ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

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" … [T]he introduction of a mode of schooling in which one 'figures out things for oneself' changes one's conception of oneself and one's role, and also undermines the role of authority that exists generally within the culture. … "

– Jerome Bruner (1915–2016)
Actual Minds, Possible Worlds
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 131

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Photo credit: Lawrence Henderson

"Elements of practices are generated, renewed and reproduced through practice."

– Mika Pantzar and Elizabeth Shove, "Towards an Integrative Theory of Practice" (2012)

Making the Invisible Visible

We are in change; and we, in one institution, in little spots scattered across this state of New York (and in a few places beyond) are feeling it.

Of course, we can't forget the context. What we are experiencing as change at our college is sharp, but it's minor compared to the wrenching disruptions that dominate the lives of millions and millions and millions across the world each day. We need perspective.

Still, we are restructuring, reversing, reshuffling and renaming; that is, we are searching for new words and new labels and new forms, and, too, borrowing from what we as an institution had once thought needed to be changed. We are trying to find our way.

Of course (a second "of course"), I'm also very aware that the use of "we" is, in itself, a bit dicey here. Who is this "we"? Is there a "we"? Without denying the significance of many shades of difference and the varied experiences among us based on factors like place, role and status, I'd say that, to an important extent, we, as employees of one institution *are* in it together.

What do we fear? As at many institutions like our own, I say we fear three things:

First, we fear for our survival. My desire here is *not* at all to be apocalyptic. The place is not shutting down, but the competition for "our" students is steep, the terrain is tricky, the numbers across the country aren't heartening, and right now, the distrust of anything "public" runs deep. What does the future hold for a relatively new self-standing institution within a gigantic system?

Second, we fear for our distinctiveness. What makes us different? If we succumb to the slide into the conventional; if we try to refashion ourselves as an institution whose ways mirror what is most familiar (to most of us and to most of our students), what is there to save? Can we effectively negotiate a space between making the place more navigable ("transparent" is one of the words of the day) and knowing that the specialness of what we try to do, and what we have done for almost a half-century, and what we can offer (and there is so much we can offer), is, indeed, our best brand?

And third (and this is the fear that's most been on my mind these days), we fear for what some social scientists call our "social practices." That is, I think we worry not only that the new structures might not work the way we want them to or hope they will, or that trying to pick at individual pieces of the college will make the whole kit and caboodle that much more vulnerable; we also fear that the social practices of connection with each other – not only those that are visible (the schedules, the structures, the policies that we know) but those that are *invisible* will thin out or just completely disappear.

My point here is not to romanticize the social practices of local cultures; it's not to argue that communities of rich dialogue and mutual care permeate every facet of the work lives that we have now. No, not at all.

It is, however, to point to a lingering fear that taken-for-granted feelings, tacit understandings, little moves here and there – the daily communicative ways upon which we rely – won't be around to support our work, and we won't know how to replace these often subtle textures and choreographies of our everyday ESC micro-worlds.

It's important to admit our fears. We have to fight for this college, and to be ecumenical about it, we have to fight for other institutions and for social policies that support the adult learner (which concretely means supporting every action that will make it easier for part-time working adults to learn what they want and need to learn). And, too, we can't forget that alternative institutions like our own (and there are others) exist for a reason and that fighting for institutional flexibility, imaginative teaching and learning modes, and for our college's core values is completely worth our best efforts.

But we also shouldn't deny our fear of losing what often feels quite fragile and that is often invisible until it's gone: I am thinking about those veins of familiarity and trust, those subtle forms of solidarity and habits of working together for our students in ways that we've learned with each other, often without even knowing what we've taken in and what we rely upon. No new rules or policies or organizational charts – even the clearest ones – can do that for us.

It will take ongoing experimenting, a bunch of discomfort, the hours that are needed to learn about those colleagues across the institution we don't yet know, ongoing critical reflection on *why* we are doing what we are doing, and a great deal of patience with each other to see if we can get this right and build what are, in effect, new bonds and new ways. We need new social practices. They will take some time to emerge and take hold.

Responding to Students and Social Change Through the Arthur Imperatore Community Forum Fellowship

Ruth Goldberg, Metropolitan New York Region

I n 2013, I applied for the 2014-2015 Arthur Imperatore Community Forum Fellowship in partnership with Anna Barsan who is an adjunct instructor in the Metropolitan region. My training is in cinema and cultural studies. Anna is an activist media-maker. Her ongoing documentary web series "SIGNIFIED" (http://thisissignified. com), chronicling the lives of queer-identified artists and activists, has received generous support from the Guggenheim Foundation Media Conservation Lab. She works in the SIGNIFIED media collective, along with media-maker Jessie Levandov and producer Sam Tabet. (Anna's work was featured in *All About Mentoring,* Issue 46, Winter 2015.)

(l–r) Ruth Goldberg and Anna Barsan

Goals, Objectives and Intended Outcomes

At the Metropolitan region we offer a wide range of media production study groups in digital filmmaking, screenwriting, editing, cinematography, documentary production, web series production, film history and visual communications. In the Imperatore Fellowship proposal, we designed a year-long experiment with new film and media production group studies and opportunities that would train and engage students who are interested in working in the fields of community-based media activism and digital media production.

We also created opportunities for students to work on a large-scale collaborative social justice project. In designing this part of the work, we had several distinct goals that were linked to both the college's institutional commitment to civic engagement, social justice and social responsibility, as well as the specific objectives of the Arthur Imperatore Community Forum Fellowship. Our goals were to:

- facilitate and improve student access to advanced professional training

and experience in all aspects of film production and media activism

- create an immersive experience for students in the fields of filmmaking and media activism, under the guidance of artists and activists who work as professionals in the field

- foster a collaborative, teamwork approach to media-making

- train committed, socially-conscious media-makers

- complete the first phase of a digital mapping project in three parts that would serve as a strong example of opportunities in film and media-making at SUNY Empire State College

- create sustained public awareness of the important student achievements in film and media studies at ESC

- identify and reach out to new populations of prospective media arts students who we are not currently serving, and who may not know what we have to offer.

We divided this work three concurrent year-long efforts:

Part One: Outreach

a) Throughout the year we reached out to local media production organizations that work with young people in New York City to explore the opportunities for ongoing relationships, in order to bring in future populations of media students who we have not served before.

b) We reached out to local film and media organizations and production companies in order to create new internship opportunities for our film/media production students.

c) We reached out to organizations in the field of media advocacy in order to create lasting relationships with the college and opportunities for students. One such partnership was with the annual Allied Media Conference in Detroit, where we brought two student media-makers to present their work at the end of the year. We have established an annual trip to this important and cutting-edge conference as a new credit-bearing residency activity that will be open to all ESC students.

Part Two: Production

A group of Metropolitan region students worked on a new media advocacy project over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year. The students began by studying visual communications and representation with me, and the history of independent media activism and social media-driven political movements with Anna. Students then collaborated on the SIGNIFIED collective's ongoing community-based interactive digital mapping project, "Queer Coordinates." The idea behind this part of the project was to give students a sense of how a working artists' collective functions, as well as engaging them in new media advocacy efforts utilizing digital mapping technologies.

Anna Barsan and Jessie Levandov presenting the web series SIGNIFIED.

From our original proposal:

"Surveying will consist of identifying public spaces, media, organizations, and historic events to be included on the map. Students will gain skills in archival research, examine open-sourced mapping tools available on the Internet, and will gain hands-on experience in building sustainable community relationships with organizations and individual participants.

Working in partnership with the SIGNIFIED production crew, students will assist SIGNIFIED in compiling additional visual material to be included on the map to include interviews, photographs, and video documentation of public spaces of resistance around the city.

The mapping project seeks to create a digital tapestry of historical information, social movements, and agents of social change. By utilizing technological mapping tools that are free for public use, Queer Coordinates will disrupt a hierarchy of access that often excludes civil society from collaboratively documenting public space."

Responding to Students, Responding to Social Change

A year passed between the moment when we submitted the proposal and the beginning of the Imperatore Fellowship year. In that year, the urgent national dialogue about race and the social movements that emerged in response to police killings of unarmed people of color in 2012-2014 influenced the direction of the project. In our different study groups, Anna and I each found ourselves teaching different aspects of the history, theory and practices of media activism and race and representation right at the moment that heated public debates ignited during that year of explosive social protest across the country. It became clear that the project would need to expand, adapt and respond to what was happening across the country and to what was most urgent and pressing to the students who were working on it.

In September 2014, the mapping project swung into production, and the students who collaborated learned a great deal from working with SIGNIFIED and from coming to understand one model of collective media-making, but they learned the most from designing their own individual mapping projects as parts of the whole. Influenced by the historical moment in which this work occurred, the student media-makers shifted the direction of the mapping project with their investigations into the intersection between public space and the health and wellness of their communities. Given the freedom and authority to pick their own topics for their work on the mapping project, the student projects all focused on the complex relationship between race, surveillance, resistance and public space in the Metropolitan area.

The student projects ranged in emphasis and in scope, from looking at abandoned school buildings in specific neighborhoods

and tracking how educational resources are allocated, to mapping sites of racially-charged violence around the city, to looking at unequal access to green spaces in different communities.

Part Three: Dissemination

One of the goals of the project was to create a stronger bridge between the experience of being student media-makers to becoming professional media-makers working within a global community of practitioners. In the design of the project, students were given the opportunity to present their work in three different professional venues: at a new media festival, at a professional conference and at a community forum.

The students first presented their work at CultureHub's Refest: Art and Technology Festival in New York City in December 2015. They participated in the "Surveillance Salon," at which they presented their individual projects with tremendous poise and eloquently fielded questions from the audience (http://howlround.com/livestreaming-the-surveillance-salon-curated-by-anna-barsan-at-the-art-technology-festival-refest).

The project then traveled to the Allied Media Conference in Detroit in June 2015, with the SIGNIFIED collective and two of the student participants. The students found the experience of meeting with and interviewing other media activists in Detroit to be inspiring and transformative, and the trip advanced our goal of helping to launch students into the professional world and into a networked community of supportive practitioners.

This project culminated in a public forum at the Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural and Educational Center in New York City. The community forum brought together media activists from several different media advocacy groups, including Janisha Gabriel who is the founder of the "Speak My Name" project (http://www.speakmyname.org/). There were media-makers from "Streetwise and Safe" (http://streetwiseandsafe.org/), a group that advocates for LGBTQ youth of color, accompanied by their partners in the "Global Action Project" (https://global-action.org/). And, of course, the members of SIGNIFIED were there. There were screenings of three

advocacy films, followed by a panel discussion on the state of media advocacy. The three films were quite different, but all focused around creating an awareness of the vulnerabilities of particular at-risk communities based on race and gender identity.

I was proud that the community forum brought together activists from several different communities and welcomed them into our ESC community. I was also very pleased that there was an ESC event out in a public community setting. I think that we should do much more of that in the communities that we serve.

I was particularly happy that the forum offered the ESC community (as one colleague put it) "a glimpse of a world of experience and media-making that is very new to many people. It was intimate and important and all of us began to get a sense of fears and feelings and ways of being in the world that are part of our world but that often we miss."

At the community forum, the moderator of our panel opened up the Q&A period with sensitivity to the diverse gender identities of all present by asking anyone who raised their hands to speak to please state their names and their preferred gender pronouns. I can think of no better or more emblematic example than that "pronoun moment" in characterizing a

Panel of media activists at the Arthur Imperatore Community Forum.

year that was full of a growing awareness of how much there is to learn as allies and as educators in a rapidly changing world.

The Imperatore year was a tremendous learning experience for me. I had the time to try new things, to experiment in my teaching and create new opportunities for our students. I was able to step back and assess what is working in our film and media training and what still needs work; what kinds of students we are serving well and the kinds of students who we could serve better. I was able to explore new approaches to teaching media activism and to help students to begin to position themselves as professional media-makers. For me, this was time and money very well spent. Thank you, ESC!

These images are from Refest: Hybrid Performance and New Media Festival, which was held at CultureHub in December 2015.

ESC student Travis Del Valle presenting his digital mapping project at CultureHub.

ESC Student Paulette Bellins presenting her digital mapping project at CultureHub.

Photo credit: ESC student Bianca Jones

Holding the Adinkra symbol for justice, an image from ESC student Bianca Jones's digital mapping project presentation.

Photo credit: ESC student Bianca Jones

Holding the Adinkra symbol for justice in front of the memorial for Eric Garner, an image from Bianca Jones's digital mapping project.

Grad(u)ation Sawstrokes(*) in *F*

Land of Hope and Glory (Pomp and Circumstance) - Elgar

6. Mort -
7. It's

gage your   mind,— go   off   to   school, and   get   an   e—du - ca - tion
hard   but   not—   im - pos - si - ble...

But   pay   it   off—be -

3

March section *[1. Music notation was devised...]*

2. "Don't improvise!" said Puritans, "It's wild and it's sinful!"
And tried to teach the flocks the rules for singing by the hymnal.

3. Though learning can be virtuous, too often "education"
Means little more than following the rules and regulations.

4. We shouldn't let the bureaucrats run colleges or schools,
They think that helping virtue thrive amounts to better rules.

5. A lot of people go to school to get an education,
But find their curiosity is dead by graduation.

Land section *[6. Mortgage your mind...]*

7. It's hard, but not impossible, to do good work with passion,
Provided you can find a job that lets you be a craftsman.

8. It's hard to be a scientist, an artist, or a scholar,
Unless you pledge allegiance first to those who own the dollar.

9. Professors needn't pledge themselves to money or to status—
Allegiance is a by-product of academic habits.

10. Professors seldom recognize how often their assumptions,
Their habits, and their disciplines are part of the corruption.

11. When people claim the Internet can break the ivory tower,
It seems they've failed to scrutinize the ins and outs of power.

12. When people claim the Internet democratizes music,
They overlook how capital controls the ways we use it.

13. The copyright monopolists think Edison enormous:
He helped them own not just the song but also the performance.

(*)*Sawstrokes* are a New Hollandian subgenre of night-rhyme music (see my "Music Hospitality"), akin to Cretan *kontylies*, wherein participants improvise rhyming or assonant couplets, often in response to one another.

4

Exporting and Importing Multinational Higher Education: The Growth of International Branch Campuses

Jill Borgos, School of Nursing

Jill Borgos is a 2012 recipient of the University at Albany's Stanford H. Levine Fellowship, a 2013 recipient of a UAlbany distinguished dissertation award, and a 2015 recipient of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (STTI) Tau Kappa At-Large Chapter Recognition for Excellence in Research award for her research on international branch campuses (IBCs). Jill has presented her research on international branch campuses at both the Association for the Study of Higher Education and at the STTI Leadership Connection annual conferences. Most Recently, Jill presented some of her work at SUNY Empire State College's Fall Academic Conference in the fall of 2015. What follows is an addendum to her Fall Academic Conference presentation, which includes her perspective on the international branch campuses phenomenon and their current growth within the landscape of higher education.

The Study of IBCs

I n 2009, I joined the Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT) with the University at Albany School of Education. This decision, seven years ago, shaped my interest in understanding the ways in which universities and colleges were establishing an international presence. The single focus of the research team was to catalog and research any and all developments associated with the small but growing number of international branch campuses (IBCs). At the time, very little information or research was available on the development of IBCs. IBCs were practically an uncharted territory in the higher education literature. This article is intended to share highlights from my past and current research on the historical development of IBCs exported from U.S. higher education institutions (HEI), offer a perspective on why China is now the fastest growing importing country of IBCs, and discuss how social capital

can play a critical role in the sustainability of an IBC regardless of geographic location. This article also serves as a follow-up to my presentation at the 2015 Fall Academic Conference on IBCs, social network analysis and qualitative methodology. While my journey in the study of IBCs began at the University of Albany, since arriving at ESC in 2013, I have continued to present and write on the growth of IBCs both at national and international venues.

During the early years of IBC development, experts in the field were unsettled as to how to define the new growth of cross-border education. The complexity in settling on the definition of an IBC in part stemmed from the variation of new and emerging innovative IBC business models (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). In particular, the financing of the models varied tremendously, as did the collaborative partnerships between the home institution and the host country. Despite later uniform agreement on a definition, the more common definition is drawn from The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE). The OBHE defined an IBC as,

> A higher education institution that is located in another country different from the institution which either originated it or operates it, with some physical presence in the host country, and which awards at least one degree in the host country that is accredited in the country of the originating institution. (as cited in Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012, p. 7)

Using this definition, The OBHE and the C-BERT at UAlbany have identified more than 200 IBCs globally. The evolving interaction and interdependence between the host countries and the home institutions is poorly understood and provides a ripe opportunity for research and contribution to

Jill Borgos

the field of international higher education. Although the study of IBCs is relatively new to the literature, IBCs have been a form of cross-border higher education since post-WWII with some institutional arrangements having been developed a bit earlier. However, up until the last decade, IBCs gained very little attention as a viable and sustainable form of delivering cross-border higher education. IBCs are educational business models that, if sustainable, can provide educational opportunities in locations where there may otherwise not be opportunity to access higher education. In many geographic locations, IBCs serve to augment or expand higher education systems in developing or transitional economy countries (Knight, 2008). IBCs also provide a range of curriculum and degree programs not offered by the host country's current higher education system. This is significant for postsecondary students who for either economic or cultural reasons cannot seek these programs beyond the borders of their own country or region (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012).

Historical Context of Exporting U.S. IBCs

The United States currently exports the largest total number of IBCs. While the export of IBCs by U.S. HEIs began predominantly post-WWII, some IBC were established as early as the 1930s and are still in operation to this day. In the United States, the GI Bill, a landmark piece of legislation that changed the landscape of higher education opportunity for military personnel, was one of the first drivers in the development of IBCs. While post-WWII was a significant period of expansion of U.S. higher education within the U.S. borders, it is also marked as a period of expansion of higher education outside the U.S. borders. With military personnel stationed abroad after the war, several universities obtained military contracts to offer educational services and programs for the military personnel stationed overseas (Lane, 2011). Boston University's IBC located in Brussels, Belgium is one example of an early IBC model post-WWII. Boston University held a contract with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) post-WWII to provide educational programs in Brussels, which led to its current day IBC model offering graduate and certificate programs. The University of Maryland is an example of a HEI that still has a significant overseas presence, with educational program offerings for military personnel stationed abroad. Other early forms of IBCs can be found with the establishment of Florida State University in Panama (1933), Johns Hopkins University in Italy (1950) and Webster University in Europe during the 1970s.

In the 1980s however, a second and significant surge in IBC development occurred. IBC development in the 1980s established a new trend in the delivery of academic programs (Lane, 2011). Countries with rapidly growing economies were seeking assistance from countries with established higher education systems to help develop educational programs for their citizens. The focus shifted to a mold where a country in one region was sought after to provide educational services to another region for the citizens of that region (Knight, 2006; Crombie-Borgos, 2013). During this period, approximately 30 U.S. institutions began offering educational programs in Japan; Temple University in Japan is the only university out of this 30 that remains in operation in the form of an IBC (Lane, 2011). The failure of many IBCs in the 1980s did not dissuade future establishments of IBCs. The third significant growth period of IBCs has occurred over the last two decades, with physical establishments of several educational facilities in the form of IBCs emerging around the globe (Knight, 2008). Altbach, from the Center for International Higher Education, noted that the recent IBC phenomenon is in part due to advances in technology and communication changing the economic and educational opportunities on a global scale (as cited in Crombie-Borgos, 2013). Countries with developing and transitional economies competing in the 21st century knowledge society are aiming to create greater access to higher education and to do so quickly.

> *Countries with developing and transitional economies competing in the 21st century knowledge society are aiming to create greater access to higher education and to do so quickly.*

The import of foreign universities in the form of IBCs provides a way in which governments can efficiently establish university structures and curriculum without the years required to build a new higher education system. In addition to IBCs providing an efficient way to increase access to higher education, IBCs also enable developing and transitional economy countries to keep pace with the global economy. The variety of business models in this new growth period reflects the requirements and needs of the host country in a rapidly changing globalized economy (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012).

From 2006 to the end of 2011, the OBHE reported that the number of IBCs worldwide increased by 144 percent (from 85 to 200)

(Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012; Verbik & Merkley, 2006; Crombie-Borgos, 2013). The U.S. led the way in terms of the total number of IBCs in operation as well as total overall growth rate up until 2009 (Becker, 2009). By 2012, U.S. higher education institutions continued to represent the largest proportion of the total number of IBCs in operation, but U.S. IBCs were no longer the most rapidly-exporting entities (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). Apart from the U.S., other leading exporting countries include the U.K., Russia and Australia. The Middle East, Singapore and Malaysia were some of the early countries importing the largest percentage of IBCs. The United Arab Emirates continues to host the largest number of total IBCs in operation; however, China has rapidly increased the total number of IBCs it hosts and is currently the second leading importer of foreign institutions (C-BERT, 2016).

IBC Business Models

Despite the large variation in emerging IBC business models, the majority of IBCs have been established using one of three distinct business models. The three predominant IBC business models included those that were either established as (1) wholly owned and operated by the home campus, (2) strategic alliances or (3) joint ventures involving contractual relations with another entity to provide educational service such as curricula support (Verbik & Merkley, 2006; Lane, 2011). In each of these business models, regardless of how they are financially supported, there are linkages between the IBC, the home campus and the host country (Kinser, 2010). Linkages are often found in arrangements connecting the home campus to the host country through for-profit educational companies, host country governments or private foundations (Kinser, 2010).

Wholly-owned campuses, such as Boston University's IBC in Brussels, is an example of a financial model in which the home campus assumes all the financial risk and all the responsibility for academic programs and operation of the physical structure of the IBC (Lane, 2010). The wholly-owned business model is considered the most risky and time consuming endeavor for a home campus, in that the home campus is responsible for the

entirety of the operations within the context of the host country's idiosyncratic legal and regulatory environment (Verbik & Merkley, 2006; Lane, 2010; Crombie-Borgos, 2013). The import and export of hard currency, tax regulations, and limits on tuition and fees are all regulatory challenges of operating an IBC in a host country that is geopolitically different from that of the home campus (Becker, 2009). A wholly-owned IBC model relies on a full-paying student for revenue, which can pose a substantial risk in the face of potentially declining student enrollment. Advantages of the model include being free of fixed contractual obligations related to investments, operational responsibilities and complicated repayment obligations in the event of a closure (Verbik & Merkely, 2006).

Strategic alliances are in some ways a less risky business model endeavor. These types of financial IBC models are prevalent in regions with transitional economies such as Qatar and Dubai. They are common in regions where the host country government is strategically investing in higher education to meet the needs of their transitional workforce and a rapidly growing global economy. IBCs established as strategic alliances have funding support from an outside entity. Funding support for the branch campus is either from the host country where the IBC is located or from a private company or organization. They are considered strategic in the sense that they are purposeful ventures with importance to the host country in terms of the overall national strategy for higher education in that region (Verbik & Merkley, 2006). In this type of model, the home campus supporting the IBC is relieved of some if not all of the financial burden associated with the startup cost of the IBC (Lane, 2010). Additionally, the strategic alliance model involves some sharing of physical space, but the management of the curriculum and space is often the responsibility of the home campus, as is the awarding of degrees (Verbik & Merkely, 2006). While the financial risk may be less than that of a wholly-owned IBC, a strategic alliance between a sponsoring government and a host government can be complicated and messy, particularly in the case of U.S. public institutions moving across borders.

Joint ventures are a third type of financial business model. This type of business model is increasingly found in China, one of the largest and fastest growing importers of IBCs. Joint ventures are often found in countries like China where there is a legal requirement for a foreign entity to partner with a host country entity (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). Other joint ventures are driven not by legal mandates of the host country, but rather by a financial need for support to either startup the operation or maintain operations (Becker, 2009). In other cases joint ventures are solely revenue seeking endeavors (Kinser 2010). Many are established for the purpose of meeting an educational need, while minimizing risk through collaborative sharing. While the exact details of each of the arrangements are often unknown, it is known that there is some level of shared ownership including financial risk and reward, collaboration on curriculum and sometimes a co-management of physical space (Verbik & Merkley, 2006). Joint venture contracts have historically been negotiated so that the partners in the endeavor share ownership of the IBC, while simultaneously retaining separate legal status (Lane, 2010).

China's Growing IBC Landscape: The Sleeping Giant Awakes

The accelerated growth of IBCs in China is a significant and recent development in the overall growth of the cross-border higher education landscape. China, with the world's largest population at 1.4 billion and the fastest growing transitional economy, has an unmet need for higher education opportunities for its citizens. Both the definition of what constitutes an IBC as well as policy changes in China have contributed to IBC growth in this country. China's IBC models are based on a partnership model that was not originally recognized by those classifying IBCs. The aforementioned definition of an IBC by the OBHE includes the partnership type models established in the host country of China. Additionally the opening up of China has contributed significantly to the establishment of IBCs within its borders. China is currently host to 22 IBCs (C-BERT, 2016).

During the early period of globalization post-WWII and into the 1980s when IBCs were first emerging, China had very limited to no

involvement in the global trade of goods and services including cross-border education. Strategic economic and educational reforms taking place within China beginning in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, and coinciding with the opening-up of China, supported the future growth in global trading and cross-border education collaboration (Xu & Kan, 2013). The 1980s educational reform in China, as one part of this Chinese "opening up" process, is documented by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2010) as one of the "pioneering strategies" to guide the future of China. By 1996, China

> *While the exact details of each of the arrangements are often unknown, it is known that there is some level of shared ownership including financial risk and reward, collaboration on curriculum and sometimes a co-management of physical space.*

had doubled its share of world exports and had significantly increased the number of students studying abroad. These early strategic policy initiatives marked a shift in China's global presence in the economy and in higher education. China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 further accelerated global trading and concurrently the development of higher education policy in China (Xu & Kan, 2013). As part of China's membership in the WTO, China committed to more robust trade agreements in educational services. The commitment "opened the educational market to foreign providers in broad fields" (Xu & Kan, 2013, p. 205). In policy documents such as the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools,* the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of

China (2003) highlighted general provisions supporting the growth of foreign partners and the openness to partner in joint educational ventures such as IBCs.

The University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) is reported to be the first formal foreign cooperative partnership between China and a host country. Within three short years after China's membership into the WTO, construction was underway in 2004 for the UNNC campus, and the first cohort of students were enrolled the same year. The Chinese partnership with a prominent British university signaled a new era in Chinese-foreign cooperative relations in higher education (Feng, 2013). The UNNC IBC business model is representative of the policy regulation dictating the establishment of an IBC in China. Education policy set forth by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China requires that the president of any joint international campus arrangement within China's borders, excluding Hong Kong, must be a Chinese citizen. In 2000, the newly appointed chancellor of the University of Nottingham, Yang Fujia, happened to be a Chinese citizen and it was Yang Fujia's leadership that enabled the successful collaboration between the University of Nottingham and the host country of China (Feng, 2013). The historical significance of the first foreign IBC established by a partnership between a British university and China in the city if Ningbo is not lost upon the experts. Feng (2013) pointed out that toward the close of the First Opium War, Ningbo was one of the first Chinese cities seized by the British military and the subsequent "fall of Ningbo symbolically ushered in the one-hundred-year decline of China" (p. 474). Current day Ningbo, a city 75 miles south of Shanghai with a population of approximately 5.5 million people, is known for its entrepreneurship and business culture as well as for being the former home of several members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering (Feng, 2013, p. 474,). China's fruitful environment is home to a number of U.S. IBCs including Duke Kunshan University in partnership with Wuhan University; New York University's partnership with East China Normal University in Shanghi; Johns Hopkins' Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese American Studies; and

the Sun Yat-sen University-Carnegie Mellon University Joint Institute of Engineering at Sun Yat-sen University.

Social Capital and Sustainability

China's IBC partnership model, as one type of business model emerging within the landscape of IBC development, is in part reflective of a quality control strategy to ensure sustainability (Crombie-Borgos, 2013). Multinational companies have crossed borders for a number of years, but multinational universities crossing borders with the development of a physical campus and awarding of degrees from a home institution to students who acquire all or part of their degrees at the branch campus site introduces a number of complex and unique challenges (Crombie-Borgos, 2013). Multinational universities operating IBCs face challenges such as the availability of qualified candidates, availability of qualified faculty, differences in cultural norms, changing political climates, legal considerations and long-term funding (Altbach, 2011; Lane, 2011; Knight, 2006). Each of these challenges in isolation or together can threaten the sustainability of an IBC.

I argue in my research that the use of social capital is one strategy to manage the challenges and complexities of cross-border IBC development. Social capital, as Coleman highlighted, is a relationship between two actors and serves as a productive and active mechanism to "achieve certain ends that in its absence would not be possible." In this way social capital can be particularly useful when operating a higher education institution in a foreign country geographically and politically different from that of the home campus. Networks or connections to a host country can be hugely beneficial in navigating the unique cultural, legal, and political policies in a foreign country.

> Using an organizational behavior lens, the literature suggests that social networks can act as a bridging mechanism for resource dependent organizations such as IBCs to overcome challenges associated with understanding and adapting to a host country environment and thus mitigating the risk associated with the endeavor. (as cited in Crombie-Borgos, 2013)

The nature of the joint venture or partnership model provides immediate network connections and relationships between individuals within the host country. These network connections are essential to the survival of any multinational venture. The mechanisms of business exchanges in one country are not the same as that of another, and this often translates over into the management of an IBC in a host country. For example, in China, in the absence of codified laws and regulations, managers use *guanxi* (interpersonal ties between managers) to facilitate economic exchanges (Peng & Lou, 2000). Having resources in the form of individuals working within the IBC model who are familiar with the cultural norms and practices, especially related to curriculum content, hiring faculty and enrolling students, can potentially determine which IBC is sustainable and which IBC closes prematurely. The success of an IBC is in part be dependent on the ability of those managing the IBC within the host country to make connections within the host country and navigate the foreign environment external to the IBC in which it operates (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Crombie-Borgos, 2013; Borgos, In Press).

Concluding Thoughts

The number of IBCs is small relative to the overall global market for higher education, but it is a growing segment that has touched a number of regions around the world. My interest and research grew out of the need for a greater understanding of the ways in which IBCs are delivering educational programs and whether they are doing so using connections that enable sensitivity to the host country environment. The issues related to the quality of the programs will linger as experts question the ability of a home campus in one country to manage and provide adequate oversight of a campus in a country geopolitically distinct from that of the home campus. An IBC's ability to harness sustainable organizational practices to minimize risks such as significant financial losses, unplanned closures and damages to the home campus' academic reputation will dictate the future development of IBCs (Crombie-Borgos, 2013). Careful, coordinated strategic planning aimed at addressing the short and long-term needs of both the home campus and the host country

is imperative to minimize the inevitable challenges posed by such a complex endeavor. Without such planning, the ability of a branch campus to adapt in a host country can be a tumultuous and potentially unsuccessful endeavor. Obstacles faced by the home campus in setting up a branch campus cannot always be foreseen, and it will be imperative for IBCs to continue to access knowledge through the mechanism of social capital regarding host country practices and policies.

During my research, I have been able to establish that there are a number of ways that IBCs have access to the cultural nuances of a host country. A primary source of knowledge is found through the administrative team onsite at the IBC. In several cases, U.S. IBCs have hired IBC administrators who have previously worked for another organization in the host country, such as another postsecondary institution. In other instances, IBCs have administrators who received their degrees in the host country, or received a degree in another country but have familial ties to the host country that led them to return home. Many IBCs have oversight boards with individuals connected to both the university, the host country and in many cases, the labor market within the region. In these cases, there are significant connections between the IBC and the host country. Regardless of the divergent strategies used to establish IBCs within and among regions, connections are and will remain important for the adaptation and sustainability of these new but evolving international educational models.

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A Poem

April Simmons, Metropolitan New York Region

What are you living for?

I awoke to a promise
Told that I would only be given one second to make the world mine
Where time is borrowed, moments defined as real sorrow
Just
Waiting for a chance or even a sign
It is like knowing all that is due but still missing enough to pay for the fine

Oh My,

How life can change at the drop of a dime

I have seen homes become home-less shelters
and less shelters accepting people who need homes
Kings losing their thrones
Dogs losing their bones
Babies losing their lives
lives being taken from guys
I have seen tears falling enough equating to years of unspoken reasons
where time became regrets manifesting as demons

Not letting u forget what u lived for
What are u living for?
The sun, the air, the trees, this life?
Oh yes, as I tuck my head and heart to peacefully sleep at night

I awoke to the promise
The promise of being the chosen one
Born out of love,
Awakened to greet the dream in the sun

I awoke to a promise
Told that I would be given one second to make the world mine
And given one penny to find nine more in order to make a dime
That makes 10 cent
But still, what is that worth?
Similar to the years of hurt that becomes endured
And all you're given back is a word
That sounds like I'm sorry

I am sorry … that you went through that
And although I never went through that
I know how you feel …

I've seen life enough to wish that it can be given just a little bit longer
And felt enough strife to awake to the feeling of stronger
Yes, stronger
After the residue dries up into the glimmer of sun
Until happiness smiles as we feel laughter as one

Gone are the days where thoughts wreak havoc
Because havoc wreaks and I can't stand the stench
And the streaks that are left hasten a weary heart
How about we think about introducing another part

Like how blessed days come
And the miracles promised are an infinite sum
So as her dreams die, my heart lives to believe
For if we both fall down how can I pick her up from her knees

And if he takes his life now, how can I give thanks for his breath
So I must shield him with love and protect him from death
For my vessels resemble rivers
Like shivers, they are meant to freeze the moment and make it last

So please don't ask what I'm living for

Exploring the SUNY Applied Learning Initiative

Anita Brown, Collegewide Career Development Office;
Anastasia Pratt, Northeast New York Region

Gwendolyn Murph, a SUNY Empire State College student, perhaps expressed it best when she said, "If you don't do an internship, personally, I think you are cheating yourself" (Brown, 2015, para. 5). In describing her own pathway through ESC – one that involves maximizing her 30 years of professional experience while seeking a bachelor's degree in business, management and economics with a concentration in human resource management – "Murph" explained that "Exposure is key. Textbook learning is important but it is a whole different story to try a new career on for size" (para. 5).

For those of us at the college exploring the SUNY Applied Learning Initiative, the goal of which is "… to ensure that every SUNY student has the opportunity to take part in at least one Applied Learning experience before they graduate" (SUNY, 2015, p. 3), Murph's ideas resonate loudly. How can our students, often adults with families and jobs, participate in the wide variety of experiential learning opportunities available to their younger counterparts at more traditional SUNY schools? In October 2015, we presented at the New York State Cooperative & Experiential Education Association (NYSCEEA) conference in Troy, New York. Our presentation, "Experiential Learning and Adult Students," focused on ESC's efforts to provide experiential education opportunities for its students and built upon the work done by the Applied Learning Team, which is chaired by Gina Torino and Pat Isaac, and includes Timothy Cosgriff, Pat DeCoster, Malongze Foma, Michele Forte, Joel Goldberg, Ruth Goldberg, JoAnn Kingsley, Maureen Kravec, Alan Mandell, Veronica O'Geen, Lucy Winner and the authors of this essay.

With the overarching goal of the Applied Learning Initiative in mind, our local goals have been to define applied learning and to both identify and build upon existing options

Anita Brown

for ESC students. To that end, we have defined applied learning as hands-on, real-world learning in which students learn by doing. Applied learning opportunities at the college have included projects that fit with SUNY Serves, the portion of the initiative centered on service learning, community service and civic engagement. Two projects that fall within this category are the partnership between the Center for Disability Services (CFDS) and the Center for Distance Learning and Northeast region, which brings workplace-embedded, on-site studies, and academic and student supports to our students who are employed by the CFDS; and a Staten Island location initiative to bring students into the community, including Lifestyles for the Disabled, the local YMCA (working with children and families), the local Jewish Community Center (primarily working with the elderly) and Stephen's House (working with the foster youth and pregnant teens in residence), to complete credit-bearing coursework.

Our students also have opportunities to complete applied learning through the SUNY Works component of the initiative. Focusing on co-ops, internships, work study and clinical placements, SUNY Works brings students into the field to do work for which they have

Anastasia Pratt

already established theoretical knowledge. ESC's advanced certificates in public history require just this type of experience. Graduate students who are enrolled in the certificate complete foundational studies (Museums and Public History; Archival Theory and Practice; Exhibitions: Planning and Interpretation; Oral History Theory and Methods) in anticipation of completing a 3-credit, 150-hour internship at a museum, archive, historical association or other public history site. Students further complete on-site work during their archival, exhibition and oral history studies. Through the hands-on application of theoretical knowledge, these public history students strengthen their understanding of the field and better position themselves to enter the field upon completion of the certificate.

That positioning, in fact, is one of the benefits of applied learning. Programs that require applied learning help students who are in a career transition or who are seeking a career for the first time because they offer the chance to identify career pathways. Additionally, applied learning experiences have the strong potential to turn into paid employment opportunities upon graduation. Research suggests that reasons for increased employability have been attributed to more

highly developed interpersonal skills, job related competencies and willingness to comply with organizational demands (Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Kaiser, 2013). As well, the creation of unique service learning opportunities can provide students with the chance to apply knowledge in real-world settings. Service learning internship programs that immerse students in real-world settings, researchers have found, develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are not easily cultivated in solely academic settings (Matthews & Zimmerman, 2009). Further, applied learning helps to boost career self-efficacy for midlife and younger, less experienced students, while also enhancing students' overall self-esteem (Gushue, Clarke, Pantzer, & Scanlan, 2006).

Currently, SUNY Empire State College is working to establish a repository of applied learning opportunities. Given the distributed nature of our college, this collegewide repository is especially important and will allow us to assist individual students seeking internships, co-ops and other service learning opportunities. The Collegewide Career Development Office offers us a very effective way of completing that inventory and working with students across the state. Beyond creating a centralized process for applied learning – which involves coordinating the process of registering, supervising and completing an internship – the office provides a means of maintaining internship information as a reference for future students. Additionally, the Collegewide Student Affairs' new career website (http://www.esc.edu/collegewide-student-services/career-services/) assists students as they seek positions. With services ranging from mock interviews, assessment tools and an internship/career events blog, the site promises to help ESC students

as they move from the theoretical world of the academy to the practical world of the workplace.

In July of 2015, career services launched a job posting system, Purple Briefcase (https://app.purplebriefcase.com/pb/account/login/), which is available to students and alumni. We are encouraging employers and organizations to post their internship and job opportunities, and for students to use the resource as a job search tool. Students can use additional job search resources found on the career services Internship page (http://www.esc.edu/collegewide-student-services/career-services/internships/). Chancellor Zimpher announced a new SUNY-wide resource, InternShop (http://www.suny.edu/internshop/), during her State of the University address in January 2016. InternShop is a partnership between SUNY and The Business Council of New York State. This new software platform matches employer members of the NYS Business Council with interns. Currently this has only been released to students from SUNY schools. Moving forward, it will be open to students from private colleges within New York state.

Our presentation at the 2015 NYSCEEA conference referred to all of the services and opportunities available to ESC students and mentors. The conference itself included participants from across New York and beyond. The association exists to promote and support experiential education for college and university students in New York state, creating and supporting opportunities for higher education professionals and employers working with cooperative and experiential education to network and share best practices. As a team of experts in experiential education, the organization provides resources and support for colleagues interested in improving the effectiveness of their experiential education programs.

Participation in NYSCEEA will support SUNY Empire State College's continued work with students on applied and experiential learning opportunities. Through this organization and the collaborations made possible through discussion and partnerships with other member organizations, we can serve as an example of all that is possible for adult students, often learning at a distance.

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Here Comes This Dreamer

Robert Carey, Metropolitan New York Region

While our longtime colleague, Bob Carey, was earning his M.Div. and S.T.M. degrees at Union Theological Seminary, he took a two-year leave (1963-1965) to work as an assistant pastor in Dr. Martin Luther King's Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. During Bob's second year, he remained active in the church while serving as the acting director of the Atlanta Council on Human Relations. Bob delivered a version of the following talk on Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday, 17 January 2016, at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City. We thank Bob for letting us share this talk in All About Mentoring.

Good morning.

So, let's begin with: How did I come to be here? In this place?

Fifty years ago – seems like forever – but to me it is just yesterday. And in talking about American history, we should remember what William Faulkner (1950) had to say on that subject: "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (p. 73). Nowhere is this truer that in asking how all of us have been shaped by the invention and use of "race" in American life. I know when we celebrate Dr. King, it is not unusual to invoke the themes of progress, of triumph over adversity, of keeping hope alive. All of these are worthy themes and some of those notes will be sounded before we are finished.

But if we are to have an engaged, committed dialogue on why race continues to haunt our days and betray the possibility of a richer future, we have to start with how the idea of race was invented and used, and how that usage has persisted. So let's begin with Atlanta.

I was very lucky. I was finishing my second year at Union Seminary in New York City and had the opportunity to take part in the Student Interracial Ministry, a program that, as the name implies, was seeking to place ministerial students in different parishes, and

for participating parishes to begin to live with a diverse clergy staff. I got to go to Ebenezer – total surprise and elation.

The time and the place and the circumstances all seemed to suggest that change was happening; that a new sense of public life was taking shape in America. To go to Atlanta and Ebenezer was to be very close to the drivers of change. I lived at Mennonite House, a Mennonite service facility presided over by Vincent Harding, himself very much involved with the movement, and a host to people who came and went from Atlanta working on civil rights issues, organizing and training people, working with local clergy, lawyers, the FBI – the FBI. … Yes, the FBI, not as an ally but as J. Edgar Hoover's apparatchiks who were working in season and out to convince America that this agitation and carrying on was communist-inspired. Yet with all that, the time was a hopeful one: change was possible, change would take place, some of that dead weight of the past would be lifted.

My work involved working with young people in church along with Albert Brinson, another assistant pastor who was my age and who would go on to finish seminary and have a distinguished career with the American Baptist Convention. In addition to developing educational programs, I visited church members in Grady Memorial Hospital, a ziggurat of a place that was segregated from top to bottom, and visited parish members who were housebound. As I got settled, I also started attending Breadbasket meetings, an initiative of Dr. King's SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference] that enlisted clergy (and their members) to push for change, targeting firms like Coke and others to change their practices in hiring.

The days passed quickly and I stayed on a second year working with the Atlanta Council on Human Relations and remaining active in Ebenezer. It is very easy, even now, some 50 years later – to call up a host of moments that seem fresh and new. Breakfast with Mrs. King
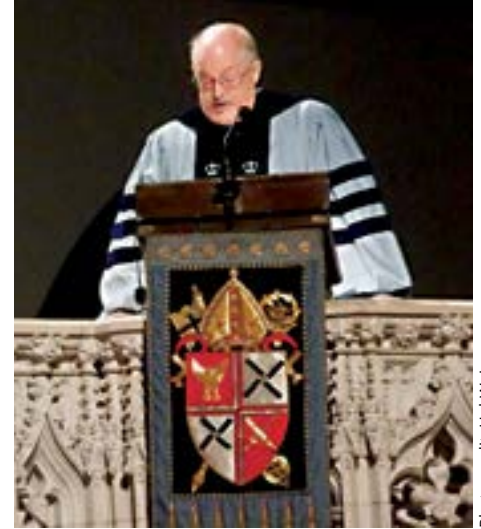
Bob Carey in the high pulpit at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York City.

Photo credit: Hal Weiner

(and helping to change one of the kids – babies at the time), family picnics, birthday clubs, officiating with Daddy King at funeral services, people coming and going through Mennonite House … watching the funeral of President Kennedy. Even with that shock to the system, it was possible to think that a page, maybe several pages were turning. Of the people I visited, Mother Clayton stands out in my mind – tall, lean, with strong hands, she would invite me to visit to have tea and sit on her porch while she introduced me to an American past I was just beginning to realize was something very, very different from the popular version that passed for the narrative of our nation's past. She was, I am certain, in her 80s at the time, so she was born during the killing years of Reconstruction – of lynching, hooded riders and the framing of a rigidly segregated life. As I look back on those conversations and what they pointed me to, I realize now that I was beginning to take the measure of what I have come to call the "Jefferson paradox."

Let's begin this way. Do you remember your high school history – American History 1 and 2? The first part was settlement to the Civil War; part two was Civil War to the present.

You can find that division even today. The line of the narrative is about European settlement, maybe highlighting issues of religious freedom, early ethnic diversity. In my history book, there was one picture of black people picking cotton, and a picture of George Washington Carver and/or Booker T. Washington. The Civil War was nobly fought by brave men. I imagine more current history books are less circumspect in laying out the realities of slavery and American development. But even now when we celebrate Black History Month, the very structure of the celebration suggests that the real deal, American History with a capital "A" and "H," roles on, is a 12 month affair, and that Black History Month and Women's History Month are sidebar issues, a nod to a theme, a motif in the main body of the story.

Let's come in from this side.

Tell me which of the following owned slaves and why: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, James Polk, Zachary Taylor, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant?

Eight presidents owned slaves while living in the Executive Mansion – for 50 of the first 60 years of the republic the president was a slaveholder.

But what about "… all Men are created equal, that they and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. …"? That apparent contradiction – celebrating the high ideals of liberty and a new vision of the political community and owning slaves – is easily explained, and that is the center of the Jefferson paradox. The words he wrote and believed in, the ideals that people enlisted under to establish America as an independent nation were words spoken on behalf of people like himself – white European-American males – and even that group did not include all white males, though the franchise would spread, helped along by Jefferson and Madison and later figures like Martin Van Buren, the first of American career politicians. So while there might have been more than a little hypocrisy involved in espousing freedom and unalienable rights, while profiting from slave labor, it was very easy for white Americans to see no contradiction at all.

The nation that was being born was nurtured and growing rapidly because of slavery and cotton. By focusing on the founding fathers and the writing of the Constitution, it is easy to overlook the fact that the nation was taking wing politically and economically, because of the work of slaves and the commodities they produced – tobacco, rice and then the demon: cotton. In fact, if you look closely at the Constitution you can see how much political weight the reality of slavery carried into Constitution Hall. The three-fifths clause guaranteed Southern political dominance; the article prohibiting the slave trade in 1808 provided yet more time, as Madison (1787) observed – to "produce all the mischief that can be apprehended from the liberty to import slaves" (para. 15). People got rich off cotton – not just plantation owners, but bankers, factory owners, ship builders, maritime insurance firms; the list is long and leads to the lobby of a good many institutions that are part of our history and remain open for business today.

To return to our history books for a moment, we were taught that the Industrial Revolution was an important moment in Western history – new systems of power and production – true enough. And where did the money come from to make this happen? First, sugar – the big driver in the slave trade – and following sugar's success, American cotton. And here is where we come to the other side of the paradox. The slavery in question was a particular kind of slavery – slavery as a system of labor was very old in the world. People could and did sell themselves into slavery and eventually earn their freedom; captives were kept as slaves and could become citizens; in some instance slave armies were central to a kingdom's success in warfare. What was new in the New World was that slavery was not a system of work alone. Slavery now defined an individual. In fashioning the racial ideology that rationalized the slave trade, the violence and control of enslaved life in American, whites argued that enslaved Africans were fulfilling their destiny; that white and black were utterly distinct. Here is a bit from Jefferson's (1785) *Notes on the State of Virginia* where, using the racial science of the day, he lays out in a nerdy detailed way why Africans are forever different. He considers color, hair, the function of kidneys, odor and sensitivity to cold in order to show that the racial hierarchy of slavery is indeed understandable. This sense of regrettable but true difference would inform the work of clergy who felt obliged to minister to the enslaved and who worked to fashion an ideology of beneficent paternalism. The enslaved became "Our people"; the master, a Christian head of household who supported and chastised. If this seems impossible to fathom, it provided people like Jefferson and others a way of quieting whatever spasm of conscience might occur. Others like Alexander Stephens, the vice president of the Confederacy, were blunter, less in need of an assumed scientific approach. In his famous *ex tempore* "Corner Stone" speech at the time of the formation of the Confederacy, Stephens (1861) said that "its [the Confederacy's] foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his nature and normal condition" (para. 10).

Freedom – but just for some – dominance and control – these continue to shape American life.

Freedom had a brief season after slavery was destroyed, but what remained was the taken for granted sense that black Americans were to be controlled – even more so now because they were not "Our people," they were "Those people." Racial terrorism, lynching, burning,

> *In fashioning the racial ideology that rationalized the slave trade, the violence and control of enslaved life in American, whites argued that enslaved Africans were fulfilling their destiny; that white and black were utterly distinct.*

whipping and always the invocation of the law and the need to protect the sanctity of white women and Christian culture mark the beginning of our day. If you saw the movie *12 Years a Slave,* you could say, as many did, "Thank goodness that is behind us; that it is over." Well, one thing was over. But if you saw *Selma,* you realized that that happened the day before yesterday. What happened after Reconstruction is that the means of control and exclusion passed to a variety of institutions, first and foremost, to the police. Banks and insurance companies and federal agencies all played a part. So, in the scheme of things, white people who found themselves puzzled or annoyed by demonstrations, by people shouting "No Justice No peace"; who would say things like: "We never had any difficulties like that when I was growing up"; failed to recognized that their towns were Sundown towns; that their local police departments, whatever else they did in catching the bad guys, were also agents of harassment and intimidation. Black people had to be out of town by sundown. Banks would only deal in red-lined real estate.

Here is a portion from Dr. King's (1963) Letter from a Birmingham Jail that captures that work and its mechanisms in detail:

> We have waited for more than three hundred and forty years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jet-like speed toward the goal of political independence, and we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging facts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an air tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year old daughter why she can't

go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year old son asking in agonizing pathos: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tip-toe stance never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"; then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. (pp. 6-7)

But, it will be said; that world is gone; those things don't happen. We have President Obama.Wow!!! Isn't this over? Aren't we post-racial?Remember Faulkner? It isn't even past.Were you surprised by Ferguson? Were you surprised to read about the Chicago Police force? Do you remember the War on Drugs and who went to jail during that war? The patterns set in Reconstruction, leaving the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to gather dust as a court that was solicitous of the rights of property read them in particularly narrow ways, still remain deeply embedded in everyday life.

The push for a more open, more inclusive society is a permanent piece of work. This day, above all of our national holidays, should bring us back to ask: Are we there yet? What is the work that still needs doing? It was

> *So to be true to the promise of this day we are enjoined to live in hope, but to be ever vigilant, pushing forward for that larger, more expansive and welcoming community to be born.*

the genius of Dr. King not only to see how the Constitution could become a people's document; to argue that the Declaration of Independence included all who sought to grow and thrive and contribute to their communities; he also called us to remember that the structures of privilege have been well fashioned; that the rich and those who benefit from structures of exploitation and exclusion will be working to protect what they have. Indeed in our life time, the gains registered after the Voting Rights Act was passed have been under steady siege by those who have invented a new coded vocabulary to guard their "city on a hill."

George Orwell, who taught us to pay attention to the politics of language and the strategies of obfuscation and mystification, would have more examples than he could possibly use in following the coded political discussion of American "segregation" when blacks were controlled and excluded and not many people seemed to be bothered. When, through political activity and legislation, more space was set at the table, more doors were opened, suddenly, a new danger appeared: *reverse discrimination.* America was told to become *color blind.* Why now? With voter registration, the lurking specter of fraud was invoked to roll back easy access for people to register and vote. A court that seems deliberately unwilling to reckon with the American past will indeed work to continue privilege's grip.

But, this day, is not an occasion for despair. We have right here before us, our communion table, a place where we gather as a community, what sociologists like to call a "metric," a way of measuring something. For Dr. King, the full

measure of community was that it invited in – it did not exclude; it celebrated – it did not recoil in pious rectitude. So to be true to the promise of this day we are enjoined to live in hope, but to be ever vigilant, pushing forward for that larger, more expansive and welcoming community to be born.

I would suggest, in closing, that we scrap the old metaphor of a city on a hill. On close inspection, the city turns out to be a gated community, with gatekeepers who are packing too many guns, who are too ready to shoot anyone who approaches who looks different. I suggest rather that we use the metaphor of a feast – all are welcome, all can come to the table. Here is Isaiah, 25: 6-7:

> 6. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

> 7. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

And when we sit there and see the array of our brethren, I like to think that we will sing: "How I got over, how I got over … my soul looks back in wonder how I got over."

And for grace, I can't help but feel that we will hear and join the voice of Dr. King when he said: "Free at last, Free at last, Thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

Amen

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"By virtue of participation in culture, meaning is rendered public and shared. Our culturally adapted way of life depends upon shared meanings and shared concepts and depends as well upon shared modes of discourse for negotiating differences in meaning and interpretation."

– Jerome Bruner (1915–2016)
Acts of Meaning: Four Lectures on Mind and Culture
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990, pp. 12–13

Midlife Crisis

Margaret Clark-Plaskie, Genesee Valley Region

Forty-five years old! We're starting to think about our own mortality and how many years we have left rather than celebrating how many years we've been here. Too many loved ones are gone. We worry about the younger, more attractive competition. How can we keep up? What
do we have to offer? Are we past our prime? Will anyone want us anymore?

Who is that in the mirror? When did that image become us? We're almost unrecognizable. It seems like only yesterday we were young, vibrant and ready to take on the world. We were going to be different and make a difference! What happened? Did we fulfill our early dreams? Were we too idealistic?

Where are we now? Are we where we want to be? Is this all there is? Can we look forward to anything else? With whom? Quick – look around. Is it her? Him? Them? It would be easy to point to those closest to us and those roles and places to which we've been committed – they must be constraining us.

Let's change them and free ourselves; we'll feel better and everything will be good again. Or will it?

What's easy is often not what's best in the long run. It's much more challenging (even painful) to turn inward and examine ourselves. But it's worth the journey.

It will take time. It will take support. It can be scary to question our long-held values, beliefs and identities. What if we find that they no longer fit? What if we are not who we think we are? What if we haven't accomplished what we set out to do? We may need to set different goals and define ourselves in new ways. We may shift our priorities. Or we may find that we still hold the same ideals and commit even more strongly to our previous roles and identities.

We won't know until we dig in. Tearing down the familiar structure shakes the very ground beneath our feet. Can we feel it? We're not losing our minds (or ourselves). We need something to hold onto, to steady us, as we examine the foundation, use what we choose, rebuild and try out possible plans. Test them. Make adjustments. Keep going. Balance.

Margaret Clark-Plaskie

What is our future? It depends a lot on how we work through and resolve the college's current "midlife crisis" together. This is not the first (nor will it be the last) time to question ourselves, but it is a milestone, a significant transitional period in the life of the college. Here's to a long, healthy and meaningful life!

Combat!

Robert Congemi, Northeast New York Region

I tried to get through life in Iraq, as I did at times as a teenager back home in rural New York, by retreating to a fictional world.

Recently, for instance, before I received my roadside bomb wound, which got me back to the States, I prepared for a search and destruction of mud, hut-like houses of an Iraqi village by starting to think up a novel the night before. I imagined that maybe it would take place in 19th century America, in the Midwest, where people left the East coast, or, better yet, their homes in Europe to seek out and find a new life. To begin with, in my mind there was the emotional decision of the pioneers or immigrants to leave behind extraneous possessions, important friends, even relatives.

"Take only what you absolutely need, Mitya," one of them might say from Eastern Europe. "There's no room or money for anything else."

"But, Mother. ..."

"You must."

"And what about my friends? And Aunt Nastasya?'

In my mind the mother reaches down and touches her child's face, an eternal gesture of comfort.

"Don't cry. It will be a good thing. You will see."

Once back home, I put aside the fictionalizing for a while – the separation from my buddies, my arm and side chewed up, the endless red tape to return, the high emotions of it all. And then there was my father to deal with. One afternoon, I got off a bus about a mile from our farm, walked the winding dirt road to the family house, and standing before it, lit a cigarette. I could see behind the house my father's corn crop was in good shape, and in the yard our old John Deere tractor to one side of the house still stood ready to serve. The sky above me was a royal blue, and the trees far off

ringing our property rose elegant and in full leaf. For the moment, I wished my mother was still alive. Then, not completely to my surprise, my father opened the front door and strolled out onto the porch. He was looking to see if two years at war had changed his son, made him more of a man.

Leaning against a porch rail, he nodded a cautious acknowledgement of me. Sullen, I wondered why he didn't come out of the house to greet me with his rifle, which believe it or not he usually kept close by him or carried. Hunting, on top of his alpha plus sense of himself, even despite his age, was one of his few passions.

"Poppa," I called out to him.

He nodded. "Son."

I tried to make a joke. "They let me come home."

"I can see that." He slowly sat down on the porch, and lit a cigarette himself. "Did they make a man out of you, Willie?" He seemed to be searching my face for clues to an answer to his question.

"That's for you to decide. It's always been that way, right?"

"Did you kill anybody?"

I ignored his question, though I had. Iraq had been far more than even an NRA-obsessed individual could imagine – awful, hideous, shameful. I was not about to tell him of the seemingly never-ending explosions of mortars and bombs, the nights and days of automatic rifle fire, until you thought you'd lose your mind. We had to kill those fucking insurgents! I'd simply let him be the tough guy he had to be, which I suppose he felt he always needed to be.

"Life was a bitch all the time when I was younger," he once told me during one of our fights, not too much before I decided to enlist and run out on him and try to prove

Robert Congemi

Photo credit: Lana Ortiz

something to myself at the same time. "Being rotten poor forever and knowing it. And it ain't any better now. It's a lot worse. Every day."

Instead I managed my way through a disappointing welcome home, neither of us giving much quarter, entered into our old house and climbed upstairs to my room at the head of the stairs and tried to reacquaint myself with my past life. Nothing had been touched as best I could remember. I wondered if it had even been cleaned since I left. The bed was there, my reading lamp and table, my books on the shelves. After a few emotional moments, I decided I would go visit my buddy Little Joe to see if I couldn't have a better homecoming.

I confiscated my father's old coupe and drove to Little Joe's house, tentative about the way, but in the end I remembered all right, and soon I was on this long dirt road to where I knew Joe had lived, as part of an improvised trailer camp. After I had parked the car before his trailer, I waited a few moments to remember my past with him and prepare my thoughts. Suddenly, out of the trailer came a skinny young woman, dressed in worn, shabby

clothes. She looked toward my car to try to determine if I was friend or foe, and slowly came toward me. As she did, I could see better and wondered if she were in the early stages of pregnancy. Her hair was long and not particularly combed, though she was clearly a pleasant person and pretty enough.

I leaned out the car window and called to her. "This still where Little Joe Graves lives? I'm a friend."

At these words, she dropped the concern she might have had over the stranger before her and nodded her head.

"He still lives here."

I got out of the car. "Good. I came to see him. First thing I'm doing since I got back. We were pretty much best friends since being kids."

She continued to study me. As she did, a dog ambled over slowly, a dog who I knew well, and who thankfully knew me. I bent down:

"Goldie. Come on. It's me. Willie. I've missed you, lady. Almost as much as I've missed Little Joe."

At this encouragement, the dog did approach me, and while I petted her, I asked the woman if Little Joe was home, and if he was, could I speak to him.

"He's asleep," she said.

"In the daytime?'

"Yes, he does that a lot."

But before I could ask her any more questions, Little Joe suddenly came out of the trailer, brightened greatly at the sight of me, threw open his arms, and came running toward me. I opened my arms, too, and we embraced, like wild little kids.

"Oh, boy, Willie, have I missed you," he said, real happy. "When did you get back?

"Today, man. I came right over."

He stepped back and asked the question: "How was Iraq?" He could of course see I had been wounded.

"It wasn't a picnic," I told him.

"But you still came back alive, huh?"

"Yup."

Then he turned to the woman. "Jeannie, this is my best friend. We grew up together."

"I know. He told me."

Turning back to me, he said: "Hey, Willie, remember that time your father almost killed you?"

"Which time?" I asked him.

He laughed, pleased. "The time we got home from that fishing and camping trip. You were hours late. I thought he was going to shoot you. Honest to God."

"So did I," I agreed.

"Jeannie, his father is the meanest son of a bitch God ever made," he explained. "I'm surprised one of the two hasn't killed the other guy by now." He looked at me. "You saw him already?"

"Oh, yes."

"And what did he say? Did he welcome you back from Iraq? Was he glad to see you were still alive?"

"Let's say that we didn't get to fighting yet."

Little Joe shook his head and told Jeannie to get us some beers, which she did, and soon we were sitting on plastic lawn chairs in front of his trailer, continuing on with our visit.

"What about you, Little Joe?" I asked him.

At this, he seemed to grow cagey. "I'm doing OK."

"Doing what?"

"A little of this and that."

I nodded, not wanting to push him.

"The economy shits, you know."

"I know."

"Worse than ever."

"I wondered about that."

He brightened. "But I got ol' Jeannie here." She was standing next to him and he reached out and patted her on her bottom. "She's hanging in there with me. And we got a baby coming."

"I thought I saw that."

"Little Joe worked for a neighbor," Jeannie suddenly said. "He's a carpenter. Little Joe helped him out."

At this, Little Joe got very defensive and insecure. "Yeah. For a couple of months." And then suddenly I thought he was going to cry. "That's the total of my accomplishments since you left," he said.

For the next few days I stayed in my room most of the time. I came to the pretty obvious conclusion that I was exhausted. I wandered out of my room on occasion to get something to eat at a local diner, but was careful to avoid my father. Once or twice, I thought to retreat to the consolation of the narrative I was creating and enjoying in my head – I had gotten to the point where my European family was trying to endure the ordeal of getting to our country, but I didn't progress very far. Finally, I decided it was time for me to see if I could get some idea of what my life was going to be post-Iraq, and with this in mind, I felt it was smart for me to pay a visit to our local junior college and also to look for a job. I felt these should be my next steps. So, two days later, I drove out to where the college was, though I had never been there, parked my car and looked around. What struck me most was how swarming with young men and women the campus was, all desperate to get themselves an education, I assumed, and overhearing a discussion by some students, how hard they were trying to get a grip on the debt for their education that was being piled on them.

"I could be $50,000 in the hole when I finally graduate," one of the students said.

"Count yourself lucky," another told the first one.

"My parents didn't have to pay anything for *their* education."

"Things are bad and they get worse all the time." This was a young woman.

"And there is no guarantee that after all this money and effort there will be any jobs."

"Come on. I don't quite believe that," the woman said.

"You don't? What planet do you live on? It used to be OK, but it isn't anymore, though we kid ourselves that maybe in our own case it is."

"Boy, are you negative."

"No. Just facing reality."

With that, I moved on to scouting out more of the campus until I finally found the central administration building and the admissions office. There, I was confronted with a pile of papers, forms and information that made my head spin a little, except for the gradual insight that I had some time to get enrolled because it probably couldn't happen until the next semester, a couple of months into the future. Not feeling particularly successful, I next moved on to the daunting task of looking to see if I could find myself a decent job.

I had some idea of how bad the job situation the country was in. Job prospects were dismal before I left for military service, and from all I could learn since then, things were getting worse. Apparently the government wanted us to believe the economy was getting better all the time, but that argument seemed to be based on replacing well-paying jobs with minimum wage jobs, if there were even minimum wage jobs available. So, when I managed to seriously start to look for work, it was worse than I'd expected. Searching the local newspapers, I pretty much saw nothing was available, except to read general, phony-upbeat notices from the fascist-like giants like McDonald's and Walmart. With my head again spinning, but trying to be as positive as I could, I told myself that this was the reality of the situation, and that I had to deal with it. I had to apply for a job at one of these places. Saddened, I went to their websites and doggedly tried to prepare for my unlucky fate. The companies continued to talk about their great goals, conditions, people, employee future, and when I thought I was prepared for them, I went first to Walmart. At their store, I was directed to an assistant manager's office, told to take a seat and wait for someone to meet with me, and in time was greeted by a tired old man who was rather decent actually and instructed me to fill out an application form. I was as conscientious and honest and as upbeat as I could be.

"Will I be able to get a job here?" I asked him when everything was done. I thought I'd go for it.

He smiled at me. "We'll let you know. We'll process your application. We have your contact info."

It was more of the same wherever I went. At McDonald's, an unpleasant-looking guy met with me, answered my questions and helped me fill out the application forms.

He eyed me over, probably thinking about the job available.

"You really want to work here?"

"I do."

"You're overqualified."

"I'm willing to do anything."

By this time, I was not sure what to do. A little frantic for ideas, I remembered what Little Joe said about having work and wondered if there might be work for me, too, with his employer. I wasn't proud of asking him about this, but placated any misgivings I had by honestly wanting to see Little Joe anyway.

Once again, I drove outside the city to the rural area where he lived, and once again I ended up talking to Jeannie before getting to see him. This time she answered my knock on their trailer door wearing only a revealing slip. I smiled a bit shyly at her, which she picked up on and made a bit of a gesture to cover herself up.

"Little Joe?" I asked.

"He's in the woods."

"What's he doing?"

"Shooting."

I wasn't sure. "Shooting what?"

She seemed reluctant. "I don't think it matters."

Raising an eyebrow, I asked her in which direction I should go to catch up with him, but then I heard a few gun shots and was able to get a pretty good sense of where he was. The gun shots were a little disturbing. Excusing myself from Jeannie, I walked in the direction of the shots, almost wondering if I should hurry. When I reached Little Joe, he wasn't shooting his rifle, but instead was on the ground. I wondered if he'd hurt himself in some way. I then recognized that he *was* crying.

"What's the matter?" I asked him.

"Everything."

"You have a wife."

"A girlfriend."

"And a baby coming."

He didn't answer that.

"I've got shit. We've all got shit."

I crouched down beside him. I wanted to touch him, but decided not to.

"Why did you come out here, Willie?"

"I wanted to ask you something."

"What?"

"Nothing."

He became agitated.

"What the fuck did you want to ask me?!"

I thought about it for a long while. Finally I said. "I want to know if the guy you worked for could use any more help."

Little Joe laughed, not pleasantly. "He's going out of business."

With that, grudgingly, I left Little Joe, walked out of the woods, passed his girlfriend Jeannie without saying anything, and went back to my father's house. Again, not quite knowing what else to do, I went back to dreaming up fiction. I would try to deal with reality at some later time.

Lying on my bed for the next few days, I forced myself to reimagine my make-believe European family finally arriving in America and making their way by train from New York through the Appalachian Pass. Once through, they continued across a vast land mass, now the states of Kentucky, Missouri and Kansas, until they arrived in the still untamed and much unsettled Oklahoma territory. When they finally found themselves at the end of their train journey, they went by hired wagon to the place where they had purchased land while still in the old country. Several days of hard journeying later, to their shock, they discovered their new home was this broken down farm house that would not even protect them from the elements.

"Dear God," the mother said to the air, upon seeing the house.

"Oh, no," the daughter cried out.

"Damn," the son said.

Without speaking, the father considered the family's predicament. He was indomitable. He had been planning this trip for what seemed like a lifetime. "We will conquer this setback," he told his family. "You will see. We will clean up this ruin, rebuild it, and it will be our home."

So for days and then weeks and then months, the family took a pile of rubble and did in fact turn it into a place in which they could live. It was done with great force and will. And soon, before the onslaught of any other major problems, their challenge to make themselves a home was complete.

Back to reality, I suppose I first heard of ISIS several weeks after being back from Iraq and staying most of the time in my room. One morning, feeling ready to take the world on again, I snuck out of the house and went into town. I bought myself a cup of coffee at the diner and seeing a newspaper left by a customer before me, I read a headline crying out about something called the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Scanning the article, I began to learn about this terrorist group in Iraq and thereabouts *beheading* people and gaining large swaths of land not too far from where I had been stationed! As fast as I could, I got back to my house and turned on the little television set I had in my room and waited for a program that would give me more information about this ISIS. I didn't have to wait long. I found a news program that filled out the newspaper story. The announcer had that crisis tone of voice in his report.

"ISIS now controls much of eastern Syria and northern Iraq." He stared right out at me. "They have advanced with nearly unbelievable swiftness, with tanks and rockets, terrifying people in their path, and decapitating anyone who does not swear immediate allegiance to their brand of Islam."

Finishing his statement, he then turned to a retired general beside him and asked for further information about the ISIS phenomenon.

"So, General, what are we to think of this latest threat to the homeland?"

The general leaned back and prepared to make his assault on the psyches of us out in television land.

"Just that, Peter. It is a major threat to our homeland. A rather frightening threat to our homeland. I'm assuming my friends at the Pentagon are amazed at the *complete* swift and terrifying success of ISIS. These assassins are like the conquering Muslims of centuries ago, mercilessly and like lightning sweeping across Africa, up the Iberian Peninsula, and then over the Pyrenees into France. Or the ones who swept across Asia into Europe and France. Unstoppable. Merciless. Thank God for that ultimate warrior Charles Martel, who finally stopped them for the known and Christian world at the battle of Tours."

The announcer made a face of great displeasure. "All these beheadings, and now the rape and killing of so many women. And presumably more to come. It's just appalling. It is indeed a horrifying situation."

The general became very professional-looking. "Frankly, Peter, we need to send our troops *back* to Iraq. I was never in favor of withdrawing our guys and leaving Iraq's safety in the hands of the so-called Iraqi army."

Unable to hear more, I turned off the TV and got on my old computer to see what else I could learn about ISIS from the internet, without the extra challenge of media alarm and frenzy. Unfortunately, I found out that what had been broadcast was perfectly true. Apparently, tens of thousands of Muslim soldiers and alienated Muslim young people had turned al-Qaeda in Iraq into this juggernaut of ISIS that was conquering and murdering all of its various enemies. Pretty upset, I tried to find further reasons for its success, a more complete understanding of such a nightmare phenomenon. Perhaps most importantly, I discovered that a new leader of the terrorist army had emerged after previous leaders were killed by Coalition forces. This man, young and well educated, and apparently psychotic, was formidable, turning an almost defeated al-Qaeda in Iraq into something called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and then into ISIS. His name was Abu Bakr

al-Baghdadi. He was shrouded in secrecy and believed by his followers to be invincible, the new caliph, virtually a god.

"But isn't he just the other side's freedom fighter?" I asked myself.

"No, he isn't," I made clear in my mind. " He's a monster."

Still shaken by this information, I went right back to daydreaming. Why the hell not? I thought. This time my resolute immigrant family faced great and unexpected discrimination from the neighbors of the nearby farms and in the frontier town. It turned out that others from their country had come before them; indeed, these others had formerly owned my family's farm, and had been driven away by their neighbors.

"We don't like you people," the brother of my family was told one day while working in the field. "We didn't like your kind back in the Old World, which was why we left there, and we don't want you to have followed us here."

"But we have done nothing to you," the brother tried to explain.

"But you will. We know your kind. You will not get a foothold here. We will drive you out just as we drove out those before you."

Nevertheless, this time the mother of the family would not be put off. In town for supplies, she stood courageously in the street, confronting the hostility and silence around her, and told her neighbors:

"Please. Give us a chance. We have also come from afar to find a new life. We are just like *you*. You will see. Please, it has been so hard. If you will only give us a chance."

At such a plea, their neighbors and the townspeople grew thoughtful and stopped what they were doing to my immigrant family. In the end, they withdrew in silence, perhaps ashamed, and thankfully it wasn't long before food and other provisions were left at my family's door, without anyone acknowledging who had done this. One day, the family was stopped in town and people asked them how they were – to which they said they were doing the best they could. Another day, to their delight, they were invited to a community celebration, and though at the celebration they were so careful and worried about not making

any mistakes, they enjoyed themselves. Indeed, the daughter was even asked to dance! Later that night back in their home, they thought of the time when they would be even more a part of community celebrations and get-togethers. The father might play music for his neighbors on his violin, the mother would make much food, and the son would help out others with chores that needed a strong, young man to do them. Finally, people came to their house one day and gave them advice about farming in this land!

When I again felt somewhat better from my fictive therapy, I dutifully once again returned to the real world, though I tried to be very careful about what I did. I did not want to – indeed, I felt I could not afford to – lose ground. For instance, at first I thought at least I would chance a visit to Little Joe, but in the end I decided for the time being not to do that. Very possibly, something might happen when seeing him that would really de-stabilize me. Also, I realized I would have to continue to be especially patient about waiting to begin college study, so, instead I went back to the Walmart store on the chance that I could handle working there. And lo and behold, I was told I could have some hours to begin working. Trying so hard not to do the wrong thing, I was very careful about the media. I struggled with myself not to read newspapers too much anymore, and also to stop turning the television news on so often, though that was particularly difficult to do because I simply could not yet give up getting *some* sense of the outside world. Normal people don't go *that* far, I told myself.

I must say working at Walmart was by no means easy. God knows I didn't want anything to go wrong on the job, even this one. I didn't want to have any part in any trouble, feeling I had quite enough trouble on my hands already. But virtually from the first days at Walmart, things didn't go anywhere as anybody might have hoped. Another guy, much younger than me this time, who apparently had been assigned to get me started at the store was also very unpleasant, though I told myself I probably was mistaken, that my impression was a projection of my own state of mind. After a few encounters with him, I wondered if he were perhaps put off by me because he was afraid of me or something. Here he was

supervising me who was nearly twice his size, older, just back from serving in Iraq, wounded and hobbling, surely angry, and most likely thinking himself a lot smarter and more experienced than his new supervisor.

"You're overqualified, you know," he too told me.

"It won't be a problem, if I am," I tried to explain. "Though I don't think I am. I know nothing about this kind of business and what people do here, so I have lots to learn and be modest about."

That didn't seem to impress him.

"It's easy to say that."

"You'll see," I told him.

"If my past experience holds true, you'll probably move on sooner rather than later."

I had to let go a little.

"You mean the jobs are that bad here?" I tried so hard to do the right thing.

In the end, my fondest hope was merely that I wouldn't be assigned to cleaning toilets, though I knew if I were, I would do what I was told. In my mind, I tried to anticipate, and also to convince myself that if it weren't such a sad and unfortunate situation, it would be comical. I would get my assignment, be shown the room where the cleaning materials were, be told to get my mop and pail, and then be directed to what I'd have to clean – hopefully the aisles, company rooms, entranceways, and not toilet bowls and urinals. I'd also be lectured on how to do a good and proper job.

What actually happened, however, is that they started me in the front of the store as a greeter. I felt uncomfortable and a little demeaned, if I am to be completely honest, but I said to myself that I could not afford to be very choosey at this point. I tried to hide my discomfort, really tried, but I guess things didn't work out. Perhaps it was how I looked. Or a feeling I couldn't hide. Or my age or, once again, my injuries or how intimidating I perhaps appeared. I called out "hello" to people, and they were not sure what to make of it. I held out fliers, and those who dared took them from me with uncertainty. Any attempt I made at conversation was a failure.

"Hi, may I help you? Looking for something particular in the store?"

They stared at me with wide eyes and said: "Um, no, we're OK. We're all right."

Once I thought I heard a giggle of nervousness or of mockery behind my back.

Finally, the management found the right job for me, stocking shelves. This way I was out of public sight, I suppose. I merely went down the aisles, recording what products needed restocking. I used my pencil and paper with diligence, and then went back to the huge storehouse to retrieve those products that I learned needed restocking. Dutifully, I brought them to the store floor, replenished the shelves with the items, and then repeated the process for the next aisle.

One evening, I had a terrible epiphany. I thought to myself that this was very probably my final professional reality. I would secure one variation or another of this work, and if lucky, progress to a minor supervisor of this same kind of work, desperate to please my superiors and completely committed to the company and its system. Would I someday be standing up in a gigantic auditorium listening to pep talks and singing eternal allegiance to my retailing saviors?

I suppose everything came to a head a few weeks later. Wherever and whenever I could, I continued to withdraw. I felt I simply had to. I became obsessively careful to avoid horror *and* tragedy and god awful bad news. I firmly kept away from as much as possible: my father, Little Joe with his Jeannie, and above all, the television. Unfortunately, though, I was still not successful. One late afternoon, I attended a meeting at Walmart in one of the small windowless backrooms of the store. A dozen employees or so sat around a table – other stock people, greeters, custodians and cashiers. I remember we were discussing store cleanliness when suddenly one of my fellow employees said:

"Yes, we don't want to get any Ebola in the store."

"My God, no," another said.

"What's *Ebola?*" I asked.

"You don't know? You don't know what's going on?"

"I … I don't."

I began to get alarmed once more.

"The new plague in Africa. It's killing thousands of people. It's spreading like wildfire. And the doctors don't know what to do to stop it. It's got everyone horrified."

"And now people from Africa are bringing it back here to the United States."

"And to Europe, too."

"Back here?" I exclaimed.

"That's right. Doctors go to Africa, they catch it from patients and then they bring it back here. Don't you read the newspapers or watch TV? They've got people with it in Manhattan, for God's sake."

I felt my mouth go dry. "Manhattan?"

These were reasonable people. I knew them. There was nothing hysterical or dramatic about any of them. I figured whatever they felt was valid. "What are we going to do?"

"Nobody knows. That's what's so scary."

"Will the scary things never stop?" I asked them. "Things worse than has ever happened before?"

"Doesn't look like it."

I was lost worse than ever. I was floored. Here I was in a meeting – just a *meeting*. Who would have thought I'd be exposed to more terror in a place like this? I had to go to work, didn't I? Was I supposed to hide in my room forever, head under the covers, and never go out into the world again? As soon as I could, I left the meeting and spent the rest of my shift trying hard not to speak to anyone, not even to say "hello," not even to make eye contact. It was absurd I know, but now I worried about anyone's slightest remark, and it was only with the most strenuous of effort that I dared to get on the internet and read more about this *latest* frightening world event. At the very least, I *needed to know* what the symptoms of this plague were. To my horror, some of the symptoms were much like the common cold or flu, which at first made it difficult to determine whether a person was suffering the onslaught of this Ebola, though Lord knows the later symptoms were shockingly clear enough. This time, I struggled with myself not to become

totally hysterical or utterly psychosomatic and believe that I had the Ebola symptoms. I reprised the situation in my mind – plague, thousands of deaths already, no cure, doctors dying, spreading to Europe and America. And then a coup de grâce. There was one link leading to another, and I revisited the Islamic State topic and found out that ISIS was beheading *many* people more than had previously been known! Beheading *countless* people! And then, as if that were not enough, ISIS was posting videos of the beheadings to the *entire world* through all the media! If you were any kind of enemy of theirs, especially a Western captive, of immense political value, you were beheaded by horrifying men in black robes wielding terrifying swords of execution. Your severed head was held up high to let all know what ISIS did and would do to anyone who stood in its way. Feeling so sickened, as soon as I could calm down, I went back *another* time – of course – to my fictional world.

Now my noble family faced their first nearly indomitable Midwestern American winter. They had been told of the total ceiling of deep gray in the sky and the heaviness of the heart and body and spirit that it brought to all the settlers and pioneers. Of the falling temperatures where cold air turned to freezing air and freezing air to frightening air. And the snows, perhaps almost acceptable at first, but which soon grew heavy and heavier, never stopping, never stopping, the snow piling up to enshroud the entire landscape, until the houses disappeared and the roads (those that did exist) were nonexistent. Yet battle this hell of winter they did. Once again, they fought furiously to survive in their new world. Months previously, they had stocked away any and all foodstuffs they could, piled so many cords of wood high in the yard of their farmhouse, prepared their stoves and clothing and blankets, and insulated the walls and windows and crevices against unbelievably freezing temperatures. Day after day, they kept each other in good cheer as best they could. And after months of terrifying conditions, triumphed over this winter that was, they were soon to learn, the annual signature of their new land.

"I am glad we are from the Caucuses," their father told the family. "We are descended from Cossacks. We can defeat this kind of winter, and we have. Come let me sing you Russian songs."

And he would sing of the endless steppes and of wolves chasing men and women and on sleds across the miles of snow, of heroic young men in love with young women more than worth their love, of indomitable trappers hunting for food to keep alive.

"I am happy that I was able to look out for you," cried the daughter to her family. "I have taken you all in my arms and kept you warm these many months."

"And I have cut more wood," proclaimed the son. "And brought it into our house and made sure the stoves brought us great warmth that saved our lives. No one was going to suffer on my account."

"And I have cooked what you have brought to us," the mother told them. "How happy it made me to work hard for you."

This story of my fictive family pleased and comforted me so much now that I returned to it again and again, seeming to perfect the story but really to live in 19th century America where I could control the world.

Ultimately, however – how could I not? I ask you – I could no longer, short of madness, continue with such behavior. I had to be a *part* of mankind. I *had* to deal with reality *somehow*. I had to find a solution. Scrupulously, wanting to avoid *anything* upsetting in the least, I tried again not to talk to people and to just go *on* with my life. Now, at work, I made absolutely no eye contact with my fellow employees, and did not show up early for a meeting or linger after one. In town at a coffee shop or in any kind of shop, I made no attempt to chat with anyone, to say nothing about befriending anyone. At the college, whenever I saw a group talking, I avoided it, refusing to read *any* notices on walls or pillars as well. At my father's house, I rushed up the stairs to my room, closed the door, and hoped he would be content with my total and undeniable attempt to avoid him. I could imagine his eyes searching mine to see if he could discover any newer sense of where I was as a human being, if he could discover my secret self. And, finally,

I decided to continue not visiting Little Joe. I even refrained from phoning him or contacting him in any way. What would be the point besides disaster? I would hear his girlfriend Jeannie tell me heartbreaking things about him, or he would, despite himself, tell me these things. How could we go on any trip together, the way we used to, if inevitably, unavoidably, we talked about how badly things were going for each of us? Besides, I could not help myself, so how could I help him?

As weeks passed, I believe I can say that I was successful with my strategy and felt less crazed and less under total attack, if always somewhat alarmed – until, that is, I made my *final* misjudgment. As I look back on it now from where I am, I might think of it as an unbelievable failure, but how could it be thought of as such? One last time, allow me to again argue I had to be a *human being,* didn't I? I had to traffic in society to some *tiny* degree to *survive,* to maintain some modicum of sanity and humanness. One day – I still don't know what possessed me; perhaps I foolishly thought I was possibly strong enough, or finally just humanly incapable of forever denying that perhaps the world could be a little better (indeed hasn't that always been so?) – I so tragically picked up a copy of a small local newspaper to merely *glance* at it. Perversely, I looked at the lead article – it was the last straw, the catastrophic gesture. I had submitted myself to something that completely overwhelmed me.

At first, I was all right. The article began by proclaiming the media far more corporate than anyone had ever known, and by exposing secret treaties enjoyed by corporations and governments, treaties of convenience that weren't being admitted to the world – deals that bestowed blessing on multinationals and need not be brought up for ratification. But as I read further along in the article, my resolve to be strong and my stability began to disintegrate. Now the story moved on to detailing the also little known *extent* of impunity given to banks and the ever-strengthening, dominating plutocracy in our country. Blinding myself in the past, I suppose, I had thought that occasionally banks managed to be excused from financial and economic crimes because of possible national well-being or security or because of ambiguities

in seemingly-criminal occurrences. But the abundant and cogent data of criminality provided by what I read stunned me, to say nothing of the vastness of the crimes. After that was a section on the growing, swelling assault by government and corporations on internet neutrality. Sooner rather than later, private and public communications would be monitored as never before. So-called necessary and moral limits would be set on these communications, and throughout the internet universe, government bureaucrats or self-appointed moral arbiters or mere careerists, commercial or otherwise, would be controlling at all points what had once been – or what I thought had been – gloriously free or nearly so. Furious with myself for not being more impervious to these frightening disclosures, I read on about my own Iraq and the Middle East in general. Literally two million Iraqis had been displaced from their homes and homeland, and countless millions of dollars of property had been lost, demolished, confiscated or stolen from poor or middle-class or ordinary Iraqis, as had the vast oil reserves and revenue of the country. Perhaps even worse had been the fate of Iraqi women, their lot in life becoming even poorer than it was under Saddam Hussein!

"I can remember women in cars, shopping, going to school, before the American invasion," an Iraqi woman was quoted in the article. "Now you dare go out in the streets, you are afraid of every movement you make because someone will say it is against holy law and must be punished. You cannot shop, you cannot have a job, you cannot drive, you cannot hope to get an education. You must only stay imprisoned in your home."

Wanting to stop reading, I leaned away from the section of the article on the impact on Jordan and Lebanon trying to help the millions of Iraqis seeking refuge. I didn't know if I could absorb the statistics of homelessness, suffering, starvation. I tried not to think of the children. But soon, I was back at it, seeing there was only a last section of the article to read, somehow rationalizing this madness. Now it was global warming. Of course I knew all about global warming, but here in the article was a complete and perverse rendition of its disastrous effects, relentlessly pounded out at the reader – rising water levels

worldwide to wreak enormous damage on the land, unimaginably violent earthquakes and hurricanes and tsunamis and droughts, and, perhaps more frightening than all others, what the article called a "methane time bomb," a product of the rapid warming of the earth and the consequent releasing of immense quantities of methane from frozen lands and from the bottom of the sea.

"Methane is *40* times worse than carbon dioxide!" the writer of the article proclaimed. "It will heat up the earth far more swiftly than even carbon dioxide. It traps heat far more devastatingly. The earth may well be destroyed in *one human lifetime!*"

At this moment, to my utter shame, I didn't know what to do *for the – what? – fifth or sixth time* in the past few months? Slowly, as if I had been wounded, I got up and slowly walked out of the diner and, as always, made my way home. It was ever all I could think of. Isn't that understandable? In my room, I sat on my bed and resolved to return to my fictive world more fully than ever. Bitterly, I thought that if it were possible to remain their forever, I damn well would.

Now I tried to imagine eternal clear and blue and sunny skies. The landscape of my family's land and the land surrounding it for miles was verdant, abundant, emerald. I enjoyed watching the son of my family become over the years one of the most successful farmers in the territory.

"Your crops always claim the best of prices for their high quality," it was said of his produce. "How do you do it?"

To my great pleasure, the daughter of the family was courted by the finest young men. They knew an extraordinary woman when they saw her.

"Marry me, dear," so many pleaded with her.

"I will dedicate my life to making yours a heaven on earth," they boasted.

And when the daughter married the handsomest and the richest and the kindest of them all, she was universally envied and admired. Her children were brilliant, as beautiful as movie stars are today, as kind as saints.

In old age, the mother looked out upon the most gratifying of families – a fecundity of children and grandchildren who adored and respected her.

"Come, my children, come my grandchildren," she waved to them. "You will all have my love forever."

And though the father, sadly, died somewhat before his time, he lived long enough to know and appreciate all these things, and with his great family around him, his beloved music played in the background, died peacefully, smiling, believing he would someday be with them all in heaven.

"My family, our home and farm, Tchaikovsky. …"

When I had had enough of playing with the fictional world, I considered if I had any future. Ashamed of myself again, I thought of college. I still had time before I needed to journey to the campus, but my job was nearly in peril. I managed to adroitly take the little sick time I had, but there was no more left. I needed to return to work the next day. I listened for my father in the house. Thankfully, I didn't hear

any sound of him. During the night, however, I dreamed of him. I dreamed of moving silently in my room or in the house when I needed to, hoping never to run into him, or be caught by him. As he had in reality, in the dream he appeared to me wordlessly making eye contact. His gaze seemed to be saying that he was waiting to see or to decide what kind of man I *now* was. Once, he spoke to me:

"Are you still as you were? Are you still not strong enough? I don't expect any change in you. I know who you are. But I continue to watch."

Exasperated, I started to plead with him, and then argue with him and shout, and then before I knew it, great pain came over his face and he fell to the floor and no longer moved.

And then my dream changed to my driving to see Little Joe. I got to the trailer camp, parked my car, looked for Goldie, but didn't see her. Apprehensive, I knocked on the trailer door. After a long while, Jeannie opened it. She was late in her pregnancy now, and she looked at me with great need and in great sorrow.

"What?" I asked her.

Her stomach swelled at me.

"What?" I repeated.

"He is gone, Willie. Little Joe is gone."

"What do you mean?"

"He … he … killed himself."

How did I know!

"He took his shot gun and some whiskey and went into the woods. I heard the sound of the bullet from here."

And then I was next to Little Joe. He was lying on the ground, splayed on his back, blood everywhere.

When I woke up, it took a few minutes for me to understand that I had dreamed. Or had I? I thought of being at work later that day. I saw myself standing in the middle of an aisle in Walmart, surrounded by people. I kept repeating aloud:

"You are absurd. You are sick. You, a soldier, no less. Become a man. Stand up. These bad times are passing. Someone will fix it. People need to know you are not the most sick of men."

Moving Into Writing

John DeLuca, International Programs

"Near Savannah, Georgia in 1812 a black slave, Joshua, murders his white master's overseer in an act of revenge for the rape of his lover, Selma, the unacknowledged daughter of her master. Joshua escapes, not into the wilderness as many slaves did, but to the Bahamas. Over the next ten years he embarks on an odyssey which takes him to Cuba and Jamaica, where he is enslaved again.

Selma is accused of abetting Joshua's escape. She is beaten, gang raped and sold to a planter in Alabama, where she is partnered with a male slave, Joseph, by whom she has a son. Joseph and Selma, along with the baby escape to Florida, where runaway slaves and their allies, the Seminoles and Choctaws, live in the environs of an abandoned British fort.

The story follows the parallel lives of Joshua and Selma in their quest for freedom, and on a life passage neither could have ever imagined."

– *Amazon's description of* Crossing to Liberty

*C*rossing to Liberty (2015: Amazon Digital Service) is my first novel. Alan Mandell was kind enough to ask me to write a little about how it came about. There is a recurring theme in the birth of this novel, and that's SUNY Empire State College.

In the mid-1990s while working on my doctoral dissertation, I was wandering through the stacks at the University at Albany library, researching the similarities and differences between Caribbean and American slavery, when I came upon Michael Craton's *A History of the Bahamas* (1962: Collins). I read the parts that I thought might be helpful (they weren't) and put it aside, but a thought later came to me: What if a slave on a plantation in the United States found a way to escape to the Bahamas?

I jotted down some ideas in a Word document. I had one page, perhaps 300 words of my first novel. The piece lay dormant for almost two years while I finished and defended my dissertation.

I am very fortunate that my wife's family has a camp on a small lake east of Saratoga Springs near the Vermont border. In the late '90s and early 2000s I spent much of faculty reading period there slowly making progress on the novel. The camp was ideal: no telephone, no television, no Internet. I'm sure that today the technology exists to get better cell and Internet service. Please don't tell me. I don't want to be tempted.

A major breakthrough came when the college announced its first Writer's Retreat to be held at The Rensselaerville Institute (now called the Carey Institute for Global Good). I am still grateful for having been accepted. The setting was ideal for writing, collaborating and sharing ideas with other writers. The three days there were a springboard for the next three to four months. I was fortunate to have attended the first three Writer's Retreats and shortly after the third one, the first draft – over 200,000 words – at that time called "Escape to the Sun," was finished.

The novel not only told the story of Joshua and Selma, but intertwined was the story of the slave owners from their days as criminals in London, to their lives as indentured servants in Georgia, to their status as among the wealthiest South Carolina planters.

As I did some research, I found that it was universally accepted that I needed an editor and a publisher. A local woman was highly recommended to me. When we met at her home, I had a very good feeling about her and we worked together for about a year. I would send her three to four chapters and she would send me suggestions for rewrites and general comments about the overall tenor of the novel. Then without warning she disappeared. She didn't return phone calls or emails. I went to her house, which seemed to have been abandoned. Very strange. In the interim I had received numerous rejection notices from publishers, and just as frequently no responses at all.

CROSSING TO LIBERTY

JOHN P. DELUCA
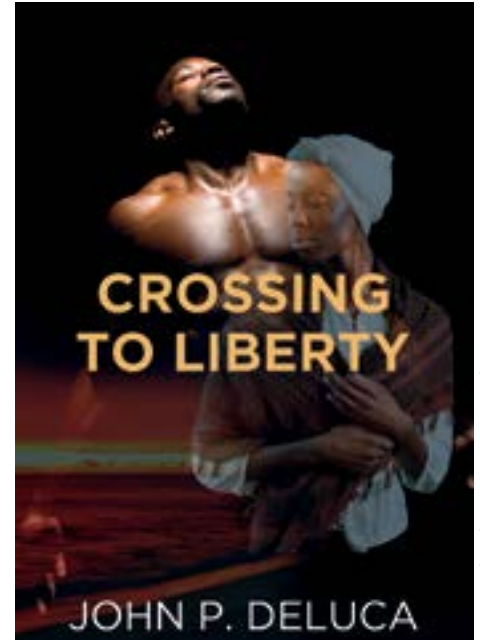
The novel sat in a file for six months and may have remained that way, if it weren't for a conversation at the All College Conference. Mentor, and my colleague in International Programs, Dr. Judy Gerardi, asked me how the novel was progressing and I whined about my frustration with publishers and my lost editor. Judy highly recommended her former colleague at the Metropolitan New York Region, Mary Folliet. For the next year, Mary and I worked together preparing the novel for publication. Her first suggestion was that the novel was too long and too complex for a first novel. I needed to focus on the slaves, Joshua and Selma, and put aside the slave owners. Her second suggestion was that writing in the third person might be mandatory in academic writing, but in a novel it may not be the best avenue to develop the story and the characters. Mary suggested that I allow the characters to tell their story.

This called for a total rewrite and I found that allowing the characters to speak changed me as a writer. I was more like a court stenographer. The characters were speaking to me and I

was just transcribing their words to paper (computer screen). As I finished the rewrite and Mary edited chapter by chapter, I was also sending out query letters to publishers, with the same result as before: "No, thank you" or silence.

When I was a student in ESC's master's program, one of the mentors with whom I was fortunate to work was Dr. Frank Rader. It was Frank who introduced me to Dr. Catana Tully. Catana and I ended up working together at the Northeast Center, the FORUM East program and International Programs. As I was finishing *Crossing to Liberty,* she was publishing her terrific memoir, *Split at the Root: A Memoir of Love and Lost Identity* (2012: CreateSpace; see an excerpt in *All About Mentoring* #43, Summer 2013 [www.esc.edu/ aam]). One day we were talking on the phone and I was lamenting the lack of response from publishers. She had experienced the same problem and decided to self-publish through

Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (e-books) and CreateSpace (paperbacks), which she highly recommended.

In October 2015 *Crossing to Liberty* was published as an e-book on Amazon. The system allows you to place your book in three categories. I selected African-American Historical Literature and Fiction, Latin American and Caribbean Historical Fiction, and African Historical Fiction. For a brief time at the end of November it was #1 in all three categories. Amazon considers any book in their top 100 to be a best seller. I was beyond pleased.

It has been an amazing journey. When I started, I was writing for the sheer joy (and frustration) of writing. At ESC's first Writer's Retreat, I introduced myself by saying apologetically that I wasn't really a writer since I had not published anything. I was shouted down by my colleagues, who claimed that if you write, you're a writer.

I was skeptical, but now I can proudly say I'm a writer. I could not have envisioned that the book would ever be published, nor that it would be so well received.

As I finished *Crossing to Liberty* and thought of my next project, I realized that I already had much of the first draft of a second novel in hand – the parts of my original manuscript that Mary Folliet suggested I set aside, which follows Joshua and Selma's slave owners from the streets of London to Georgia. Now called *Full Circle,* I expect to have it available before the summer of 2016. In addition, I have a manuscript called *The Esterhaven Conspiracy* on the assassination of an American president almost complete, and another titled *The Vigilantes,* in which four Iraqi war veterans come home and, disgusted by the corruption in government, plot to take the law into their own hands. The first draft of that is 50 percent finished.

The journey continues.

> "… [T]he language of education, if it is to be an invitation to reflection and culture creating, cannot be the so-called uncontaminated language of fact and 'objectivity.' It must express stance and must invite counter-stance and in the process leave place for reflection, for metacognition. It is this that permits one to reach higher ground, this process of objectifying in language or image what one has thought and then turning around on it and reconsidering it."
>
> – *Jerome Bruner (1915-2016)*
> Actual Minds, Possible Worlds
> *Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 129*

Confronting Corruption in Government:
The Need for Trusted Leadership and Civic Engagement

Roxana Toma, School for Graduate Studies

Roxana Toma is the recipient of the 2015 Susan H. Turben Award for Excellence in Scholarship. The following was adapted from Roxana's SUNY Empire State College faculty lecture, delivered to the college community at the All College Conference on March 22, 2016.

Many of the key ideas and research included in this edited talk were taken from two sources: an article written for Sociology Compass *(Toma, 2015), and Chapters 2 and 6 from the recent edited volume published by Routledge (Belasen & Toma, 2016).*

Introduction

George Washington Plunkitt was the boss of the infamous turn-of-the-century New York City political machine, Tammany Hall. Journalist William Riordan listened to Plunkitt's talks and published them as interviews in various local newspapers. In 1905, he published them in a book, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall,* a key document of urban politics that is often referred to, even today. It is in the first pages of the book where Plunkitt gets his enduring fame, when he explains his ill-gotten wealth (Riordan, 2004):

> Everybody is talkin' these days about Tammany men growin' rich on graft, but nobody thinks of drawin' the distinction between honest graft and dishonest graft. There's all the difference in the world between the two. Yes, many of our men have grown rich in politics. I have myself. I've made a big fortune out of the game, and I'm gettin' richer every day, but I've not gone in for dishonest graft – blackmailin' gamblers, saloonkeepers, disorderly people, etc. – and neither has any of the men who have made big fortunes in politics.

(l–r) Mary Caroline Powers, Roxana Toma, Tai Arnold and Eileen McDonnell at the All College Conference, March 2016.

> There's an honest graft, and I'm an example of how it works. I might sum up the whole thing by sayin': 'I seen my opportunities and I took 'em.' (pp. 3-4)

Sheldon Silver, the former speaker of the New York Assembly, exploited his position as one of the most powerful politicians in the state to obtain millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks, federal authorities said as they announced his arrest in January 2015 on a sweeping series of corruption charges. As Preet Bharara, the United States attorney for the Southern District of New York, said at a news conference with F.B.I. officials, "For many years, New Yorkers have asked the question: How could Speaker Silver, one of the most powerful men in all of New York, earn millions of dollars in outside income without deeply compromising his ability to honestly serve his constituents? Today, we provide the answer: He didn't" (Rashbaum & Kaplan, 2015, para. 4).

These are merely examples from the state in which I live. However, these days, it is impossible to look at a news website or pick up a newspaper anywhere in the world that does not carry a story about a corruption scandal. "Everybody does it," John Noonan (1987), a

federal judge in California, wrote in his 839-page volume, *Bribes: The Intellectual History of a Moral Idea.* "Romans and Visigoths, Englishmen and Africans, Catholics and Jews, pagans and Protestants, capitalists and Communists, imperialists and patriots …" (p. 685).

The most commonly used definition of corruption is "the abuse of public power or office for private benefit" (Meny & de Sousa, 2001, p. 2825). Over the past 20 years, scholars, policymakers and academics have devoted increasing attention to the study of corruption as an obstacle to development. This has been a dramatic intellectual turn in the social sciences, since less than a decade ago, the "general wisdom" was that corruption and related problems (patronage, clientelism and cronyism) had many positive effects (i.e., "greasing the wheels"). New theories and better data have turned this argument around. Corruption and its related problems are now seen as having devastating effects not only on economic growth, but also on the viability of democratic processes, the legitimacy of public policies and, not least, on the overall social fabric of society. Corruption can undermine political stability;

lead to efficiency losses; and ultimately reduce governance credibility and effectiveness. In addition, what can be considered low quality government is also a causal factor behind violent political conflicts, both inter- as well as intra-state, and has also led to an increased interest in the negative effects of corruption on rebuilding post-conflict societies and establishing representative democracies.

While most of the literature treats corruption as a principal-agent problem between the state and government officials, focusing primarily on the state's optimal choice of monitoring intensity, incentives and sanctions to constrain government officials' behavior, I propose an alternative understating through the lens of social capital theory and the relationship between culture, civil society and social trust. In this literature, corruption is viewed as a departure from the cultural norm of social trust, where citizens naturally expect the government (and each other) to be honest. In such societies, the vast majority of citizens do not even consider offering bribes, nor do they tolerate bribe-taking, favoritism or other forms of corruption. If most citizens perceive honesty to be widespread, honesty in fact becomes widespread – a self-reinforcing mechanism.

Social Capital and Corruption

Social capital is broadly defined as the set of rules, norms, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures and society's institutional arrangements, which enables its members to achieve their mutual goals (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Social capital is created from the horizontal networks and relations between individuals, groups and organizations in civil society. Social capital is embedded in primary social institutions that provide people with basic values, such as high levels of social trust, cohesion and participation. Social capital provides "trust" as a "public good" (Del Monte & Papagni, 2007). The classical study by Almond and Verba (1963) on civic culture gave empirical evidence to the Tocquevillian intuition that social trust, cohesion and participation increase the quality of democracy. Putnam (1993) computed the level of civicness of each of Italy's 20 regions and found a remarkable concordance between the performance of regional governments and the degree to which social and political life in

those regions approximated the ideal of civic community. In creating trust between members of their organizations, individuals are providing a public good to other members of society who are not part of their organizations – in this way, trust becomes a positive externality. Not only does social capital create a "public good" but "most forms of social capital, such as trust, are … 'moral resources' – that is, resources whose supply increases, rather than decreases through use and which become depleted if *not* used" (Hirschman as cited in Putnam, 1993, p. 169). Low economic development and low social capital would lead a community into a "vicious circle," draining its social capital even more and transforming it into a less civic community. The opposite is also true and a community with high economic development and high social capital will enter a "virtuous circle," which leads to a productive community (Putnam, 1993).

Research specifically on corruption shows that trust matters. In order to be able to set mutual goals and cooperate for achieving them, people have to trust each other and their governmental institutions, which in turn have to ensure the environment is favorable to such cooperation (Jankauskas & Šeputienė, 2007). The literature on government regulation has argued that the higher the level of trust in government, the more likely the people will comply with government demands and regulations (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Scholz & Lubell, 1998a, 1998b; Tyler, 1990, 1998). This literature approaches trust from a rational perspective – trust reflects beliefs about risk, and trust is a result of encapsulated interest (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Scholz, 1998). This rational approach argues that in cases involving social dilemmas, both sides cooperate as long as the other is perceived to be trustworthy. To the extent that people are able to make such a generalization, trust should be related to higher probabilities of compliance (Scholz & Lubell, 1998a, 1998b). Applying this argument to corruption, one would expect that the extent to which people trust the government to be fair and trust other people to behave fairly, it is rational for them to reciprocate and also behave fairly. Trust becomes the basis on which non-corrupt exchange is sustained (Tavits, 2005).

Other authors have claimed a strong relationship between both trust in government and trust in other people on the one hand, and the level of corruption on the other, both across countries and at the individual level (Camp, Coleman, & Davis, 2000, 2004; della Porta, 2000; Morris, 1991; Rothstein, 2000; Uslaner & Badescu, 2003, 2004a, 2004b). However, this literature argues that trust has a positive consequence in terms of reducing corruption via social bonds rather than via rational calculation of utility – "trust leads to empathy with others – and thus a respect for the law" (Uslaner, 2004, p. 10). Seligson (2002) used individual level data to argue that corruption influences the level of trust in other people and trust in the fairness of the political system. Uslaner (2004) on the other hand, relying on aggregate country level data, demonstrated the relationship between high trust and lower corruption, while Uslaner and Badescu (2004b) established several reciprocal relationships between political and social trust on the one hand, and the perception of and actual encounters with corruption on the other.

Positive Versus Negative Social Capital

Positive social capital assumes that monitoring of officials is carried out by the clients (perhaps through complaints to their political representatives), rather than by the state itself directly. Kingston (2005) used a simple linked-games model to show how positive social capital reduces corruption. Social capital can enable citizens to engage in collective action against corruption. Paying bribes often creates a negative externality[1] among the potential bribe-payers. By paying a bribe in exchange for preferential treatment, an individual reduces the benefits available to everyone else. Likewise, by accepting a bribe in exchange for preferential treatment, a public servant reduces the benefits available to everyone else. As a result, bribe-payers face a collective action problem: They would all be better off if they could all mutually commit not to pay bribes. Social capital can enable them to enforce agreements not to pay bribes (or informal "norms" against bribery) and thereby reduce the level of corruption. In this way, in states with high levels of positive social capital, people are less likely to act corruptly, and more likely to be punished if they do so (Kingston

Figure 1: Positive Social Capital
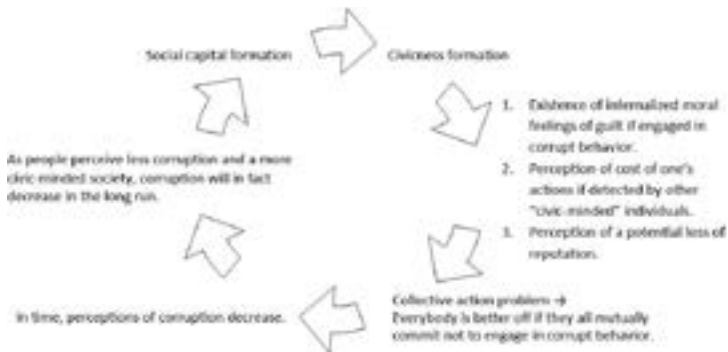
Figure 2: Negative Social Capital
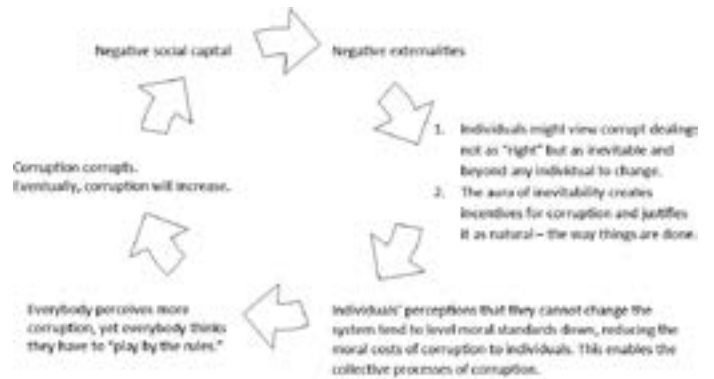
2005). In conclusion, "functional" social capital reduces corruption as a consequence of positive social norms through which people relate to the government. Figure 1 illustrates the ways in which social capital deters corruption.

However, social capital theory also points to the possibility of a close relationship between networks, associations and corruption. For example, della Porta and Vannucci's (2012) detailed portrait of corruption in Italy highlighted that businessmen, politicians and public servants might view corrupt dealings not as "right," but as inevitable and beyond any individual to change. Under a negative social capital framework, if one is going to do business in the public sector, then one has to play by the rules. The aura of inevitability not only creates incentives for corruption, but also justifies it as natural – the way things are done. Individuals' perception that they cannot change the system tends to level moral standards down, reducing the moral costs of corruption to individuals.

Warren (2006) claimed that when people lose confidence that public decisions are made for reasons that are publicly available and justifiable, they often become cynical about public speech and deliberation. People come to expect duplicity in public speech, and the expectation tarnishes all public servants, whether or not they are corrupt. When people are mistrustful of government, they are also cynical about their own capacities to act on public goods and purposes, and prefer to attend to narrow domains of self-interest that they can control. In this way, corruption

diminishes the horizons of collective action (Warren 2006) and social capital enables the collective processes of corruption – collective in the sense that they solve collective action problems for those involved in corruption, even if they are not public goods.

Using econometric results, Del Monte and Papagni (2007) found that the spread of corruption in Italy weakened the sense of loyalty to civil and organized society and the climate of corruption created further incentives for corruption, due to the belief that known offenders could continue their corrupt practices with little risk of punishment. Čábelková and Hanousek (2004) claimed that high perceptions of widespread corruption in Ukraine can increase corruption in government by encouraging people to believe that they must pay bribes and by enticing public servants to think that accepting bribes is natural and widely accepted. They found empirical results that perceptions of widespread corruption among the Ukrainian population are correlated to actual encounters of corruption. In this way, perceptions of corruption facilitate actual corruption levels (Čábelková & Hanousek, 2004). Tavits (2005) argued that the decision to engage in corrupt behavior is primarily influenced by a personal definition of corruption and individual perceptions of how widespread corrupt activities are (imitation). This explanation borrows from social learning theory – if people perceive that a behavior is widespread and that there is an approval of the problem behavior, they will be more likely to engage in such behavior. Tavits (2005) showed that somebody who thinks that corrupt

activities are very common in the country is about 10 times more likely to be corruptible than somebody who thinks that corrupt activities are not at all common. Figure 2 shows how "dysfunctional" social capital breeds a vicious circle which reinforces corruption.

If a society is in a dysfunctional social capital cycle, can that be changed? Newton (2001) had argued that social capital and a developed civil society help to make good government possible, and good government helps to sustain social capital and the conditions of civil society – a bottom-up and top-down concomitant process. However, the problem is that even when the domestic political system has undergone reform, it sometimes seems unlikely that any outside force can introduce enough of a "carrot and stick" approach to persuade a country to maintain momentum.

December 2014 marked the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. This may be a short period of time in the overall arc of history, but it doesn't feel this way for the Romanian people, who have been yearning for a "return to Europe" and a similar quality of life for almost 70 years. Romania joined the European Union (EU) on January 1, 2007, having come a long way from Nicolae Ceaușescu's dictatorship. Its evolution is even more remarkable considering that it was the only Eastern European country with a bloody revolution that was followed by a transition dominated by former communists. Nonetheless, in 2007 Romania continued to be regarded as the poorhouse of Europe and was rated as the most corrupt EU member

state by Transparency International (2007). And to this day, its booming economy is dividing its citizens into an elite, small upper class and a larger emergent underclass. While the European Commission reports after accession have acknowledged the vital steps taken in developing its institutional capabilities to deal with corruption, the Anticorruption Report from 2014 indicates that both petty and political corruption remains a significant problem in Romania. "Although some positive results have been observed when it comes to prosecution of high level corruption cases, political will to address corruption and promote high standards of integrity in Romania has been inconsistent" (European Commission, 2014a, p. 9). How can we explain this inconsistent trajectory?

It is within this context of a changing Romanian society that I offer a historical retrospective of the dysfunctional social capital that was still well in place on the verge of Romania's scheduled accession to the EU. By exploring this "history of the present," to use Foucault's phrase, I will focus on how Romanians viewed their relationship to their government, what their sense of social trust was and how this social trust had become progressively more dysfunctional through successive generations until present day. By focusing on this historical period of the recent past in Romanian society, the data I present may offer a potential window into understanding Romania's cultural inconsistencies in fighting corruption, and viewing why there are remaining barriers to developing positive social capital.

Data

I drew on hitherto academically unutilized survey research on two populations, elected and appointed government officials. First, I analyzed data that were collected at the end of 2004 for a study funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and undertaken by the Institute of Public Policy in Romania via a survey conducted by Gallup Organization Romania. Sampling was designed on a three-stadium, probabilistic basis and was representative of the population of civil servants from local government with a tolerated error of 3 percent. The survey covered all 42 administrative

units of Romania (41 County Councils and the General County of Bucharest) and 83 mayoralties of municipality and towns. The sample consisted of 993 civil servants from local public institutions; the response rate was 97.7 percent for the variable *perceptions of corruption,* and ranged between 48 percent and 99.8 percent for other questions (Moraru & Iorga, 2004).

Second, I analyzed data that were collected at the end of 2005 for one of the Pre-Accession Impact Studies (PAIS)[2] funded by the European Commission[3] and coordinated by the European Institute of Romania (n.d.). Participants were identified using a two-stage sampling technique and represented 9 percent of the population. The sample consisted of 253 municipality mayors and was representative of the population of elected officials with an estimated error of 1.2 percent. The response rate was 96.4 percent for the variable *perceptions of corruption,* and ranged between 58.1 percent and 99.6 percent for other questions.

Finally, I analyzed elite interviews that I conducted in Romania in the summer of 2006, six months before the scheduled date for accession to the EU. The purpose of in-depth interviews with administrators, elected officials, politicians, EU representatives and leaders in the nongovernmental sector was to gather expert opinion about the transformation and development of Romania, and document perceptions of ethics and corruption. I conducted 17 interviews and the sample was representative of expert opinion in Romania in 2006.[4] Identities of the respondents were not revealed to any other persons in Romania at the time, nor are their responses identified in the narrative analysis.

Findings

Two-thirds of the elected officials felt that corruption was widespread in the civil service, with only about 50 percent thinking that the Romanian public administration was undergoing comprehensive reform and that the changes met their expectations. However, to a more general question – "Is reform headed in the right direction?" they seemed more optimistic; 85 percent said "yes." I employed path analysis with structural equation modeling

(SEM) software in order to model elected officials' perceptions of and linkages between forces of corruption and corruption. When deciding the direction of influence between these forces of corruption for the path model, two different corruption syndromes emerged from the literature – the pursuit of power through wealth and of wealth through power. Where economic opportunities are opening up more rapidly than political ones, ambitious people will pursue *power through wealth,* using their economic influence to shape laws and regulations to suit their interests – often excluding competitors from the same access and benefits (USAID, 2004). Alternatively, where political opportunities are relatively more plentiful than economic prospects, elites may pursue *wealth through power.* Here, state power becomes a tool for extracting financial benefit from the economic resources available in the country.

The building of alternative path models followed these suggestions and a model development approach was used whereby models have been perfected using SEM techniques such as significance of path coefficients and modification indexes. This process combined exploratory and confirmatory purposes and resulted in the path model depicted in Figure 3. This model corresponds to the pursuit of *wealth through power* scenario, where perceived political pressure affects the other four out of five causes of corruption directly (see Figure 3). This suggests that elected officials thought of political pressure as the root cause of government corruption in Romania. Even though it did not show the largest influence on perceived corruption itself (see Table 2, perceived political pressure comes second in terms of standardized total effects on perceptions of corruption, after perceived civil servants' lack of morality), political pressure stood out as the only *exogenous* perceived cause of corruption (see Table 1). It then seemed reasonable to identify this phenomenon as political corruption, defined as "… behavior [that] deviates from the formal duties of a public role [elective or appointive] because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains …" (Nye, 1967, p. 419).

Figure 3: Path Model of Perceptions of Forces of Corruption (Elected Officials)

Where: **Management of the Civil Service** → *satisfaction with current centralized form of management of the civil service;* **Economic Pressure** → *perceptions that economic pressure causes corruption in the civil service;* **Political Pressure** → *perceptions that political pressure causes corruption in the civil service;* **Legal Framework** → *perceptions that the legal framework causes corruption in the civil service;* **Civil Service Pay** → *perceptions that civil service pay causes corruption in the civil service;* **Civil Servants' Lack of Morality** → *perceptions that civil servants' lack of morality causes corruption in the civil service;* **Citizens' Behavior** → *perceptions that citizens' behavior causes corruption in the civil service.*

Table 1: Structural Coefficients (Elected Officials)

Structural coefficients	Estimate
Political pressure → Economic pressure	.582
Political pressure → Legal framework	.494
Civil servants' lack of morality → Corruption	.381
Citizens' behavior → Civil servants' lack of morality	.366
Political pressure → Civil servants' lack of morality	.306
Economic pressure → Civil service pay	.306
Civil service pay → Corruption	.245
Political pressure → Citizens' behavior	.222
education → Economic pressure	.217
education → Civil service pay	-.210
Centralized management of civil service → Citizens' behavior	-.210
Economic pressure → Citizens' behavior	.202
Centralized management of civil service → Corruption	.183
Citizens' behavior → Corruption	.161
Legal framework → Corruption	.151

Table 2: Standardized total effects between perceptions regarding forces of corruption (Elected Officials)

Variable name	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects
Lack of morality of civil servants	.381		.381
Political pressure		.336	.336
Citizens' behavior	.161	.139	.300
Civil service pay	.245		.245
Legal framework	.151		.151
Economic pressure		.136	.136
Centralized form of management of the civil service	.183	-.063	.120
Education		-.022	-.022

Previous studies argued that cultural factors have a direct bearing on corruption, particularly the nature of social capital and the degree of trust existing in society (Bjørnskov, 2003; Uslaner, 2001, 2003, 2004; La Porta, Lopez-Silanes, Schleifer, & Vishney, 1998). While this analysis employed no direct measure of social capital (for example, generalized trust, trust in institutions, willingness to cooperate), elected officials' perceptions seemed to point to negative levels of social capital existent in Romania at the time, as evidenced by their perceptions of civil servants' lack of morality and citizens' behavior as significant factors that reinforced perceptions of corruption (see Table 1). These findings were indicative of the vital need to build and maintain civic attitudes in Romania through investing in education and interest in society. To win the fight against corruption, the country needed to surpass outdated mentalities and legacies of the past and build strong and responsible citizenship.

As for the civil servants' data, a third of the respondents felt that corruption was "very" widespread in the civil service. However, on follow-up questions, only 3 percent believed that there was no corruption or that corruption existed only at the low levels; a third of them thought that corruption existed at the highest levels; and 62 percent believed that corruption was pervasive at all levels. Findings from logistic regression indicated that civil servants' perceptions of the spread of corruption in the country had the strongest effect on the perceived level of corruption in the civil service (see Table 3). The analysis also indicated that the government was an important player in the anticorruption game and that it enhances its anticorruption efforts. Moreover, findings were pointing to a lack of leadership and of a clear mission, and citizens' behavior as obstacles to administrative ethics. Therefore, ethical, trusted leadership seemed vital to creating an ethical workforce in Romania.

The qualitative analysis indicated that the situation in Romania was a mixed picture: Institutional structures and anticorruption legislation had been put in place, but the foundation was still fragile. Respondents indicated that Romanian values have interfered with support for Western-style democratic governance. All former Communist countries have this problem, they said, but post-Communist Romania in particular. Tradition and conservatism on the one hand, and traumas from the Communist dictatorship on the other, have greatly hampered adoption of the values shared in Western-style governance. "The fish rots from the head down!" one respondent insisted aggressively. Another one argued, "The ones at the top are to blame!" The system is to blame and "ordinary people are just mere instruments in all of this." "We can't accuse the low-levels for being corrupt. We should accuse the ones from the top!" The way the system is now designed, lower

Table 3: Logit coefficients and odds ratios (Civil Servants)

	B	Exp(B)
age	-.028	.972
non_merit_hiring	.343	1.410
evaluation_satisf	.512	1.669
politics_hire	.744	2.104
bonus_system_satisf	-.875	.417
matter	-.384	.681
corrupt_country	2.615	13.668
reform_3	-.771	.462
mission	-.537	.585
leadership	-1.223	.294
citizens	-.808	.446

levels depend entirely on the people at the top. "We need a civil service able to function and maintain its ethics regardless of the politics at the top."

However, some experts believed that Romania was finally entering a functional cycle of social capital. They suggested that the fight against corruption needed to be depoliticized, together with a strengthening of the public perception of respect for the rule of law. "The ones at the top level need to understand that they represent the public good, that they are followed in their behaviors." Romania does not have a model of civic ethos. "We should invest in education to change that."

Listening to the respondents, I could not stop thinking about the perverse consequences of the Communist social engineering and how much suffering Romanians have endured. It was most distressing to observe Communist legacies time and time again, rooted in modern mentalities. W. Somerset Maugham (1919) said that "it is not true that suffering ennobles the character; happiness does that sometimes, but suffering, for the most part, makes men petty and vindictive" (p. 94). Observers noted that it will take time to end materialistic obsessions in Romania and for civic mindedness to develop in the people. Nonetheless, some respondents believed that mentalities change along with positive changes in the society. "It isn't the people who need to change, but the environment they live in," one of them said.

Romania After Accession to the EU

The European Commission reports on the progress made by Romania after accession have been generally positive. However, while the pre-accession years brought about the development of an impressive arsenal of legal instruments of transparency and accountability in Romania, progress is not straightforward, so that advances in one area can be constrained or negated by setbacks elsewhere. For example, when Romania was campaigning for admission in the European Union in 2003, it launched an anticorruption drive, and appointed Monica Macovei, a tough justice minister who spurred a series of corruption cases against senior officials. However, as soon as Romania joined the EU in 2007, the campaign dissolved, the justice minister was fired and the cases were dropped.

Romania had barely entered the EU when its political class started to undo the anticorruption commitments undertaken to allow the country's accession. Matters worsened to the point that two deputy prime ministers resigned in one year, and most of the political class mobilized to change the legislation to decrease the power of prosecutors. The government even attempted to close down the National Anticorruption Department, Romania's independent anticorruption agency. A vicious fight erupted between the president and the Parliament, culminating in an attempt to impeach President Traian Băsescu. A severe split between representatives and voters emerged when two-thirds of Parliament voted to have Băsescu deposed and two-thirds of the voters reinstated him in a referendum on May 19, 2007.

In July 2012, President Băsescu survived another referendum on his impeachment, after turnout fell below the 50 percent needed to validate the vote, raising again questions about the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in Romania. The referendum was part of the ongoing power struggle between the president and his archrival, center-left

Prime Minister Victor Ponta, who had been the driving force behind efforts to unseat the president. The center-left government had accused the center-right president of exceeding his authority and of meddling in government affairs, and President Băsescu was suspended by Parliament. The row caused by the impeachment vote had paralyzed political decision-making in Romania at a time when it was finalizing agreements on an International Monetary Fund-backed aid package.

In December 2013, decisions in the Romanian Parliament served as a reminder that the core principles and objectives of anticorruption reform are still being challenged. The Romanian Parliament voted to amend the Criminal Code to exempt top politicians and lawyers from corruption crimes. The snap amendments, voted without parliamentary debate, said that the country's president, senators, members of the lower chamber, as well as lawyers, were no longer to be considered "public officials," which in turn meant they could no longer be held accountable for abuse of office, bribery, conflicts of interest and other corruption crimes. This was happening at a time when 28 of the members of parliament had been convicted or were on trial for corruption, and over 100 mayors and vice-mayors were on trial for awarding public contracts to family and friends or for similar abuses. The Constitutional Court showed checks and balances at work in ruling this unconstitutional. However, events like these make it particularly difficult to assess the sustainability of reform and to judge how much domestic momentum exists to ensure that a broadly positive trend is assured. They also offer an explanation for why Romania's corruption score has stagnated since 2007.[5] Additionally, setbacks like these may explain the persistent low social trust in Romania, which I discuss next.

Implications for Social Trust

While Romania's corruption score has been the same since 2007,[5] the European Values Survey and World Values Survey data suggest a gradual deterioration of social trust among Romanians from 19.3 percent who think most people can be trusted in 2005, to 17.6 percent in 2008, and 7.7 percent in 2012. While counterintuitive at first, let's go back to social

capital theories of corruption where social trust is a positive manifestation of social capital, while corruption is the negative form. Unlike forced cooperation enforced by a third party (i.e., formal institution), social trust is self-enforcing (as an informal institution).

Table 4: Social Trust in Romania 1999/2000 and 2008

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	1999/2000	2008
Most people can be trusted (%)	10.1	17.6
Cannot be too careful (%)	89.9	82.4
Valid cases (N)	1115	1362
Missing (N)	31	127

Source: European Values Study ZACAT - GESIS Online Study Catalogue ZA3798 (EVS, 2012) and ZA4773 (EVS, 2010).

Table 5: Social Trust in Romania 2005 and 2012

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?	2005	2012
Most people can be trusted (%)	19.3	7.7
Need to be very careful (%)	75.6	91.4
N	1776	1503
Missing (N)	91	15

* Romania was not part of Wave 4: 1999–2004
Source: World Values Survey Wave 5: 2005–2009 (2014) and Wave 6: 2010–2014 (2016).

Considering social trust as a response of individuals to the changing external world around them (Newton, 2001), these data are telling of how Romanians evaluate the trustworthiness of their environment (see Tables 4 and 5). The problem with repeated setbacks in the political arena is that they have long-term consequences on social trust and hence, civil society and collective action. As Hardin (1993) observed, trust involves the continual accumulation and updating of experience. Štulhofer (2004) showed that the decrease of social capital in Croatia in the 1995-2003 period could not be exclusively attributed to the situational effect of the 1991-1995 war. In fact, the strongest and most consistent factor contributing to negative dynamics of social capital through fragmentation of trust in institutions was found to be the increasing public perception of corruption among public officials. In other words, perception of widespread corruption causes a deficit of (positive) social capital or a deficit of social trust. Decreasing social trust and trust in institutions are adaptive reactions to the social environment that is

perceived as unpredictable, risky and full of frauds (Štulhofer, 2004). Data released by the European Commission (2014b) revealed that an astonishing 93 percent of Romanians think that corruption is widespread in the country[6] and 65 percent think that the level of corruption has increased in the past three years; no wonder, then, that Romanians exhibit decreasing levels of social trust.

Conclusion

Even when the domestic political system has undergone reform, it sometimes seems unlikely that any outside force can introduce enough of a "carrot and stick" approach to persuade a country to maintain momentum. I looked at Romania to understand the cultural peculiarities of fighting corruption and building civil society, a country where despite the tough EU monitoring and domestic anti-sleaze efforts, corruption and low trust remain significant problems. My findings suggest that in order to transition from an ecology of self-reinforcing corruption to a state where corruption plays a minor rather than dominant role, political cultures need a legitimate governing ethos and increased efforts to build civic attitudes to help override historical legacies and build a greater reservoir of positive social capital that can sustain change.

I have also explored the question of whether corruption has since replaced the legacy of communism as a factor undermining trust in others, and government in Romania and presented an examination of the association between corruption and post-communist civil society. In essence, I argue that future research needs to switch focus from discussing social, political and cultural behaviors from a *longue durée* perspective to evaluating the impact of political corruption on trust and, hence, civil society.

Notes

[1] Negative externalities are the negative byproduct of the processes taking place in society, negative in the sense that they add cost to these processes at everyone else's expense.

[2] The PAIS project was aimed at providing research and policy support to the Romanian authorities involved in the EU accession negotiation process. Financing spanned from October 2001 to October 2005 under the coordination of the European Studies Unit of the European Institute of Romania and concluded in the series PAIS I, II and III. Data used in this chapter come from Study no. 3 of PAIS III titled "Public Administration Reform in the Perspective of Romania's Accession to the EU" (European Institute of Romania, n.d.).

[3] Financed via Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies (PHARE). The PHARE program was one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the EU to assist the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparations for joining the EU. Originally created in 1989, PHARE has expanded from Poland and Hungary to cover ten countries, including Romania.

[4] List of interviews: Mircea Ciumara, general director, National Institute for Economic Research, National Academy of Romania and finance minister 1996–2000; Bogdan Cocioaba, principal commissary, General Commissariat, Financial Guard of Romania; Enrico D'Ambrogio, head, Information Bureau in Romania, The European Parliament; Radu Filipescu, president, Group for Social Dialogue; Jürgen Henkel, head, Romanian Office, Hanns Seidel Society; Nicolae Idu, general director, European Institute of Romania; Alexandra Ionescu, assistant dean, Institute for Political Research, University of Bucharest; Elena Iorga, program coordinator, Institute for Public Policy; Mioara Mantale, prefect of Bucharest; Andrei Micu, head, EU Integration Affairs, Prime Minister Chancellery; Sorana Pascariu, counsellor, Secretariat for External Affairs; Marius Profiroiu, head, Administration and Public Management, The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies and public administration minister 2001–2004; Dorel Sandor, director, Center for Political Studies and Comparative

Analysis; Onno Simons, acting head of delegation, Delegation of the European Commission in Romania; Adrian Sorescu, research director, Center for Studies on Democracy, Pro-Democracy Association; Eugenia Stanciu, task manager public administration, Delegation of the European Commission in Romania; Raimar Wagner, executive director, Transylvania Academy and Local Council of Sibiu.

[5] See *Nations in Transit 2008* (Walker & Goehring, 2008) and *Nations in Transit 2014* (Habdank-Kołaczkowska, 2014).

[6] Fifty-four percent of Romanians think corruption is widespread, and 39 percent think it is fairly widespread. It is important to mention that perceptions of widespread corruption are lower in Romania (93 percent) than Greece (99 percent); Italy (97 percent); Lithuania, Spain and the Czech Republic (all 95 percent); and Croatia (94 percent).

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The Lifelong Learning University of the Future

Alan Tait, The Open University

The following is a contribution to a recent edited volume on "lifelong learning" written by Alan Tait, emeritus professor of distance education and development at The Open University, United Kingdom. We felt that its efforts to imagine a "university of the future" would be of interest to AAM *readers. This piece was previously published by Waxmann Publishing. We thank them for allowing us to reproduce and share this text with our readers.*

The lifelong learning (LLL) university of the future will willingly, openly, and explicitly engage with the conflicting claims of its major stakeholders. These will be acknowledged as including:

- students and learners, from the perspectives of personal fulfilment, livelihood enhancement, and as citizens in their communities

- major social priorities such as climate change, sustainability, social justice, inclusion, employment, well-being, and happiness

- major stakeholders such as employers, government, non-governmental organizations, and academic staff.

The university of the future will aim to build learning, both formal and informal, in ways that acknowledge the competing claims of these stakeholders, and will seek to resolve the tensions between them primarily in the interests of learners and students. The university will be a creative social entrepreneur, innovator, and agent for development, led by humanistic values. Such a university will need to understand that students learn on and off campus, that they may work and have families, that they may need guidance and support as learners, and that programs of study need to be compelling to engage and retain their interest. Assessment will be innovative and varied, and will support learning as well as provide judgements on outcomes of learning. Our new university will under-stand that students may bring credit from elsewhere and may take credit elsewhere too. This is their right. Students in the LLL university of the future may want to move between modes of study: full time, part-time, on-campus, and through distance and e-learning, and the university will need to ensure that all modes are available and affordable. Students with disability will be supported to succeed. In summary, our new lifelong university of the future will do its utmost to remove barriers of the mind about who can and should study there, whether these barriers derive from social class, gender, geography, ethnicity, or disability. The LLL university will recognize that informal learning is an important penumbra for formal learning, and that contemporary skills for citizenship, personal development and livelihood need competence in the use of technologies for learning, within programs of study and later for informal LLL. Our new university will stretch the definition of what a university is without ever losing credibility in society. Its strength will be realized in a combination of sustained focus, diversity and pluralism. Our new university will lead and challenge society as well as respond to its stakeholders. Staff in our new university will believe its mission is more important than their individual careers. They will be excited about coming to work. Learners

Alan Tait

in our university will reflect the composition of our societies, and will have respect as equals as well as support as learners. Their experience will be valued and they will be excited about studying. Our society will be appreciative because we include them in conversations about our mission as well as a very wide proportion of them as learners; be respectful because our work is of high quality; and from time to time our society will be surprised.

Acknowledgement

Views Along the Journey: Landscape Paintings

Hillary Hostetler '11 | Hudson Valley Region

Being invited to contribute to *All About Mentoring* and have my paintings featured in this issue encouraged me to reflect on the last few years.

As an alumna of SUNY Empire State College, and after earning my M.F.A. at Lehman College (CUNY) in 2014, I returned to ESC as an adjunct to work with students in the visual arts. Having my work included in *AAM* symbolizes the completion of a journey started when I considered leaving a design career and returning to school at age 50 to embark on five years of undergraduate and graduate study. The years that have followed – building a new career as an artist and teacher – have been challenging, but satisfying. It was a good choice. I really enjoy teaching adult learners and developing my own art, as well.

My work as an artist focuses primarily on landscape and botanical painting in all varieties of media. I like to formally explore color and the materiality of paint while sometimes subtly expressing my feelings on a host of current social issues. The paintings selected for this issue of *AAM* show a range of work done over a period of three years as I progressed through graduate school. They represent some of the many paintings and individually-themed collections completed during that time. Through different projects, you acquire new skills, explore new concepts and experiment with new materials to find your own unique artistic voice. This was very much a part of my journey.

Some of my paintings reference specific art-historical Arcadian landscape painting tropes juxtaposed with present day, found photographs of military drones, golf courses and private country club grounds. Collaged and painted, the transformed images invite the viewer to explore contemporary land use and ownership, nationalism and our moral values in times of war. The selection of work here includes paintings with complexity of meaning, landscapes created just for visual pleasure, and a still life that is structured as a landscape. Additional examples of my paintings of both landscapes and florals can be found at http://www.hillaryhostetler.com/. I look forward to working with ESC students in the visual and studio arts, and being able to share my work and my journey with them.

Destiny Manifested, 2014, Oil paint on wood panel, 5" x 7" x ¼"
Photo by Hillary Hostetler

Kindred Spirits, 2014, Oil paint on wood panel, 5" x 7" x ¼"
Photo by Hillary Hostetler

Pebble Beach, 2013, Oil paint on wood panel, 5" x 7" x ¼" Photo by Hillary Hostetler

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Collaged and painted, the transformed images invite the viewer to explore contemporary land use and ownership, nationalism and our moral values in times of war.

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Top: *Hudson River at Sunset,* 2015, Oil paint and wax on canvas, 18" x 36" x 1" Photo by Hillary Hostetler

Right: *Dawn, Peekskill Harbor,* 2015, Oil paint and wax on canvas, 18" x 36" x 1" Photo by Hillary Hostetler
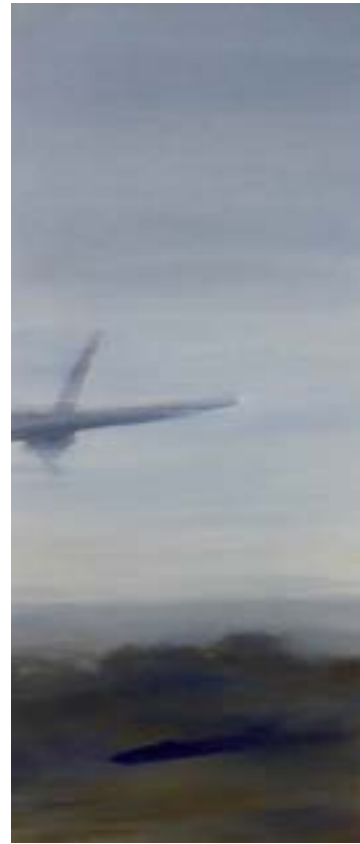
Top: *Predator,* 2013, Oil and wax on
Arches oil paper, 30" x 14" x ¼"
Photo by Hillary Hostetler

Bottom: *Surveillance Drone,* 2013, Oil and
wax on Masonite panel, 30" x 15" x ¼"
Photo by Hillary Hostetler

Left: *Daybreak,* 2013, Oil and wax on
Masonite panel, 30" x 15" x ¼"
Photo by Hillary Hostetler

Caring Attention: What is "Good Enough" Mentoring at ESC?

Shantih Clemans, Metropolitan New York Region

What follows is an edited transcript of a webinar presented by Mentor Shantih Clemans on March 3, 2016 for the Center for Mentoring and Learning. Thanks to Shantih for her work in preparing this text for publication and to the many colleagues who participated in this webinar.

So let's start with what inspired me to want to study mentors. Like many other colleagues who are in Community and Human Services, I found my way to mentoring and teaching through a career in social work and a passion for the human connection. I've long loved the dynamic exchange that unfolds between a client and a counselor, and I felt an almost instant recognition when, for me, counseling became teaching, and I became a mentor. It was a great moment. And I continue to be fascinated by the tensions between being a mentor as a teacher, and a mentor as a facilitator or a counselor. And that's really what I want to talk to you about today.

Even before I joined the SUNY Empire State College faculty in 2011, I'd been really interested in understanding and exploring what teaching means to teachers, and how it is specifically practiced. I'm also really interested in group work. I've long been interested in group dynamics – the rich, layered life of ideas, conversation, personalities and perspective – that come to life in a group. I just feel like it's so cool whether in a social work group or among a group of students. And one more thing: My work in social work has been in the area of "vicarious trauma," which is the idea that social workers and other helpers can be personally transformed by their work with clients. I really see an interesting connection here between this one area of my scholarship and my current work on mentoring.

As part of my two Center for Mentoring and Learning faculty reassignments, I have been researching mentors and talking to mentors across the college.[1] I interviewed and had conversations with 25 mentors from all the college locations. I really want to emphasize that talking to mentors throughout ESC was incredibly inspiring for me. Learning about how mentors feel about their work, connect with students, and deeply care about students' lives and learning was so heartening and gave me hope, honestly, that our signature work at ESC – mentoring our students – really, really matters, and that it is a practice worth exploring and understanding.

I know I'm stating the obvious when I say that times are changing at Empire State College. At the time of high first interviews, the college was already changing, and I had the awareness then that being able to investigate the meaning of mentoring through the voices and the experience of mentors was one important way that I could contribute to ESC.

First Reassignment

So, in my first reassignment, the first thing that I did was to interview mentors. I asked them specifically how they interpreted the college mission of individualized learning in their work with students in groups (so this is where my group work/interest really came in). And after looking at my interview notes and transcripts, I came up with these two big themes that emerged in these conversations: 1) a deep commitment to students, and 2) creating connections with students.

- **Commitments to students.** One mentor asked: "How can I best serve my students using the paradigm that we use? I am always looking for ways to make the learning meaningful…" I imagine people can relate to this. Here's another example.

- **Creating connections.** A mentor said: "It's really important to me that students don't feel isolated."

Shantih Clemans

Second Reassignment

What I'm doing this year in my second CML reassignment is jumping in to take a deeper look at the nuances, tensions and contradictions in the role of mentor and in mentoring practice. I just want to say I have so many more questions than answers, and what I really hope is that we continue the conversation about this. I might be wrong about everything I'm proposing, but I'd like to hear what you think.

Here are some things that I'm thinking about.

Tensions and Contradictions in the Mentoring Role

What are the most important elements in our work with our students? What can we realistically accomplish, especially as things are changing so, so rapidly at ESC? What is "good enough" mentoring?

So I've been thinking a lot about contradictions and paradoxes and tensions and all these things that make mentoring difficult. But I've really been trying to appreciate and embrace the paradoxes. I would say that

over the past few months, and during my whole CML reassignment, I've done a lot of interesting reading on mentoring and some of these complexities. Alan Mandell actually introduced me to this author with whom I wasn't familiar; his name is Douglas Robertson, and his area is higher education leadership. I think his last university was Northern Kentucky University. You know when you read something and it just it speaks to you? This is how I felt about this article. Robertson (2005) wrote eloquently about contradictions in what he called "learner-centered college teaching." He has three contradictions that really speak to me (he has a list of six).

- Individual mentor/group learning leader. Here, you're balancing what your individual student might need, what your individual student is interested in, and with the group needs – the group, the study group or whatever group you're working with. And I know people who run/facilitate groups know this tension.

- Loving the student/loving the subject. How do you balance your love of the student and your love of the student's learning, with your love and your interest in whatever your subject is?

- Caring for the student/caring for yourself. We really are taught to care about all aspects of our mentees, but what does that mean for ourselves?

"Caring Attention"

As I revisited my interviews, I came up with this idea that I'm calling "caring attention." It is the result of my reading and my re-reading, and most importantly my thinking about the important, sustainable nuggets of our work as mentors – What's most important?

Caring About the Whole Student

The first thing that I want to talk about is a theme that I'm calling "Caring about the whole student." I have a mentor's perspective on this, but first I want to ask: Is this realistic? Can we really care about the "whole student"? Are there parts of the student's life that are more relevant at certain points in his or her learning process? Here's an example to which I'm sure you can relate:

I have students who tell me about their lives, their problems, their divorces, their daughter's wedding … their son in prison, their husband's heart attack. 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 … I have come to see myself as a teacher focusing on the whole student. …

I just want to repeat that last sentence: "I have come to see myself as a teacher focusing on the whole student. …"

"I'm a very good listener." What I'm playing around with is taking this idea of "caring attention" and breaking it down into, for lack of a better word, subcategories. So another subcategory is what I'm calling, "I'm a very good listener." And here's an example:

[Students] do a lot of talking, which they are not used to, but they feel known and seen.

This is a very short, simple statement, but it's so deep – they feel *known* and *seen*. Think about that.

Mentors are learners, too. I think that it's really cool when there's a parallel between something a mentor wants to learn and something a student wants to learn; the two go hand-in-hand really nicely together. But I think it takes a certain amount of bravery and curiosity on the mentor's part. Here's an example:

I have had to learn to become interested in what my students are interested in because in many instances, especially in the early years, I had no idea what they were talking about, but I learned and it has been a delight for me. My world has become much bigger and that is something that I love about my work.

I just think that's really cool. This example is so positive and hopeful that what we do in learning with our students is meaningful.

"I really want to know what students want to know." There's a sense of curiosity here that really struck me. Here is an example:

I ask every independent study student: 'What is it you want to learn? How do you want to learn?' Most look at me dumbfounded. Then I say: 'This is an opportunity unlike any educational opportunity. Since kindergarten you have always been told what you want to learn.'

Workload Matters

I know I would be neglecting a big category if I didn't mention workload. It's a major issue. It's a big part of all the thinking I've been doing on "caring attention." Let's think about this: What is "caring attention" with 20 mentees? What is "caring attention" for 120 mentees? What is realistic, and what is the ideal? Here's an example:

I hate that we don't have summers off for our work. I am a person who likes to work really hard for a few months and then take a breath. I get tired that we don't get a long breath.

Principles of "Good Enough" Mentoring

So this leads me to what I'm calling, "principles of 'good enough' mentoring." I've been experimenting with these principles in the current, rapidly changing world of ESC. I want us to think about what is "good enough," and how we achieve this quality and feel "OK," even "good" about our work. So I came up with a little list:

1. First do no harm. Students come to us with complicated histories as learners, as people, and the first contact with us is really important in creating an impression and leaving a mark. I always try to remember that it takes courage and bravery to come to college or to come back to college, and you don't want to "damage" the person. The student might be afraid, vulnerable, whatever. So you first do no harm.

2. Believe that every student is capable of learning. I think it is related to number one. But the belief and the optimism is a way of motivating you and the student. And it's also a way of showing this "caring attention" that I'm talking about. You can show it in different ways, but believing in every student is a key principle.

3. Flexibility goes a long way. … Not all students need the same thing from you. Varied assignments, different modes – those are all really important ways of showing this "caring attention" by saying, "I'm going to be flexible for you." Of

course there are limits. I've become much more flexible in my assignments, and I think it's really paid off with my students.

4. … So does organization. I'm very organized because the more organized I am, the better I can help students. And you have to figure out whatever makes sense for you – whatever system makes sense for you. I am a note-taker; I write everything down, and it really helps me be prepared and be ready for when a student comes in. So I do a little prep ahead of time and I write everything down. Whatever organization means to you, I think the more organized we are and the clearer we are about expectations, the better we can communicate what I'm calling "caring attention" to our students.

5. Be patient: learning is a process. I've had to learn this; I'm sure you've all had to learn this. I've had to learn not to rush a student. Sometimes students drop out, and come back when they're ready. And sometimes we missed that moment when they're ready. So I'm really working on being patient.

6. Strive to create a meaningful moment in every student encounter. This is something that really could be number one. I've been thinking a lot about this. So I'm thinking that it's important to make sure that one thing happens every time you meet a student. It doesn't have to be the same thing. Maybe a student

is coming in to register or has questions about registration. Maybe a student has a question about credits. Or maybe there are those amazing "aha" moments – those don't happen in every encounter – but the time you have with your student shouldn't be wasted. Something meaningful should happen. And sometimes just making that connection, or listening to the student talk about some aspect of life – that can be meaningful.

7. Hang in there through the hard stuff. So it's important that you don't give up after you've made a connection with a student. Things happen, as we know, in the lives of students: there might be a crisis; the degree plan might need to be amended; there might be questions about graduation. So hang in there through what is the hard stuff for the student. And don't give up after that initial contact or after that initial study or whatever the issue is. And related, students appreciate the continuity of the relationship.

8. Caring for students equals caring for ourselves. This goes back to some of the contradictions – we have to balance both. If we if we take care of ourselves and we balance our workload, we're better able to communicate a caring sense to our students.

I'm interested in hearing your thoughts. Please feel free to contact me at Shantih.Clemans@esc.edu.

Note

[1] I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through Empire State College for my mentor study. The identities of mentors whose responses are shared here are protected through not disclosing specific names, areas of study, locations, etc.

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Worker Education from A to V (Aristotle to Van Arsdale): A Conversation with Michael Merrill

Bob Carey and Alan Mandell, Metropolitan New York Region

Over the last 12 years, Michael Merrill has been the dean of The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies. As of the first of July, Mike returned to Rutgers University, New Jersey, as professor of professional practice in the Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations. He also is directing Rutgers' labor and community external labor education program, LEARN (Labor Education and Research Now). The text that follows is an edited version of a conversation that took place on 13 June 2016. Thanks to Mike Merrill and Bob Carey for their work on this project, to Karen LaBarge for helping to prepare a draft transcript, and to John Hughes, without whom the recording would not have happened.

Alan Mandell: Today, only a little over 11 percent of American workers are in unions. In such a world, what is the role of labor education?

Mike Merrill: That number is deceptive. Eleven percent of the workforce is still a lot of people! Also, if you look at the actual number of trade union members in the United States since World War II, the number has changed very little. The institutionalized labor movement is almost as large as it ever was. It is smaller relative to the economy as a whole, and we would certainly all be better off if it were bigger. But whatever need the movement had for labor education when it was a third of the workforce is still the same.

Judging the size of the labor movement by the percent of the workforce in a union is deceptive in another way, as well. It confuses the legally-recognized face of the movement with its socially effective body. Workers organize themselves at work and in their neighborhoods, even when employers or local politicians don't want them to. Wherever they are, people form associations and manage their work and lives, one way or another. The union movement is that portion of the labor movement that the government has agreed to

Faculty and staff with Dean Michael Merrill at a Van Arsdale Center Farewell Toast and Roast on Wednesday, June 8, 2016.

recognize as legitimate collective bargaining agents. But unions alone don't exhaustively account for the whole.

The Wagner Act of 1935 put in place the procedures to facilitate legal recognition of unions. It is only 80 years old. There was a labor movement before there was a Wagner Act, and there will be one even if the Wagner Act goes away. What we call "unions," i.e., legitimate or legally-recognized collective bargaining agents, are how the labor movement dresses up to be more acceptable to more people, especially to business folks. But there is more to it than that.

Don't get me wrong. Unions are a good thing, even if respectability is the price of their acceptance. But we shouldn't mistake what the relatively low percentage of workers in unions actually means. It does not signify the degree to which workers want to be in unions. It signifies the degree to which managers have been forced to accept them. A majority of workers want unions at their workplaces. It's

the employers who generally don't want them, and who fight tooth and nail to keep them out. That's the real problem.

A good estimate of how many folks would be in a union if employers did not oppose them so strenuously is the density of representation in the public sector. In states where public sector unions are allowed – and that is about half the country – union density is 50 percent or more. In New York it is more than 60 percent. In other words, if workers were given an unopposed or free choice about whether to join a union and pay dues for services rendered, unions would represent about half the workforce, and not the 10 or 11 percent they do.

These numbers, by the way, line up with public opinion polls. Ask workers if they are, or would like to be, in a union, and more than 50 percent of them say, "Yes!"

In short, the need for labor education is just as pressing now as before. But the need for proper management education is even more pressing. If the people in power don't recognize that

the labor movement is an inevitable feature of modern society and make their peace with it and try to deal with it, they are sowing dragon's teeth for the class wars of the future. It's not going to turn out well. It's not as if the people who build the buildings and sweep the streets are going to go away and just decide, "OK, you're right, we're worthless, treat us like dirt, see if we care."

Bob Carey: Still, this notion of labor-in-decline is a powerful one.

M.M.: Certainly. And it has both implications and effects. But I think the trope of decline disorients the official labor movement as much as it does the general public. It, too, thinks, "Oh, my God, our unions are in decline," when what's really in decline is the willingness of managers to accept the unions. The labor movement is much stronger than it thinks it is. It has an inferiority complex.

In this regard, the rank-and-file union people and local leaders with whom I work are often extremely frustrated by the fact that in the established collective bargaining regime, they have to refer their problems to the boss and are dependent upon that boss to do something. It makes them crazy. First of all, they are being sent the message that they are powerless. And second, it seems irrational, since more often than not, they know more about the problem and how to fix it than the boss does. So it makes no sense. But the way the system operates, they are only allowed to do what they are told. Do that enough and you forget who you are and what you can do.

We have Frederick Taylor and numberless other "scientific managers" to thank for this problem. Before management became "a science," workers actually had more control over their jobs; and the labor movement, even though unofficial and largely unrecognized, had more power.

The unionized building trades are still organized around this older set of expectations. Every building and every location is different, so it is simply impossible to anticipate or solve every problem that might be encountered from the front office. Workers have to be relied upon to make decisions on the spot and get the job done in an efficient and timely manner. The construction unions rightly pride themselves on being the best, most skilled,

most thoughtful workers in their line of work. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with them at the Van Arsdale Center.

What we see now are other parts of the labor movement finding their own way back to this older tradition of self-help and job control. Take the "Fight for $15"! It is a perfect example. Fast food workers have been asking their employers for raises for a long time. But without recognized unions or collective bargaining agreements, there were no established channels for making such gains across the board. After years of fruitless urging, the workers finally decided, "To hell with this. What we are paid is shameful and our employers ought to be ashamed! We are being mistreated and we are going to demand that it stop. No more, 'Would you please give me a few pennies?' We demand a living wage!"

It had an effect. The labor movement is still trying to get its head around what happened. It is important to note that it would not have happened at all without the support of unions like the SEIU [Service Employees International Union], which invested in the movement even though there was no immediate payoff to them. The labor movement is beginning to look for solutions beyond the established collective bargaining regime. It has to. If nothing else, there is only so much that the employers themselves can do. Collective bargaining is not the only path to a solution. What we might call "collective politicking," at the local, state and national levels, also has to be part of the toolbox.

B.C.: It seems to me you're drawing an interesting line between a very central American debate, and that's: "It's all for me and you're on your own" or "We've got to figure this out as a community," because we seem to have this pattern of "Me first and everybody else last," but "I desperately want to belong somewhere." And we can't quite seem to make that kind of happy partnership between those two visions of the political self. How do we begin to even get ahold of that and educate people to begin to think that "You're a walking vision of community; Are you aware of that, and do you know what it means?"

M.M.: I did an interesting exercise in one of our global civilizations courses once that tried to get at something like that. The goal was

to get the students to see that they're part of the world and then to think about how they wanted their part to go.

I broke the class up into small groups and asked them to debate the following question: "Is the United States better off surrounded by rich countries or poor countries?" The groups then reported back. The majority opinion in the room was, "Well, obviously we'd be better off surrounded by rich countries, which have most of what they need and can afford to buy the rest from us, because if we're surrounded by poor countries, they're going to climb the walls and try to get whatever we've got." But there was also a minority opinion in the room. "No, no, we'd be much better off if we were surrounded by poor countries. We can beat the shit out of them. We've got bigger guns. We can take from them what we want."

I didn't have to say anything. Most of the people in the room were already where I wanted them to be and could defend their positions as well as or better than I could. By far, the consensus that emerged from the ensuing discussion was that it would be better to be surrounded by rich countries.

The obvious next question was: "OK, but we are not surrounded by rich countries. What

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should we do about that, if anything?" Having spent the better part of an hour talking to each other about why being surrounded by rich people was better than being surrounded by poor people, it was relatively easy to come up with reasons for sharing our wealth in ways

that helped everyone to be better off, rather than just hoarding it in the hopes that we could hang on to what we've got.

The same argument is applicable in other than international contexts. Are we better off living in rich or poor neighborhoods? The answer is obvious. What then do we do, if we are among the poor, as we all are, to enrich our neighbors?

These are some of the most important lessons I learned from working with the students at the Van Arsdale Center. I was in daily contact with them. Many had a very different mindset than my own. I think many thought me naïve, altruistic and utopian. I know at least one who wanted to know if I was a Communist. (I told them, "Yes, the New Testament variety, with a small 'c'!") In contrast, the students think of themselves as hardheaded and realistic. They believe deeply that they had gotten where they were by virtue of hard work and stubborn courage, more than good fortune or social assistance. It was themselves alone, them against the world. And when I say to them, "This is not an accurate picture," they respond with, "Well, maybe not for you, but it certainly is for me! I don't know what your daddy did for you, but my daddy didn't do that much for me. They took my daddy away."

I should also note here that those of our students who came from longtime union families were often, though not always, slightly less individualistic. They had been taught to honor the union tradition and solidarity. But many of them also drew a line, not so much between themselves and the rest of the world, as they did between the union (or their family) and the rest of the world. There was still a line, a boundary, a border, they had to cross. It was the same problem.

A.M.: I think this is a hard problem for Empire State College and adult education more generally, because I think that in most cases, our students do believe that they have gotten no support; they believe that they are solitary fighters against the odds, and they're celebrating that. You know, it's a way in which the college confirms a lot of the highly individualistic ways of thinking about success because it is perceived as (and is, of course!) a tremendous individual achievement. Yes, of course, many students acknowledge how

important some family and friends have been to them, but the larger collective part is often harder for people to see.

B.C.: It's the whole American success story, even though the numbers say you'd be better off in France, and certainly much better off in Germany, just in terms of richness of opportunity. And so, going way back to Berger and Luckmann in their *The Social Construction of Reality* [1966: Random House], it's how you begin to help somebody demythologize so someone can say, "Oh, I'm part of a group that's trying to make a difference. Actually it's not me just marching along to this ultimate goal but a lot of people next to me, a lot of people behind me."

M.M.: Initially, some of the faculty responded to the student's survivalism and individualism with: "They are all reactionaries!" No, they are *not* all reactionaries. Getting ahead by their own effort is their truth. It is their reality. And they are right, just as Aristotelian mechanics is right when it comes to most practical purposes. We are not going to change their minds by saying, "You're deluded. You don't understand your own reality." Their response to such a view is, rightly, "Excuse me? I think I know my own situation very well." We can't address these issues in that way. It's more about saying, "OK, yes, you are right. That is the way things seem to be. But let's think them through a bit. Are things also other than they seem?"

I often challenged the students with the following deceptively simple question: "Does the sun revolve around the Earth or does the Earth revolve around the sun?" Most people get this right. (There was one fellow who raised his hand for the first option until he realized he was the only one and quickly put it down!) Once we settle that question, I then ask, "How do you know? What does it look like? How you can tell?"

Of course, it looks the same either way. You can't tell on the basis of visual evidence alone. If anything, it looks more like the sun is in motion relative to the Earth than the other way round. So why do we think the Earth revolves around the sun? We think so because we have learned to do what I call "the mental math." Even though our senses are telling us that it's the sun revolving around the earth,

Wages are not a technical fact of the production system. They are a political fact of the social system.

our *mind* is correcting our impression of the situation so that we can understand what's actually going on.

That's the same kind of mental math we need to learn to understand the relationship between the individual and the social.

Take the Van Arsdale Center's course on Labor and the Economy. The course explores the concepts of market efficiency and the distribution of factor payments (wages, profits, rents, etc.) in depth. With regard to the first, it helps the students discover for themselves, in a very rigorous, logically coherent way, that market efficiency is income-distribution dependent. What is efficient for one distribution is not necessarily efficient for another. In other words, it is impossible to decide the most efficient way for an enterprise to organize itself before you have decided how you want the rewards of the enterprise to be distributed. The former is dependent upon the latter.

The course also addresses how the wage rate is determined, and by implication how the profit rate, etc., too, is determined. The students generally come to the class having accepted the idea that wages are a function of productivity. Ask them "How are wages set?" and they generally respond by saying that wages are determined by how good or productive a worker is. Skilled workers are paid well; unskilled workers, not so well.

But then we ask, "So, if you are good and productive, but you aren't in a union, will you be paid the same?" They have little trouble acknowledging that they would not. So then the question becomes, which is the fair wage, the union wage or the non-union wage?

Traditional economics basically argues that the non-union wage is the fair wage. It is the market rate, which the catalytic action of

innumerable buyers and sellers supposedly determines with almost mathematical rigor. But traditional economics is wrong. Wages are not a technical fact of the production system. They are a political fact of the social system. Productivity matters, but it matters more as a source of leverage than as a source of value. Wages are set by power. Fairness isn't the answer to a calculus problem. It's the answer to a political problem.

And with that, we are back to terra-centrism versus helio-centrism, or in this case, ego-centrism versus socio-centrism. It is a problem of optics. The way we see ourselves in the world has to be corrected. We have to correct for our myopia if we are going to see things for what they are. Instead, we are usually seeing the world wrongly through a biased lens!

A.M.: Van Arsdale was the only part of the college, certainly in the early years, that had any kind of groups or classes whatsoever. Faculty left the college or were forced out of the college for wanting to do groups. Obviously, the situation is very different now and that's fascinating in itself. But it seems to me that part of your argument is that the very "groupness" of the learning is critical to the nature of the learning. You know, the rest of the college was focused, at least in theory, on the particular student, and in doing so, it embraced a certain kind of individualism. From the very start, Van Arsdale, on the other hand, had a very different model and I hear you saying this is a model that is necessary for people to get the experience of being part of a little community.

M.M.: Well, I think it helps. The "groupness" of our classes does provide an occasion for people to discover that knowledge is social and that they can learn a lot more, more quickly, by having the opportunity to hear others. At the Van Arsdale Center, we always tried to organize our classes on a democratic basis. We took it for granted that there were several learning exchanges: not just instructor to students, but also students to instructor, and students to each other. We made room for and celebrated each of these exchanges in order to maximize the learning that went on in the classroom. The message was: We are all smart here; we all know things; and we all have things we want to know. Let's learn together!

The groupness of a classroom can be a problem, however. It is possible – indeed, I would say, it is common – to organize a classroom in an undemocratic fashion, privileging one learning exchange over another. Doing so inhibits learning. The message from the instructor in an undemocratic classroom is something like, "I am informed and you're not," or even, "I am smart, and you're not." In such cases, the groupness of the classroom works against the learning, especially if it is equality, cooperation and solidarity that one wants to teach. Better a solitary free thinker than a bureaucratic captive mind!

A.M.: In the *New Student Orientation Handbook* from Van Arsdale, there is a line about the fact that the political ideas of the labor movement are two or three generations old. What does that mean, and what are the political ideas that you wish a new labor movement would embrace and that you want our students to learn?

M.M.: For me, the core idea of the labor movement goes back to the time of Aristotle, at least; it is that there should be democracy in the workplace, to which I would add that if we are going to have democracy in the workplace, we need to have it everywhere. Of course, Aristotle opposed this idea and tried to refute it. But he described it clearly enough and explored its strengths thoroughly enough to make it possible to figure out what the other side was saying. Democracy is an ancient Greek idea and Aristotle's discussion is very clarifying.

Basically, the labor movement is predicated on the notion that we should not follow the example of Xerxes (or Donald Trump) and organize large-scale organizations on a military or slave model. We should organize them on a city-state model (absent the slavery and second-class statuses, of course), with as much participatory democracy as possible. To me, that's what the labor movement is about: it's about realizing democracy in the workplace and in the wider society. But whether we're thinking about a single person, a single union, a single firm or even a single country, there is a larger social context. We can't have democracy in the workplace if we don't have it in the town square or at home.

B.C.: I'd like to pursue the whole question of the notion of a "democratic" and then an "inclusionary" approach. It seems to me that we have to look at the realities of American history and American life, which very often are driven by the idea that we shouldn't do *that* because I don't want "those people" to get any of *this*. A lot of our history of ethnic and racial discrimination is predicated on that, so the idea of the integrity of the social fabric of the place is actually spun a little thin because we can't quite get our heads around the notion that if everybody is really doing well, then I'm going to be doing even better than I am doing now.

One of the things that seems to me to grow out of some of the things you've been saying is that the U.S. Constitution provides for another level of identity other than just family, race and clan. And that's the notion of citizenship – that this citizen and that citizen can actually sit down and figure something out without it being a zero-sum game. What would be the way to approach that in terms of labor education or labor movement concerns?

M.M.: The most explosive interface of so much of the discussion about democracy, citizenship and identity is obviously race, and the interaction between race and class. There's a lot that needs to be done so that people can think through the issues raised by these relationships. For myself, I am a fan of the Fields' book *Racecraft* [2012: Verso Books], which argues that race is a socially-constructed fiction, which explains nothing but needs to be explained. Of course, even fictions are powerful and there may be no fiction more powerful than race in American society. But when we treat it as a material or biological fact –

> *To me, that's what the labor movement is about: it's about realizing democracy in the workplace and in the wider society.*

something inscribed in nature, rather than as a social fact – then we buy into the myth rather than challenge it.

Moreover, to confront the fact of race as a social category necessarily brings us face to face with slavery, which at least in the Atlantic World, is the principal institutional source of racism, its ultimate origin and ground. If we are going to think historically and honestly about racism, we have to tell the truth about, and confront the reality of, slavery. But the same is also true of class. Race (and gender) have been used as a justification for economic exploitation. But the economically-exploited have also been set apart as a separate "race." Class is about where we draw the freedom line, just as race and gender and sexuality are. If you are black, a woman or gay in America, you are not as free as you would be if you were a straight white man. But the same is true if you are poor or a worker. You are not as free as you would be if you were rich or a boss.

In fact, laborers have long been stigmatized in many of the same ways that people of color and women have been, and for many of the same reasons. To be a wage earner, historically, has been to be dependent upon and often at the mercy of others; a position of subordination and forced inferiority, only slightly above that of a slave. In such circumstances, it is easy to see how those on top might come to think of themselves as better than those below, who by virtue of their position appear clearly inferior, and deserving not only of being put down but also of being held down. Such supposed superiority is an insidious myth that we have always struggled against, intellectually and personally.

A.M.: Mike, in all of this, I'm so aware that a major goal is to help us and help our students place these debates in historical context. Yes, as you've pointed out, there is a larger world out there, but you've got to know this history – the history informs our understanding of what's happening and that's why it has to be a central part of worker education.

M.M: Nothing comes from nowhere or goes anywhere without baggage. One of my most favorite projects at Van Arsdale was redoing the U.S. history curriculum. Just like everyone, we often heard from our students,

"I hate history. It's so boring!" It motivated me to insist, "Our history does not have to be boring!"

B.C.: Well a lot of people work very hard to make it that way!

M.M.: Indeed, they do! So we decided to change the way we approached the subject. Instead of teaching history as a reading course, where students were expected to master canonical interpretations of the past, we proposed to teach it as a writing course, where they would in effect become their own historians right from the start.

To do so, we reorganized the U.S. history class around four key events or trends: the American Revolution, Reconstruction, immigration and the rise of modern industry/the labor movement. Each of these events or trends was an occasion to focus on a key question about the American past. The focus for the unit on the American Revolution is democracy. Is the Constitution democratic? For Reconstruction, it is freedom. If you abolish slavery, does that actually achieve freedom? Or is there more to be done? The immigration unit is about national identity. Who belongs to the country, who doesn't? Do you have to be born here? Or can you just move here? And the last section is about equality. What does "equality" mean? Why have people struggled to achieve it? And what have they achieved?

The whole point of the effort was to get rid of textbooks and required readings that you had to memorize and regurgitate. Instead, we gave the students writing assignments. Lots of writing assignments. We didn't tell them what they had to read, though we did make suggestions. We only told them that they had to be real historians and tell the truth, based on evidence, so far as they were able.

A.M.: So there are two themes: first, "We're all historians" and second, "Everything we're learning is completely relevant to our lives right now."

B.C.: It's a way of restating Faulkner's famous dictum in *Requiem for a Nun* about history: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

M.M.: The right wing has been hammering us over the head for so long about the Constitution. We decided it was time to grab it and hammer back! Let's find out what this

is about! Anyway, that's one of the things I've enjoyed. To me, this is worker education: taking folks who come straight from work exhausted and dirty and creating a space where they can think. In doing so, we are saying to our students, "You are an historian and a thinker. You are an economist and a sociologist. And you need to be these things if you're going to be a citizen who can shape the environment in which you live your life."

I often asked the students, "Why is the labor movement in trouble?" And I then tell them, "The labor movement is in trouble because somebody else is telling its story. They are painting you in a bad light and making it seem like you get more than you should. You need to tell your own story. You need to tell people what is *actually* going on."

> " … *You need to tell your own story. You need to tell people what is* actually *going on.*"

A.M.: It's really about retaking the history that has been told *about* you and saying, "There is a history here that is *your* history, and you can make this an unbelievable moment of recognition, of seeing yourself in the world in a totally different way."

B.C.: In a very real sense, it's democratizing the discipline downward. If it's only about kings and generals, it's very different than if it's "everyone is their own historian." Then you're in a very different place, where things become immediately available. One of the reasons memorization is death to historical thinking is because it poses no problem. It just says, "What is Grover Cleveland's first and last name?" "Oh, good, I got an 'A.'"

M.M.: I'm reminded of a story that speaks to the quality of the classroom and to learning things in the classroom that matter to you and others. One of the student speakers at the Van Arsdale graduation this Friday [June 17, 2016] is going to be Hana Georg. I have the advantage of getting an advanced copy of her remarks. She is going to talk about an incident

of harassment on the job. But what she also says is that what she loves about the college is that it's a place where people have discussed harassment and other uncomfortable issues, which helped her to feel less alone. She then tells how, as the incident in question unfolded, a fellow student stepped up and said, "Hey man, what are you doing? This isn't what you should be doing!" It's helping students make those kinds of connections at the personal as well as the social level that is one of the main reasons we do what we do, I think.

B.C.: The immediacy of one's own experience.

M.M.: I was thrilled! She asked me if it was OK that she talked about these things and I said, "Are you kidding? Absolutely. If somebody is upset, blame me. It's my last graduation!"

A.M.: Given the spirit of what we've been discussing, Mike, maybe we're back to a version of the opening question of our conversation. What do you see as the future of labor education?

M.M.: I want to make a distinction between "labor education" and "worker education." Labor education is what I understand to be the education of labor as an institutional, organizational form in the current political economy. It is about helping people learn what they need to know in order to fill their functional roles in the collective bargaining system. If the society is committed to collective bargaining and trade unionism, then, just as there are business schools, which I like to think help businesses operate better and teach people how to be better business people, there need to be labor schools, which teach how to be better labor people. Labor education will continue to exist as long as people and their unions care about what they do. I don't see it going away.

Worker education, however, is not just concerned with providing opportunities to union-side labor relations professionals, officers and staff. Worker education is about educating workers. It is about preparing the majority of the population, who are working people of one sort or another, for the challenges of democratic citizenship. Worker education has to be about more than how to secure union recognition and negotiate better contracts. It has to be about how to cultivate in ourselves an appropriate, democratic temperament so

that we can organize the whole society on a democratic basis. Basically, it's Kant's four questions (from his "What Is Enlightenment?" essay [1784]): Who are we? What can we know? What ought we do? What can we hope for?

A.M.: So why in your "worker education" regime do you have students read Melville's *Moby-Dick* [1851]?

M.M.: Ah! Well, one, because it's the greatest working-class novel in American literature; and two, because my maternal grandmother told me it was the greatest book of any kind by an American – she was always giving me books to read – and promised me that when I grew up she would give me her copy, which I coveted because of its beautiful Rockwell Kent illustrations. (The Modern Library still sells this edition.)

I guess you could say that *Moby-Dick* is something of a family tradition. My maternal grandfather was a member of the German merchant marine and I don't think the salt water ever left his blood. He emigrated to the U.S. before World War I, following an older brother to Idaho, where they staked a homestead claim. Some months later, in June 1914, my grandmother decided to leave her relatively comfortable middle-class professional life (her father was a manufacturer of railroad engines; she was a schoolteacher) and go to America. She just got fed up being a primary school teacher in Wilhelmine, Germany, I guess, and decided to accept a proposal of marriage from one of the brothers, who she barely knew. According to family lore, when she arrived in the desolate area of eastern Idaho where they were to live, my grandmother declared that she was going to marry the fun-loving younger brother, rather than the serious-minded older one, who had written the letter! My sisters believe she had it all planned out before she left home. Obviously, the younger brother accepted her proposal.

The single greatest critical influence on my reading of the book, by the way, has been C.L.R. James, whose book on *Moby-Dick, Mariners, Renegades & Castaways* [1953], was written while he was in detention on Ellis Island and about to be deported as an undocumented immigrant. James offered *Mariners* as proof that he was more American

than, or at least *as* American as, any of the judges who were deciding whether he could stay in the U.S., where he had lived, agitated and organized for more than a decade. In James' reading, *Moby-Dick* is a microcosm of the American working class and of American working-class life, with Ahab playing the part of the mad capitalist, totally consumed by a meaningless quest, who has lost all sense of balance or social purpose.

Like the U.S. history curriculum, the *Moby-Dick* course was an experiment. I co-taught the class with Rebecca Fraser, who I had been trying to recruit to the cause from day one. She finally relented and we offered the course as a version of her Working-Class Themes in Literature study, which is a standard part of the Van Arsdale bachelor's degree curriculum. I remember each of the students who took the class. There were 18 electricians in all. Most of them had ended up in it because they had waited until the last minute to register and it was the only course that still had openings.

Naturally, their first reaction was, "Oh God, are you kidding me! *Moby-Dick*?"

A.M.: "I think I'm going to be studying labor contracts and instead I get Herman Melville!"

M.M.: Exactly! I remember one student saying, "Wait, we're going to read one book all semester?! How can you talk about one book for the whole term?" We said, "Yup, trust us. There will be plenty to talk about. And we won't even be able to finish the whole book." They reluctantly said, "OK." But, truthfully, what were they going to do?

We also later found out that three or four people in the class had already read the book in high school or at a previous college, so not everyone was a reluctant member of the enterprise. Some of them were actually excited about reading the book again and discussing it in a small seminar. In any case, the class clicked. Rebecca and I worked hard to help them connect to the story. We wanted them to experience the text as a mirror rather than a mystery, something in which they could see themselves, and they did.

Fortunately, the opening chapters of the book are a comic classic, so there was plenty of material to work with right from the start. For those who don't remember the opening,

Ishmael ends up bunking with a Pacific Islander named Queequeg because all the other beds at the inn are full, and only the Islander is indifferent to sharing. Queequeg is out when Ishmael gets to the room, so he falls anxiously asleep, only to be awakened later by the arrival of a massive mountain of a man, tattooed from head to foot, who has apparently been selling shrunken heads around town and kneels down to worship a stone idol before turning in.

We told the students to read all of this first bit and then we asked them, "Who is *your* Queequeg?" In *Moby-Dick*, Queequeg turns out to be the most noble of fellows and Ishmael's boon companion on the "Pequod," whose crew they join together. ("Better a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian," Melville infamously remarks later in the book, prompting condemnation from his most Christian reviewers and helping in some sense to damn, so to speak, the book's initial reception.)

Students read enough to know that Ishmael had gone from being frightened and ready to kill his strange companion, to being willing to sacrifice his own life for Queequeg, if he had to. In that context, "Who's your Queequeg?" made perfect sense. Each student realized that they indeed had folks like Queequeg in their lives, and they told stories about various odd sorts in their families, neighborhoods or workplaces who turned out to be great people. In this way, they saw that *Moby-Dick* actually was a framework they could use to think about their own lives and learn about each other.

After a couple of weeks of such "mirroring," we shifted gears. We wanted the students next to get used to the idea that the book could also be a window, something through which they could learn not only about themselves, but also about the wider world. We are in the middle of the book at this point, which is a long, and for many readers, boring dissertation on whaling. But for our students, it was perfect. Helpfully, there is a chapter early on that describes whale oil being used to light American cities in the 1850s, and the students immediately commented on the fact that, in effect, whale oil was the electricity of the era. They said, "Hey, whalers are like us. They lit the city and that's what *we* do."

It was easy then to get them to look more carefully at what whalers actually did on a whaling voyage. We divided the middle of the book up into different parts of two or three chapters each and gave every student a section to report on orally, in class and in sequence. In effect, we proposed that we read the middle of the book together. No one had to read the whole thing, though they could if they wanted to. All anyone needed to do was to tell their part of the story in a way that connected it to what had gone before, and could be connected to what would come after.

In that way, they each got into telling their own stories and we worked our way through what can be a rather demanding section of the novel in high fashion. I doubt *Moby-Dick* has ever been retold so well. In part, this was because it was being retold by people who also worked with their hands and knew what it was to build something – or in the case of whaling, as Melville points out, to "un-build" it. Almost all of them came up with some kind of fascinating twist. One of my favorites came from a young woman in the class, who reported that she had found herself having to say, "Don't be an A-hab!" on the job more often than she liked. But, she said, it was perfect. People got the message.

I also remember the very funny story told by the guy who ended up with the whale penis chapter. Who could forget! As Melville describes it, the crewman who cut the whale blubber up into smaller pieces so that it could be boiled down into oil would always make a vestment for himself out the skin of a whale penis, which he would wear as oil-resistant protection as he minced the blubber. It was a memorable performance, enlivened in part by the student's re-enactment of what it must have been like to haul a whale penis across the slippery deck of a whaling ship on the high seas!

Another memorable tale came from a student who was assigned the chapter called "The Grand Armada." In it, Melville described the family patterns and social behaviors of whale pods (e.g., females will protect wounded companions, but young males will abandon them). He also described how whalemen would sometimes wade into these pods and start clubbing pups. The student was horrified, saying, "Look, if you have a queasy stomach

or you care about your dog, don't read these chapters." At the end of class, when we asked if anyone was at all disappointed in the book or its ending, this apprentice added, "Yes, I was disappointed. All of them should have died. Ishmael, too, shouldn't have lived! They were mean. Beating these whales to death! What did they ever do to them?!" He was great.

B.C.: You've really loved your job.

M.M.: Yes.

A.M.: Why is that?

M.M.: Because it's fun. Maybe it's not everybody's cup of tea. But for me, it was the perfect job. I arrived in New York City in 1966 as a geographic diversity/affirmative action admission to Columbia University from the great state of Idaho. I loved the city. But I loved the education I got at Columbia even more, primarily because of its demanding general education requirements. The idea was that every student had to read in the Western philosophical tradition from Plato forward and in the humanities from Homer forward. Everyone also had to take a required course in the sciences, math, art and music. And there was an opportunity to study what was called at the time "Oriental Civilization" and "Oriental Humanities" (now incorporated into a Major Cultures or Global Cultures option).

Thanks to the SUNY general education requirements, I have been able to reproduce that experience, at least in part, at Van Arsdale. I have never tried to take a relatively specialized course and stretch it a bit to make the case that it fit the gen. ed. requirements (not that anyone ever does!). I tried to design courses that were consistent with the encompassing spirit of the requirement. Here again, we threw out all the textbooks and developed reading lists of whole books and other collections that people actually want to read.

Some of the students resisted this move initially. I would meet monthly with student representatives from the various classes during my first two years at the center. In the beginning, they would chide me with, "Why do I have to be here? This isn't a real college. I've been to a real college – Brooklyn! And this isn't it!" Then the tune changed: "Why do

I have to be here?" they asked. "This is a real college! I don't have time for this. I work too hard. I have a family," etc.

Slowly, the culture changed. I remember one vociferous representative who demanded to know, "Why do I have to read a story about a man who turned into a bug?! Teach me something that I can use! You say this is a labor education program … teach me something useful!" To which I replied, "Look, you want to learn something useful? Do you think that if I had a secret that would help you bargain a better contract, the other side wouldn't know it already? I mean, if it's available to me and it's something I can teach in an introductory class, I think it's already known. The point is to go where no one has gone before! And you're not going to get there just regurgitating pre-chewed pabulum. You have to get there the hard way. I can't hand you power on a silver platter. You read a story about a man who turns into a bug so that you can learn to read between the lines and behind the scenes – to make connections that you would not otherwise make. There is no other way to do it," or something to that effect.

The Van Arsdale Center has given me the opportunity to do a little economics, to do a little history, to do a little literature, to do a little sociology. To me, that's the true life of the mind. Most colleges and universities seem to have become so bureaucratic, overspecialized and insistent on quantitative promotion criteria that it is almost impossible to be a generalist anymore. I understand. It's easier to count than to evaluate. But if those are your metrics, that's what you are going to get. The Van Arsdale Center has been a great opportunity for me. The chance to discuss Aristotle and Karl Marx and Herman Melville and Franz Kafka with electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painters, machinists and education paraprofessionals? I loved it!

I hope the college remains a welcoming environment for this kind of initiative, as it has been (for the most part) for me. I can't predict the future. But I do know that the work we did at the Van Arsdale Center benefited from Empire State College being the kind of institution it is – and hopefully will continue to be. It was possible to do things at the center that wouldn't have been possible in other, more tightly-controlled, centrally-organized, rigidly-

structured institutions. It is very important to have the kind of flexibility we had, if one wants to create a welcoming institutional space for nontraditional students who don't fit the standard models. If you don't, you're back to the teacher-centered "learning platforms" of traditional education.

B.C.: And how about your new work at Rutgers?

M.M.: Rutgers is more structured, but I will be part of the nontraditional education offerings there. I'm going to be in the noncredit area, working with the labor movement and community groups. I worked with these same sort of folks at the Van Arsdale Center, but I did so from *inside* the institution. At Rutgers, I will be working with the same population from what might be described as the *edge* of the institution. I'm looking forward to it, in part because it's a different rhythm, a different set of objectives.

The program that I will be directing – LEARN: Labor Education and Research Now – has an established set of professional

> *The Van Arsdale Center has given me the opportunity to do a little economics, to do a little history, to do a little literature, to do a little sociology. To me, that's the true life of the mind.*

development courses, which I will continue, expand and try to improve upon. But I will also work to add something new to the mix: courses that are less instrumental and more inspirational (I hope!). I would like LEARN to become known as one of the places you go if you want to find out more about how to guarantee a job to everyone who wants to work. To me, actual full employment at a living wage is the key to everything. As a society, we are rich enough and proficient enough to do

such a thing. We only lack the imagination to believe it is possible and the will to make it happen!

Basically, I am talking about a 21st century Homestead Act. The Homestead Act of 1862 gave every U.S. citizen not in rebellion against the government (as many then were!) 160 acres of public land, which they could claim as their own, if they would work their allotment for five years and add improvements to it. It was what my grandparents did. I think our children and grandchildren should have the same opportunity. They should be able to claim a right to a meaningful share of the modern commons – the resources at public command (which are very much greater than is normally imagined) – to be theirs if they are willing to work and turn the chance to account.

By the way, I don't say we try to do this without the private sector. The old socialist dream of "public ownership of the means of production" as the key to all happiness never convinced the mainstream of the American labor movement, and never convinced me. We need partnerships, not monopolies, which means we also don't do this without the public sector. I don't see us getting to actual full employment, as opposed to the watered-down economistic version of full employment we are now taught to settle for, without mobilizing the full resources of the society, public as well as private.

The key point here is that the government can productively and profitably employ anyone the private sector can't. Moreover, it can do so, if it does it right and under the right circumstances, without causing inflation or crashing the economy. We need to understand in our bones that the government does not take value from the private sector; on the contrary, it is an essential co-maker of the value that the private sector likes to claim belongs wholly to itself. How that works, why it's so and what its effects are, are all things we need to learn. I want LEARN to be a place that can help us do just that.

Multilingual Art Exhibitions at Museums, A Sign That the Time has Come

Raúl Manzano, Metropolitan New York Region

This article is based on my dissertation: Language, Community, and Translations: An Analysis of Current Multilingual Exhibition Practices among Art Museums in New York City *(Manzano, 2015).*

It took me five years to complete my doctoral studies. What seemed to be an endless road ahead when I started in January 2011, turned into a light at the end of the tunnel that was brighter than I could have imagined. The knowledge and experience I acquired throughout this journey is priceless. This journey began with an idea of developing a creative dissertation that would incorporate my artistic skills and philosophy to address social, cultural and political issues. The focus was the iconic symbol of the Statue of Liberty and her evolving significance as a symbol of freedom and hope to many people, as perceived in today's political and social climate. The Union Institute & University's interdisciplinary Ph.D. degree with a concentration in humanities and culture was the obvious choice for me. Its core studies in ethics, social justice, philosophy, leadership, aesthetics, cultural difference, and creativity offered the flexibility and blended studies that I was seeking.

During the first year, my studies went well, but something began to change. Was it Plato, Aristotle, Khan, Appiah, Rawls, Gilligan, Hall, Young, King Jr., Foucault, hooks, Nash, Bogues, Jacob, Nussbaum, Hampl, McAdams, Anzaldúa, or Tharp who changed my thinking (the list of thinkers can fill up this page), thus directing my goal toward a more public concern with the production of interpretative material for art exhibitions at museums? Specifically, I recall two assignments: one for my Research Methods II course and the other for Critiquing the Canon. The first one focused on museums' interpretative text panels and labels to inform the public and enhance their learning experience. The second focused on the Haitian Revolution to demonstrate concepts of freedom and independence from Western supremacy by establishing the real meaning of freedom: freedom from white domination. It was at this time that my dissertation shifted from a creative concept to socio-cultural driven research. While the literature review of my dissertation provided the foundation for this analysis, I want to share the practical aspect of the research based on three different surveys I designed: of museum staff, of the general public, and finally my observations of museum facilities and human subjects. The surveys and scripts were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Union Institute & University.

Throughout this research, I engaged in more than one activity, switching back and forth as a scholar, an artist, a faculty mentor, an immigrant, a tourist, an ethnographer and as a community participant, practicing self-reflection to learn about the essence of human conditions. I reviewed scholarly material early in the process, followed by research conducted over a period of eight months, during which I visited 36 museums, including four museums in Barcelona, Spain, to solicit audience participation and conduct visual research. My goal was to understand from both perspectives – of the museums and of the public – the relevance of multilingual exhibitions.

I began this project by visiting museums in New York City with the purpose of researching interpretative wall text panels and wall labels. Wall text panels are large texts displayed at the entrance of the galleries (see Figure 1); they provide contextual and referential information to familiarize visitors with the works of artists, time periods, and/or art movements. Wall labels are small labels placed next to artworks (see Figure 2); they contain identifiable information, such as name of the artist, nationality, date of birth and date of death, when applicable, title of the artwork, the year this was completed, and the medium. The label

Raúl Manzano

may also list how the artwork was acquired and the year it became part of the museum's collection. When museums want to emphasize an important work, a short description of the painting is listed on a separate larger label (see lower label on Figure 2). The label also provides guidance to users listening to an audio tour device. On the label, there is an image or symbol and a number next to the image which the user must press on the audio unit. Audio listening recordings are short descriptions of the artworks and often include a curatorial point of view from the curator, scholars or artists themselves.

Figure 1. Visitors reading wall text panel at MoMA, New York City.

Pablo Picasso
Spanish, 1881-1973

Three Musicians 1921
Oil on canvas

Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1969

🎧 510   👁 60   🎧 6

The three musicians and dog conjure a bygone period
of bohemian life, enjoyed here by Picasso in the
guise of a Harlequin, flanked by two figures who may
represent post-friends of the artist: Guillaume
Apollinaire, who had recently died, and Max Jacob.
The patterned flatness of the work is derived
from cut and posted paper and stands in stark
Contrast to the sculptural monumentality of other
Paintings Picasso made in the summer of 1921.

Photo credit: Raúl Manzano

Figure 2. Wall label.

At the museums I visited, wall text panels were featured at the entrance of and within the galleries, and wall labels were displayed next to the artworks. I noticed that the text panels and labels were written only in English, but not in other languages, even though some of the exhibitions displayed artists from other countries. I was surprised to find out that the smaller museums with much less funding, such as El Museo del Barrio, The Bronx Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian, were able to publish bilingual interpretative information in English and Spanish. In New York City, where Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language, it seems peculiar that no other institutions have taken a strategic leadership role in this area. Some museums, however, offer audio tour recordings in several languages, yet this material only refers to general information about the museum or their permanent collection. Current or traveling exhibitions are not included in the audio tour recording unless the exhibition is large; often this type of exhibit is presented at the high-end museums. However, in Barcelona, the museums display interpretative material in three languages – Catalan, Castilian (Spanish) and English – and sometimes in five languages. For the most part, I observed a good number of visitors reading the wall text panels and labels, particularly the text at the entrance to the gallery, an activity that signals that this interpretative material is still an important part of informing and designing an exhibition. Additionally, it showed that visitors wanted to develop a sense of understanding before viewing the exhibition.

I focused on five museums and selected them by ethnic classification and popularity in order to get different perspectives: The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), El Museo del Barrio, The Queens Museum, The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and The Rubin Museum of Art. For instance, the MoMA holds collections of international artists from the late nineteenth century to the present; El Museo del Barrio is dedicated to Latin American cultures; the Queens Museum is located in the most diverse borough of the city; the NMAI is dedicated to the Native people of the Americas; and the Rubin Museum of Art focuses on Himalayan art and culture. The MoMA and the Rubin Museum of Art are two of the most advanced in the incorporation of technology. El Museo del Barrio and the NMAI (see figure 3) more actively promote bilingual material; the Queens Museum, while presenting artists of different cultures, exhibitions are offered only in English, though they welcome presentations in other languages for their community outreach programs.

Photo credit: Raúl Manzano

Figure 3. English/Spanish wall labels. National Museum of the American Indian.

Museum Survey

Part of the process was to identify museum staff to participate in this research; specifically, I was interested in the curatorial and/or exhibition production and design departments. I visited museums in person; others I contacted by phone. When I approached museums to participate in my surveys during the course of my research, they generally did not seem as congenial as I had anticipated. From the five museums I selected, only The National

Museum of the American Indian, The Rubin Museum of Art, and the Queens Museum offered information.

The MoMA and El Museo del Barrio declined to offer information, despite my repeated attempts. During my communications with them, I was either directed to someone else or the person I contacted never returned my calls, as was the case with the Museum of Modern Art; I also contacted MoMA via their website but did not receive a reply to my request. With El Museo del Barrio, emails went back and forth over a period of four months; eventually I got a final reply by the recipient indicating that she was not the appropriate person to respond to my survey and that she had forwarded the information to someone else, who never answered. In spite of several efforts to request participation from the listed museums, time constraints, possible lack of commitment by representatives, and the difficulty of scheduling interviews did not allow for timely responses to my survey. For researchers who wish to offer new knowledge about museum studies, as it was with this multilingual research, the research experience can be frustrating and challenging, since museum staff members are often reluctant to speak on behalf of the museum.

Thus, this article does not include the statistics I gathered; they have been published in my dissertation (Manzano, 2015). I also want to note that while the responses from the museum representatives reflect individual opinions, they are not necessarily the institutions' viewpoints; more studies are necessary in order to understand the role museums play in addressing the needs of diverse communities and the use of languages to include multicultural audiences. Having access to museums' senior officers would have been beneficial to provide a broader perspective on whether museums are addressing multilingual audiences.

Public Opinion Survey

I conducted the public opinion survey in three ways: using the online survey site SurveyMonkey, through face-to-face meetings and by email. From the three formats, SurveyMonkey was the most effective for reaching out to a large audience, getting information and analyzing results. It allowed

for follow ups to remind subjects to respond within a timeframe. Another advantage was the way SurveyMonkey categorized and summarized the data collected, providing group summaries or individual responses in visually attractive charts, percentages and text. Not every subject targeted responded to the survey, and of those who responded, some left questions unanswered; however, the diverse group of people I reached out to via this web-based application saved me time that I would have otherwise spent on other methods.

The face-to-face approach was conducted at various locations, including museum sites, on the street and with neighbors. I enjoyed this activity as I spoke with people directly. Some were very enthusiastic about participating while others kindly declined. This is expected in any research and I learned that some people are not interested in giving information, spending time on this activity, or are simply not interested in the subject. Nonetheless, the experience was rewarding as I learned about their likes, dislikes and views on museum approaches to the use of languages to inform the public. No doubt, communication is the most basic way to learn how people think, to elaborate on proposals, suggest recommendations for the benefit of the majority, or to simply learn how to make something work.

During my museum walking tours, I conducted surveys at museum sites, speaking with museum staff such as docents (guides), guards, volunteers, and tour guides as well as tourists. I conducted myself in a professional manner by introducing myself as an academic and a researcher. I provided my business card as a college educator, and those I met seemed impressed and reassured by my position as a faculty member. I came to realize how positive and influential the professorial work could be perceived by others. Other participants were approached during my subway commute rides and in cafeterias; I also reached out to tenants in my building, neighbors, and anyone available and willing to participate in my research. Email was another way I reached out to people for those not included via SurveyMonkey. Although not the most efficient method, to this small group I sent the survey attached as a Word document. In this case, participants

saved the file to their computer, filled it out, saved the file again and returned it to me via email as an attachment.

The survey of the general public provided the most direct information about language and how individuals feel about it. Feedback from participants showed that multilingual exhibitions are an issue that should be addressed. But they also acknowledged the complexity of language inclusion as a defining factor in the production of multilingual art exhibitions. For example, deciding which languages to select could be viewed as an expression of bias against cultures whose languages are not chosen. One way to address this is by looking at population statistics to determine the largest groups and by default language choices. Another option is by acknowledging the language of a particular culture when the presented exhibit features that particular culture (Hall, Evans, & Nixon, 2013; Paulston, 1997).

In addition, I spoke with many people informally about their experiences and/or views while visiting museums. This was very informative, as it broadened my own perceptions of museum audiences. For example, tourists visit museums when they are on vacation; on the other hand, local residents visit museums when there are special exhibits or when their friends or relatives visit them and want to see exhibits.

Visual Research

I engaged in visual research to analyze people's behavior and their level of interest when reading text panels or viewing exhibitions. Being inconspicuous at the museum gave me the opportunity to learn without intruding on individuals' space and time. I observed people of different ages, backgrounds and cultures. As I took notes, I tried to make sense of what the viewers were doing and what they were saying, since some spoke in different languages, and what experience they felt reading text panels. Some viewers did not spend time in front of an object and just passed by without showing interest in the artwork or the text panels. I can only assume that some visitors did not express interest in reading information, did not know the language, did not realize there was a text panel and label, or already had read about the subject. Or perhaps they just

wanted to focus on the visual experience. Some people spent moments in quiet observation before moving on to the next image while others spoke to their companion(s); others took photos and selfies with their cameras and phones, a practice that has gained popularity among all groups. At times, it gave me the impression that some visitors had known about the artists and the subjects and were exploring the artworks more deeply by the way they focused on the objects or the length of time they devoted to viewing a particular image or reading text panels. There were moments I felt I wanted to interview a number of them to learn more about their interest in visiting the museum, but as Alexander (2003) wrote, "ethnography is often about infiltration and filtration, the entering of intimate spaces and the processing of substantive worth" (p. 122). My detective role became that of an ethnographer and at the same time a recorder of social behavior; that is, interpreting people's performance and reasons for their actions. While I was engaging in ontological and epistemological research at the same time, I respected that moment of privacy.

My visual observations at the museum facilities and with subjects also revealed that non-English speaking visitors ignore wall text panels and labels when they are not presented in their native language. On the other hand, English speaking visitors, presumably local residents or those with knowledge of the language, spent time reading the wall text panels and labels.

As producers of knowledge and cultural representation, art museums have the power to not only educate, but also bring together communities and become a catalyst for social change. The unique position museums hold as producers of culture can have a significant impact on communities at the local, national and international levels (Brown, 2004; McKnight & Plummer, 2014; Moreno, 2004). I also learned in conversations with non-museum visitors that some individuals and groups would like to attend museums but find themselves in doubt about doing so because of the language barrier, the type of exhibition, and some because of their ethnicity. In my experience as a college art educator, many of my students have expressed their hesitation in visiting a museum or taking an art history

study because they have felt intimidated by the subject as well as by the art institutions; for them, the museum represents a place for upper social classes. In addition, museums are associated with Sotheby's and Christie's auction houses, which entail class, prestige, and economic power where artworks are sold beyond the economic means of the average citizen. These are all people who earnestly want to be part of this aspect of society, but find themselves in uncomfortable settings where a sense of belonging is absent. People respond positively when they are acknowledged, and more so when they feel they are part of a community (Block, 2009; Holley, 2009), thus providing not only transformative learning experiences but also building bridges between ethnic groups and across society.

This psychological barrier plays a more dominant force for those in underserved communities who have never had a museum experience until adolescence or perhaps later in life. Therefore, there's no connection to the material presented and discussed unless it touches or discusses a reference to which individuals can connect and understand. This repressed participation becomes a political and cultural discourse, as Bennett (1995) stated, that "those sections of the population which make little use of the museums clearly feel that the museum constitutes a cultural space that is not meant for them" (p. 104). Hood (2004), on the other hand, suggested that museums should move away from the educational doctrine and present themselves as a place for "exploring and discovering ... and having a good time with other people. ... If skillfully handled they can prepare the occasional participant [and nonparticipant] to cope with the 'museum code' as well as enhance their positive perceptions of museums as places that meet their criteria of satisfying leisure locales" (p. 155), without sacrificing the museum's mission.

Current monolingual practices at New York City museums may change as immigrants and international visitors whose language

is not English wish to see interpretative material in their native language; over time, language usage will likely elicit greater concern and attention. With the exception of some ethnic museums, which currently produce bilingual exhibitions in English and Spanish, well-financed museums are taking steps to accommodate non-English speaking audiences through technology. Some of these museums have partnered with Apple, Android, Google and other leading software developers to provide these services through philanthropies or corporations to absorb the production costs. What has yet to be determined however, is to what extent the production of multilingual exhibitions meets the museums' goals as producers of culture. The current challenge is an opportunity for innovation to build stronger cultural community connections. Social media has been the best medium for museums and one that can help democratize the museums' status quo.

Multilingual art exhibitions may open new opportunities for learning and inclusion, but more importantly, it is to recognize other cultures through their language. This field has much ground to explore in the United States compared to European countries where multilingual exhibitions are common. Existing scholarly material on multilingual research at museums is practically nonexistent. With a few exceptions, one must rely on other scholars' research within cultural diversity and representation, politics, leadership, and social justice to identify the gaps and bring these issues into a dialogue. In doing so, we may move toward a better understanding in the practice of more linguistically welcoming museums.

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Celebrating Experiential Learning

Elana Michelson, School for Graduate Studies

On 27 January 2016, student/alumni clubs ESC Education for All, and Minority Students in Action (MSiA), supported by the Student Activity Fee of SUNY Empire State College, hosted "Celebrating Experiential Learning." The evening, held at the college's 325 Hudson Street/ Manhattan location, was carefully and ably organized by Ms. Tanya Thompson '14, currently an MAAL student and Ms. Layla Abdullah-Poulos '10, a student in the MALS program. After wonderful introductions and reflections by Thompson and Abdullah-Poulos, Alan Mandell, one of the evening's speakers, offered his thoughts about experiential learning and its radical roots in questioning the university's monopoly on all the knowledge there is to know and about the "fight for PLA (prior learning assessment)" as one effort – across the world – to recognize the learning of those who have been excluded from the university.

But at the heart of the "celebration" was a talk by ESC Professor Elana Michelson, who provided a glimpse of her important volume, Gender, Experience, and Knowledge in Adult Learning: Alisoun's Daughters, *recently published by Routledge. What follows here is an edited version of Elana's talk that really pushed those in attendance to recognize the very complexity of what we mean by "experience" and our assumptions (explicit and often tacit) about the relationship between experience, learning and knowledge.*

Thanks so much to Tanya and Layla for their excellent planning and facilitation of this event, and to Elana for her help in editing this piece to share in All About Mentoring.

This is a lovely event for me. The idea of experiential learning has been central to my own work and it is one of the reasons I've been proud to work for Empire State College. Over the years, I've been frustrated when experiential learning ends up being a kind of cliché – yes, a badge of honor, a way of claiming student-centeredness and

(l–r) Cathy Leaker, Layla Abdullah-Poulos '10, Elana Michelson, Tanya Thompson '14 and Alan Mandell at the "Celebrating Experiential Learning" event and book signing.

progressive educational values, but without always thinking very hard about what we were actually talking about.

So I do want to celebrate experiential learning, but I want to do so in a way, as my co-panelists have done, that requires us to be thoughtful and careful about what we are saying. Because "experiential learning" is a complicated matter. Whose experience are we talking about? How do we understand what "experience" is? What is its relationship to learning and to knowledge? What beliefs about the mind allow us to say that we "learn from" – or some would say, "learn in" – experience?

One of the things I set out to do in my book was to trace the history of "experiential learning." Or, rather, I wanted to see how the claim that we learn from experience has played out historically in the rise of science and the social sciences, democratic citizenship, industrialization and colonialism, and the other key elements of what came to be called the "modern world." I also wanted to know how claims to "learn from experience" have fared across the structures of inequality – class, gender, "race" and culture.

What I found was fascinating, but also troublesome, and it taught me that the claims of "experiential learning" have not always been a good thing. Almost as soon as the claims of "experience" hit the page – and the page I've traced it to is from Chaucer's 14th century *Canterbury Tales* – a lot of work went in to narrowing the number of people whose experience was seen to lead to knowledge.

In the 17th century, Sir Robert Boyle set the terms of experimental science, claiming that the only people who could reliably learn from experience were upper-class Protestant males like himself. Women were too dependent, merchants too self-serving and Catholics too crafty to trust, and he didn't even bother himself about workers, people of color or Jews.

In the 19th century, the rise of sociology (to study poor people) and anthropology (to study so-called "primitives") determined that most people couldn't make sense of their own experience and needed middle-class professionals to do it for them.

It was only in the 20th century that the folks whose experiences were being sidelined started to push back. Critical race scholars began

to resist the power of people who were, in the words of bell hooks (1990), "… claiming to know us better than we know ourselves" (p. 22). Second-wave feminism focused on women's experience, with Teresa de Lauretis (1986) defining feminism itself as "… a politics of experience, of everyday life …" (p. 10). Dorothy Smith (1987) spoke for many people in saying:

> It is this essential return to the experience we ourselves have directly in our everyday worlds that has been the distinctive mode of working in the women's movement – the repudiation of the professional, the expert, the already authoritative tones of the discipline, the science, the formal tradition, and the return to the seriously engaged and very difficult enterprise of discovering how to begin from ourselves. (p. 58)

Or, as Chaucer's (1957) "The Wife of Bath" prologue originally said, "Experience, though no authority were in this world, is right enough for me to speak. …"

But even that is more complicated than it sounds.

It's complicated, in part, because of the historical relationship I trace in the book between the claims to "learn from experience" and the rise of democratic citizenship. From the 17th century on, the idea that at least some people could learn from experience gave them rights in an emerging political economy that focused on the individual, who then could vote, sign contracts, own property and, if things got bad enough, even overthrow the king.

Placing rights within the individual is in many ways a very good thing, but it is also a problem because we then have to decide whose experience is valid, and for every woman claiming that she knows her own mind and doesn't need a man to tell her what to do, there is a man who just knows she really meant "yes"; or a police officer who is sure he saw a gun in the hand of a 12-year-old; or an unemployed worker who knows in his gut that the Mexicans stole his job.

In other words, experience doesn't give us some kind of pure access to what is true or good. It arrives in our consciousness already mediated by ideology and expectation. It isn't actually ever really "ours," if by "ours" we mean a personal possession that we own as owners of ourselves and that gives us the right to cut ourselves off from the experience of others.

But experience can be "ours" if we really mean it in the plural – "ours," not "mine" – and if we use it as a way to recognize the mutuality of self and world, of experience and knowledge, rather than trying to frame it, as too much adult learning theory does, as something that we learn from in the sanctity of our own brains. We need to talk to each other. We need to have hard conversations across different sites of knowledge and cultures of experience, across the ways in which we are located in complex, power-laden matrices of inequality and difference. Those are hard conversations, but they are necessary ones if we are ever to understand that there is no fixed point at which the experience of the individual stops and the life of the world begins.

I think that, for a while, Empire State was one of the places in which those conversations happened. In the parlance of the '70s, when the college was founded, we said that we would "start where the student is at." That never meant that we would stop there. Through mentoring, group studies and most importantly through prior learning assessment (PLA) we engaged in the hard work of talking across experiences, knowledges and communities of practice. We encouraged the re-examination of mainstream academic knowledge, re-grounded knowledge in ordinary work and daily life-maintenance activities, and, at least implicitly, we raised the question of how experience is socially valued and legitimated. The college is changing.

The world of higher education is changing. And I'm worried that there will be less and less space in institutions like ours for those hard conversations.

In my experience, that would be a shame.

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Hands-On Mentoring:
The American Revolutionary War Era Residency

Paul Miller, Central New York Region;
Gregory Edwards, Niagara Frontier Region

Introduction

By autumn standards it was a fair day as the students, mentors and support staff participating in the 2015 American Revolutionary War Era Residency eagerly gathered around a monument at their last stop on their tour of the Saratoga National Historical Park – the Saratoga Battlefield. The monument that everyone focused their attention upon was a granite representation of a boot. On the monument, the inscription reads,

> *In Memory of*
> *the "most brilliant soldier" of the*
> *Continental Army.*
> *who was desperately wounded*
> *on this spot, the sally port of*
> BURGOYNE'S GREAT (WESTERN)
> REDOUBT
> *7th October, 1777.*
> *winning for his countrymen*
> *the Decisive Battle of the*
> *American Revolution*
> *and for himself the rank of*
> *Major General.*

Otherwise there is no mention anywhere on the monument about the "brilliant" American "soldier" to whom it was dedicated. More on this later.

John Mortimer,[1] a student from the Center of Distance Learning, had been assigned the task of telling the story of this soldier's contribution to the American victory at Saratoga. Mr. Mortimer began his tale by quoting a modified version of Mark Antony's funeral oration in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. "Friends, [patriots], countrymen ..." he began, "... I come [not] to bury ... [but] to praise him." As Mr. Mortimer continued his presentation, tourists began to join the group to hear about how this valiant general's leadership and actions on the field turned the tide of the battle and of the war

(l–r) Paul Miller and Gregory Edwards

decisively in favor of the Americans. At the conclusion of his narrative, Mr. Mortimer received a loud round of applause. So ended the fifth annual American Revolutionary Era Residency.

The Birth of a Residency

The idea of the residency began almost two decades before, when Mentor Gregory Edwards was teaching the American Civil War at Jamestown Community College. Some of the students in that course expressed an interest in touring the Battle of Gettysburg, or Antietam sites. Consequently, he offered to organize a field trip to Antietam in Maryland. The students would receive extra credit for researching and writing a paper about what happened at some geographical location on the battlefield and its significance for the outcome of the battle. The administration at Jamestown Community College graciously permitted him to drive the students who volunteered to go in their seven-passenger minivan to Antietam. Others followed in their own vehicles. The results of this little pilot project were impressive. The students who

participated did an ample amount of research, and were highly motivated to do the best possible jobs on their papers. It is notable that the students' grades, excluding the extra credit award, were generally higher than those of the rest of the class. This might have been because they were more motivated, more interested in the course content, and were more adept to begin with than their fellow classmates; or it might have been a product of their participation in this event. However, it is absolutely clear, because of continuing contact with this group of students, that the field trip significantly increased their interest in the Civil War Era. The experience also confirmed an axiom that most teachers would recognize, which is that teaching subject matter is the best way to learn it. Finally, a field trip like this provided students an opportunity to transition from an interest in "popular history" to a more academic approach to historical studies.

When Gregory was appointed to a tenure-track position at SUNY Empire State College in 2002, students needed all 10 SUNY General Education Requirements in order to receive a bachelor's degree. The need for

students to meet the American History General Education Requirement provided an opportunity to design a traveling residency about the Civil War Era (that would meet the aforementioned general education mandate). From the perspective of a SUNY Empire State College mentor, the residency represented "real mentoring." It would be student-taught with the guidance of the mentor, rather than teacher-taught through direct dictation. Further, it would encourage students to become lifelong learners.

The observations of two students finishing the residency come to mind. One told Gregory that before the residency, she could not understand people's obsession with the Civil War. After the residency, she told him that she couldn't help herself: She kept buying and reading books on the Civil War. Another student whose area of study was Community and Human Services, was a reluctant enrollee. However, on the last day of the residency, she pulled Gregory aside and told him that the residency was the "highlight" of her experience at SUNY Empire State College. At the height of the general education era, the Civil War Residency averaged between 30 and 35 students each year. One year, 45 students participated on two trips. Even though at present, students are not *required* to fulfill the SUNY General Education Requirements for American History, 20 to 25 students enroll each year. At present, the residency includes a three-day trip to the Antietam and Gettysburg sites. During the days, the students give their presentations at their battlefield stations. In the evenings, there are three-hour discussions on problems surrounding the history of the Civil War based on the readings the students have been assigned for the study.

The idea of the American Revolutionary War Era Residency was derived from the objectives of, and the experience of the Civil War Residency. In 2008, the college granted Gregory a sabbatical. One of the purposes of the sabbatical was to give him the opportunity to design another residency that focused on the American Revolutionary War Era. The basic conceptualization, outlines and goals were inspired by the Civil War Residency, but with significant modifications. One of the alterations in design was to apportion more time for student presentations on other

aspects of the Revolutionary War Era than military history. In order to accomplish this, two other Historical Studies mentors, Karen Garner and Paul Miller, were invited to collaborate on its conceptualization, content and framework. First of all, the collaboration has resulted in a more democratic residency that examines the perspective, experience and influence of women, countervailing religious groups and African-Americans. The entry of additional faculty into the residency format has also brought competing interpretations of the meaning and impact of the Revolution as well as a fresh range of study offerings that explore new dimensions of the Revolutionary experience. Each student now chooses to enroll in a hyphenated study: American Revolutionary Era Residency-Women's History, or Slavery and the Founding Fathers, Religious History, Constitutional History, Federalists and Jeffersonians, or Military History. Based on mentor discretion and the focus of the students' sections, assignments vary with all students reading the same major textbook, Norman K. Risjord's *Jefferson's America, 1760-1815* (2010: Rowman & Littlefield).

Half of the American Revolutionary War Era Residency is devoted to seminars in a conference room in a selected hotel, where students give presentations on the focus of their particular study. On the second day, the students who have enrolled in the Military History section give their presentations on the battlefield. Besides providing a chance to relive the Battle of Saratoga, the learning activities are intended to impart an understanding of the historical process and provide insights into the historian's craft. To this end, oral and written assignments introduce a set of complex, historical-thinking skills. Students learn to ask questions, the first step in any research investigation; analyze primary and secondary sources; and construct arguments based on a thorough examination of relevant evidence. Further, the residency allows meaningful and constant interaction between faculty and students on critical questions of the Revolutionary War Era. Such exchanges reinforce that history is constantly evolving. The past is never dead. It is always changing because of new realities, e.g., the availability of new evidence, innovations in methodology and shifts in the culture, politics and society.

The Importance of Residencies

Learning opportunities like these are not typically available to college students. Research in the field reveals that history is often disseminated by use of faculty lectures and multiple-choice exams. This is referred to within the profession as "chalk and talk." The effects of this method are bored students, while exciting and pregnant events are made plain by rote and memorization. This is an old yet unfortunately still vital criticism of the field. The work of history education specialists Randy Bass, L. D. Fink and Mick Healey indicates that the profession emphasizes content (i.e., facts and dates) over process (i.e., argument and methodology). The result is that terribly low numbers of college students are ever given the opportunity and encouragement to actually "do" history.

Studies of effective college history teaching and testimonials of students demonstrate that "active learning strategies" likes the ones used at the residency can inspire alienated students. One definition of an "active learning strategy" is anything from "… listening practices to writing exercises to complex group exercises in which students apply course material to real life situations and/or to new problems …" (Perrotta & Bohan, 2013, p. 52). These approaches have proven to motivate students. In the words of Lakewood-Jamestown location student, Skye Wilson, "The American Revolutionary Era War Residency was an overall enlightening and interactive experience that I'd recommend to anyone [who] is interested" (S. Wilson, personal communication, December 24, 2015).

The American Revolutionary War Era Residency has been an impactful experience that prepares students for future learning opportunities and instills in them a lifelong love for history. Its "nontraditional approach" has proven to be rigorous preparation for future college studies. The research on active learning strategies demonstrates that these encourage students to be more "autonomous in their learning" (Perrotta & Bohan, 2013, p. 52). This is one of the general benefits of ESC's mentoring model. Through the residency, students are shown how to ask questions, effectively research answers, and defend their conclusions in reasoned oral

and written arguments. It is a part of their maturation toward becoming independent learners. Further, the statements of students throughout this paper testify to the residency's enduring legacy.

This year during the seminars, we had some very good presentations on subjects such as, "John Jay and the Abolition of Slavery in New York"; "Patrick Henry's Reasons for Opposing the Ratification of the U.S. Constitution"; "The Economic Interpretation of the Constitution Reconsidered"; and "Thomas Jefferson's Decision to Purchase the Louisiana Territory." The presentation by Skye Wilson on John Jay sparked a vigorous discussion about the ideology of the Revolution and the inherent conflict within that ideology between human rights and property rights. Student John Garcia's exposition of Patrick Henry's Anti-Federalist case against ratification of the Constitution, in conjunction with his papers on the "Critical Era," and on Charles Beard's "Economic Interpretation of the Constitution," produced a debate among the students and the faculty over whether American history is more accurately interpreted in light of conflict or consensus. This, in turn, led to a philosophical discussion about the attempt to portray American history in progressive terms.

The Importance of Saratoga

As previously mentioned, the second day of the residency revolved around a trip to the Saratoga National Historical Park. The Battle of Saratoga was actually two battles: The Battle of Freeman's Farm, September 19, 1777; and the Battle of Bemis Heights, October 7, 1777. Together they are described as the turning point of the American Revolution because the Americans successfully "destroyed" an entire British Army, and proved that with a little help they could win the war and obtain their independence from Great Britain. Consequently, the King of France, who prior to the battle had secretly succored the American effort for independence, now formally signed an alliance with the United States that committed France to declare war on Great Britain and overtly support the American quest to emancipate itself from the "Mother" country.

This was a remarkable turnaround, because just prior to the American victory at Saratoga, the British Army under General William Howe had captured Philadelphia, forcing the Continental Congress to flee the city. Britain then controlled the two most important cities in the United States: New York and Philadelphia.

These facts, combined with the apparent success of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's invasion force from Canada made an American defeat seem inevitable. Yet such appearances masked the true reality of the situation. In fact, Burgoyne's situation was desperate. His Indian allies had abandoned the Army. Without Indian scouts, his Army was blind. And, although by September, Burgoyne's Army had triumphed over the American defenders at Ticonderoga, and progressed southward to Saratoga, his ultimate success depended on the juncture of two other armies with his own: General Henry Clinton's Army coming up the Hudson from New York City, and General Barry St. Leger's Army moving east along the Mohawk River. However, for various reasons, neither of these armies would reach Burgoyne. Furthermore, Burgoyne had been forced to cut his soldiers' rations in half because his supply line had become overextended and compromised. In the words of Lieutenant Colonel Brockholst Livingston, Burgoyne "has got himself into such a situation that he can neither retire or advance without fighting" (as cited in Ketchum, 1997, p. 347).

It is at this point of the story that the student presentations pick up the story during the tour of the Saratoga Battlefield. At Tour Stop #1, "Freeman's Farm Overlook," student Steven Holland from the Central New York Region began the story about the Battle of Freeman's Farm. Holland explained how Burgoyne's dire situation led him to order a reconnaissance in force in an attempt to turn the American left to force Horatio Gates' army out of their strong fortified position along the crest of Bemis Heights. Burgoyne's advance ran directly into trouble when they reached the Freeman farm. Gates had acquiesced to the wishes of his chief subordinate, and ordered Daniel Morgan's rifleman, along with other units, forward to execute an active defense. The rugged and broken terrain around the Freeman farm favored the American style of

warfare. After some very heavy fighting, it appeared the British line was about to break. However, Burgoyne had ordered Baron Von Riedesel's force to make a right turn and strike the right flank of the American assault. Riedesel's maneuver successfully halted their advance, and forced them to retreat back across the field, leaving the field in British hands. Consequently, the Battle of Freeman's Farm is considered a tactical British victory. Mr. Holland described his experience at the Battlefield park,

> *"Simply walking across the battleground at Saratoga, knowing that some of the autumn leaves rustling under my feet had fallen from the same trees that witnessed all that happened there, added an intangible connection to the facts we had learned that I can only describe as spiritual … the barriers of centuries melt away, and you feel a part of it, and it becomes a part of you."* (S. Holland, personal communication, December 31, 2015)

The tour continued at the Bemis Heights tour stop. Here, student John Toussaint from the Central New York Region informed the group about the contribution of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the brilliant Polish military engineer, to the American victory at Saratoga. According to Mr. Toussaint, Kosciuszko strongly and successfully urged Gen. Gates to move north from his position near the confluence of the Mohawk and the Hudson to Bemis Heights. The National Park Service had marked the line of the American fortifications and entrenchments. As the residency students stood on the high ground, they could see the line to their west, and to their east. Mr. Toussaint explained that this fortified high ground was almost impregnable. By extending them to the bluffs overlooking the Road to Albany along the river, Kosciuszko effectively prevented Burgoyne from advancing to Albany without first taking the American entrenchments. Since British attempts to breach the American position would most likely fail, the most viable option remaining for Burgoyne was to turn the American left flank. At Freeman's Farm, the British had failed in the first attempt. On October 7, 1777, Burgoyne would make one last desperate effort. The Battle of Bemis Heights actually never reached Bemis Heights. It began in Barber's

(l–r) John Garcia, John Toussaint, John Mortimer, Skye Wilson, Steve Holland, Dan Appler, Paul Miller, Greg Edwards, Elsie Poucel, Joe Tria, Adam Glass and Tracy Bowen.

Wheat Field, where the British formed a line of 1,000 yards in length, surrounded by thick woods on both flanks. The cover was used to advantage by American riflemen. Led by Colonial Daniel Morgan, a corps of frontier sharpshooters pierced the British position, mortally wounding British General Simon Fraser of Balnain.

The American pressure on the British right flank forced Burgoyne's men to retreat from the Wheat Field and retire to the Balcarres and Breymann redoubts, earthen fortifications built after the Battle of Freeman's Farm. Here, the daring and gallant actions of the "brilliant American soldier" to whom the "Boot Monument" is dedicated settled the issue of the battle, and turned the tide of the war decisively in favor of the American Revolutionaries. When numerous attempts to assault the British position failed to breach their fortifications, General Benedict Arnold

led a troop of American soldiers into the gap between the two redoubts in the face of withering British musket fire, and then successfully assaulted and breached the rear of the Breymann redoubt. In the process, A British musket ball pierced Arnold's thigh, and another felled his horse causing it to land on Arnold's wounded leg, shattering his thigh bone. Because of Arnold's bravery and audacity, the far right flank of the British army had been compromised. Burgoyne's men had no choice but to retreat from the battlefield. On October 17, 1777, with his army surrounded, Burgoyne surrendered to Gates.

In October 2015, student John Mortimer, reflecting on these two battles, reminded his listeners of Saratoga's terrible costs and noble legacy:

> *"There is a stillness that descends … as one gazes at Freeman's Farm or Bemis Heights or at Arnold's anonymous memorial. These*

were real people, not living their lives as facts upon a page. They suffered and fought and won and lost, and I can think of no other way in which this could be driven home with such force or eloquence." (J. Mortimer, personal communication, December 15, 2015)

As John Mortimer's wise observation reveals, meaningful history instruction reminds us that we are witnesses to real events. At a time when most of the country consumes its history through media that blurs the lines between fact and fiction, the residency evokes the real-life tragedy and heroism of the age. In this way, it is a testament to hands-on mentoring, which situates learning in the community and, therefore, introduces students to what is authentic about past and present. Through active learning strategies, the residency also promotes independent thinking. It is these outcomes and possibilities of mentoring that make ESC exciting and fresh and constitute the ESC difference.

Note

[1] We thank our students for allowing us to share their words in this paper.

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Creativity Across the Disciplines Residency: The Intersection of Art, Life and Learning

Mara Mills and Stacey Gallagher, Hudson Valley Region

Introduction

Few people get to play at a museum. Those who go to museums generally go quietly. Indeed, SUNY Empire State College students quietly entered the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (HVCCA) in Peekskill on November 7, 2015 for the Creativity Across the Disciplines Residency. Some students explored the artwork, inspired by the theme of "love." Most went straight to the coffee bar and waited to explore creativity, whatever that meant. Actually, most students had self-defined themselves as "not creative" in the registration forms. As one Community and Human Services student admitted, the residency was "pretty far out of my comfort zone."[1]

The use of art space was specific to the mission of Creativity Across the Disciplines, for it served as an interactive playground of ideas that would disrupt students' general mindset about art spaces, in particular, and creativity, in general. Gathered around tables and around artwork in HVCCA, students would come to recognize their own creativity as a process – a process utilized across academic disciplines and professional fields.

Begun three years ago by mentors Mara Mills and Mark Miyake, the residency is held in November each year. In 2015, the residency was scheduled for Nov. 7- 8, from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sunday. The preparation for the residency began the previous summer. This article shares the why, what and how of exploring creativity across disciplines in a residency, especially, with non-art students.

Planning

We started with a committee of 10, including faculty, adjuncts and professional staff. The original committee was responsible for

Mara Mills

Photo credit: Joshua Dirlam

Stacey Gallagher

Photo credit: Terence Gallagher

brainstorming workshop ideas and staffing, and getting the practical work assigned: outreach, food ordering and lines of communication.

An email was sent out first to workshop leaders who had participated previously and whose workshops students had evaluated as being provocative and inspirational over the past two residencies. A second email went out to other faculty and potential leaders outside the college who were recommended by committee members based on personal creativity in their chosen fields.

Once this was done, the committee re-created itself into a working group of five, who were responsible for the residency meeting its mission, from planning the content and flow of the workshops to doing the practical legwork to make the residency move seamlessly. This committee also made sure that we stayed on task and problem-solved any last minute contingencies.

At this point, Mara and mentor Stacey Gallagher became the co-leaders of the residency. Secretary Jamie Decker oversaw practical organization. Chris Tayko, technical support specialist, oversaw technical needs – both requests for and setting up presenters' equipment. Assessment Specialist Tom

Brady, Adjunct Hillary Hostetler, and Retired Mentor/Adjunct Marianne Arieux, along with Stacey, Mara and Chris, spent several hours setting up tables, chairs and electronics on the day before the residency. If we hadn't had early access to the residency space, we would have had to arrive in the wee hours on November 7 to set up!

Recruiting Students

A first email went out collegewide to ESC mentors with a description of the residency and tentative workshops, asking them to alert students and remind them that this residency would cover the SUNY General Education Requirement for The Arts. A second email with a description of the workshops was sent to all Hudson Valley, Metropolitan and Long Island Region students, as well as students suggested by statewide mentors. Students could register for the September or November term with a limit of 40 participants overall. Once students registered, they received a sign-up form where they could indicate their first and second choices of workshops for each time slot, as well as a list of things to do in Peekskill.

Student working together to create a narrative from objects.

Workshop Scheduling and Flow

There were some scheduling issues. One was the practical limitation of presenters' weekend schedules and preferences. Another was the order and sequencing of the workshops to ensure students had sufficient variety from which to choose for each time slot.

Every workshop required an experiential activity. Besides being an important teaching/learning modality, these activities provided movement time during this intellectually-packed two days. Further, the experiential part of workshops provided students with face-to-face interactive communication and honed their listening and presentation skills.

Saturday

Students were greeted by museum staff and residency committee members who provided an introduction to the residency, and asked students to sign a photography release and gave them nametags.

The "all-participant" workshops began on Saturday with Dr. Livia Strauss, co-founder of HVCCA, leading the group on a curatorial walk through the art, asking for interpretations, supporting individual ideas, talking about sorting and juxtaposition as a curatorial methodology, and providing an open forum for students to give opinions. Afterward, some students noted surprise at the multitude of interpretations and the fact that their ideas were honored.

"The Elements of Creativity Workshop" followed. This was an introduction by Mara to the creative process, using *inspiration, sorting, juxtaposition, limitation, creation,* and *justification* as words and concepts to introduce the creative process model and provide an exercise in group creativity and storytelling

as the experiential component. (In his book, *Hegarty on Creativity,* Hegarty (2014) called storytelling the essence of creativity.)

For this exercise, students split into six self-selected groups. Each group was given a box of objects, and was asked to work together to create a culture, a family story, a biography, the history of a demolished house, and then present their stories. The limitations were: they had to work as a group; all the objects were to be used; and the creative process model that was earlier introduced needed to be part of the group process. (A sidebar to this is that several students later said that in the "Elements" workshop case, it was what was inside the box that mattered – a commentary on both a sign outside the museum ["It's what's outside that matters"] and the now clichéd "Think outside the box.")

Next came the individual workshops. The following are descriptions of what participants took up in each session.

Livia Straus (far right) and students discuss art.

Session One, 2:20-3:20 p.m.

A. **"Creativity in the Board Room," facilitated by Business, Management and Economics Mentor Linda Treinish**

In this workshop, students explored how creativity informs every successful business enterprise. Students discovered creative techniques to enhance organizational effectiveness by examining creativity from the first entrepreneurial spark of an idea to the role it plays in the decision-making process. Finally, students broke into smaller, collaborative groups, which helped them understand that teamwork enhances creativity.

B. **"Art & Sustainability," facilitated by Arts & Cultural Studies Mentor Mindy Kronenberg**

In this workshop, students examined visual arts, focusing on sculpture as a process and instrument connecting the natural environment and human imagination to develop an appreciation for art as personal expression, conduit for social consciousness, and opportunity for a new esthetic based upon ecological awareness. Mindy shared slides that featured prominent eco-artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Patrick Dougherty, Nils-Udo and Theo Jansen. Assessing her own experience, Mindy noted:

> *"Participating in a residency is a two-fold joy. It helps to ground one's imaginative energies while integrating new ideas into a shared event and to summon strategies in pedagogy that challenge and inspire students. Creativity Across the Disciplines was an ideal venue for me to introduce sustainability in the arts to a larger audience and emphasize the value of interdisciplinary learning."*

C. **"What happened that made me feel this way? Fairy Tales, Dreams & the Experience of Art," facilitated by Retired Mentor/Adjunct Marianne Arieux**

Certain queries guided the workshop: What makes us experience strange, often wonderful, but always unexpected feelings when viewing art, whether a painting, music concert or embroidery on a tablecloth? How does the artist excite our imaginations to create wonder about the art and about ourselves? And what do we bring to this interchange, what narratives, fairy tales, dreams and memories do we infuse into the dialogue between ourselves and the artwork? Works from the exhibit were used to inspire original fairy tales.

Session Two, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

D. **"Unlocking Creativity in the Instruction of Exceptional Students," facilitated by Master of Arts in Teaching Mentor Jelia Domingo**

In this workshop, students examined how research in the use of creativity in instruction has focused largely on educating intellectually gifted students; yet learning disabilities and other emotional, intellectual and physical/brain impairments are not mutually exclusive to giftedness. Students then explored how to access areas of strength and giftedness in exceptional children through the use of creativity in instruction, and how to encourage creativity in students, which can unlock individual ways of understanding and processing the world.

E. **"Visual Journaling for Life and Art," facilitated by Arts Adjunct Hillary Hostetler**

Students examined the history and therapeutic uses of art-based journaling for health and well-being. Students then explored the methods of art-based journaling that include expressive doodling, dream drawing, collage, mixed media, mask making and simple line/color drawings. After this introduction, students were invited to have a visual self-journey using collage and drawing.

F. **"Enchantment," facilitated by Assessment Specialist Tom Brady**

Using the art in the collection as illustrations, students explored the use of enchantment (enchanters, enchanted objects) in literature, especially in Arthurian literature of the Middle Ages and today. One student remarked afterward that Tom was able to

> *"… help us explore art without being didactic. Our opinions and his views were interwoven into a cohesive understanding of the paintings and their symbols. I had a great time."*

After the workshops, students were encouraged to go out to dinner together and explore the city of Peekskill, which, for many years, has used art as an educational and economic resource. In particular, students were encouraged to explore the Peekskill waterfront as an example of how art can transform an unused space into an urban resource.

Crumbs *performance.*

Sunday

Sunday began at 10 a.m. with a performance of *Crumbs,* a play by Donna Barkman, directed by Mara Mills, which used art to explore love, relationships and the ambiguity of gender roles.

The play was inspired by and performed in front of *Night Dreamers,* painted by Derek Boshier and *My Baby,* created by Charles LeDray. Performers were ESC student Keri Rastelli ("Grensel"), and Thomas Kramer ("Anomalee"), a professional actor who had just finished *I am My Own Wife,* a perfect precursor to *Crumbs.* After the performance, a Q&A with Donna Barkman provided a way to explore both gender and "writing to art," which set the stage for the next full group workshop, "Love Letters."

"Love Letters: Visual Art as Literary Inspiration" was facilitated by Cultural Studies Mentor Stacey Gallagher. Students explored how art on the theme of love can inspire our own expressions of love to family, friends and lovers, real or imagined. Students were invited to read aloud several love letters written by poets and U.S. presidents, among others. Students then had time to explore the art of HVCCA and write their own love letters, in prose or poetry. Students and mentor both were surprised that one particular piece, an entwined couple wrapped like a mummy, *Longue Duree* by Emil Alzamora, inspired the most love letters, both idealistically romantic and negatively jaded in tone.

Lunch was then served. Practical considerations included food placement – the museum had a large bar cart where platters and drinks were placed and an eating and drinking space with six tables in a room about 15 feet by 25 feet, which worked, but was tight. (A huge room we had used in 2014 was made into art space in 2015.) Interestingly, the bar setup and smaller gathering space seemed to invite conversations and connections. Another consideration was the amount of food served – in hindsight, we should have ordered more for lunch and snacks in the afternoons! The final practical considerations were dietary restrictions and preferences – next year's residency will include kosher/halal options, in addition to the vegan/vegetarian/gluten-free options we did provide.

After lunch, there were three workshops. By this time, students were feeling independent enough to switch to workshops other than the ones they had chosen on their registration form. We saw this as a positive demonstration of ownership and comfort in the process.

Residency student performs her love poem.

Session Three, 1:15-2:45 p.m.

A. **"Your Story Can Change the World," facilitated by Community and Human Services Mentor Susan McConnaughy**

This workshop introduced participants to the skills of mining their experiences for stories that can powerfully convey substantive meaning to others. The schedule placement of this workshop worked well as one of the second day's afternoon workshops; that is, at this point in the residency, students more readily shared profound experiences and encouraged each other's openness. Students came to appreciate how focused, powerful stories can change people's minds and motivate them to take action. Susan noted,

"Here I had 15 adults primed to take some creative risks exploring identity change in adulthood. The students were already in a creative mindset by the time I got them on Sunday afternoon … so we hit the ground running! What a distinct pleasure for us all!"

B. **"Dance and Dance Movement Therapy in the Helping Professions," facilitated by CHS Mentors Debra Kram-Fernandez and Rosalind October-Edun**

In this workshop, students learned how different cultures have employed dance as a ritual for healing, establishing community and celebrating life events. Students then explored the evolution of dance therapy and ultimately focused on a form of dance therapy that developed on the east coast, the dance therapy of Marian Chace.

After discussing the healing elements of dance therapy and the significance of Chace's "movement circles," students were invited to participate in a brief Chacean-informed dance therapy group, as either dancers or observers. Afterward, Debbi noted how receptive the students were to a new dance modality.

"They brought up excellent questions, ideas, and movements, and made the event an overall blast! Don't even get me started on the beauty of the space!"

C. **"Weaving Technology Through the Disciplines," facilitated by Educational and Historical Studies Mentor Kimberly Roff**

Students explored how technology can be more than a tool to get work done. They examined technology as a way to interweave educational disciplines, create a juxtaposition of differing perspectives, and provide an area for critical and constructive thinking. Students were heard laughing during this workshop, testament that interweaving technology can be fun.

The final workshop, "Country Line Dancing," facilitated by Historical Studies Mentor Anna Bates, had in years past been offered as one of the small group workshops. However, we decided when planning the schedule and flow that a final full group workshop would give the residency an arc and provide an energetic end to the day; one which students may have avoided if they felt they were not "dancers." This was an auspicious decision. Student comments, which began with "I can't dance" or "I don't dance," ended with comments like:

"Looking around me, I saw people of many ages and abilities playing together. No one cared if I could dance. Neither did I."

Follow-Up Projects

Students were required to read two of the following three books that were chosen specifically to emphasize the connection between creativity and life, rather than creativity and art: *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art* (Nachmanovitch, 1990); *The Everyday Work of Art: How Artistic Experience Can Transform Your Life* (Booth, 1997); or *Hegarty on Creativity* (Hegarty, 2014). All three books emphasize the universality of creative thought and encourage readers to discover their own creative abilities and interpretations. The readings emphasize a commitment to creative thought, its universality, a re-perception of the world around us, and the examination of the role of consciousness in our perceptions and creativity.

By the close of the term, each student was required to hand in a creative project with a short essay on the creative processes used and, when possible, make connections with ideas and insights gained in the residency workshops. Creative projects included a collection of original Valentine's Day cards, based on the "Love Letters" workshop; a book of collages, inspired by "Visual Journaling"; a set of placenta prints by a birthing doula, inspired by her life's work; a student's portrait of his children, *Bean Thinking,* in which beans and vegetables were used to create a portrait of his sons and illustrate the fundamentals of good eating; and portraits and autobiographies, inspired by "Your Story Can Change the World" workshop.

A longer academic essay was the students' second assignment. The essay was to discuss the readings, the experience of the residency, student learning and their current thoughts on creativity. For many, their attitude toward art and artists was altered by the discovery that they, too, were allowed to define and use creativity for themselves.

Conclusion

Accepting and exploring our creative selves involves risk-taking, playing, working both individually and with others, and a willingness to explore both what's in the box and what's outside of it. The Creativity Across the Disciplines Residency was designed to give students the opportunity to explore and experience their own creative processes and the art of creating together. According to student evaluations, we succeeded. A BME student wrote:

"As a result of taking this residency, I have opened my mind to be more aware of the creativity all around me. Creativity is a unique force that is within all of us, if we look for it and nurture it."

A CHS student, who had been "a bit apprehensive" on Saturday morning, said,

"Once I started in the breakout sessions, I felt far more comfortable and excited to be there."

An Arts student declared the residency

"… completely absorbing because of the comprehensive and varied activities … I learned from all workshops because of the interaction and physically doing art."

The residency began quietly on Saturday morning. Many students felt apprehensive and seemed concerned with following directions; clearly, some were trying to fly under the radar. By Saturday afternoon, and certainly by Sunday, the raucous laughter and shouts of appreciation for each other's insights reflected residency ownership and the discovery of the playful aspects of creativity. The residency's coequal atmosphere allowed students to engage openly with one another and the workshop facilitators.

The follow-up assignments further demonstrated that the residency gave students a belief in their own creative processes. Participants acknowledged they had something of value to contribute during workshops, and individually as creators. In the final essay, a BME student wrote:

"Overall my learning during the residency was not what I thought it would be, and I mean that in the most positive way. I've come to realize that learning is really the only way to live and grow. Creativity is something I have heard so much about in my life but was completely unaware of in me until I faced it at the residency."

We feel sure that students will carry with them their newfound belief in their own creativity and, just as important, respect the creative processes of others, even artists, who students now see as people who express their own creativity, as they themselves will do personally, academically and professionally.

Note

References and Suggested Readings

Booth, E. (1997). *The everyday work of art: How artistic experience can transform your life.* Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc.

Hegarty, J. (2014). *Hegarty on creativity: There are no rules.* London, UK: Thames & Hudson.

Nachmanovitch, S. (1990). *Free play: Improvisation in life and art.* New York, NY: Tarcher/Putnam.

" … [I]t is culture, not biology, that shapes human life and the human mind, that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying intentional states in an interpretive system. It does this by imposing the patterns of discourse modes, the forms of logical and narrative explication, and the patterns of mutually dependent communal life."

– Jerome Bruner (1915–2016)
Acts of Meaning: Four Lectures on Mind and Culture
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990, p. 34

Do Minimum Wages Harm Low-Skill Workers?

Justin A. Giordano, Metropolitan New York Region;
Emmanuel Tabones '13

This article is the result of a collaboration with my former student and SUNY Empire State College alumnus, Emmanuel Tabones '13. Mr. Tabones is truly a gifted researcher and continues to hone his already proven skills in this area. He is also a fine analytical thinker. It has indeed been my pleasure to work with him. We are currently developing and completing other related projects for publication. In my opinion, this collaboration is only possible because of the kind of student talent we find at our institution. I'm most grateful that I've contributed, if even in small measure, to enhancing the development of talented individuals such as Mr. Tabones. I have been most grateful for Mr. Tabones' research, for his insights and for this opportunity.

This paper is the third article on which we have collaborated; each of these articles has been published. "Regulations And Their Impact On Small Business And Entrepreneurship," was published in the Review of Business Research, *Volume 13, Number 1, 2013; "The Minimum Wage, Unemployment, And the Youth Workforce (Age 16-19): A Correlation And Comparative Analysis of Select Categories Including The General U.S. Labor Population For Years 2003-2012," was published in the* Journal of International Business and Economics, *Volume 13, Number 4, 2013; and the most recent publication, "Minimum Wages And Low Wage Workers: Correlational Evidence From El Centro, California (Imperial County) In Comparison With Select U.S. and State (California-Specific) Statistical Data," was published in the* Journal of Academy of Business and Economics, *Volume 15, Number 2, 2015. It is a version of this third essay that is republished here.*

Our work on minimum wages was also presented at the International Academy of Business and Economics conference held in Rome, Italy, June 18-20, 2015. In addition, we presented this paper, with minor modifications, at the Northeast Business & Economics Association's annual meeting/conference held in Queens, New York, November 5-7, 2015, and received the "Overall Best Paper" award (the highest honor conferred at

the conference). We hope that you find the ideas, questions and arguments presented here to be provocative. We certainly welcome your responses.

– Justin Giordano

Introduction

"Minimum wages" are commonly understood as government-enforced regulations that institute an economic "price floor" on the rate by which workers are paid hourly. From our observation, such guidelines are not usually tied to related economic factors such as productivity. Moreover, these appear to be largely motivated by politics and ideology, therefore representing a rejection of market forces and microeconomic cost-benefit analysis as determinants for establishing wage levels.

The issue has become a hot topic for discussion and debate especially in recent years. Yet, the policies that foster such regulations have been firmly entrenched in the U.S. political system for at least since the early part of the 20th century (Leonard, 2000). Amid the well-publicized protests that have lately attracted considerable media attention and even going over much of what transpired during the previous century, research studies into analyzing and investigating its alleged effects have since multiplied so that one economics journalist even referred to the phenomenon as a "cottage industry" (Farrell, n.d., para. 1).

One such effort that immediately comes to mind is the controversial and heavily-scrutinized work by economists David Card (UC-Berkeley) and Alan Krueger (Princeton), which not surprisingly, has garnered its share of both praise and scorn (Leonard, 2000). In an apparently ambitious attempt to refute the aforementioned "market-oriented" or "neoclassical" economic model (Lowery, 2013) such as the one advanced previously by noted economist George Stigler (1946), Card and Krueger broadly suggested that increasing the minimum wage does not lead to

(l–r) Emmanuel Tabones '13 and Justin Giordano with their Overall Best Paper award at the 2015 Northeastern Business and Economics Association conference.

unemployment among less-competitive/entry-level workers (Lowery, 2013). Some might find Card and Krueger's claims even "slightly convincing" based on the alleged quality of their research (Caplan, 2013). Perhaps not surprisingly, the U.S. government under the Obama administration is supportive of such conclusions, thereby dismissing "traditional" viewpoints as "myths" (USDOL, n.d.). For informed observers, the point is not lost that politically-active groups often associated with "pro-labor" causes are more likely to back enforced increases in minimum wages whereas those identified with business interests and "libertarian/conservative" ideologies usually comprise the opposition.

Since we find that minimum wages are largely shaped by politics/ideology and not by "market forces," one could believe with good reason that lawmakers may conceivably impose any rate they wish especially with sufficient political backing. For example, what may be currently preventing legislators from promoting minimum wages say, at $20 an hour or greater may simply be an inability to generate the necessary public and media support although

that might change in the near future. Likewise, implementing such a policy may have been possible even 20 or 30 years ago if advocates back then could have presented popular and convincing arguments. Currently, the U.S. government likes to highlight research studies claiming that "… increases in the minimum wage have had little or no negative effect on the employment of minimum-wage workers …" (USDOL, n.d., para. 4).

In response, one could show that the government and other minimum wage supporters are able to validate their claims only through some "creative" use of select data that may help to further explain the current lack of consensus even within the economics community.

Incidentally, the official government position seems to ignore any existing relationship between labor costs and employment/ unemployment levels, thereby implying that maintaining or increasing this mandated wage could never adversely affect anyone's work status regardless of other influential economic factors. However, and perhaps more importantly, there does appear to be at the very least a tacit or implied acknowledgement that in the absence of such regulations, low-end pay rates would in fact, drop to levels more in accordance with the laws of "supply and demand," but that such an outcome would likely be politically unacceptable to many.

Literature Review

Almost all statistical information contained therein is provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) under the direction of the U.S. Department of Labor, and other federal sources (notably the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, St. Louis) that compile the same or related data. An exception is the California minimum wage chart (Figure 6) that is copied from the state's Department of Industrial Relations' webpage.

This report also makes brief references to research conducted by a number of prominent economists including the previously mentioned David Card, Alan Krueger and Nobel Laureate George J. Stigler, as well as details regarding the prevailing U.S. government position.

In addition, the study acknowledges other research outcomes as reported by media outlets such as the online edition of *Time* magazine, as well as *The Huffington Post, Slate Magazine, The New York Times Magazine,* the *MinnPost,* and from well-known political sites such as the Center for Economic Policy Research.

We derive further economic analysis from respected journals such as the *History of Political Economy* and *The American Economic Review,* from papers and commentaries written by noted researchers at distinguished institutions such as George Mason University and Princeton, along with other contributors linked to relevant economic entities like The National Bureau of Economic Research and the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

Methodology

This study analyzes and compiles relevant statistical data as it relates to select low-wage/ labor-intensive occupational categories, along with employment/unemployment rates, workforce populations and college graduation percentages. It presents the information within the context of "logic and reason," thereby discussing "basic" economic principles as these pertain to "price floors" and market conditions. In interpreting the results of this study, it also examines opposing conclusions and conflicting viewpoints. In addition, please note that the monetary figures referred to throughout are expressed in nominal terms and that the statistical data are estimates subject to random sample error (RSA).

The main focus of this report is El Centro, California, the county seat of Imperial County, which sits along the state's southern border with Mexico and has struggled with major economic problems. Due to incomplete information provided by the BLS, we will alternate between citing data for either El Centro or Imperial County, although it may be valid to assume, given its size and relatively modest population, that there may be considerable uniformity between both as to general economic conditions.

"Market Oriented" Arguments About Minimum Wages

Today, even as this topic has exposed vast disagreements within the economics community, this was not necessarily the case in the years especially following the 1946 publication of Stigler's market-oriented "The Economics of Minimum-Wage Legislation" (Morrison, 2014). Even in the years prior, as "progressive" ideologues strongly supported such efforts during the Great Depression, they recognized that this law meant to exclude certain "undesirable/inferior" groups – often along ethnic/racial lines – from competing for the limited number of jobs available on the basis of negotiating lower wages in exchange for employment (Hutchinson, 2011). Instituting a wage "price floor" could then encourage employers to engage in further acts of racial and ethnic discrimination by reducing the incentive to hire people who did not fit a particular description. This was all in keeping with a fundamental understanding of how market forces work within the economic framework of supply and demand, despite motivations that we today would regard as "sinister."

Hiking the minimum wage generates higher labor costs that directly apply to workers who are less "market-competitive," generally those with minimal skills, thereby decreasing demand (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – The "Neoclassical" Supply-and-Demand Economic Model as it Applies to "Minimum Wages"
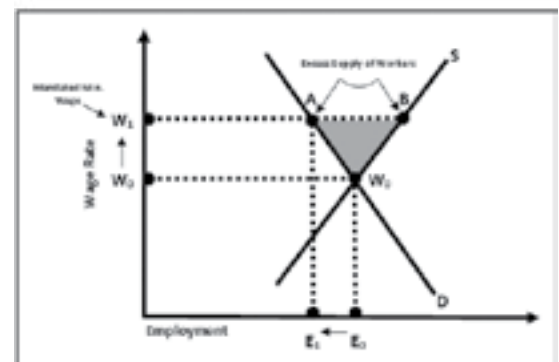
Price Controls: The Price Floor of a Minimum Wage

Source: Adapted from Gwartney, Stroup, Sobel and MacPherson (2005).

Economists often refer to "neoclassical" theory when describing this supply and demand relationship. This is typical of various other economic transactions that in this case, show how "buyers" (employers) purchase the services of "sellers" (workers) for an agreed-upon price (labor costs/wages) (Leonard, 2000). We must also stress the fact that what we see in the Figure 1 model applies to completed transactions in which the parties involved ("buyers" and "sellers") comply with the "terms and conditions" of the relationship. Furthermore, Figure 1 also explains that different wage levels (if related factors remain constant) would have a varying effect on the quantity of available workers in that a wage "price floor" (W1) above the "equilibrium" price –that which generates "demand" equal to "supply" – would reduce the need for employment leading to a surplus of workers since it increases labor costs above what employers are normally willing to pay. In other words, such a policy merely forces "buyers" to "overspend" for what they could obtain at market prices. Using microeconomic cost-benefit analysis, we find that this simply puts them at a disadvantage since they are then required to absorb unnecessary add-on labor costs in order to benefit third-party ideological and political goals.

What this particular model also suggests is that maintaining wage levels beyond the "equilibrium" level could limit or prevent increases in job numbers especially during times of major economic crisis, as we will examine with our analysis of El Centro, California. The reason for this is because shifts within social and economic environments can induce changes in material supply and demand, causing "equilibrium" prices to fluctuate. Therefore, a "price floor" in accordance with minimum wages will likely generate an oversupply of available labor, which translates to "unemployment."

Please note again that even minimum wage advocates do not necessarily disagree with the premise indicated in the aforementioned economic model. This is because they likely understand that only an enforceable "price floor" could prevent a market-based decrease in minimum-level salaries. It is also worth emphasizing that these economic principles certainly apply to higher-paying occupations.

Yet, because employees belonging to these categories usually receive greater compensation that corresponds with their market-competitive status, they often would see little or no direct gain from any mandated low-end wage hikes. Under these conditions, employers have little choice but to pay higher salaries in order to attract and retain "high-demand" workers. Incidentally, a minimum wage set below "equilibrium" would be "meaningless" within a competitive environment unless participating workers willingly accept payments at below-market rates.

The Importance of Analyzing Economic Conditions in El Centro

El Centro, California is the main subject of this study in large part because in our view, it represents a major test to the aforementioned popular claim that "minimum wages 'do not harm' low-skilled/lower-competitive workers." One reason is that the composition of its employed labor force stands in sharp contrast with that of the state and the entire country. As an example, we point out that as of May 2014, almost one-quarter of all jobs in El Centro fell within these three low-income occupational categories: "farming, forestry, and fisheries," "food preparation," and "personal care and related services" with a combined average median wage of $9.17 per hour (USDOLBLS, 2015c).

Meanwhile, in California, these same three occupations made up less than 14 percent of jobs, with a combined average median wage of about $9.86 (USDOLBLS, 2015b), whereas

nationally, the same statistical numbers were about 13 percent and $9.72, respectively (USDOLBLS, 2015a).

Further, this discussion involves economic characteristics for El Centro and Imperial County, conditions that are not necessarily unique, but that appear to have been largely ignored amid all the hoopla surrounding the minimum wage controversy. Some might refer to its combination of existing problems – such as chronic high unemployment, relatively low educational attainment (Imperial County), income levels far below that of state and national averages, and the previously mentioned "disproportionate" percentage of low-wage workers – as akin to a "Great Depression" scenario (see Figures 2-4, 6; USDOLBLS, 2015c). Yet, the U.S. government position seemingly ignores the issue that having this disproportionately larger percentage of low-wage earners (when compared with state and national statistics) could potentially affect the degree of unemployment amid rising minimum wages and changes in economic conditions. Moreover, during a 10-year span beginning in 2005, these rates fluctuated considerably from a low of about 13-14 percent around early 2006 to above 30 percent during the years 2011-2012 as indicated in the chart (Figure 2). Figure 2 also reveals that comparable figures for both the United States and California never exceeded 15 percent at any time within this same period, even during the recent Great Recession. These even declined to just above 5 or 6 percent over the latter part of 2014, whereas El Centro/Imperial County continuously saw persistently high

Figure 2 – Monthly Gen. Unemployment Rate Fluctuations (Imperial County, California, United States: 2004 through 2014)
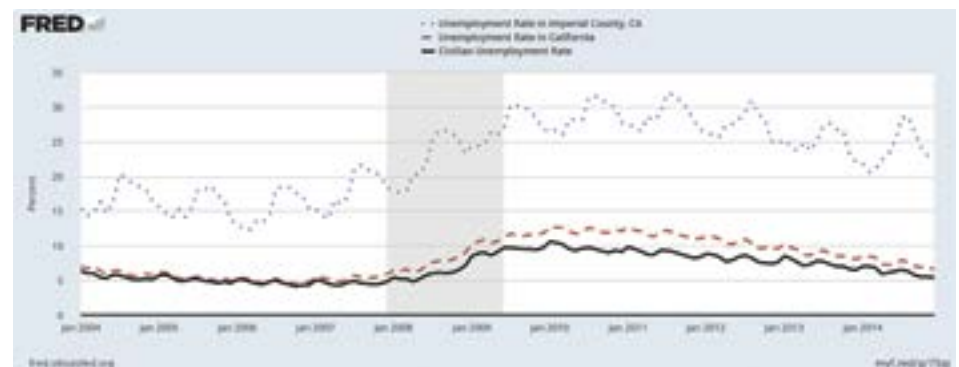
Source: FRED Economic Data (2014)

unemployment that at times hovered above 25 percent within that year. One reason that may explain its impoverished status is statistics indicating the aforementioned lower academic achievement that shows college completion rates well below the state and national percentages (see Figure 3). College graduation rates for California residents age 25 and up are more than double that of Imperial County's population and the disparities would certainly be greater if one were to add those below age 25. Now, if such trends continue, these may undermine efforts to expand the jobs market outside of low-wage/labor-intensive occupations. Meanwhile, the region boasts a per capita personal income of under $32,000 as of 2012, lagging far behind the average for all of California and the United States, in general (See Figure 4).

So briefly, the degree by which these selected economic features distinguish El Centro from other areas may form the basis of understanding how minimum wages could potentially affect it differently. These conditions are such that we can construe that its worker population may be more vulnerable to above-market fluctuations at the minimum income level than what we might comparably measure in higher-wage/competitive labor markets like those at the state or national level. Therefore, the particular nature and focus of this research should explain why it derives a different set of results in contrast with those usually cited by minimum wage advocates. In other words, the employment/unemployment level represents the "dependent" variable influenced by multiple "independent" variables (including but not necessarily limited to the stated area economic characteristics plus minimum wages).

Discussion

The primary focus of this study involves measuring and comparing annual employment numbers for El Centro between "farming, fishery, and forestry" occupations and those of "personal care and related services" from May 2008 to May 2011. As indicated in Figure 5, California-based employers including those in El Centro were subject to an $8 per hour wage "price floor" as of January 1, 2008

Figure 3 – College Graduation Rates (Imperial County, California, United States: Select Data, 2010-2012)

Source: FRED Economic Data (2012a)

Figure 4 – Per Capita Personal Income (Imperial County, California, United States: 2002-2012)
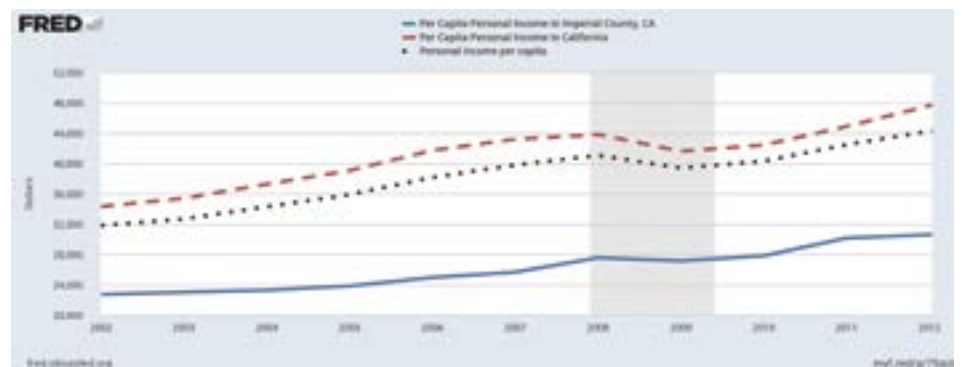
Source: FRED Economic Data (2012b)

and it applied throughout this particular time period, ending June 30, 2014 (State of California DIR, n.d.).

Now, according to available statistical data (see Figure 6), over the four-year span starting May 2008, these agricultural-related occupations saw fluctuations in employment ending with a higher than 43 percent reduction by May 2011 to a level well below 5,000, while initially starting from a high of 8,430 just three years prior. Not surprisingly, this coincided with area unemployment rates that climbed to about 28 percent during the month of May covering both 2010 and 2011. One could perhaps expect this result especially when we consider that corresponding median wages recorded a "modest" rise (under 3 percent) from $8.64 to $8.89.

Meanwhile, those involved in "personal care and related services" experienced a "significant" job increase over the specified period starting from about 850 jobs and rising to just under 2,300 jobs, again, even with area unemployment reaching 28 percent (Figure 6). This all might seem unusual until we realize that median income among this group actually declined by about 17 percent, from $10.85 per hour in May 2008 to just above $9 per hour in May 2011. Such an economic pattern showing an inverse correlation between these variables would be consistent with the aforementioned "market-oriented" economic model (Figure 1),

which happens to also apply to the previously analyzed wage/unemployment trends among "farming, fishing, and forestry" workers.

In the latter case, it appeared that the official job reductions were influenced by a lack of downward wage flexibility especially with

Figure 5 – Minimum Wage Increases, California (2002-2016)

Effective date	New minimum wage	Old minimum wage	Amount of increase	Percentage of increase over previous wage
January 1, 2016	$10.00	$9.00	$1.00	11.1 percent
July 1, 2014	$9.00	$8.00	$1.00	12.5 percent
January 1, 2008	$8.00	$7.50	$0.50	6.7 percent
January 1, 2007	$7.50	$6.75	$0.75	11.1 percent
January 1, 2002	$6.75	$6.25	$0.50	8.00 percent

Source: Adapted from State of California DIR (n.d.)

the presence of an $8 per hour price floor. We can only speculate as to how a lower minimum wage or the absence thereof could perhaps stimulate job creation within these two occupational categories and beyond.

At the time of this writing, with California's minimum wage at $9 per hour,[1] representing a higher figure than the May 2014 median level for "farming, fishing, and forestry" and equal to that of "personal care," it raises questions as to how that could impact the affected low-wage occupations especially in the event of another economic downturn (State of California DIR, n.d.; USDOLBLS, 2015c). As mentioned previously, chronic unemployment remains a persistent problem (Figure 1) but in the event that it worsens for these particular professions, their low-wage earners have even less room to legally maneuver even if they indicate a willingness to accept lesser pay in exchange for continued employment.

At any rate, those who subsequently experience job displacement have little choice other than to seek opportunities in the underground economy if they are to stave off the effects of unemployment. Otherwise, they would have to improve their work qualifications in order to remain viable in an increasingly competitive job market.

Presenting the results of this study will by no means end the controversy over minimum wages. Perhaps readers with business experience along with people who are both knowledgeable and supportive of market-oriented economic principles will agree and even embrace the positions that we endorse in keeping with the results that we have compiled.

On the other hand, one could assume that those with opposing viewpoints – perhaps critics with rigid ideological/political leanings – would likely dismiss this study in its entirety. As such, we should at least

understand how they approach this particular topic and the way they frame their arguments, the U.S. government being one of them. Yet, one could maybe feel a sense of irony in knowing that the statistical documentation used in developing valid counterarguments against such a policy originates from the same political entity that strongly supports it.

In rejecting the evidence presented by this particular report, opponents have a number of available options. First, they could probably "ignore" it altogether since it would be difficult if not impossible to utilize the data and analysis in support of their position. Second, they could argue that the findings are not necessarily "definitive" because these rely mainly on interpreting correlational patterns despite compatibility with fundamental economic principles (unless it promotes their point of view). Sometimes, critics might even demand as further "proof," an accompanying survey (usually involving businesses) indicating

Figure 6 – Employment/Unemployment Statistics, Select Low-Wage Occupations (El Centro, CA: May 2008-May 2011)

Occupation	May 2008			May 2009			May 2010			May 2011		
	Employ-ment	Med. Wage ($)	Area Unempl. Rate (%)	Employ-ment	Med. Wage ($)	Area Unempl. Rate (%)	Employ-ment	Med. Wage ($)	Area Unempl. Rate (%)	Employ-ment	Med. Wage ($)	Area Unempl. Rate (%)
Farm, Fishing, Forestry	8430	8.64		5270	8.91		5970	9.05		4770	8.89	
Personal Care, and Service-Related	850	10.85	20.3	960	10.45	26.1	n/r	8.90	28.0	2290	9.01	28.0

Sources of Data: FRED Economic Data (2011); USDOLBLS (2011)

that higher minimum wages would cause employer-responders to lay off workers. Third, they could divert attention to competing research that fully support their position, despite what some might consider questionable methodologies and conclusions.

Case in point, back in June 30, 2014, the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), a "progressive" think tank, hailed a report prepared by economists at Goldman Sachs and based on "a simple evaluation of the impact of … state minimum-wage increases" that found higher employment growth in states that raised minimum wages at the beginning of 2014 compared to those that remained the same as the previous year (Wolcott, 2014, para. 3). In a partial response, we could point out that in those states referred to in the aforementioned report, only a relatively small fraction of their respective work populations are salaried employees receiving "minimum wages or less" (USBLS, 2015), suggesting that the direct effects on overall labor costs are minimal at best and should have negligible impact on general employment/unemployment trends. Moreover, the aforementioned CEPR piece really does not provide "credible" evidence showing that the improved job numbers are actually the direct result of these particular mandated salary increases. In fact, one could properly make the valid observation that existing economic expansion not related to minimum wages, coupled with increased employment in higher-income/higher-productivity occupations, could have offset any potential negative effects brought on by the rise in these particular rates. Yet, the CEPR article does not even raise the possibility that other economic factors could be involved. Indeed, one could refer to this example as a "creative" use of labor statistics, as previously referred to earlier in the study.

Further contributing to the questionable validity of general pro-minimum wage arguments is how proponents often fail to explain the complexities inherent within some of these regulations. For instance, what is currently law in Minnesota involves "different tiers" of wage requirements based on meeting certain business criteria (Bierschbach, 2014). This appears to add more confusion to a policy already fraught with controversy.

Yet, to our knowledge, supporters seem to avoid discussing these details as they relate to economic principles.

Meanwhile, a leading weekly magazine highlighted another study purportedly showing that President Obama's widely reported $10.10 per hour proposed minimum wage would "lift millions of people out of poverty" (Dockterman, 2014). However, the article does not address whether there is even sufficient market demand for eligible workers at that rate of entry-level pay and whether that applies even during an economic downturn. This is in keeping with concerns and complaints among some that the recent recovery generated job growth mostly for lower-wage-earners (Berman, 2014). Therefore, one must realize that any additional labor costs incurred by employers beyond the "equilibrium price" due to such regulations merely represent a form of "subsidy" to its recipients. This automatically results in a less-competitive workforce. So as indicated by the supply and demand model (Figure 1), this puts these so-called beneficiaries at greater risk for unemployment. Yet, the possibility does not seem to resonate with minimum wage proponents, but as we have observed from certain labor patterns in El Centro, one simply cannot ignore such a potential outcome.

Now, in answer to the question, "What would occur if minimum wages were eliminated?" one journalist made generalized references to "Econ 101" without expressing what some may refer to as a "clear understanding" as to how that fully applies to a low-wage labor market – and without mention of possible adverse effects under various economic conditions (Weissmann, 2014). In a May 14, 2014 online article for Slate, writer Jordan Weissmann seemingly "downplayed" any positive effects on job creation and then drifted into some vague speculation that this "… could encourage [employers] to hire less-skilled workers … imperiling job opportunities for adults who need the work to support their families" (para. 8). The truth is that such assumptions contribute little or nothing to our basic understanding of this issue.

Perhaps as a way of responding, one could explain that these self-same employers are in a better position to understand their hiring needs than some third-party observers such as journalists. In addition, any form of paid wages merely represents a fulfillment of terms and conditions in return for services rendered, not necessarily that these should subsidize family living standards.

Continuing similarly along that line of reasoning, we could say that a "proper" way of articulating what would likely occur in the absence of minimum wages is that low-end pay would simply be allowed to fluctuate according to supply and demand. These rates would subsequently adapt to a variety of economic conditions and their respective environments toward an unplanned goal of reaching "equilibrium" level. Ultimately, the purpose of eliminating minimum wages is to ensure that there is less or even minimal third-party interference as employers and workers negotiate non-coercive, mutually-beneficial arrangements. As a result, we may even see dramatic wage differences between communities, but the trade-off would likely be a decline in overall job loss. Bear in mind though that oftentimes, unemployment simply represents the failure of employers and workers to reach mutual agreements that culminate with some form of functioning business relationship. This can occur in situations where prospective work applicants reject legitimate job offers or amid circumstances whose impact we might not be able to accurately measure such as that which involves an aforementioned participation in the underground economy.

Conclusion

Anyhow, this ongoing debate over minimum wages continues unabated despite how they conflict with basic economic principles and cost-benefit analysis, as such realities seemingly have not weakened the resolve of supporters. Yet, as this study demonstrates, the law of "unintended consequences" remains alive, more specifically as it pertains to the issue in question – whether an upward movement in minimum wages inversely impacts employment. In fact, what one might readily conclude from the analysis presented herein is that instead of the intended objective of improving the lot of the low-wage/unskilled-labor force, the opposite seems to be occurring especially amid adverse economic conditions.

Even the egalitarian notion of "spreading the wealth" is negated by this study since El Centro/Imperial County and related data directly point to a reverse correlation in keeping with market expectations along with standard business practices and trends. Namely, raising minimum wages can contribute to increasing the number of unemployed for those in the low-income/labor-intensive/unskilled-labor-group(s) (again, with other relevant factors remaining constant).

Along those lines, we reiterate the major differences between the evidence and conclusions that make up this argument with the claims in favor of minimum wages. Recall that this study focuses on correlational employment/unemployment patterns among selected low-wage occupations within a particular impoverished community. We cover a specified time period amid varying economic conditions with the minimum wage set at an $8 per hour rate (California). Not surprisingly, the results involving changes in employment/unemployment levels confirm exactly what we expect would occur in accordance with "market-oriented" economic principles.

On the other hand, we find that arguments for this policy generally promote views more as part of some "marketing" campaign fraught with ideological/political rhetoric. These generally dwell on the "optimistic" normative aspects that translate into claimed "benefits" for groups that make up their support base. They seem to appeal to certain notions rooted in "misguided idealism" and "wishful thinking" that commonly downplay or avoid discussing possible negative or "spillover" effects.

This position seems to lack a certain understanding within the context of the market process and basic economic relationships. This is likely affected by ideological tendencies that appear to form the basis of a particular mindset. As a result, the related arguments are seemingly incapable or limited in their capacity to further incorporate knowledge and insight as to the implications of such policies. These include the possibility that they may foster a dubious sense of economic security among people, the questionable belief that the ability to legally regulate pricing can somehow generate desired outcomes in favor of some ideological or political agenda. As a result, minimum wages retain a certain allure especially with many in the media, government and in academia. Unfortunately for them, market forces do not necessarily conform to normative expectations.

For proponents, espousing a popular mantra perhaps because on one hand, it might constitute the course of "least resistance" (as opposed to "encouraging" or "demanding" that people try to "adapt" by being more "market competitive") and is apparently "politically-advantageous," most definitely it is not what sound economic policy should be based upon.

Economic policy, be it at the local, state or federal level, must be founded and grounded upon an unbiased analysis of the available data and whichever direction the resulting analysis points to is the path to be pursued. Preconceived notions and political/ideological considerations should never supersede facts and established principles as best as they can be determined. To do otherwise may satiate the intended target audience and be politically expedient, but in the long run will only result in causing harm at the macro level as well at the individual level, including those that the intended policy claims to assist the most. The old adage encapsulates it well: "You may be entitled to your own opinion but not to your own facts." Naturally, this research does not cover the entirety of the United States nor do we make claim that it does. However, the El Centro study is clearly an example from which the case for seriously re-examining and reconsidering increasing the minimum wage can be made.

Note

[1] California's minimum wage was raised to $10 per hour as of January 1, 2016.

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"The biological substrate, the so-called universals of human nature, is not a cause of action but, at most, a constraint *upon it or a* condition *for it. … Our knowledge, then, becomes enculturated knowledge, indefinable save in a culturally based system of notation. In the process, we have broken through the original bounds set by the so-called biology of memory. Biology constrains, but not forevermore."*

– Jerome Bruner (1915-2016)
Acts of Meaning: Four Lectures on Mind and Culture
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990, pp. 20–21

Three Poems

Mindy Kronenberg, Long Island Region

Sand

I dreamt of my childhood while I lay on a
dune
sleeping: I was climbing the rippled sand
with my mother, our shadows stretched but
never touching, our legs impossibly long
like giraffes stalking the Serengeti.

All afternoon I was hunting treasure –
unbroken shells, rounded pebbles,
pieces of sea glass salted to crystal.
She had her scarved head down in a book,
seeking the pleasure of found words,

safe adventure, an ocean's beckoning
to a better life. What happiness gleams
beyond the powdered hill? How does the wind
carve each year till it slips from our hands?
I return every summer to find out. Always,

too soon, we gather our towels
and separate dreams.

This is the Title of the Poem

And this is the first line.
It's as if you are crossing a street
for the first time, looking both ways,
knowing the drill:
the roughened dip of the curb
under your shoe, the blurred parade
of cars between yourself and the light.

What will the next stanza foretell?
Pedestrians cross from line to line –
some with their arms swinging,
some dragging luggage,
some realizing that green has gone to yellow
and run, breathless, to the other side.
Perhaps a siren is wailing in the distance.

Will this continue to the next page?
There's always another block to explore,
another idea to refine.
There's a glimmer of neon
in the corner of your eye. This is where
it's supposed to get good.
You've been walking and watching
and taking it in, but there's no map to tell you
that you've arrived.

Wildlife

Whatever you call him, woodchuck
or whistlepig,
the groundhog outside
my kitchen window gambols and nibbles
at the edge of the woods,
chewing weeds in the thick summer air.
I am sipping coffee as I watch him,
just emerged from my own rumpled
den, my own fur frazzled
and in need of a lick.

As I slump over cornflakes
he rises regally, tilts his head
to a bouquet of dandelions,
casting glances across the grass
to a line of cars in the parking lot.
On a terrace in the building across the way
two love birds cackle and caw,
slam the sliding glass door
and abandon beer bottles
glinting green in the sun.

My neighbor's cat is on the prowl
but hasn't found his choice of prey;
he crouches at the edge of the lawn,
eyeing the possibilities:
the groundhog, the resident Jack rabbit,
a pair of grackles searching for grubs.
He settles for conquest of a plastic bag
that seductively balloons
then flattens under the lengthening
shadows of the trees.

Forgiveness in the Face of Hate

Nadine Wedderburn, Northeast Region

The following dialogue was written in response to the killing of nine African-Americans by one white man in a church in Charleston, South Carolina on June 17, 2015. Using the power of narrative and performance to enable conversation, the dialogue, framed around the concept of forgiveness, was presented as a staged reading to facilitate an open discussion on the longstanding relationship of race, religion and justice in the U.S. This dialogue was created by Nadine Wedderburn, and was read by Wedderburn and colleagues Cynthia Bates, Bob Carey, Alan Mandell and Anastasia Pratt at the SUNY Empire State College Fall Academic Conference, October 30, 2015. It served as a take-off point for robust discussion among the many colleagues who had gathered for this concurrent session. We hope it will continue to provoke new responses and questions.

A Forgiving People
(Read by Nadine Wedderburn – Standing center stage)

On June 17, 2015, 12 African-Americans assembled inside Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina for weekly Bible study. AME stands for African Methodist Episcopal, the Protestant denomination founded by African-Americans during slavery as a means to practice their faith outside of the watchful eyes of white observers. The AME Church remains a predominantly African-American denomination today.

The Emanuel AME Church was founded in 1816 and is the oldest AME Church in the South. Although Emanuel means "God with us," the historic edifice is affectionately called "Mother Emanuel"; perhaps because mothers in the African-American community embody safety, security, support and strength. Mothers bring forth life and are expected to stand the test of time. To many, "mother" means love, unconditional love, protection, the one who can do no wrong. For many in Charleston, "Mother Emanuel" is a sacred space, a

holy place – set apart for sanctuary, refuge, reimagining and remembering. Throughout her history, she has been a harbor for recovery, renewal, strategizing and resistance-planning in the name of freedom and justice. Mother Emanuel is at once home, anchor and compass.

Among those gathered within the warmth of Mother Emanuel's space on June 17, 2015 were: Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Clementa C. Pinckney, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton and Myra Thompson. By all accounts these were proud African-Americans: educated, hardworking, ambitious, respected and beloved by their families and community. Collectively, they could speak of surviving the Jim Crow, Civil Rights and post-9/11 eras, while being hopeful of the future.

And then, a lone white man joined their study. They welcomed him. He conversed with them. But as they were about to say the final prayer, the lone white man stood up, pulled out a gun from his fanny pack, and fired multiple shots at the assembled few. Bedlam! Another slaughter of black bodies at the hands of a hate-filled, deranged white man! Nine new victims of "racial violence" lay lifeless in Charleston, South Carolina – a scene all too familiar to "Mother Emanuel."

Two days later, the accused killer appeared in a Charleston county courthouse for a bond hearing. Members of the victims' families who were present openly offered forgiveness to the accused. This seemingly quick offer of forgiveness made me question the value and purpose of the victims' lives, and essentially, forgiveness. Had "I forgive you" become a well-rehearsed line that had lost its substance? The bodies of the nine who perished had barely become cold! How is one able to offer forgiveness so quickly after such an atrocity had been meted out?

Premature Forgiveness
(Read by Cindy Bates – Standing left stage front)

I call this "premature forgiveness." Premature forgiveness is the verbal or formal pronouncement that a wrong has been forgiven even before the injured party has had an opportunity to grieve the wrong done to him or her. This offering of forgiveness serves no useful or fruitful function because it comes from a place that has not sufficiently processed the injury suffered. Forgiveness is a place of victory where one arrives when one has conquered the emotional and concomitant trauma of a wrong suffered. Just as the pronouncement of victory before crossing the finish line is not helpful to an athlete competing in a race, the pronouncement of forgiveness before one has dealt with the guilt associated with an injury is not helpful to an injured party.

Forgiveness as Coping
(Read by Anastasia Pratt – Standing right stage rear)

It seems to me that, at least as it is often portrayed in cases like Charleston, forgiveness means one thing for African-Americans and another for whites. A white Protestant teaching of forgiveness seems to imply that it is an act that wipes clean all previous sin, as if it had never happened – an act that, when carried out, is good for the oppressor and the oppressed. As an outgrowth of the Methodist tradition, it would be safe to say that AME adherents retain this white Protestant view of forgiveness. However, the "forgiving black person" seems to show up another way. Black Christians in the U.S. seem to have also come to appreciate forgiveness as necessary to keep their souls intact, even as they stand up to those who "trespass against them."

Forgiveness Needs Time
(Read by Alan Mandell –
Standing left stage rear)

So is forgiveness misunderstood? Maybe forgiveness *is* appropriate early in grief. Maybe it is a form of prevenient grace – the offended saying that "in order to get to a place of peace, I must act on the power of forgiveness; in order to 'get through' the pain and grief, I must forgive. Otherwise, the pent-up resentment could destroy me. …" [pause, as if thinking.] "I understand that, but I also think that premature forgiveness is dangerous. Forgiveness implies completion – coming "full circle" through a process of wrestling with the wrong that has been done to you. To offer forgiveness suggests that one has reached a certain place of peace, even if one is not completely over the wrong. By this token, it appears that forgiveness, if not allowed to emerge through a process of contemplation and coming to terms with the wrong that has been done, can be damaging.

Dysfunctional Forgiveness
(Read by Bob Carey –
Standing right stage front)

While black rage is challenged as inappropriate and unhelpful in the media, the same media and others celebrate the traumatized family members' ability to respond to this latest heinous crime with compassion and love. This breeds a sort of societal psychic dysfunction. This apparent rush to forgive, and acceptance of quick forgiveness, is unhealthy and partly explains the vicious cycle of hate that persists and manifests into violence. The assumed readily-available forgiveness trivializes real black suffering, grief and the heavy lifting required for any possibility of societal progress. When black redemption of white America is prioritized over justice and accountability, there is no chance of truth and reconciliation.

To repress rage through premature forgiveness is to diminish the humanness of the oppressed in the eyes of the oppressor, and perpetuate the cycle of attacks and abuse that numbs cognitive and emotional clarity. Victims' families will forgive on their terms but, as a country, we should be entirely unforgiving! Premature forgiveness breeds denial. Premature forgiveness promotes silence – not addressing the truth about the scourge that is racism.

Premature forgiveness suppresses justifiable outrage – open rage that is just as vital to healing as forgiveness. Choosing to act as if racism does not exist means it will never go away.

Forgiveness – Reality or Fantasy?
(Read by Nadine Wedderburn –
Standing center stage)

So, for the Christians in Charleston whose deep faith tradition holds forgiveness as a core principle, what might appear to be premature to many is relieving the burden of anger and pain of being victimized. On one hand, it is the family's prerogative if, when and how they choose to be forgiving to the killer. On the other, the entire country bears the burden of racism and a larger national conversation – grounded in honesty and truth about the past and present injustices of this land – is necessary to begin working toward reconciliation. There is no "post-racial America"! Racism in the United States is as real today as it has been for more than 200 years! As long as the denial and avoidance enabled by forgiveness fantasies are allowed to exist, there will be recurrences of the scenes like we've seen in Charleston, in Ferguson, in Cleveland, in Sanford, in New York City. … What do you think?

Image credit: *Charleston Daily*/Google Images

A portion of a community memorial to honor the victims of the Charleston church shooting.

Reassignment Report
American Art: A New Look

Betty Wilde-Biasiny, Metropolitan New York Region

Introduction

The basis of my faculty professional development reassignment during the fall 2015 term (August 18-October 20) was to do research and course development in support of my blended undergraduate study titled American Art: A New Look. My process included the examination of current and potential texts, the search for relevant primary sources, the close reading of selected texts, visits to museums, and a review of recent course templates used to teach the course during two previous terms. This report summarizes my research and highlights outcomes that resulted from this immersion into the American Art study and my practice of teaching art history with an embedded writing component. I conclude with a synopsis of next steps that have resulted from this project that will keep this research open to my growth as a scholar and mentor at SUNY Empire State College.

Research and Course Development: American Art: A New Look

Having the time to research and revise the course content for American Art: A New Look for the Moodle learning platform was a significant motivator for my work, because I was able to make the course content more historically detailed, diverse and specific. The content guides, in turn, help to direct me toward developing abstracts for future scholarly articles. I enjoyed analyzing and writing new content, and the process of reading earlier student assignments to make the new version of the course more engaging and enriching for the students. In my experience, students tend to read more closely when they have reading guides and prompts, so I have re-written various study guides as a prelude to their readings, to motivate them to do closer readings of the material (see Appendix).

In addition to ongoing reading and writing assignments, as well as class recitations and question and answer sessions, the major project for students was to create a visual presentation on an artist they thought was important to reintroduce/include/magnify in significance to the history of American art. Throughout the course, they were encouraged to look closely at the missing links, the possible oversights, the marginalized or previously unknown artists they would want to see as part of the official course. In reviewing over 20 examples of student presentations, I made a selection of two projects that will be included within the new course content: 1) *James Audubon,* by Yee Mee Lee '15, and 2) *Archibald J. Motley Jr.,* by Daisy Ferrer '15. Ms. Lee is a gifted painter and designer whose choice of illustrator and painter James Audubon provided an in-depth view of the sometimes overlooked ornithology portfolios of Audubon within an art historical context. As an artist coming of age at the apex of modernism and abstract art, Audubon has been overlooked in some histories as an illustrator and thereby marginalized as an influential artist of the early 20th century. By identifying with his artistic vision and his conceptual project – that is, the preservation of ornithology – Ms. Lee expanded the content of our course and delved into a colorful history that also continued to inspire her own artistic work.

In contrast, Ms. Ferrer's refreshing outlook on the African-American artist Archibald J. Motley Jr. and the Chicago jazz era, is enriched with an audio track and well-edited visuals that will enliven the subject for students in the years to come. Motley was very well known within his own community, and by selecting him for her project, Ferrer introduced him within a much larger context through her exciting multimedia presentation. It was kismet that the Whitney Museum of American Art was to include a major retrospective of his work in the 2016 season, which became part

Betty Wilde-Biasiny at the Morgan Library, New York City, 2014.

Photo credit: Kira Kraft

of the next study group's assignment to view and write about the show. Having seen Ferrer's presentation, students were well-equipped to draw inferences to the interplay of jazz and culture, and most significantly the idea that Chicago was part of the Harlem Renaissance and its impact on the history of American art, especially in mid-century.

Highlights from my museum viewing included a visit to the new Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City with its inaugural exhibition "America is Hard to See." The Brooklyn Museum of Art will continue to serve as a primary resource for the span of 350 years of American art, with assignments to visit the collection in person; as well as use of its extensive website for the study and categorization of objects. The text that was the most transformational for me – Berlo and Phillips' (2014) *Native North American Art* – was woven into various course modules in terms of telling the story of First Nations and providing terminology and history that will broaden student learning beyond one visit to the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City.

Furthering the Embedded Writing Component

In the previous versions of the course, my work with academic support colleagues Dr. Brett Sherman and Carolyn Wilsey, M.F.A., inspired my efforts to develop writing guides to help students with research and writing skills. I also had worked with a group of colleagues under the leadership of Dr. Cathy Leaker on the pedagogy underlying the use of writing within academic subjects prior to my reassignment. Upon closer examination of student writing samples from earlier versions of the course, I observed a fair amount of confusion with the writing concepts, which can be very abstract. Therefore, I revised the embedded writing guides to shift from the abstract to the more specific comparative methodology of art history. For example, standard writing guides using what appear to be everyday examples such as apples and oranges, can cause the reader/writer to first process the apple/orange comparison concept while readily losing sight of the proposed question or assignment.

I have revised the writing guide for American Art: A New Look to use specific examples that students can relate to directly as a way of modeling writing rather than blocking the flow of thought with examples that cause confusion. Instead of spending quality thinking time trying to make sense of the example, the art historical model – based ultimately on visualization – provides an alternative method that may be more amenable to various learning styles.

Visual Research

An opportunity to visit the Biennale 2015 in Venice, Italy, the international presentation of contemporary art, allowed me to examine the most cutting-edge state of American art on the world stage. The Biennale took place at two primary sites: one at its historical location, the arena of the Central Pavilion (the Giardini), which was arranged in a way similar to a world's fair with discrete buildings and pavilions; the other, the *Arsenale,* a modified former military facility interlaced with canals and bridges with its massive brick warehouse staging most of the works. The

featured exhibition, "All the World's Futures," comprising 136 international artists, unfolded the vision of Okwui Enwezor, the Nigerian-born international curator. The exhibition began with a very intense American section that showcased Terry Adkins' (1953-2014) monster-sized metal machines that sometimes included sound. The cathedral-scale ceilings lent themselves to foster a melodramatic setting that enlivened the environmental qualities of each artist's project, many displayed as solo shows occupying an entire room; others as a kind of "group show by country" including numerous examples by contemporary Chinese artists.

Equally compelling and more concise in scale were Melvin Edwards' (b. 1947) cast bronze *bas reliefs* (three-dimensional works hanging from a flat surface). Expanding upon his historical racial identity-based work from the '60s, each work melded very specific machine parts as visual metaphor for shackles and enslavement. Arranged across a large expanse of wall, each intricately formed piece served as a kind of cuneiform (letter or symbol) for future civilizations to read. To complement Edwards' engagement with the theme of race and the cultural signifiers raised in his work, I will be using passages from the recent essay on the black male body, *Between the World and Me,* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015), as a way of updating students' understanding of the issues of the black male in society and how they play out in contemporary art.

By far the most dramatic and conceptually complete presentation of the Biennale was *Codice Italia* by the Italians, whereby the curator invited artists from around the globe to interpret "the genetic code" or the classic Italian formulas, materials and aesthetics in a new way. The visitor is first confronted with a series of heroic murals with very dramatic music playing in the background, almost as though to announce an event similar to the Olympics. The issue of nationalism was almost parodied by the imagery and huge sound, and eclipsed by the curatorial choice to select artists from around the globe.

Some examples of American artists who will be added to my course include Joan Jonas, the octogenarian video and performance artist who was the official representing artist of the United States pavilion; one *Codice Italia* artist, Vanessa Beecroft, *La member Fantome,* 2015, whose traditionally-carved marble sculptures turn issues of race, class and gender into a visual orchestra of mixed and matched figures and heads; and Mel Edwards, for his historical and ongoing work in contested histories of the American black male and other issues of civil rights and social commentary.

On the plane home from the Biennale, I read a review in *Art in America* that was fairly negative, sarcastic and missing most of the good work. Titled "Pavilion Problems" (Droitcour, 2015), the article made me realize how fortunate I was to have experienced the Biennale first hand, since my experience and critical analysis was entirely different and will provide an important benchmark for me (and my students) to the emerging canon of American art within a global context. One largely overlooked aspect of the review was any formal analysis, at the expense of trite reflections on whose work was the most "socially engaged." For me, the deconstruction of visual language continues to democratize the process of discerning meaning and, ultimately, that most definitely can include its signification of social issues.

In viewing the massive installations at the Biennale, I also became aware of many new presentation styles as well as extensive media that have inspired me to include music, video and film clips into American Art: A New Look. (I have learned how to make the links more accessible to students; that is, they are now embedded into the course as links rather than indirectly referred to as an outside media source.)

My first-hand viewing was a marvelous way to re-contextualize my preliminary task to study the significance of First Nations; I now feel that I more closely understand the issues of colonialism as they relate to American art history. During my attendance at the Biennale, I had the opportunity to reconnect with museum curators and other colleagues through

rich conversations that further motivated me to verbalize and write about my experiences and to broaden my own views about art.

Conclusion

I have had the opportunity to do more in-depth study of the theory and history of First Nations as they relate to American art history; to review student writing and presentations, making a selection of their work to include as part of the new course; to examine what aspects of the course to expand upon and to make clearer through the enhanced writing guides; and to become excited again about the state of American

art within a global context. I really enjoyed the idea of including student work, because it is a kind of collaboration that I was able to make more official through this project. Future projects include some ideas I have for publishing about my methodology that combines viewing art and writing, and to initiate a future writing topic, "A Museum Studies Approach to Teaching Art History." One more version of the course transpired for spring 2016 where I opened up the final project to be more group-oriented, whereby students built course content on a much more granular level, posting articles, objects they observed through many more museum

visits, and prized short papers that added to our "class canon." Still sifting through those results, I look forward to attaching them to the next revision of the course, which will eventually form the basis of an ongoing Metro NY Region seminar study, one that really thrives on face-to-face interaction of students coming together to access, absorb and invent through their individual cultural experiences. It is a course in motion, still growing, ebbing and flowing with the input of students, whose views, perspectives, and originality make it a perpetual work in progress.

Slides from final project by student Yee Mee Lee '15.
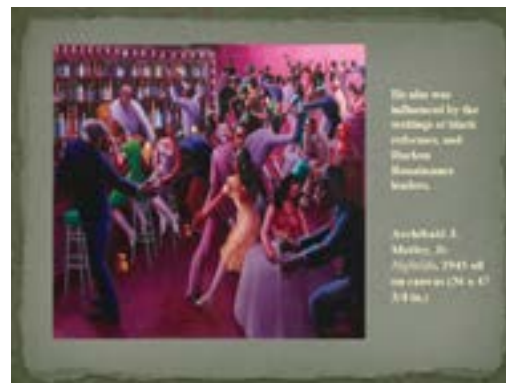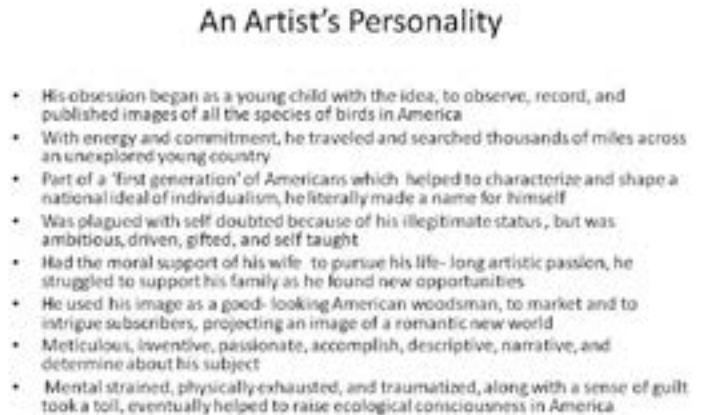
Slides from final project by student Daisy Ferrer '15.

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Appendix: Example of a Study Guide to Prepare for Reading

To prepare for reading Chapter 1, from Berlo, Janet C. and Phillips, Ruth B., *Native North American Art,* second edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Please keep these questions in mind as you read about First Nations and their inclusion in the history of American art, and submit your answers as a Word document. Be sure to annotate (footnote) your sources as applicable.

1. What is the primary difference between pre-contact and post-contact in referring to American art history?

Pre-contact relies on archaeological evidence and aboriginal oral traditions, whereas, post-contact is the result of examined written texts, photos and films (Berlo & Phillips, 2014, p. 4).

2. What is the difference between pre-contact and prehistoric?

The term "pre-contact" is preferable to "prehistoric" because it acknowledge that the thousands of years before the official arrival of Europeans (1492) on North American soil, a great many changes and developments took place among indigenous peoples, largely based upon their interaction with other peoples and their responses to new features of the environment (Berlo & Phillips, 2014, p. 5).

3. In terms of art history, how has the study of indigenous cultures been expanded?

The bases of art historical research most often have relied upon the expression of political power, group identity, cosmological beliefs, and the presentation of the individual self. During the last three decades of the 20th century, what is sometimes referred to as "the new art history," the discipline has expanded to include the social history of art. As well, the use of the term "visual culture" rather than "fine arts" also speaks to the significance of cultural identity in the analysis of art and its history, thereby becoming more inclusive in recognizing diverse peoples and their contributions to art history and culture (Berlo & Phillips, 2014, p. 7).

"When we talk about the process of distancing oneself from one's thoughts, reflecting better to gain perspectives, does this not imply something about the knower? Are we not in some way talking about the forming of Self?"

– Jerome Bruner (1915-2016)
Actual Minds, Possible Worlds
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 129

Found Things

Excerpt from *Empire State College Middle States Association Evaluating Team Report* (November 1974)

The following is an excerpt from the November 1974 report to the faculty, administration, trustees and students of SUNY Empire State College by an evaluating team representing the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association. The report was prepared after the study of ESC's self-evaluation report and a visit to its regions (at the time, called "learning centers") in October 1974. Two ESC staff assisted the team with this document: Mimi Dowd, who was an intern; and Roger Trumbore, who was executive assistant to President James Hall. Overall, the report praised the new college, noting in the introduction: "While some suggestions for further development will be noted in the following sections, the accreditation team has confidence in the college's determination and capacity to continue to meet its objectives with increasing effectiveness." Further, "There is strong evidence of the institution's awareness of areas that need further attention, of its commitment to excellence, and of its sense of direction."

This excerpt is of the first three sections of the report: "Mentors"; "Educational Delivery System"; and "Students." We thank Janet Jones for helping us to prepare this document for All About Mentoring.

Mentors

The concept of the mentor is a dynamic, new element in higher education. Its effective application at Empire State College reflects a determined effort to make the mentorship the vital and pivotal component in the educational delivery system. Inherent in such a model is an expectation of a great empathetic quality, keen intellectual insight, and breadth of expertise of a magnitude that inevitably poses challenges to its full realization. This model is necessarily characterized by tensions and possible role incompatibilities among such multiple expectations of mentor performance.

The team was genuinely impressed with the quality of individuals serving as mentors. There is a commitment to the Empire State College mission and to the one-to-one relationship with students.

Students with whom team members visited were very positive in their reaction to the mentors and generally felt that the service they are receiving from mentors is first-rate. Moreover, student descriptions of their relationships with mentors seemed to substantiate that claim.

Mentors are available; time devoted to the individual student is adequate; and the quality of the relationship is satisfactory. Some of the reactions of the students were very moving as they described the mentors' commitment, perseverance, and intensity of involvement.

There is a need, however, for better documentation of student evaluation of mentors, not only in assessing performance of the mentors but for use by those concerned with planning the further development of the college.

While the team found morale to be somewhat uneven among the centers, the mentors seem to enjoy what they are doing, take a great deal of pride in their work, and are generally enthusiastic and excited by being part of a truly innovative endeavor and by being associated with students who reciprocate this enthusiasm. There is, however, a concern about their own professional development. This is a legitimate concern and one which is recognized and shared by the administration. Indeed, this has wisely been made a high priority by the President of the College.

Many mentors having a closer orientation to their disciplines feel that traditional scholarship and publication are still possible through the apparently efficient Research Foundation of SUNY.

It would be unfortunate, however, if the members viewed professional development only in these terms. The entire process of mentoring represents in itself – with all of its variety and challenge – a new form of professional life. Some mentors, less tied to professional reputations through their disciplines, are more interested in educational experimentation, fieid-based learning, and topics directly related to the Empire State experience. Frequently such faculty members seem to feel that they do not have a "home" in the professional academic community outside of Empire State. To the extent that they have an opportunity to analyze their role, depersonalize it, and share it with other colleagues and institutions they may make an important contribution to the field of higher education as well as to their own intellectual and professional growth.

While informal communication among mentors within the centers seems to be more than satisfactory, there is a need for interchange across centers and units – and even between Empire State College and some of the other SUNY institutions. Some formal mechanisms for mentor interchange concerning roles, methods, and performance might be desirable.

Indeed, the whole matter of in-service training for mentors may need further attention. Empire State College's mentor represents a new concept in higher education – it envisions a role for faculty that is quite different from the traditional model. Ways need to be developed for monitoring mentor performance with individual students and for continuous examination and improvement of this role and function. Many of the mentors and deans with whom members of the team talked appear reluctant to endorse the idea of direct observation of mentor interviews or other "control" techniques that might tend to interfere with the mentor-student relationship. Tape recordings were similarly rejected.

The need to monitor the individual mentor-student relationship might be particularly critical for the more passive student. Mentors who are less conscientious about doing the necessary paper work or having periodic contact with the students could unintentionally discourage those less motivated and resourceful.

Perhaps one of the most frequent references made by the mentors is to the work load which they are assumed to shoulder. While there is general institutional concern about this matter, the team had the feeling that this issue is sometimes discussed by mentors in relation to traditional faculty roles and expectations rather than in terms of the model developed at Empire State College. It is our understanding that tutors and the adjunct faculty may be drawn in to share with the mentor ~me of the instructional load, leaving with the mentor the primary responsibility for assisting the student in developing a degree program, counseling, identifying and acquiring learning resources, and evaluating the student's work. In brief, load cannot be defined obviously in the same manner as would be the case if the mentors were responsible for all of the instructional requirements. Still, this is an area worthy of the on-going attention of the institution. It is particularly important that the role of the mentor is clearly defined, understood, and continuously reviewed.

Educational Delivery System

Objectives three, four, and five are at the center of the educational philosophy of Empire State College and are being very well met. The educational program is open-ended and is seemingly limited only by the interests and goals of the students. Students do have the opportunity to establish their goals and the development of their degree program is, in fact, an important educational experience.

The process of degree plan preparation, development of portfolio, and digest and evaluation seems to be educationally sound. It helps assure consistency where consistency is valid (e.g., assessment criteria), yet it is flexible enough to permit responses to individual student learning needs. There is some risk that the verbal evidence in the digest and evaluation might become criteria of successful performance and that verbalizations might become discrepant with actual work products. Some selective "performance auditing" procedure acceptable to the faculty should probably be developed.

The educational approach of the college has created an atmosphere of excitement within the learning centers, pioneered a new manner of utilizing human resources, and is providing a forum for testing new ideas and new variants of community and student based models of education.

The delivery system has also injected back into the educational process a more personalized human element. Although faculty members sometimes complain about the work involved in assessing portfolios and students sometimes comment on the leg work and writing involved, the net result would appear to be an important educational experience and an excellent means for mentors to become better acquainted with their students and their personal and educational needs.

One concern expressed by some team members is a possible bias toward humanistic fields such as philosophy and history and the social sciences because many of the mentors are drawn from these disciplines. Personnel in the learning centers explain that students with a strong interest in science, technology, or the arts can be directed toward tutors, adjunct faculty, or existing traditional institutions.

While reliance on these learning resources is fine, the progress of such students should be carefully observed given the fact that the centers heavily emphasize the value of individual mentoring; obviously such mentoring might be more difficult for students whose interests are not well represented on the faculty. The institution needs to be careful that student choices are not limited or discouraged simply by the fact that mentors are drawn more heavily from some academic backgrounds than others. In brief, it would seem that educational programs might be overly determined by the scholastic and/or experiential background of the mentors and their perceptions of appropriate or accessible resources.

Obviously, given the educational approach of Empire State College, one central aspect of the entire program is the matter of quality assessment and control both of previous learning experiences and of those acquired through college guided experiences.

Students with whom team members visited expressed opinions and exhibited characteristics which indicate that their education has been substantive and, in many cases, rigorous. Students are concerned with both process and content – with how they learn and what they learn. Several students, when quizzed about their fields by faculty members on the team, revealed better than adequate substantive and factual knowledge.

Yet, it is in this area of quality control that much remains to be done – particularly with regard to substantiation and verification of learning. This does not mean that the matter of quality control and assessment of learning is unique to Empire State; all institutions have the problem although it tends to be addressed too frequently only of the innovative. The team felt that Empire State College has much to be proud of with regard to the quality of education which is provided but that the documentary material to certify student progress and achievement needs to be further developed with more extensive methodological scope and precision.

Mentors and administrators are attempting to come to grips with some of these issues, and much progress has been made in recent months. Even since the self-study was produced, at least two significant documents have emerged that speak to the problem – "Policies and Procedures for Granting Advanced Standing," and "Policies and Procedures for Degree Programs."

Thus, the college is to be commended once again for its awareness of understandable shortcomings and for its commitment to quality. As the institution continues its efforts in this area it may wish to explore more experimental assessment concepts and procedures in order to guard against any tendency to return to the more orthodox emphasis upon courses, credits, and traditional forms of testing.

Students

As noted earlier in another context, the students with whom team members visited were very impressive. They are dedicated, articulate, knowledgeable and extremely enthusiastic. Many spoke of the intellectual confidence they have gained and the personal growth they have experienced.

The feeling is expressed by many students that they are working harder than that which was required of them in a traditional college, a perception in which they take great pride.

Students are finding at Empire State College what they expected to find; the college is proving to be, for its enrolled students, what it says it is.

While it is important to have these verbal and impressionistic reactions of the satisfied student, the college will undoubtedly continue to mount systematic research efforts to document student progress. Research designed to elicit in depth student responses to the college to mentors, resources, contracts, degree programs, and assessment will no doubt call for additional attention as Empire State College proceeds with institutional improvements and planning.

Moreover, the potential clientele that, for whatever reason, did not become students, should be studied – those who inquire but never apply; those who apply but are not accepted; those who are accepted but who do not attend orientation; and, perhaps most importantly, those who drop out.

The telephone survey of a sample of drop outs is inadequate and does not really provide any basis for determining whether there were significant program failures or failures in the initial screening process, or both. Furthermore, the acturial data on drop out rates is virtually impossible to interpret. What is critically needed at this point is some notion as to the probability that a typical student will drop out after various periods of time, as opposed to completing a degree program.

Equally important is the collection of more comprehensive data on the programmatic experiences of students prior to their dropping out. Only in this way can the adequacy of the screening procedures and the impact of the educational program be sufficiently assessed.

For its enrolled students Empire State College is certainly meeting its objective of providing an alternative approach to traditional forms of higher education, and is doing so in a manner consistent with the basic tenets of the institution.

Empire State College has developed sound programs for those student needs which are not readily met by the calendar, patterns, and learning modes that characterize most other traditional colleges and universities.

There is, however, another aspect of this first objective that deserves further consideration by the college. In addition to offering alternatives, the first objective goes on to say "to all who are prepared to pursue college level work, recognizing that the college must serve people with a variety of needs, backgrounds, and life styles."

It is the strong conviction of the team that the college is well-suited and is doing a good job with adult students who – for the most part – are highly motivated, independent, goal-directed and who have already had substantial experience in more traditional forms of education and in jobs or other career activities from which they have acquired some skills and knowledge. In brief, there is the impression that the college has responded primarily to a self-selected clientele.

If the college is to implement fully that portion of the objective that suggests access to a much more diverse student group – those less motivated, less experienced (both educationally and occupationally), and less advantaged – then additional supportive professional services will be required.

For example, more professional assistance in counseling and guidance will be necessary, both because the mentors are not sufficiently trained in these areas and because the mentor work-load would not seem to permit these kinds of additional responsibilities. There will also need to be counselors and tutors in reading, writing, and computational skills.

Such new clientele may also initially possess less experience in independent study and library use. There may be less perseverance and resourcefulness initially, requiring more support and reinforcement than for the highly motivated with a background of success.

There is evidence that the institution is fully aware of the need to create a more diverse student and that this topic has been given high priority (a fact clearly indicated in the President's memorandum of September 30, 1974, to the Committee on College Development). We strongly endorse this direction and encourage the college to now take the next step in providing educational opportunities for those students to whom more traditional forms have not been responsive.

Along this line, the college may also wish to give more attention to acquiring greater breadth in mentors' backgrounds – not just in connection with its planning for a more diverse student body but even for the benefit of its current clientele. Mentors with non-traditional academic experiences could significantly enhance faculty diversity and uniqueness.

In the beginning, mentors and administrators seem to have been largely drawn from traditional academic backgrounds – many in the liberal arts. Many of the students, on the other hand, came with strong career interests. This combination made for a fruitful conjunction for selected students: a liberal arts mentor trying to respond intensely to the academic and personal growth needs of these kinds of students. There is convincing evidence that much of value for the student resulted from this blend and many good, valid, and non-traditional subjects and methods of study were developed.

Without in any way detracting from the importance of this kind of mix, an added value might be obtained by supplementing the faculty with more mentors possessing non-traditional academic backgrounds outside of the liberal arts.

Remembering Robert Seidel

Colleagues from SUNY Empire State College

Robert Seidel (1937-2015), mentor emeritus in history and politics in the Genesee Valley Region, served the college from 1974 until his retirement in 1999. Among the many accolades he received were the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1979-1980, and being named a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor in 1990. Bob was also a two-time recipient of the Arthur Imperatore Community Forum Fellowship: the first in 1990 on what he called, "Neighborly Affection and the Common Good: An Examination of Urban Volunteerism and Community Needs" with Shirley Thompson; and the second for his 1998 project, "Restoring Keystones to Rochester's Community: A Progressive Photodocumentary Exhibit." Bob was named a gold medalist in the 1986 national "Professor of the Year" competition, sponsored by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and funded by the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching. Bob Seidel was a kind, engaged and serious man devoted to his community, whose generosity was felt by so many – students and colleagues alike – at ESC.

Robert Congemi, mentor, Northeast New York Region

I remember when I first knew Bob, in the late '70s, he was speaking at, I believe, an All College meeting. He captivated his audience. I was so impressed with how this sweet, shy, gentle man spoke with such caring, thoughtfulness, learning, power. Virtually everything he said about what kind of college ESC could be, what our students would want to accomplish here, what a legion of educational theoreticians and philosophers had said impressed me so deeply that I knew I had chosen right to come to ESC – this idea, this mission and this new hope. He taught me during our most casual conversations, but without a trace of arrogance or showiness. I am a better teacher and person for having known Bob Seidel.

Lee Herman, mentor/coordinator, Central New York Region

Bob Seidel was my buddy mentor. It was 1979. I'd just been appointed the first coordinator of the Auburn Unit. Bob was already an established and highly regarded mentor at the Genesee Valley Center in Rochester. My space was an unquiet corner in a busy administrative office. Bob's was a sedate, high-ceilinged room in a former convent prone to having leaking rainwater. Both of us had a lot of books. I was a philosopher and classicist, a longtime intellectual nerd. Bob was a widely learned American historian, who'd completed his graduate studies at Cornell after making a living for years as a dairy farmer. Meeting him for the first time confirmed my impression that I'd landed a tenure track job in a paradise of teaching and learning.

From him, I learned to be a mentor: I'd drive to Rochester once a week or so and would sit quietly in his office while he met with students, one at a time. I was amazed by the earnest and good-hearted attention he gave to each student. He'd say – big smile, bright eyes (he had very bad eyesight, never dim in expression) – "Tell me what you want to learn!" One student I recall said, her chin and shoulders jutting forward, "Witchcraft in 17th century France; I'm a witch myself, head of a coven." Bob rocketed out of his chair, zoomed to his giant bookcase (most shelves stuffed with double rows), grabbed something without hesitation, spun around, and offered her the volume: "You're going to find that this book is just what you need!" I glimpsed the title, which, sadly, I don't remember. But, I *do* remember that I couldn't understand how in the world the book could have anything to do with 17th century witchcraft (or witchcraft at all … or France). This is mentoring? Then, Bob engaged the student, really engaged the student, in a discussion about the relationship between nascent political liberalism and the persistence and persecution of witches in

Robert Seidel

Western Europe and Colonial America. The student was excited. I was entranced. This *is* mentoring!

Richard Bonnabeau, director for academic planning; college historian and archivist; mentor emeritus, International Programs

I will always remember Bob Seidel – for his dedication to students and colleagues, for his great passion for learning. He cared for the welfare of others, whether they were colleagues in the next office or at a distant center. One knew instantly from a simple glance that he was a deeply humane person.

I met Bob for the first time in 1975. It was at my first All College meeting, as they were known then. At the time, the Gideon Putnam Hotel was large enough to comfortably accommodate the faculty, professional staff and the administration of what was still a small college. It was literally possible at that time to know just about everyone's name.

Bob was a member of our Historical Studies AOS, which had more Latin American specialists than any other SUNY campus, and Bob was one of them. At what was known as

the Genesee Valley Regional Learning Center, Bob was noted already for his outstanding work with students and service on center committees. It did not take long for Bob to become a mentor of mentors. In 1979-1980, he received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (established by Chancellor Ernest L. Boyer), and seven years later he received a gold medal as the professor of the year in a national competition, an award supported by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Other honors and achievements followed. After his retirement, Bob devoted his life to a whole host of social causes, from the educational welfare of refugee children to addressing recidivism.

I benefitted from Bob's mentorship. Early on, he invited me to participate in a Third World Conference in Chicago, Illinois with a colleague from another college. This included a generous invitation for an overnight stay at his home to break up the long drive to Chicago. There, I enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of the Seidel family. He also shared with me the opportunity to write a book review, and he served as one of the readers for my manuscript for what became *The Promise Continues: Empire State College, The First Twenty-Five Years* (1996: Donning). Most important, whenever I met Bob at college events or meetings, he always gave me a ready smile and a pat on the back. Though we were separated by huge stretches of time and distance, he always made me feel that I was part of a larger community.

I often wondered what made Bob such a very special person. I recall a story he shared with me about his father. During the trying economic times of the 1930s, Bob's father moved the family from New York City to Ghent in upstate New York. There they started life anew as farmers. The first spring sowing was a disaster for the Seidels. Three times his father sowed the fields, and three times unseasonable heavy rains rotted the seeds in the soil. Bob recalled that his father was overcome by grief when the third sowing failed. But he and his wife persisted and ultimately succeeded. I believe that this example gave Bob the courage to face the challenges in his own life, compassion for the less fortunate, as well as an appreciation for the human spirit to overcome adversity.

Wayne Willis, mentor emeritus, Genesee Valley Region

Bob Seidel was one of the most respected mentors in the history of Empire State College. He received many honors, including the national college Teacher of the Year award, the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, and a SUNY Distinguished Teaching professorship. Yet he once told me that during his first three years at the Genesee Valley Center he came in "every day with butterflies in my stomach, wondering if I could really do this job." This typifies the sense of acute personal responsibility, of maximum conscientiousness, that Bob brought to his work with students, his leadership in governance, and his relationships with colleagues. His intensity was such that at times he seemed on the verge of wearing himself out completely in pursuit of his duties.

Citizenship and community were ideals that guided Bob's scholarly and public life. In our time, both are often reduced to hollow and blandly sentimental notions, but Bob sought to reinvest them with substance. Citizenship for him involved deep, intelligent engagement with public issues and community was always a work in progress, something to be constructed through hard effort in the face of conflicting interests and values. While at ESC, he devoted extensive research to the community building projects of neighborhood activists in Rochester, and when he retired he immersed himself in volunteer service through his church and social agencies.

Bob's intellectual curiosity was enormous. He packed thousands of books into his small office and it was difficult to walk in and out of there without having several volumes enthusiastically thrust upon you. But Bob was also an irrepressibly warm and, as someone said, "compulsively compassionate" man who befriended students and new colleagues, like me, who needed the befriending. Strikingly, he blended his sharp mind with his good soul.

Remembering James Case

Colleagues from SUNY Empire State College

James Case (1935-2015) was dean of the Hudson Valley Region until 2000, and former associate commissioner of the Massachusetts State Department of Education. After retiring from Empire State and moving to Texas and finally to Clemmons, North Carolina, Jim served as an adjunct faculty member at several local colleges, involved primarily in teacher education about which he cared so deeply. Jim Case was committed to teaching and learning throughout his professional life. He taught high school English in Winchester and Brookline, Massachusetts, trained teachers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, was director of the Institute for Learning and Teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Boston and worked with calm astuteness with many students at ESC. His smart, understated-classy ways have been missed and will be remembered.

James Case at Gerald B. H. Solomon Center for Learning and Technology Dedication, SUNY Empire State College, June 26, 1998.

Photo credit: Spencer Tulis. Courtesy of College Archive.

Diana Worby, mentor emerita, Hudson Valley Region

During the years that Jim Case was our dean, we often gathered at each other's homes for our faculty meetings. One day we were at Jim Case's home in Westchester County, sitting out-of-doors on a back porch on a lovely day, pushing ideas and suggestions back and forth, proposing new ideas, talking, arguing, exploring still another path, thinking we were being smart, when Jim, in what was to be the phrase that defined his legacy, said: "OK, so who has the R?" We learned soon what that meant: Who has the responsibility? Who is going to carry a particular suggestion forward toward action, even to completion? I think we have all thought about that question in so many other settings over the years since Jim was our dean. Lots of talk; lots of ideas; lots of suggestions; but who has the R?

Joan Altman '81, retired assistant to the dean, Hudson Valley Region

The dean sets the tone for the center. When I think of Jim Case, I think of a dean who created a positive and safe environment for honest communication among all. Jim's compassion, intelligence and great wit contributed to his popularity as a great leader. However, he was very humble about his attributes and accomplishments, and credited the success of the center to his colleagues, whom he had great respect and admiration for. The feeling was mutual.

"A First Among Peers"
Miriam Tatzel, mentor emerita, Hudson Valley Region

At the first center meeting where Jim Case was dean, he barely said a word. Alan Mandell was the associate dean then and he ran the meeting. What to make of this new guy? Jim could be inscrutable like that, and in other ways too. This gesture has several interpretations, of his observing and learning, for sure; but also the message that we were self-governing, albeit with someone keeping an eye on things. This laissez-faire sort of leadership suited a strong-headed and self-directed faculty, and Jim won our respect and affection.

Jim was a masterful teacher. I thought of him as "a first among peers." He could do our job better than we could, and I liked that in my boss. Here's an example of what I admire. My student was doing a learning contract on Shakespeare with a tutor, and the two of them were not getting along. Jim offered to take over the contract. The evaluation he wrote (we had narrative evaluations instead of grades in those days) is but one rather brief paragraph (typical of Jim's style), but filled with verve and definitely individualized. I excerpt from it here (the student wrote papers on each of five plays):

> *And what papers they are! The best is a brilliant analysis of Hamlet's supposed madness. … Ms. A has a nice, intense, off-beat style and a point of view 13 degrees off center: She sees things most readers don't, and raises questions which have not occurred to most of us. So her papers are exciting, thought-provoking, and serious beneath the surface. She should continue to write – to write about literature, and to write, period.*

Rosemary Kearns '07, retired secretary/office manager, Hudson Valley Region

First and foremost, Jim Case was a dedicated educator, inspiring his students to delve deeper into their studies. As dean of the Hudson Valley Center, he sought additional resources for students on a regular basis, adding tutors and study group leaders and urging mentors to develop additional studies. He worked to bolster enrollment by constantly spreading word of the advantages of studying at Empire State College, and, would, himself, conduct information sessions and speak to community groups when requested.

Jim was also very approachable. His easy-going, informal style allowed faculty and staff alike, to openly discuss center issues and problems. He recognized that each center employee, whether professional or support staff, had a valuable contribution to make toward a smooth-running and successful center operation. He realized that support staff had access to the pulse of the student body and sought and encouraged their input.

As a person, Jim was witty and had a great sense of humor, often sharing jokes and funny stories. His hearty laugh could often be heard whenever and wherever a gathering occurred.

"Jim Case: A Fond Remembrance" Steve Lewis, retired mentor, Hudson Valley Region

I was a new part-timer at the college, well trained in the twin towers of Dutiful American Pedagogy (lesson planning and learning objectives), when I received an unusual learning contract written for a mentee of mine working with my dean, Jim Case:

A. Title: The 19th Century British Novel

B. Learning Activities: Ms. X will begin the study by reading *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen. She will meet with me regularly to discuss the book and to develop the evolving terms of the contract.

C. Evaluation: (left blank)

Oh?

I compared Case's LC with one I painstakingly developed for a similar study: two pages of learning activities (required readings, recommended readings, writing assignments, due dates, final project options, etc.) followed by an extensive list of learning objectives to be attained through the completion of the prescribed learning activities.

To save my Dean embarrassment over his skimpy LC, I typed in, "Ms. X will demonstrate a substantive understanding of the literary and social elements of the 19th century English novel."

Four months later, I received an elegant piece of long-form prose from Jim in the guise of a contract evaluation. He recounted, in substantive detail and with style, the impressive work my student had completed – and what she had learned – over the course of the contract.

Stunned, I quickly reviewed the work completed by my student in the parallel study: Predictable. Pro forma. Uninspired. Got-the-job-done. Full credit.

Oh.

At the next degree planning session with the student who had worked with Jim, we talked at length about the learning process involved in that contract and what she now understood about the 19th century English novel. My jaw dropped.

So when she expressed an emerging interest in novels written by American women in the late 19th century, I greedily agreed to serve as her tutor.

She and I wrote the contract that day:

A. Title: 19th Century American Women Novelists

B. Learning Activities: Ms. X will begin this study by reading *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin. We will meet regularly to discuss the book and to develop the evolving terms of the contract.

C. Evaluation: Ms. X will demonstrate a substantive understanding of. …

And thus initiated the long and exhilarating process through which I began to learn the fine art of mentoring from the Prophet James Case.

Terri Carter, secretary, Hudson Valley Region

Jim Case was a very encouraging dean. His mentoring and leadership skills as a dean were above and beyond expectations. It was a pleasure working with him.

Anne R. Bertholf, mentor emerita, Niagara Frontier Region

The first opportunity for most members of the President's Council to meet Jim Case occurred at the All College meeting, 1990. Guiding the agenda that year was a strong emphasis on significant cost reduction, a mandate that pushed us toward the most draconian budget cuts of my ESC years. A parallel push to identify new revenue streams led to major changes in many job descriptions. Center deans were asked to reach outside the college in search of new opportunities. Thus, associate deans (as we were then called) would soon become "center directors," responsible for both administrative and academic oversight. We associate deans were immediately concerned about managing on a major new front, since most of us experienced the "old" job description as quite intense without the addition of new responsibilities.

"Dazed and confused" pretty aptly describes our frame of mind as we adjourned the full council session and headed off to our associate dean's meeting. I was worried about "the new guy," assuming that he would be overwhelmed by our list of unanticipated responsibilities. But I hadn't met the new guy yet, and there were surprises ahead.

Jim got to the Center Directors' meeting room before the rest of us. After introductions all around, we quickly moved to our much-amended agenda. Jim participated almost as if an old hand, responding quickly with useful, thoughtful questions. His "new guy" questions caused us to slow down and think more deliberately about the upcoming year, and I'm sure it made our response more thoughtful and measured than otherwise would have been likely.

That All College meeting marked the beginning of a "high stress" period for center directors, but there was very helpful teamwork among the group, and Jim continued to be a

significant leader. We used our time together to share ideas about changes in workflow within the centers and to coordinate, almost to orchestrate our presentations about budgetary needs and strategies at the center level. And we played well together. I remember a funny, wild night at the track (I think our winnings were sufficient for each of us to receive a cone of ice cream!) as clearly as the memory of our unusually well-coordinated series of budget proposals for each center. Concentrating on collegewide needs more than on specific location-based challenges meant that we were more attuned to the definition of common problems, and thus more attuned to common solutions. Jim was not the sole architect of our changes in style and content, but his habit of careful analysis and effective organization of responses was an important factor. He was both a good team player and a thoughtful coach, a wonderful colleague.

As I heard it, Jim's departure from the college was dramatic, too, but quite different than his arrival. Shortly after announcing his retirement, he departed, but his departure was star-quality. According to the story that circulated, Jim dropped by the Hudson Valley Center driving a pickup truck (maybe there were even cowboy boots?), there to say "good bye" to friends and colleagues before riding off into the sunset, heading for Texas.

Since Texas was also my post-retirement destination, I looked forward to seeing Jim again, and we did connect once. He and his wife lived in Spring, Texas, and he was teaching part time at the University of Houston. Once I stopped for a visit as I drove from my home in Austin to a family reunion in central Louisiana. We enjoyed lunch and a leisurely swim in his backyard pool, and, with his wife Cindri, a lovely dinner. We promised to connect again, but unfortunately that didn't happen.

Jim was a splendid colleague – funny, calm, smart, loyal and affectionate. It was a pleasure to know him and to work with him.

Leslie Ellis, director of academic review, Hudson Valley Region

Jim Case was a mentor's mentor. He strongly supported the mission of the college and he supported us in our work. He was deeply involved in the academic program. He understood our jobs, was always available to help when needed, and supported us in our decisions. Essentially and importantly, he respected us. Jim had a wonderful sense of humor and he was one of the best writers I have ever read. His use of language was masterful. He was someone I could have debates with on a variety of issues and I always missed that after he retired.

Marianne Arieux, retired mentor/adjunct, Hudson Valley Region

Jim Case first appeared on the other side of a large square conference table while interviewing me for a position at HVC, in casual attire with shirt sleeves rolled up to his elbows. Although the muted authority was evident, the authenticity was perhaps more striking – dressed down and ready to engage/to work. It was impressive, unlike any other dean I had known. Jim soon became an unofficial mentor to me. We shared many students those first years, as Jim showed me what Empire State College's unique academic program offered. I fell in love with the college, a truly innovative place where education could happen. Socrates in Westchester. When I shared the feeling that I'd "died and gone to heaven" Jim recalled his equal astonishment when new at the college: "You can really do this?" Jim flourished in this environment, removing with pleasure any obstacles that prevented students from reaching their goals. He loved to teach, and had scores of students, for a dean. Saying that the Hudson Valley Center mostly ran itself due to the faculty's abilities, he filled any remaining moments mentoring students in literature and writing. Under his tutelage, students often became good writers in the making. He also understood educational administration from top to bottom, from creating to employing policies that affect interactions between mentors and students. These often disparate aspects of education merged seamlessly in Jim's ability to foster growth. This capacity emanated so easily that one might think "it was just in his blood," were it not crafted and honed with years of learning, caring, and constant attention to what worked and what did not. I miss Jim personally. He was a beloved friend, mentor and advisor. But I also miss Jim embedded in and embracing all the messiness of an innovative educational experiment, at one of the helms of Empire State College of yore. He helped make it a wonderful place to work, to realize unknown potentials, and to be.

Core Values of Empire State College (2005)

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

We value learning-mentoring goals that:

- respond to the academic, professional and personal needs of each student;

- identify and build upon students' existing knowledge and skills;

- sustain lifelong curiosity and critical inquiry;

- provide students with skills, insights and competencies that support successful college study.

We value learning-mentoring processes that:

- emphasize dialogue and collaborative approaches to study;

- support critical exploration of knowledge and experience;

- provide opportunities for active, reflective and creative academic engagement.

We value learning-mentoring modes that:

- respond to a wide array of student styles, levels, interests and circumstances;

- foster self-direction, independence and reflective inquiry;

- provide opportunities for ongoing questioning and revising;

- reflect innovation and research.

We value a learning-mentoring community that:

- defines each member as a learner, encouraging and appreciating his/her distinctive contributions;

- recognizes that learning occurs in multiple communities, environments and relationships as well as in formal academic settings;

- attracts, respects and is enriched by a wide range of people, ideas, perspectives and experiences.

We value a learning-mentoring organization and culture that:

- invites collaboration in the multiple contexts of our work;

- fosters innovation and experimentation;

- develops structures and policies that encourage active participation of all constituents in decision-making processes;

- advocates for the interests of adult learners in a variety of academic and civic forums.

Submissions to *All About Mentoring*

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

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

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, #50, will be available in the winter of 2017. Please submit all materials by November 15, 2016.

The quotes in this issue of All About Mentoring *are taken from the work of Jerome Bruner, who, at his death at age 100 on 05 June 2016, was research professor of psychology and senior research fellow in law at New York University. Since his first publications in the late 1940s, Bruner's work in cognitive and developmental psychology deepened our understanding of learning and what he described as the "narrative construction of reality." It was Bruner who first used the word "scaffolding" to describe the ways in which children, and adult learners too, can build on what they already know.*

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