studies include theories and
methods of community organization, issues in social welfare relevant to
community goals (i.e., housing, health care, drug abuse, and prevention),
legal implications of those issues, and knowledge of the service delivery
systems pertinent to the community.

B. Administration

   The student deals with basic issues and problems associated with the management and administration of community and human services agencies/institutions. Students critically examine the various theoretical perspectives relating to organizations and management. Topics to be examined in this area include budgeting, funding and proposal writing, staff development, personnel policies and procedures, community and board relations, and consumer participation.

C. Service Delivery Systems

   The importance of the structure, organization, and financing of human service delivery systems is analyzed in relation to the nature and scope of the services delivered. The services are further determined by the resources made available to them such as knowledge, skills, and technology. "These factors include the social distance between the server and the consumer, centralization and decentralization; the amount, quality, and training of manpower providing the services; the national government's ethos and commitment; the salaries and other rewards available to the service givers; the extent of public and local control; the fragmentation or integration of agencies; the selection and promotion of the service givers; the vested interests of the various groups; and the traditions of the professions." (From Gartner and Reissman, Human Services Delivery. Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1974, p. 7.)

D. Organization and Structure of the Agency/Institution

   Agency goals, financial and legal auspices, organizational structure, determination of staff roles and functions, and the subsequent program and services and their interrelationships are studied. Students examine the potential sources of conflict between stated policies and their effect on the individual's roles and function within the agency.

E. Public Policy and Legislation

   This area deals with how public policy is formed, who participates in decision-making, and the resulting legislation and guidelines. Students become acquainted with legislative processes at federal, state and local levels. The role of lobbyists and special interest groups, including their strategies and influence in determining the nature of the legislation, is examined.

F. Program Planning, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation

   The delivery of a service is based on a particular ideology and program design. The fundamentals of programming are addressed. Basic components such as problems and needs analysis, consumer role and participation, feasibility, resources, methods and strategies for implementation, and criteria for evaluation are studied. These components will reflect a knowledge and understanding of the social and political milieu.

Questions:

   --What does the term and concept "community" mean to me?
     What are the differences among communities, i.e., rural
     to urban? What are the different constituencies comprising
     a community? What is meant by community involvement and
     participation? What are the different theories of community
     organization and action?

   --How is the community's well-being and viability dependent
     on the range, accessibility, and quality of services?
     How does the financing, organization, and structure of
     an agency determine the nature of the service and the
     ways in which services are delivered?

   --What are the different theories of administration and
     management, particularly those most applicable to human
     service organizations? What are the potential conflicts
     between management efficiency and effectiveness of service
     for the client?

   --What is the role and function of the supervisor?

   --How does the agency philosophy and structure act to
     constrain or encourage a worker?

IV.   Thoughts on Field Instruction

     Field instruction is seen as important in preparation for professional
practice consonant with the goals of a liberal arts education. It is through
this mode that a student develops the conceptual tools and processes
necessary to develop the theoretical and skill components of the practice.
Since learning is seen as learning for use, field instruction provides the
student with the experience of putting practice with theory.

Reframing Our Collective Future: Challenging the Co-Opting of Adult Education

Wendy B. Yanow, DePaul University School for New Learning and National Louis University

A Review of:

"Decentering the Ivory Tower of Academia"
New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education
Edited by Dianne Ramdeholl

Using experience as the foundation for teaching and learning, this counter-narrative of adult education and the academy demonstrates adult learning at its core. The authors share and reflect upon their experiences working inside, outside and along the margins of the academy. As we ask our students to do, the authors reflect on these experiences in the context of adult education, social justice and the political era of the time.

Education in general, but adult education more specifically, has become part of just about every for-profit and non-profit industry in existence today and one could convincingly argue that every professional trainer, teacher, facilitator, doctor, lawyer, manager and so on is an educator. Adult education is everywhere but as the experience of these authors reminds us, adult education as work toward social justice isn't nearly as impactful within higher education as its place in the academy might have us believe. Instead, adult education and the programs designed to serve adult learners have come to really exemplify the commodification of education. Today, adults can return to higher education along with their life experience and then trade that experience in for college credit. But to make that trade, adults' experiences and the learning they take from them must reflect what the academy has deemed creditable learning.

Although the commodification of education and the unpacking of that commodification specifically in adult education as part of a political-economic process is a key message of the text, the text also includes messages about shifts in public policy impacting structural inequity, agency (both from the perspective of the individual and certainly the broader community), the unidirectional focus of knowledge creation from the academy, and the shrinking spaces available for the work of social justice education. The narratives remind us that we can "fight the good fight" if we are willing to look for or create the spaces that can draw upon the resources of the academy while avoiding the limitations imposed at least in part by the kissing cousin relationship between the for-profit sector and academia. It is clear that within those spaces there can also be the foundation for transformative work.

In the text's first essay, Atkinson reminds us about the extraordinarily complex relationship between activist scholar educators and the academy. And it's probably also important to keep in mind that this complex relationship results, at least in part, from the incredible diversity of the field of adult education.

At a time when democracy is regularly conflated with the American Dream, it is essential to bring to the forefront scholars whose work challenges these inaccuracies. The impetus to document these authors' experiences grew out of a 2012 Adult Education Research Conference panel in which the speakers shared their experiences addressing the complexity of negotiating "the chasms between communities and academic institutions" (p. 5).

Through their stories, the authors encourage us to challenge the constant co-opting of our field and work, and to remind ourselves that democracy isn't the same thing as capitalism. So, as Ramdeholl notes, the knowledge born and housed within the academy has to be understood as knowledge driven by "neo-liberal economic interests" (p. 1). If that is the case, then where lives the knowledge of adult education that grows from the life experiences of adult learners? And how do we ensure that knowledge finds its way back to the academy?

Sharing her ideas about decentering the academy and availing itself to activist scholars, Selvaraj describes her lifelong antipoverty work, the transformative impact the 1996 Welfare Reform Act along with media reform had on anti-poverty work and the creation of the University of the Poor. Selvaraj's narrative focuses on her collaborations with "people striving intellectually and practically to move beyond the pervasive logic of capitalism" and her subsequent development as a radical adult educator. Very simply, she suggests to those of us in the academy, that a " … straightforward way to decenter the ivory tower is to act on the understanding that knowledge creation does not only originate with the academy." But to accomplish this knowledge creation, we need to "base ourselves" outside as well as inside the academy (p. 32).

Both Atkinson and Selvaraj appreciate the resources and opportunities available within the academy to further, through research, our knowledge of adult education. Atkinson
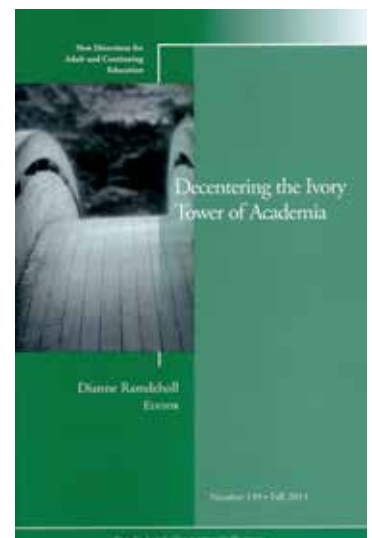
recognizes the profound impact that evidence-based research and the resulting statistical data had on adult literacy work when that information was used to develop narrow policies about lifelong learning and to "link literacy to economic productivity and competitiveness" (p. 9). She thus raises the concern as to whether the publication of research documenting "how educators work around the demands that force them to objectify the students … " (p. 9) might encourage even narrower policies related to learning focused on literacy or social justice. That struggle to make the difficult truth known, even at the possible expense of those for whom the truth should serve, is an age-old problem. And it may be even more complex when the question is raised in an environment where personal gain through the attainment of tenure is, at least for a time, a key concern.

Following the Welfare Reform Act was the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that helped to ensure a redefinition of adult education as " … a means to produce workers for the U.S. economy" (p. 46). Garvey, Gordon, Kleinbard and Wasserman's experiences in adult literacy in New York during the 1980s and early '90s exemplify the powerful struggle between supporting adult learning that nurtures self-agency and the impact of support by government funding reflective of a national change in priority. Gordon, sharing thoughts on the impact of the Workforce Investment Act offers that " … [the] period was characterized by a sense of excitement and engagement with questions of teaching and learning and how those things might be meaningfully connected to people's daily lives – a sharp contrast to the … focus on testing … push[ing] essential questions of teaching and learning, relevance, and meaning to the back burner" (p. 49). The narratives of Garvey, Gordon, Kleinbard and Wasserman, perhaps more than others, reflect the lost opportunities in literacy education resulting from these public policies.

Heaney's counter-story about the creation of the Universidad Popular, on the other hand, illustrates what can happen when agency within the community becomes and continues to be the priority even when there is collaboration with the academy.

A grassroots coalition in Chicago wanted a democratically run program that did more than teach ESL such as addressing issues including, "gentrification, discrimination, unemployment and political voice … " (p. 39). In collaboration with the City Colleges of Chicago, Universidad Popular was created and included a " … community board, teachers who were from and committed to the community and a growing realization … that this program was committed not only to students, but to changing conditions in their neighborhood" (p. 39). During the 10 years this collaboration continued, there existed the opportunity for knowledge to flow from the community to the academy. The relationship, however, was not without struggle. Ongoing concerns over co-optation (for example, the City College policy that training specialists "not … teach more than 12 hours per week") made it impossible to hire full-time coalition teachers who also would be eligible for "union membership" (p. 39). Giving up federal funding, Universidad Popular became an independent community-based organization and, more than 40 years later, is still open.

As important as fighting the good fight is being critically aware of how the fight is fought and making sure to check who benefits and whether status quo power lines have remained intact – or are even being addressed.

Created as a community resource to support literacy learners and literacy educators with the understanding that "empowering women through literacy means creating social equity and transforming our world … " (p. 78), Miller's WE LEARN (Women Expanding Literacy Education Action Resource Network) still struggles against its marginalization by the ivory tower. There

continues to exist a divide between what is considered appropriate academic rigor within academic disciplines and the kind of learning, i.e., literacy education, which can transform people's lives. Even while adult learners strive to improve their life through education, " … college professors who generally are still unaware of basic literacy challenges disparage arrival in college of students unable to effectively complete the academic work" (p. 80).

Johnson-Bailey's narrative is a powerful counter-story about life as an African American professor in higher education and a reminder of the ordinariness of racism. Referring to herself as an interloper, Johnson-Bailey's insider/outsider presence on campus is a challenge to the status quo, but one that she identifies as a powerful teaching opportunity. If, as she suggests, a tenet of adult education is to empower adults, then shouldn't a priority for those of us within the academy be to address the reality that "higher education … continues to reproduce existing systems of power, and functions to maintain the status quo" (p. 19)?

Szymanski and Wells write about their experience as faculty at Empire State College's Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies – and, in some ways similar to Johnson-Bailey – describe how the very presence of a center for labor studies within an academic institution can be a challenge to the status quo. What is fascinating about their educational model is that it exists within academia and because of its foundation in popular education, faculty at the Van Arsdale Center continue to focus teaching and learning around the telling of and reflecting upon one's own story. And those stories/experiences, while serving as a challenge to the dominant narratives reflective of current neo-liberal ideology, also serve as foundation for new learning.

As important as fighting the good fight is being critically aware of how the fight is fought and making sure to check who benefits and whether status quo power lines have remained intact – or are even being addressed. Several authors consider this issue in particular as it speaks to service learning. Hart lives as both a community organizer and an academic political educator. In a story about her work with

the Coalition of Household Workers, she describes a moment in which collaboration is occurring between the workers, union representatives, a lawyer and leaders from community organizations. Even though the objective of the collaboration was to address issues related to the experiences of home care workers, those workers felt unheard, as though they "had no voice in the minds of those claiming to be allies" (p. 62). The allies, it seems, were still responding to status quo patriarchal power structures, which seems analogous to the struggles over the flow of knowledge from and into the academy.

We are left, at the end of the book, pondering fundamental, philosophical questions about how to participate in reframing our future in a more democratic and equitable way, and just what it might mean for us to decenter the notion of the academy. The editor, Dianne Ramdeholl, beautifully challenges us to critically reflect upon our work, both individually and collectively.

For scholar activists, I think the work to reframe our collective future is what we do. As we have learned from these authors, it is complicated and it's messy. To me, decentering the notion of the academy may be even more important right now because it asks us to consider our very relationship within the academy and the degree to which we and our ideas have already been co-opted. By definition, the commodification process has begun to dismantle the structures of adult education that challenge hegemony and the work that connects social justice to education. If that is the case, then, as many of the authors have suggested, how do we ensure that the ivory tower still exists as a place to engage in social transformation – or even challenge ideas? This text is worth a serious read and an honest and ongoing conversation.

Reference

Ramdeholl, D. (2013, Fall). Decentering the ivory tower of academia. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2013*(139), 1-95.

> *"The era of the adult learner is at hand. The learning enterprise, if one includes both formal and non-formal learning, is already predominantly an adult enterprise. This dominance will persist and grow. The institutions of formal learning (education, training, and information providers) are increasing in types, numbers, and size."*
>
> *– Morris T. Keeton (1917-2014)*
> *"New Ways to be Responsive to Adult Learners"*
> CAEL News, *November/December 1986, p. 31*

Remembering Victor Montana

Colleagues from Empire State College

Victor Montana, mentor and administrator at Empire State College, died on 29 December 2013 in Concord, New Hampshire. First appointed as a mentor in Science, Mathematics and Technology (his Ph.D. was in physics), Victor served the college from 1972 until 1990, as associate dean and then dean of the Genesee Valley Center, and then as acting vice president for academic affairs and as acting president. In 1990, Victor moved to what was then the College for Lifelong Learning, which became Granite State College of the University System of New Hampshire. He was CEO/dean and then president for 10 years before resigning in 2000 due to ill health. His intellect, devotion to adult learners and incredible final 13 years offer a wonderful model for all of us.

"Rochester's Sharon Grigsby," Genesee Valley Center

Victor Montana came to the Genesee Valley Center as a Science, Math & Technology mentor in the very early days of the center – in May, after George Drury had unlocked the doors for the first time on January 14, 1972 (or so legend has it). I met him when I came as a student in September of 1975. Bill Laidlaw was dean then, and Victor was associate dean. Bill was my mentor and I was studying the management of public institutions. We met in late afternoon and Victor would often join us. The three of us would discuss my readings in management and how they applied to this distinctive new little college. I got to know the college in ways not usually available to a student, and I got to know these extraordinary people, as well.

When Laidlaw left in 1978 to become president of a college in Washington state, Victor became dean (the first three deans of GVC – John Jacobson, Bill Laidlaw and Victor – all became college presidents elsewhere), and he hired me to present all

the GVC information sessions. Thus, I began a dozen years working for Victor, essentially as his assistant.

A short time after I began doing information sessions, it became evident that the center needed student services support. Of course, there was no such position in the college or center budget (those days were 30 years in the future!). As a wizard with resources (he always seemed to find a way to fund needed services), Victor located scraps of lines to fund my work. I began at one-eighth time, then one-quarter, then maybe one-third, then back to one-quarter for a while, etc. until, by 1981, he had put together a full-time line for me. I never did have a title; neither of us wanted one for me. Once, The Office of College Relations called me, asking for my title for a photo caption. I said, "I don't know. Ask Victor." They did. He said: "Just put 'Rochester's Sharon Grigsby.'" The absence of a title gave more flexibility for special projects as needed (my favorite line in my performance program!). He was always alert for interesting things for me to do. I was incredibly lucky to work for him.

Though, it never felt as if I were working for him, but with him. Each of us could – and did – correct or scold the other, while figuring out a better way next time. He exemplified the old management approach of "Ready, Fire, Aim": seeing a need, addressing it in a small thoughtful way, then adapting as needed. He was brilliant, innovative and a remarkable leader in the center, the college and in the Rochester Area Colleges consortium; never pretentious or stuffy. One of my favorite memories is of the holiday party Wayne Willis describes in more detail here, with Victor in the ill-fitted Santa suit, sitting on the floor of the GVC conference room, playing with the center children and their new toys.

Victor B. Montana was a towering intellect, an outstanding leader and most of all, a cherished friend. We talked sports, cooking,

Victor Montana

boats and sailing, books and family. He attended our daughters' weddings, and I took his son John to Buffalo Bills games after Victor moved to New Hampshire. He was my friend and I miss him terribly.

Tom Rocco, former dean, Niagara Frontier Center

Victor Montana was a special friend of mine. I knew him for just over 30 years, a bit more if we count the first professional experiences we had. He chaired a search and interview team for a dean's position in Empire State College back in the winter and spring of 1982, for which I was a finalist. I was not chosen for that position, but Victor did what no other search committee chair ever did for me: He called to tell me that although I would not be offered the position, this had nothing to do with any deficit in my application or my personal conduct during the interview. It was just not my time this time; but when any comparable position in ESC would come open, I should

not hesitate to apply. What a generous and confirming thing to do. That was just like Victor.

A year or so later, I applied for another dean's position and although Victor was not on the committee, I was chosen for that position. I lived as dean for the next 15 years, working very closely with Victor for much of that time. Indeed, it is fair to say that I learned how to be a dean from him. He not only mentored me during my early months at ESC, but he also filled in for me when I had a heart attack in my second month at the college. You could say that I owed him a great deal; in fact, he gave me so much without possibility of recompense that I could only pay him back with friendship. He was my friend and I loved him.

Victor often seemed brusque; he was not really short tempered, but he was "plain spoken" and he usually communicated clearly what he meant. Characteristically, he was kind and helpful and always he was dedicated to the main mission of the college, helping mature students to learn. He was an excellent mentor for students; he was a truly fine leader with his faculty and for his support staff. With other deans and on the president's council, he was a superb colleague. He was just a guy, but he was a truly admirable guy. You could not tell that he had a Ph.D. in physics from Harvard; that was part of what he had been but it was not what made him who he was, which was a really devoted mentor and a leader in the college.

He left Empire State College before I did and he went on to be the dean and then the first president of Granite State College in New Hampshire (then named the College for Lifelong Learning). Although I moved to Seattle to be president of an alternative institution there, we never lost touch and I never lost sight of how much he had done for me. When he was diagnosed with cancer in 2000, with not very long to live and he decided to retire, he got in touch with me to see if I were interested in succeeding him at Granite State. Victor had paved the way for me again.

Just a couple more things: my wife Ellen and I spent some of the most memorable times of our lives with Victor and his wife Pat

in Maine, including a singularly beautiful nighttime boating experience, and we felt that their life together throughout the last 10 years was simply beautiful. We were privileged to be able to see them during this time.

While I was president of Granite State and even afterward, during those years while Victor was living with cancer, I had the added privilege of spending some days with him that revealed his continuing engagement with education and his strength of mind and will. He did a great deal for Granite State behind the scenes. For a while, he also became a tutor at the local community and technical college, committed to helping individual students learn some mathematics and physics. They would have no way of knowing who he was or what he was bringing to their sessions together – just that he was there to help them learn. He worked at this task as he would work at running a college. For example, he revealed to them and to me the utility of the Khan Academy as a way to learn math and what a difference the new technologies could make to learners.

During the past year or two, I was happy to be able to spend an hour or two at a time with Victor whenever we were in Concord or on the phone, just chatting. Friends.

Marjorie Lavin, vice provost for academic program development, Office of Academic Affairs; and from 2000-2005, vice president for academic affairs, Granite State College

I had the happy but all too brief opportunity to work with Victor Montana at what was then called the College for Lifelong Learning in the University System of New Hampshire. Victor was president of CLL when I started my position as vice president for academic affairs there in August 2000. About five months later, Victor resigned for health reasons after a diagnosis of cancer. He remained a mentor and friend for the next 13 years. Despite his illness, he remained an ardent advocate for adult learners and institutions devoted to their education. He created the foundation for what is now Granite State College, which is now a thriving statewide institution in New

Hampshire serving adults through online programs and regional learning centers. He embodied lifelong learning, pursuing new interests and reviving old ones. He brushed up on math to be able to tutor at the local community college and signed up for MOOCs (massive open online courses) just to see what they were about. For me, he remains a model for facing adversity with courage and for embracing learning with energy and joy.

Wayne Willis, mentor, Genesee Valley Center

I find it difficult to write about my former dean and friend at the Genesee Valley Center as "Victor" Montana, since just about everybody at the college in those days called him "Vic." It was only years later when visiting him in New Hampshire that I learned he much preferred to be called Victor, as he was known to people in the Granite State. I suppose out of courtesy I should call him Victor in this little remembrance. But the informality of "Vic" brings back memories much more easily and better reflects the mom and pop store atmosphere of ESC in the '70s and early '80s. ("We have a little bit of everything somewhere around here. What would you like to learn about, anyway?")

Vic Montana was the associate dean at GVC in 1977 and also was overseeing the Lilly Endowment postdoctoral "mentor intern" program that brought me to the college at that time. He moved up to dean (and started wearing a sports coat and tie to work instead of T-shirts) in 1978, and Hugh Hammett came in as associate dean. Both Vic and Hugh were extremely helpful to me in my early years on the faculty, finding ways to keep me on after my "Lilly year" expired, and eventually carving out a tenure-track position for me as a mentor in Interdisciplinary Studies. I am glad to have had the opportunity, some months before he died, to remind Victor of my gratitude for all his encouragement to me, which went well beyond what I am mentioning here.

Vic was every bit the New Yorker, raised in Greenwich Village, who did not entirely share Rochester's very high civic opinion of itself. (This was somewhat of a bonding agent between him and certain

other transplants from larger cities, such as myself.) When he became dean, some wondered whether he was the best fit to be the leader of what was still an academic startup in a region with the pastoral name of Genesee Valley. This did not turn out to be a problem. In fact, GVC grew substantially in Rochester during the Montana deanship, and added units at Auburn, Ithaca and Corning.

As dean, Vic supported what I came to see as the distinctive Empire State College approach to higher education: widening access by means of individualized degree programs and learning contracts. We would best serve the underserved by tailoring academic content to the individual's life circumstances, learning interests, abilities and personal goals. I remember him criticizing those mentors at GVC

and at other centers who were already routinely developing standard, one-size-fits-all learning contracts and beginning to narrow the range of student learning projects they would take on to their own academic specialties. If we keep doing that, he once said to me, "We really will become a lousy little college." He recognized that individualized mentoring was very labor intensive and, when combined with demands for college service, took up most of the faculty's time. Accordingly, he usually placed rather little emphasis on scholarship (as disciplinary research and publication) when evaluating mentors for reappointment, tenure and promotion. Vic often said that, in contrast to traditional colleges, conversations between mentors were rarely about each other's research. Instead, they typically began enthusiastically with "I

have this student who. ..." Drawing out the student's learning interests and nurturing their growth were acts of intellectual discovery at the core of the mentor role.

I close this brief remembrance with the astonishing sight of Vic Montana as Santa Claus! There was a holiday party every year at GVC with small presents and a Santa costume that someone would be coaxed to wear. One time (and one time only) Vic agreed to don this garb. Imagine a much taller Groucho Marx behind false white whiskers and you begin to get the picture, as Vic burst into the conference room with a sardonic "ho-ho-ho," and a look on his face that said "Well, I guess *somebody* has to do this." Consenting to the completely unexpected was a daily occurrence at the early ESC. Now it was the once and future Victor's turn.

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*

I f 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.

Email submissions to 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 Microsoft 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).

All About Mentoring is published twice a year. Our next issue, #46, will be available in the fall of 2014. Please submit all materials by Sept. 2, 2014.

The quotes included in this issue of All About Mentoring
are taken from the work of two wonderful educators,
who, in different ways, have influenced our work:
Morris Keeton and Maxine Greene (both, 1917 - 2014).
We honor their lives and contributions.

ALL ABOUT MENTORING

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