Atlantic Universities’ Teaching Showcase

2009

L’Expo-Enseignement des Universités de l’Atlantique

Proceedings/Actes

Volume XIII

Edited by/Sous la direction de

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On October 24, 2009 teachers from across the Atlantic region and beyond gathered at Acadia University on a wet and windy day to share their scholarship. The Showcase is a testament to the value placed on teaching and learning in the Atlantic region. The Showcase happens at a very busy time of year for faculty and continues to thrive, despite increasing competition for limited professional development resources. So, I first and foremost, want to thank all of the participants who went out of their way to participate and contribute to the Showcase.

The Showcase was organized by staff of the Learning Commons and faculty at Acadia University. Caroline Bastable was the project manager who was responsible for all of the organizational aspects of the Showcase, from budget monitoring to maintaining and developing the website, to organizing the sessions and communicating with participants. Deborah Jones coordinated many of the logistics, including registration. Acadia faculty, who adjudicated proposals, chaired sessions, and reviewed submissions for the Proceedings include Stephen Ahern, Jeff Hooper, Linda Lusby, Susan Markham-Starr, and Beert Verstraete. Technical assistance was provided by learning technologies staff of the Learning Commons, Duane Currie and Terry Aulenbach. Many student volunteers helped out on the day of the Showcase with registration, directions, and many other important tasks. These include Chen Yuan, Cheryl Guttormson, Christy Chisholm, Jennifer Newell, Jennifer Phillips, Jim Ghoshdastidar, Julie MacDonald, Kathryn Furtado, Rosalind Best, Tiffany Nickerson, and Zhou Jing.

The following faculty and faculty developers from other Atlantic universities reviewed submissions: Bev Bramble, Robert Lapp, Anthony Roberts, Erin Steuter, and Elizabeth Wells. The AAU Faculty Development Committee provided advice and encouragement and also assisted with reviewing paper submissions. Eileen Herteis, chair of the committee, was especially supportive and helped in numerous ways, including organizing and chairing the Award Winners Panel. The Committee members include Erin Austen of St. Francis Xavier University, Margaret-Anne Bennett of Saint Mary’s University, Sylvie Blain of Université de Moncton, Judith Buchanan of University of New Brunswick Saint John, Tanya Crawford of Mount Saint Vincent University, Dianne Dunlop of Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Maureen Dunne of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Shannon Murray of University of Prince Edward Island, Eileen Smith-Piovesan of Cape Breton University, Lynn Taylor of Dalhousie University, and James Whitehead of Saint Thomas University. Margaret Rao, administrative assistant of the AAU, was very helpful in providing support and much information in preparation for the Showcase and in creation of the Proceedings.

Heather Hemming, Dean of Professional Studies, and Caitlin Regan, Vice-President of the Acadia Student Union provided early-morning welcoming remarks to start the day off on a bright foot. Jeanne Narum flew in from Washington, DC to share her expertise with us by providing the keynote address. The 2009 Distinguished Teaching Award winners (Étienne Côté and Shelagh Crooks) and the Anne Marie MacKinnon Instructional Leadership Award winner (Ann Bigelow) ended the day by sharing their personal stories of “what works” in their own teaching.
Finally, I want to end by again thanking all of the participants who made the 2009 AAU Teaching Showcase a great success by taking the time to share their thoughts and experiences with their colleagues.

Le 24 octobre 2009, des enseignants de toute la région des provinces atlantiques et au-delà se sont réunis à l'université Acadia, par un jour pluvieux et venteux, pour partager leur érudition. L'Expo-enseignement est un témoignage de l'importance attachée à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage dans la région des provinces atlantiques. L'exposition se déroule à une période de l’année très chargée pour le corps enseignant et continue de se développer, malgré une compétition croissante pour des ressources de développement professionnel limitées. Aussi, avant tout, je voudrais remercier tous les participants qui ont fait tout leur possible pour participer et contribuer à cette exposition.


AAU Teaching Showcase: Acadia University, October 2009

administrative de l’AUA, a été d’une aide précieuse par l’apport de son soutien et de nombreuses informations pour la préparation de l’exposition et la création des Actes.


Enfin, je voudrais conclure en remerciant encore une fois tous les participants qui, en prenant le temps de partager leurs idées et leurs expériences avec leurs collègues, ont fait de cette Expo-enseignement 2009 de l’AUA un grand succès.

Foreword/Avant-propos

Acadia University hosted the 13th annual Association of Atlantic Universities’ Teaching Showcase on October 24, 2009. Many of the showcase events were held at the Sheldon L. Fountain Learning Commons, a beautifully-renovated and welcoming former dining hall. The mission of the Learning Commons was to coordinate and integrate supports for teaching and learning, with an emphasis on internationalization and community engagement. With this mission in mind, the Conference Coordinating Committee chose the theme “What Works: Empowering Students for the 21st Century”. The Committee reflected on the notion of student engagement, the theme of the 12th AAU Teaching Showcase, and decided to build on that, to encourage educators to reflect on whether engaging students is to empower them as citizens who are living in an increasingly inter-connected and information-saturated world. We chose “What Works” in order to encourage sharing of success stories.

The Showcase started out with a keynote address from Jeanne Narum, who at the time was Director of Project Kaleidoscope, one of the leading advocates in the United States for what works in building strong undergraduate programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Jeanne Narum shared with us some of her successes in developing environments in which students flourish and are empowered in their learning. The keynote was followed by 34 sessions led by 64 contributors. We ended the day with a plenary chaired by Eileen Herteis, chair of the AAU Faculty Development Committee, in which the 2009 AAU Teaching and Instructional Leadership Award winners talked about “what works” in their teaching.

The concurrent sessions were grouped into five themes: 1) internationalization, with two papers exploring this issue with pre-service teachers; 2) the changing demographics of today’s students, with five papers addressing inclusive teaching and generational changes in attitudes and communication; 3) integrating experiential and problem-based
learning in university courses, with many (13) papers exploring a variety of issues here; 4) first-year experience, with six presentations focusing on this important transition; and 5) the role of technologies in learning, with a total of eight papers having this focus.

These Proceedings are organized according to the five themes. They diverge in two significant ways from how the Proceedings have been presented in previous years. First, they represent a record of all of the papers that were presented during the Showcase (excluding the Keynote Address, the lunch-time session devoted to advice regarding developing a dossier for a 3M award, and the panel discussion by the 2009 AAU Teaching Award winners). In order to get this more complete record of the Proceedings, we invited participants to submit either a standard paper or a brief report of their session. If participants did not submit either a paper or brief report, the abstract from their session was included. Second, this is the first time that the Proceedings have been published in a digital medium only. The recommendation to do this was supported by the Faculty Development Committee of the Association of Atlantic Universities in recognition of the changing ways in which people are accessing information and in order to conserve precious resources. We hope you enjoy the resulting Proceedings and that you take the opportunity to learn from the scholarship of your colleagues.


L’exposition a commencé par un discours-programme de Jeanne Narum, à l’époque directrice du projet Kaléidoscope, une des principales partisanes aux États-Unis de ce qui fonctionne dans la construction de programmes de premier cycle solides en sciences, technologie, génie et mathématiques. Jeanne Narum a partagé avec nous certaines de ses réussites dans des environnements en développement dans lesquels les étudiants s’épanouissent et prennent le pouvoir sur leur apprentissage. Le discours fut suivi de 34 sessions menées par 64 contributeurs. Nous avons fini la journée par une séance plénière présidée par Eileen Herteis, présidente du Comité de développement des enseignants de l’AUA, au cours de laquelle les vainqueurs du Trophée de l’Enseignement et de la Primauté didactique de l’AUA ont parlé de «ce qui fonctionne» dans leur enseignement.
Les sessions simultanées ont été regroupées en cinq thèmes: 1) l’internationalisation, avec deux articles explorant cette problématique avec les enseignants en formation; 2) la démographie changeante chez les étudiants d’aujourd’hui, avec cinq articles traitant de l’enseignement inclusif et des changements générationnels dans les attitudes et la communication; 3) l’intégration de l’apprentissage expérientiel et centré sur les problèmes dans les cours universitaires, avec de nombreux articles (13) explorant diverses problématiques; 4) l’expérience de première année, avec six présentations se focalisant sur cette transition importante; et 5) le rôle des technologies dans l’apprentissage, avec un total de huit articles sous cet angle.

Exploring the Perspectives of Pre-service Teacher Educators on Globalization

Zhanna Barchuk and Mary Jane Harkins, Mount Saint Vincent University

Abstract

Our increasingly globalized society offers powerful opportunities for “the thoughtful, articulate, persuasive, and internationally minded to play a key role in shaping the future” (McBurnie, 2001, p. 24). The importance of higher education as a central force in creating opportunities for the future transformation of the world cannot be denied. As educators involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning, we share the responsibility of creating relevant and meaningful learning environments. This paper is based on a qualitative study developed by the researchers to examine pre-service Social Studies teachers’ perception of their preparedness to teach in the global world. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions and understandings of the complex global processes of the 21st century are critically important as they provide another lens from which to view our teaching. The findings provide valuable insights for educators in higher education into the importance of fostering open-mindedness as well as developing critical thinking and critical evaluating skills in teaching in a global society.

Globalization and Higher Education

In spite of the incredible popularity of the term globalization, its clarity and definition are still matters of constant debates. Many and varied approaches to, and understandings of, globalization are being offered by theorists, economists, politicians, and the media. The International Monetary Fund defines globalization as “the growing economic interdependence of the countries world-wide through increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services and of international money flows, and also through a more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology” (as cited in Codrington, 2003, p. 668). The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development describes globalization as “the growing interdependence of countries resulting from the increasing integration of trade, finance, people and ideas in one global marketplace” (Soubbotina, 2000, p. 15). In many of the proposed definitions of globalization (Bigelow & Peterson, 2002; Codrington, 2003; Ghorayashi, 2004; Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005; Robertson, 1992; Soubbotina, 2000; Wiest, 2004), the most common factors affecting globalization are expansion, concentration, and acceleration of worldwide relations. But even common factors are being perceived differently by globalization enthusiasts and opponents. While the pro-globalization authors welcome it as the beginning of a new era of prosperity and growth, their opponents see globalization as the emergence of global domination by big businesses at the expense of labour rights, democracy, poor countries, minorities, and the global ecology.
Our increasingly globalized society offers powerful opportunities for “the thoughtful, articulate, persuasive, and internationally minded to play a key role in shaping the future” (McBurnie, 2001, p. 24). The importance of higher education as a central force in creating opportunities for the future transformation of the world cannot be denied. As educators involved in preparing students to be future global citizens, we have the responsibility of creating relevant and meaningful learning environments for global education.

Since the “resurgence of interest” in global education after World War II (Hicks, 2000), a variety of terms are used by educators while addressing the need to explore global matters in the curriculum. The most common are “global education,” “global perspectives,” “world-centered education,” and “global citizenship” (Kirkwood, 2001, p. 11). According to Kirkwood’s comparative study of the used terminology, “the incongruities of existing global education definitions tend to be idiosyncratic rather than substantive” (Kirkwood, 2001, p. 14). In spite of some minor differences among the terms, the global educators agree on the four essential elements in defining the field: multiple perspectives, comprehension and appreciation of cultures, knowledge of the global issues, and the world as interrelated systems (Kirkwood, 2001; Spring, 2008).

Tye, in his book *Global education: A worldwide movement* (1999), compares global education in more than fifty countries and states that in spite of the similar theoretical basis and terminology, the ways of implementing global education vary significantly. He also mentions the existence of offshoots of global education, such as peace education, environmental education, and development education; these add to existing complexity in the field and make defining, categorization, and classification even more difficult. As a result of theoretical, terminological, and conceptual complexity, many practitioners find it rather difficult to define, explain, and, therefore, put into practice the global approach to the curriculum (Kirkwood, 2001). There is no doubt that the quality of teachers’ understanding of the approach is extremely important for what and how they teach.

This paper is based on a qualitative study developed by the researchers to examine pre-service Social Studies teachers’ understanding of globalization and their perception of their preparedness to teach global issues. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions and understandings of the complex global processes of the 21st century are critically important as they provide another lens from which to view future teaching about global education.

**Design of the Study**

This qualitative study involved an exploration of pre-service teachers’ perceptions of addressing globalization and global issues. Two qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis were used: a) an individual, written questionnaire, and b) a focus group session. According to Morgan (1996), the reasons for combining individual and group interviews typically point to the greater depth of the former and the greater breadth of the latter. Using multiple research methods can also operate to enrich the data and to enhance validity (Reinharz, 1992; Ristock and Pennell, 1996). This approach allowed
researchers to explore not only the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of a topic but also the reasoning behind the participants’ contributions.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

A written questionnaire (Barchuk, 2009) was conducted with 40 pre-service Social Studies teachers who were willing to participate in the research. The questionnaires were coded and analyzed using an inductive approach (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1996; Sim, 1998) to identify shared experiences, repetitive themes, and to capture pre-service teachers’ present understanding, if any, of globalization and related issues. This information was used to foster discussion at the focus group. The focus group was audio recorded and transcribed and a thematic analysis of the focus group transcripts was conducted following the same processes as the written questionnaire.

**Participants**

The participants in the study were first year, secondary Social Studies pre-service teachers enrolled in a two-year Bachelor of Education program in eastern Canada. Of the 40 respondents 12 (30%) were men and 28 (70%) were women. Most of the participants (33 or 82.5%) fall under the category less than 30 years old. The participants came to Social Studies courses from different backgrounds: majors in History (18 or 45%), English (8 or 20%), Sociology (4 or 10%), Psychology (3 or 7.5%), Art (3 or 7.5%), Geography (2 or 5%), Economics (1 or 2.5%), and Math (1 or 2.5%). In spite of very enthusiastic participation in the written questionnaire component of the study, which took place during a Social Studies Methods class, eleven participants signed up for the focus group but only six were able to attend the discussion which took place at the university recording studio. Discussions with the six students in the focus group provided for an in-depth examination of the key issues identified in the questionnaires. Because the participants represented different perspectives, their views were not homogeneous and benefited the study by contributing to the holistic understanding of the studied topic.

**Importance of Teaching Globalization and Global Issues**

The study showed that the pre-service teachers seemed to be aware that they live in the “global web” (Friedman, 2000, p. 8). The participants demonstrated clear understanding of the complex nature of the globalization process, its positive and negative sides. All the participants agreed that globalization and global issues might create conflicts of opinion in the classroom and will demand a lot of work on the teachers’ part in the sense of structuring, monitoring, and assessing the discussion. The main reasons for undergoing such a potentially challenging task as teaching global issues were: a) fostering understanding of current world events, b) preparing responsible and active citizens, and c) developing and improving critical thinking skills of the students. Many respondents viewed these reasons as overlapping and interconnected goals of teaching rather than as separate skills and understandings to be achieved. Controversial global issues were viewed as “a great way to approach critical thinking and ... to impact the learners that are going to be the society of tomorrow” (focus group interview, Barchuk, 2009, p. 51). The
top global issues identified by the pre-service Social Studies teachers as the most important, stimulating, relevant, and involving were (in order of importance): environmental issues, social, economic and human rights issues, resource management, and technology.

Two key challenges in preparing for, and teaching about, global issues identified by the pre-service Social Studies teachers were: a) awareness of possible bias/coversing all perspectives objectively, and b) lack of knowledge and understanding of an issue.

Having discovered the challenges anticipated by the questionnaire respondents, which were further discussed and expanded on by the focus group participants, it was quite natural to inquire what knowledge, skills, and competences the participants regarded as most required for dealing with global issues. One of the participants named dedication and passion for the subject and topic taught as necessary components for succeeding:

I’m here [at the focus group] because I think this is a really important topic. It’s the topic that I’m passionate about; it’s the topic that I spend a lot of time studying, so that dedication will help me overcome challenges. But I think we’re all individuals and a lot of social studies teachers might not have that same emphasis on global studies. So their fears might be harder to dispel.

The rest of the participants agreed that good research skills and the capacity to critically evaluate existing information on an issue are vital. In the words of a focus group participant:

This whole degree, in sum, has given me a lot of time to practice my research skills, and I think that’s really the key to being up on it when we’re teaching it. Because matters are going to change. What we know today will be vastly different when we’re actually in our social studies class. So I think it’s just that and an open mindedness and willing [sic] to continue the learning process. So I’m not feeling completely prepared, but sit me in front of a computer and I’ll get some research done, then I’ll feel a lot more prepared when I’m actually doing a particular lesson.

Most of the participants of the focus group stated that even if they did not feel completely prepared with the knowledge content or pedagogical approaches for addressing global issues in practice, they were willing to try and considered the topics essential and unavoidable in the modern school. Most participants stated that they would feel comfortable discussing global topics with the students, and would not fear possible debates and controversies.

Two means of helping pre-service Social Studies teachers were considered by the participants as the most important: a) providing practical strategies, and b) increasing teachers’ cultural competence. Practical strategies, recommendations, and resources were named as the most highly anticipated and appreciated parts of any course of the Bachelor of Education program. According to focus group participants, practical methodological workshops should be added to their program:

Workshops that are conducted by teachers that are successfully teaching global studies would be great! I mean, we can all read a theory... but it’s another thing to
Increasing cultural competence of the pre-service Social Studies teachers was seen as a second major means of addressing possible fears and encouraging further interest in global perspectives. As one of the focus group participant commented:

... actual classes or workshops on cultural competence. Learning about different cultures more in depth. You hear different things but you don’t actually know the whole body... I think if we have more of a full education about different cultures, it might make us more prepared to deal with global issues.

Defining global education turned out to be the most challenging and the least responded to question of the questionnaire. Thirteen (32.5%) participants chose not to provide any definition, and 17 participants (42.5 %) used question marks and hesitation remarks to show their uncertainty and doubts in defining it. In spite of the low comfort level with the question, the answers revealed a rather high level of understanding of the global education approach. Among the most interesting definitions were:

Education that strives to take into account the histories, perspectives, and experiences of as many cultures and peoples as possible, bringing students an awareness of the variety and beauty of world’s cultures.

Global education is learning your role as a citizen of the world, not just your country, province, etc., and understanding the interconnectedness of everyone.

Education that introduces students to the world, shows all facets of society, culture, history, etc. A well-rounded perspective prepares students to participate in a global economy.

Education that provides students with a sense of the broader world; how one country’s decisions impact the lives/economy of others.

Global education to me is providing insights into many issues locally, nationally, and globally.

Global education gives students the tools to consider events for their cause and effect on the world around them, and to be critical of what they read.

Education which promotes world learning and creates citizens of the world. Learning about matters from a perspective outside of one’s main, dominant culture; grappling with reconciling cultural differences while learning to accept differences and being together as one world.

Without going into specific terminology used by global education theorists, the questionnaire respondents managed to bring up all four key elements of global education described by Kirkwood (2001), namely: multiple perspectives, comprehension and appreciation of cultures, knowledge of the global issues, and the
Collectively, respondents’ definitions demonstrated a high level of understanding of the essence of the approach, but evaluated separately, the responses resembled disconnected and incomplete pieces of a puzzle. A very hopeful sign, though, was that the participants of the focus group expressed their willingness to find proper connections among separate ‘pieces’ of their knowledge, and to acquire missing understandings and skills to address global issues effectively and responsibly.

Such partial and incomplete knowledge of global education approach demonstrated by the participants of the study was not unexpected. According to Tye’s report (1999) on global education, "there were only a small number of teacher training programs anywhere in the world, particularly at the pre-service level [emphasis added by the researchers], directed specifically at developing global education teachers” (p. 10). A number of respondents of Tye’s study also stated that global education was dealt with, at least in part, within such courses as Geography, Social Studies, Economics, Biology, etc. The analysis of the questionnaire responses of this study also showed that although there was no specially designed course dedicated to globalization and global issues, the topics were partially covered within some courses of the Bachelor of Education program. Among the courses that encouraged students to develop their knowledge about globalization and global issues, the pre-service Social Studies teachers named: Social and Cultural Issues, Social Studies Methods, Social Studies, Exceptionalities, and Cultural Contexts.

The participants noted that Social Studies curriculum offers teachers more freedom to choose the content and the strategies that fit their particular interests and preparation levels than other subject areas. As pre-service teachers about to enter the teaching profession, they identified the introduction of new teaching methods and the availability of quality teaching resources as some of the most important factors ensuring further increase in the proper implementation of the controversial global topics at the school level.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further study

The purpose of this study was to identify pre-service Social Studies teachers’ perceptions of the main benefits and challenges of teaching globalization and global issues. Because of the limited sample size, single geographical location, and methodologies used, this study provides an initial step towards fostering further academic research on perceptions of globalization and on pedagogies to teach it that address pre-service teachers’ concerns.

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the data gained did not “represent a wider population of people, events or situations in a strict probabilistic sense” (Cuba & Lincoln, 1994, as cited in Sim, 1998, p. 350), and it was not possible to make empirical generalizations as may be possible with quantitative studies. This study has only begun to scratch the surface of what it means to teach globalization and global issues in the rapidly changing global world. Themes that emerged for future research include: a) the role of the mass media on the development of students’ perceptions of the world; b) ways to enhance critical thinking and critical evaluating skills of teachers and students;
c) the concept of ‘neutrality’ when discussing controversial global issues, and d) the importance of cultural competencies for teachers in a time of increasingly diverse student populations.

Conclusion

Globalization and global issues are highly complex, controversial, and involve constantly evolving social and cultural realities. Educators, however, have an important role to play in the future realization of a sustainable world. Recognizing the importance of teaching our youth about the links between globalization and a sustainable environment, this qualitative study explored pre-service teachers’ perceptions of globalization and of their preparedness to teach global issues. The findings of the study demonstrate that these pre-service teachers were very enthusiastic about the importance of teaching globalization and global issues. These pre-service teachers have demonstrated the need for future research in issues relating to globalization and have given us hope for the future as they seem determined to continue the process of finding new ways to address issues related to globalization. Our challenge is to design innovative teacher education programs that address globalization and the related issues as we work together to teach for international social justice and a meaningful vision of humankind.

REFERENCES


Engaging Student Voices: Enhancing Students’ Connections with Learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Lynne Healy, Acadia University
Mary Jane Harkins, Mount Saint Vincent University

Abstract

This paper explores the scholarship of teaching and learning through teacher inquiry in the context of classroom teaching. With our understanding of how knowledge is constantly changing and with increasingly diverse populations in classrooms, how do we enhance learning for all students in a global society? This question provided the basis of an action research study that involved an inquiry into our teaching practices in an international setting. As part of this critical reflection on the scholarship of teaching and learning, we were able to gain valuable insights into our own teaching practices from the perspective of our students. Including students’ voices in the teaching-research process is an important consideration when addressing the needs of the shifting demographics of student populations in higher education and working to improve student outcomes.

Introduction

The link between research and teaching in higher education has become increasingly important. With new technologies, diverse student populations, greater emphasis on research-based teaching, pressures for accountability, and the impact of different teaching approaches on student outcomes, faculty in all disciplines are engaging in pedagogical inquiry as it is assumed that this will lead to improved teaching and student learning (Gosling, 2006; McKinney, 2007). This research on teaching evolved out of courses taught at Erdiston College in Barbados, West Indies, as part of a Masters of Education program offered through Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Our teaching responsibilities in the program were to develop and teach courses in “literacy education for at-risk learners” for both elementary and secondary school teachers. Upon reflecting on this teaching experience, we were intrigued by the enthusiastic engagement of the learners in both courses, and their insightful responses to the course work. We decided to systematically examine this link between research and teaching by exploring questions related to student learning from the perspective of graduate students/teachers.

Research on teaching gives recognition to the scholarship of teaching and learning, for as Brew (2006) asserts, “Developing the relationship between teaching and research goes to the very heart of academic work” (p. 13). As faculty members in higher education, this provides an opportunity to create synergies between our dual responsibilities as teachers and as researchers. The concept of the scholarship of teaching was coined by Boyer in 1990 (Trigwell & Shale, 2004) and is defined as, “problem posing about an issue of teaching or learning, study of the problem through methods appropriate to disciplinary epistemologies, application of results to practice, communication of results, self-reflection, and peer review” (American Association of Higher Education, 1998, as
cited in Sperling, 2003, p. 595). Boyer was concerned with the disproportionate institutional status given to research and the disregard for the importance of teaching. Engaging in the scholarship of teaching can enhance the status of teaching and improve student learning (Trigwell & Shale, 2004).

As two teacher educators and researchers, we explored dimensions of our teaching practices as the basis for a reflective, teacher inquiry into the teaching and learning process. As Goswami, Lewis, Rutherford, and Waff (2009) affirm “...no research approach may be as useful to the improvement of educational practice as engaging in teacher inquiry” (p. ix); there is such potential for the power of a pedagogical inquiry to improve one’s teaching, and in turn, the teaching practices of graduate students who are teachers. Engaging the graduate students in an exploration of our teaching gave us the opportunity to gain an “insider’s” perspective and to learn about the impact of our teaching on their classroom teaching practices. Students also had the opportunity to examine questions from their real world of teaching so it was immediately meaningful and relevant to their own experiences.

Through this inquiry, we needed to examine and make explicit our own values, beliefs, and assumptions about the teaching and learning process, as well as how teaching and learning intersect in the classroom. To do this in a rigorous and systematic manner, we utilized the teacher inquiry approach outlined by Emig’s paradigm (1983, as cited in Goswami & Rutherford, 2009). The characteristics of this inquiry paradigm include:

1) A governing gaze – What is our philosophy of the teaching and learning process? What influences what we do in a classroom?
2) Assumptions about teaching and learning – What are our assumptions about literacy learning? For example, we both believe in the use of cooperative learning small-group work and that students learn by actively “doing.” Emig’s work has helped us to unpack and make explicit our assumptions and ideological perspectives as we engaged in ongoing conversations about the discourse of our teaching practices.
3) A coherent theory – What are the theoretical frameworks from which we operate? In this discussion we talked about our understandings of constructivism (Weaver, 1994), scaffolding students’ learning (Vygotsky, 1978), and the gradual release of responsibility model (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Fisher & Frey, 2008).
4) Intellectual tradition – We extended on our theoretical understandings using an ecological approach (micro and macro) as we explored the socio-cultural influences on our teaching. This was important as we were teaching in an international context with students from a culture different from our own.
5) Methodology – Based on our research questions, we decided on an action research methodological approach (Mills, 2003; Tomal, 2003; for more details, see the Research Design).
6) Indigenous logic – Is this doable? Does this make sense? Why are we doing this? What will be learned? Does this enhance and promote a systematic approach? We asked ourselves these questions throughout the data gathering and as we documented our findings.
Emig’s paradigm was an important beginning to our systematic inquiry into the teaching and learning process. We were motivated by a desire to improve our teaching, and as Goswami and Rutherford (2009) state, “Inquiry into practice – deep understanding of the ways of teaching and learning – is the most significant contribution each of us can make to the students under our care and others in the profession” (p. 10).

The purpose of the study was three-fold: a) to inquire into our own teaching practices; b) to gain insight into an understanding of the graduate education students’ application of the knowledge and skills from their course work (i.e., “if” and “how” these teachers would be able to implement what they had learned into existing classroom settings in Barbados); and c) to contribute to the research on the scholarship of teaching and learning. The fundamental research questions of this study were:

- What do the participants identify as key factors of their course work that impacted on their learning and their teaching practices?
- What are the mutual benefits of engaging in practice-based research?

**Research Design**

As our intent was to examine processes and subjective meanings, action research was the most appropriate approach for gathering data (Mills, 2003; Tomal, 2003). However, as Ayers (1989) cautions, “we do not, of course, end up with the truth, but perhaps more modestly with a burgeoning sense of meaning and knowing grounded in real people and concrete practices” (p. 4). Action research has the potential to enhance teacher professional development and to improve student outcomes. This is a valuable approach to inquiry as it is practical, participative, empowering, interpretative, tentative, and critical (Alberta Teachers’ Association, 2000). Within this research approach, Emig’s inquiry paradigm was utilized as a framework to explore the intersection between teaching and learning (Goswami & Rutherford, 2009).

**Selection of Participants**

Letters of invitation to participate in this study were sent to all students who completed the graduate courses in literacy learning for struggling readers and writers with one of the researchers during the Summer Institute. One researcher taught 16 secondary school teachers and the other researcher taught 26 elementary school teachers. Nine (one male and eight females) of the 26 elementary school teachers and 13 (one male and 12 females) of the 16 secondary school teachers agreed to participate in the study. Henceforth, these graduate students/teachers will be referred to as participants.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

A multi-method approach to the data collection involved: focus group sessions, the completion of individual written questionnaires, and researcher teaching notes. This multi-method approach was planned to gather information from whole group discussions and to allow for individual input in a more private manner. Through the use of focus groups, we wanted to generate discussion among the participants about their course work experiences and to explore the impact on their classroom teaching. Focus
group sessions were considered the primary source of data collection as “the hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (Morgan, 1997, p. 2).

Two focus group sessions were held at Erdiston College, Barbados, one year after the participants had completed their course work and had graduated from the program: one with the elementary school teachers and one with the secondary school teachers. During the focus group sessions, participants engaged in discussions related to their course work and the impact it had on their daily teaching practices. Focus group discussions were videotaped and transcribed. At the end of the focus group discussion, participants were invited to complete a researcher-designed written questionnaire. The first unit of analysis was careful coding of the transcripts of the videotapes of the two focus group discussions. The second unit of analysis was the written questionnaire. The final analysis was a cross-case analysis involving the numbering of significant responses and identifying emerging patterns of related issues.

Findings and Implications

By critically examining teaching and learning through the participants’ voices, we identified different aspects of classroom teaching that positively impacted their learning and their own classroom practices, including: a) the nature of the learning environment, and b) the teacher-student relationship and role of the teacher. It also provided insights into valuable considerations in practice-based research.

The Nature of the Learning Environment

One of the key themes that emerged related to the nature of the learning environment that was created during the graduate courses. Based on our beliefs that learning is enhanced through collaboration and active engagement, the courses included many opportunities for cooperative group work with a focus on hands-on, interactive learning experiences that included choice and multiple ways of knowing and representing. The participants commented on the overall positive learning environment that this created:

*There was this camaraderie and sharing among all of us. So that’s what stood out, and made a comfort zone.*

*The learning atmosphere was very relaxed and created the desire to learn. There was no need to feel inhibited because freedom of expression and questions were encouraged.*

*...we learned by doing, and we found that those strategies, those before reading, you know, during reading, and after reading strategies, that actually worked ...*

One participant went on to discuss how she was able to incorporate this type of learning environment in her own teaching and the positive outcomes that were a result of this change in her classroom practice:
The students are now more motivated to participate in class. They feel more secure and comfortable in the setting of the classroom hence they take risks which they would not normally take. My students also now understand the benefits that can be derived from collaborative learning and the fact that each one has to pull his or her own weight.

Another participant summed up the change in understanding of the teaching and learning process effected through this learning environment with this comment:

...there’s been a transformation of your mindset... now we realize that this learning thing is dynamic.

**The Teacher/Student Relationship and the Role of the Teacher**

A second theme that emerged was the nature of the teacher/student relationship that fostered learning. Several participants commented on the importance of feeling valued and affirmed by the instructor and how that impacted on their engagement and learning throughout the course. For one participant this led to a deeper understanding of the importance of connecting with students in the classroom:

...it also has helped me as a teacher to nurture my students, because of the child in us, and even as adults we want to be loved, and appreciated, and know that you care about us...

A second aspect of the role of the teacher that was reflective of our beliefs, modeled during the courses and identified by the participants as significant, was the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This resulted in a change in practice by one participant who stated that in her own classroom, “I have removed myself from the front of the class. I am now among my kids.” Another participant commented on how this shift in the teacher role also fostered a less competitive learning environment: “...the comfort came because we were able to interact with each other, and with you [emphasis added], and there wasn’t that level of competition...”

The responsibility of the teacher with regard to students who struggle was also discussed. Providing differentiated instruction to foster success for all students was a key component of both courses. One participant clearly articulated this understanding of the teacher’s role and responsibility for ensuring student success for all with the comment, “My role is to devise as many strategies as possible to ensure that every student in my class learns.”
Benefits of Practice-based Research

As teacher-researchers, this inquiry provided an opportunity to identify considerations in designing practice-based research. Researching our own teaching practices provided us with a rich, learning experience that informed and deepened our understanding of our practices in many ways. Through this exploration we learned about the value of involving students in research and of building an environment that supports an openness to learning about students’ experiences as well as how they acquire concepts. The participants benefitted from the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences in the courses. As participants responded to our questions and engaged in focus group discussions, they were collaboratively constructing, interpreting, and sharing knowledge. They were able to make clear connections between the course work and their practice and to articulate their learning. Participants gained a new appreciation of their own knowledge and a sense of empowerment as they contributed to our research.

Conclusions

Engaging students in researching our teaching and valuing students’ voices was a powerful learning experience. As our study evolved, we enhanced our knowledge of the teaching-learning process in general, and gained an enriched understanding of our students’ learning. Our teaching was being transformed as we clarified and made explicit our values and beliefs, critically examined our practices, and collaborated with our students. The findings of this study have implications for those teaching in higher education as they highlight influences on teachers’ construction of meaning and their application of theory into practice. Most importantly, this systematic inquiry into our teaching practices gives recognition to the scholarship of teaching and learning as a rigorous academic body of research that is informed by and informs theory and values learning as a collaboration between teachers and students.

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Inclusive Teaching: An Approach for Non-traditional Student Success

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Abstract

University teachers frequently complain that non-traditional students come underprepared to university. In the last few years, higher education institutions and teachers have been taking measures to help non-traditional students improve their academic skills. Most of these initiatives are remedial in nature, i.e., they aim at providing non-traditional students with the academic skills and knowledge of mainstream students and teachers. These actions have proven inadequate to empower most non-traditional students to succeed, as they neglect to embrace the diverse values, beliefs, and skills that non-traditional students bring to the classroom. This article discusses a research project that focuses on the relationship between teaching models and knowledge models with respect to both mainstream and non-traditional students. It also proposes several strategies to promote inclusive teaching in the classroom.

Introduction

It is a recurring complaint among university teachers that most of today’s students come underprepared to university (Côté & Allahar, 2007; Gabriel, 2008; Kuh et al, 2006; Weimer, 2002). A large percentage of these students are non-traditional (i.e., mature, Aboriginal, international, recently immigrated, first-generation, or belonging to a visible minority). Both universities and individual faculty members have been taking measures to help non-traditional students improve their skills and performance. These initiatives are remedial in nature, in that they aim at equipping non-traditional students with the academic skills and knowledge of mainstream students and teachers (Tinto, 2000). Not surprisingly, these actions have proven inadequate to empower most minority students to succeed, as these measures neglect to acknowledge and incorporate the diverse values, beliefs, and skills that non-traditional students bring to the classroom (Haigh, 2009).

The pivotal thesis of this article is that students’ preparation reflects their own cultures, traditions, and beliefs. In other words, students are not underprepared. Their preparation responds to a different notion of the world around them and to the fact that they have different literacies. So, instead of requiring non-traditional students to adopt mainstream academic skills, disciplinary perspectives and processes, we should open our classroom doors to teaching diverse and non-traditional ways of approaching
disciplinary content, and organizing and expressing thought. This helps students achieve the deepest degree of learning and the highest rate of academic success (Bowden & Marton, 2004). We should support this by including non-traditional pedagogies to help our students learn in a more inclusive way. This article is premised on literature findings that show that faculty members can have a major impact on student success (Bain, 2004; Bain & Zimmerman, 2009; Gabriel, 2008; Light, 2001;). It recognizes, however, that students are more likely to succeed when, in addition to inclusive classroom teaching, the college or university implements multiple programs and initiatives aimed at helping students strive in their academic endeavours (Kuh et al., 2006).

I begin this article with a brief overview of the demographics of university students in Canada. Second, I briefly describe a project I conducted and its methodology. Third, I examine the nature of programs and classroom strategies aimed at fostering non-traditional student success. Then, I analyze the relationship between teaching models and knowledge modes with respect to both mainstream and non-traditional students. Finally, I propose several strategies to promote inclusive teaching and to enhance learning opportunities for non-traditional students.

The New Demographic of Students

Most of the so-called underprepared students are non-traditional students (i.e., mature, Aboriginal, international, recently immigrated, first-generation, or belonging to a visible minority). Increasing numbers of non-traditional students have been entering the world of higher education in the past two decades in Canada. There are approximately 700,000 full-time and 220,000 part-time undergraduate students in Canadian universities. A total of 100,000 full-time students and 190,000 part-time students are mature; 70,000 full-time and 13,000 part-time students are international. A full 16% of Canadian students identify themselves as belonging to a visible minority (AUCC, 2007) while 30,000 students are Aboriginal. While there is some overlapping among these categories, these data suggest, nonetheless, that non-traditional students represent a very large percentage of today’s students in Canadian universities. Traditionally historic mainstream students – white, Euro-Canadian, middle-to-upper class, Judeo-Christian, Western young students whose parents graduated from university – are now a minority (Bowe, 1999). This profile is radically different from two or three decades ago, when classrooms were more homogenous and the participation of non-traditional students was marginal.

The Study

I conducted research aimed at identifying the measures needed to help non-traditional students succeed in higher education. The original purpose of the study was to examine the measures that were aimed at changing the individual pre-entry college attributes identified as determinants of success in the Tinto Model of retention/attrition (Tinto, 1994).
I started the project by examining the existing strategies followed by faculty and higher education institutions to help non-traditional students succeed. Then, I conducted a series of focus groups with non-traditional students attending colleges and universities in northern Ontario, Canada. These focus groups included mature, Aboriginal, first generation, international, recently immigrated, and visible minority female and male students. The focus groups were complemented by in-depth open-ended interviews of non-traditional students, teachers, and administrators in those colleges and universities.

The questions in both the focus groups and the interviews were aimed at getting to know the participants’ histories and trajectories. Questions focused on their educational life and their social and family life. The objective was to get to know as much information about the students’ traditions, backgrounds, and beliefs in order to throw light on their educational experience and needs. The interviews were videotaped, and a 40-minute DVD was produced with edited segments of the focus groups and interviews in order to provide feedback to the participants about the main ideas of the project. The DVD was shown to participants and those interested in the project after the data were obtained and analyzed. As a result of these focus groups and interviews, I adopted some classroom strategies that implement the main findings of the project to incorporate more inclusive teaching.

**Predominant Classroom and Institutional Initiatives**

Many teachers and institutions have been adopting a series of initiatives to deal with the perceived problem of teaching underprepared non-traditional students. The predominant approach to dealing with non-traditional students has been the adoption of remedial programs and remedial teaching strategies (Tinto, 2000; Locks and Gregerman, 2008). These initiatives are premised on the belief that non-traditional students lack certain academic skills, and that they can succeed in university if they acquire these skills. These remedial programs and teaching strategies aim at providing these students with the necessary skills and cultural processes to place them at par with mainstream students.

These programs and initiatives vary in format. At the institutional level, they include academic support services (Seidman, 1995; Seidman, 1993; Crockett, 1984; Kreysa, 2006-2007) bridging, access, and mentoring programs (Zeegers & Martin, 2001; Williford et al., 2000-2001; Tinto, 2006-2007). Classroom teaching strategies include using visual information in the classroom (Rees-Miller), explaining a topic more than once in the classroom or office, providing additional tutorials and practice tests (Keller, Mattie, Vodanovic, & Piotrowski, 1991) sitting international students apart during tests (Arkoudis, 2006), avoiding jargon, and being flexible with deadlines and assignments.

These initiatives have proven to be ineffective (Tinto, 2000) as they reinforce a superior value of mainstream knowledge over non-traditional ones. These programs send a message to non-traditional students that they need to adapt to a better way of thinking and expressing thought. While Canadian universities and colleges have eased access of non-mainstream students, attrition rates have also increased. This demonstrates that
the strategies followed by Canadian postsecondary education institutions have not been successful in helping non-traditional students thrive in their university studies (O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007).

North American Knowledge Modes and Academic Skills

Most teachers in North American higher education institutions approach the teaching of disciplinary content, academic skills, and thought processes from traditionally Western and North American perspectives. For example, the predominant knowledge mode in North America is external, socially mitigated, and considered “objectively” measurable (Haigh, 2009) while subjective, relational, and qualitative methods are often considered unworthy of the mainstream university classroom. Teaching writing has been reduced to teaching disciplinary thesis-based writing, where students learn how to develop a thesis, pose questions, gather and weigh evidence, and construct arguments as members of a certain discipline (Bean, 1996). Critical thinking, which is conceived as a self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking mode in which the thinker analyzes, assesses, and reconstructs evidence (Bok, 2006) displaced other forms of thinking, such as creative and integrative (Boyer, 1990; Clark, 2009).

These North American knowledge modes and thought processes are very particular, perhaps even elitist, ways of interpreting the world around us. They are by no means universal. They do not coincide with ways of producing and expressing thought in other cultures. Furthermore, they have been criticized within North American academic circles for being patriarchal, colonial, racist, and ethnocentric (Bean, 1996).

These modes of thought, methodologies, and academic skills are generally accompanied by teaching pedagogies such as lectures and seminar discussions that also reinforce this particular epistemology and related pedagogies. However, these pedagogies are neither universal nor necessarily effective, and have also been deconstructed by mainstream Western scholars (Bain, 2004; Biggs, 2003) as being both particularly situated and subjective, rather than universal and objective.

Non-Western Knowledge Modes and Academic Skills

Non-traditional students have a way of seeing themselves and understanding the world that derives from their own cultures and traditions, that differs from the perspectives that predominate in North American universities. As is the case with their mainstream colleagues, non-traditional students’ ways of seeing the world have repercussions and implications in most academic areas. They influence the way students think, express themselves, and interact in the classroom. For example, many non-traditional students tend to see things in a subjective, inward-looking fashion (Haigh, 2009). Other students from non-Western societies are holistic in their thoughts. They tend to emphasize and value how things are interconnected. Non-traditional students are aware of their situated knowledge and social and cultural standpoint and appear to be more reflective (Haigh, 2009). What is important in their writing works is “seeing, feeling, and being situated in the web of relations that surround the subject” rather than developing a
thesis (Fox, 1994). The dynamics of the North American university classroom also clash with the way in which many students, particularly Asian and Aboriginal, are brought up. For example, Chinese students are taught to never question, evaluate, or challenge their professors (Sarkisian, 2006).

**North American Teaching Model**

The North American knowledge mode is neither better nor worse than other modes of knowledge. But, it is generally presented as the only correct way of generating, organizing, and expressing thought in our universities (Bowden & Marton, 2004). When students or teachers from a particular tradition, who lack experience and education in appreciating knowledge diversity, cross knowledge and thought traditions, they tend to judge different knowledge modes in a very negative way (Haigh, 2009). Due to this judgment, non-traditional students tend to perceive North American academic writing as inferior, arbitrary, and disrespectful of the audience. For example, according to a Chilean student reported in Helen Fox’s (1994) book, when he “reads something written by an American it sounds so childish.” Other non-Western students believe North American writers belittle their audience by making explicit their arguments and by making explicit connections between different arguments. Another example quoted by Fox shows that for non-North American students it should be the responsibility of the audience—not the writer—“to do the analysis, to draw meaning from the context. [The writer does] not [even have the] responsibility to make sense.” (Fox, 1994). In most cases, non-traditional students, particularly non-Western, feel that following North American conventions is against “what everything inside you is telling you to do” (Fox, 1994).

At the same time, mainstream teachers – and those minority teachers educated in mainstream Western higher education institutions – perceive non-mainstream student writing and other academic skills as signs of unpreparedness for university studies (Gabriel, 2008; Côté & Allahar, 2007). For example, when non-traditional students write an essay where they do not cite a few sentences they borrowed from an author, or when they digress instead of supporting the thesis with arguments and evidence, most teachers do not understand that these students are responding to the way in which they have been brought up to see and understand the world. Teachers tend to believe that these are signs of a lack of academic preparation.

Traditionally, when students and teachers came to university from the same privileged and homogeneous social backgrounds, they shared similar values and principles. So, there was no difference of perspective between teachers and students (Bowden & Marton, 2004). The lack of success of individual students was interpreted as individual failures, generally explained in terms of a lack of application and effort on the students’ part (Côté & Allahar, 2007). Today, since non-traditional students make up a large percentage of North American classrooms, what was once an explanation in terms of individual students is now a generalization about underpreparedness.
Strategies for Inclusive Teaching

The deepest degree of learning, and the highest rate of student academic success, take place when university teachers encourage, include, and value the cultures of both minority and mainstream students and incorporate them into their classes. As put by Bowden and Marton, “by becoming aware of other people’s ways of seeing various phenomena one’s understanding is enriched and therefore becomes more powerful; one can see one’s own way of seeing exactly as a way of seeing (rather than ‘seeing what something is like’) and individual awarenesses are linked to each other, forming a collective consciousness” (Bowden & Marton, 2004).

In practice, this entails teaching disciplinary content and academic skills from a wide array of diverse traditions so that every single non-traditional student will feel included and will see that her knowledge modes are acknowledged and recognized. In an inclusive teaching classroom, non-traditional students thrive as their ways of understanding the world are a central part of the course. At the same time, they are more willing to learn mainstream North American ways of thinking and expressing, as these are presented as one among many alternatives of interpreting reality and creating and expressing thought (Bowden & Marton, 2004). For mainstream students, learning about non-traditional values, skills, and processes also opens up new ways of knowing and learning, which enrich their academic experiences and skills at a level that cannot be achieved when being taught using a single worldview paradigm (Bowden & Marton, 2004).

While inclusive teaching should ideally be part of teacher education and development, there are some strategies that we as teachers can try in order to open up our classes to non-traditional views, values, and skills. The following are some suggestions which derive from both the literature and inclusive teaching practice, which I implemented as a result of the main ideas arising from my research project.

- Place student learning of diverse knowledge modes, and ways of generating, organizing, and expressing thought at the forefront of the curriculum. Include this with the intended learning outcomes for the course. And make explicit to your students that they will learn to approach the discipline, and to generate, organize, and express thought, from multiple traditions. For example, in a criminal law course, help your students interpret the notion of crime from different legal traditions, such as Islamic, Talmudic, Aboriginal, and Soviet. Help your students think and communicate about criminal law as scholars would do in these traditions.

- Change the preconception that non-Western ideas are exotic. Introduce non-Western knowledge modes, academic skills, and disciplinary content as something usual.

- Help your students see the intrinsic value of acquiring diverse, non-traditional ways of seeing the world. Include a wide array of non-Western and non-traditional worldviews and values, even if you do not have students from a certain culture. For example, even if you do not have Aboriginal students, teach your students how to transmit knowledge through stories as is done in Aboriginal
communities (Charter, 1996). In a business course, encourage your students to become familiar with the ancient Mayan notion of accountancy. Help your students apply these notions to current business problems.

- Show your students how useful it is to be prepared to live and work in different cultures.

- Teach multiple ways of writing instead of restricting writing to North American academic styles. For example, teach your students how to organize thoughts and express ideas as is done in Chinese culture. Ask a Chinese graduate student who acquired his or her undergraduate education in China to show you how Chinese scholars write academic papers, or invite that student to your class to talk to your students. Then, ask your students to write a short paper in English following an academic Chinese structure and organization.

- Vary pedagogical methods, i.e., teach as is taught in other cultures and traditions. For example, use story-telling, organize circles, potlucks in, or ideally outside, the classroom to acknowledge Aboriginal traditions. Or base part of your pedagogy on notions of Dharma, which emphasize personal introspection, self-awareness, self-realization, and self-improvement (Haigh, 2009).

- Include texts in foreign languages that some of your students speak as alternative or supplementary to texts in English. Even if you do not read in a foreign language, as a disciplinary expert you are probably familiar with the text and the author, or you probably read an English translation. Most foreign language journals include an abstract in English. So, it is not very difficult to know the content of an article in your discipline even if you do not speak that language. Invite the students that read those articles to comment on them in class. Unilingual speakers will see the value of reading the discipline in other languages.

- Invite guests from other traditions, such as an Aboriginal elder, a visible minority professional, or a foreign religious leader. They can discuss topics related to your course, and your students can gain insight into their worldviews.

- Organize student presentations where students may discuss a problem from their own tradition. A variation of this activity is to ask students to present a topic from a tradition that is different from their own.

- Discuss disciplinary content that interests diverse groups of students. For example, recent immigrant students want to see issues related to immigration, assimilation, and heritage discussed in class. If you teach US literature, you can include Chicano authors’ short stories dealing with problems faced by Latino immigrant families, such as stories by Francisco Jimenez. If you teach Contracts Law, you can include the notion and formation of contracts found in legal traditions outside North America.

- Mature students have very rich life experiences. Make room for them to share their experiences with the rest of the class.

- Assess whether students can generate, organize, and express thought in a multitude of diverse ways. Assessment is the component in the aligned teaching system that most greatly influences the approach students take to learning.
(Gibbs, 1999). If your assessment actually evaluates whether and how well students have mastered a wide array of knowledge modes, diverse academic skills, and non-traditional disciplinary perspectives, students will be likely to achieve your intended learning outcomes (Biggs, 2003).

- Design assessment tasks that are representative of different cultures and traditions. Do not restrict your assessment tasks to exams, multiple choice tests, research papers, and group presentations. Adopt assessment tools used in other cultures, such as informal dialogues, holistic evaluation of student performance throughout the course, or self-evaluation. Another alternative is to ask your students to gather evidence that is customary in their traditions to show how well they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.

Conclusions

The demographic of today’s classroom has changed drastically in the last two to three decades. Today, significant numbers of non-traditional students have gained access to higher education. This increase in participation has not translated into increased student graduation and success. Teachers perceive non-traditional students as academically underprepared, while in fact, students’ preparation reflects their own cultures, traditions, and beliefs. Non-traditional students have been prepared to see the world and express thought in ways that differ from those of North American mainstream teachers and students. The predominant approach to dealing with this perceived lack of preparation of non-traditional students has been to provide these students with remedial strategies so that they can acquire the academic skills and thought processes of North American mainstream scholars.

Inclusive teaching is an alternative approach that addresses this perceived under-preparedness. It acknowledges and incorporates diverse knowledge modes, thought processes, and expressive styles into the classroom. It prepares both mainstream and minority students for success as inter-culturally knowledgeable citizens in today’s globalized world.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre for its generous grant to conduct this study. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Jason Gauthier, my research assistant, for his dedication and effort.

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AAU Teaching Showcase: Acadia University, October 2009


Students as Consumers: Tensions and Opportunities in the Commodification of Programmes in Education

Deborah Day & Ann Vibert, Acadia University

Students in Education at the B.Ed. and graduate level are very familiar with universities and professors and are adult learners; many are experts in managing the educational experience. There is a growing tendency for students to be strong self-advocates and to question all aspects of the educational experience and the processes that support it. This can obstruct or work in concert with efforts of faculty to support the development of capacity for reflection and critical perspectives. Challenges and opportunities both need to be anticipated and managed in the context of the changing demographics of these relatively sophisticated students. This session will explore the contexts which inform student and faculty perspectives, and will involve participants in active consideration of various vignettes from the university classroom.

Net Geners: A Different Mindset

Scott Follows, Acadia University

Many academics criticize students for being inattentive in class, lacking social skills, violating intellectual property rights, and being narcissistic. Are our students really this bad, or are they really that different? Net Geners – digital natives – are the first generation to grow up bombarded by digital media. Research indicates that this has changed how their brains are wired, and therefore how they process information. For those of us over 30 – digital immigrants – our adaptation to changing technologies is like learning a second language. We may use digital tools, but it is always with a mindset from a generation defined by watching television. On one side of the classroom are professors who prefer a slow and controlled release of information, presented linearly to students who work independently; on the other side of the lectern are students wanting a collaborative, rapid-fire trial and error learning environment using multiple multimedia sources. The objective of the presentation is to shed light on the mindset and skills of digital natives. Following the presentation there will be a discussion of the pedagogical implications.
The Thrill of the Hunt: Engaging the Millennial Generation through Discovery Learning

Erin Steuter, Mount Allison University

Educators are becoming aware that there is a widening gap between the lecture-based teaching offered by many universities and the active learning style of the new generation of students dubbed the "Millennials". The largest demographic of Millennials were born in 1990 and are now entering our universities, having been raised in an interactive digital culture. Research shows that they are more engaged through active learning, and seek experiential processes that can hold their interest (Sweeney 2006). The tradition of discovery learning, which takes students beyond the role of passive listener or reader, may be an effective pedagogy to recruit and retain this new generation of students. Instead of being 'told' the content by the teacher, in discovery learning students interact with the subject matter by exploring and manipulating objects, wrestling with questions and controversies, or performing experiments. Proponents of this theory believe that discovery learning has many advantages including promoting active engagement, student autonomy, and the development of creative problem-solving skills. This presentation will provide tips and strategies for educators to transform traditional assignments into discovery learning experiences. Participants will have the opportunity to design discovery-learning assignments for their own disciplines.

The Efficacy of Literacy-based Assistive Technology for Undergraduate Second-Language Learners

Danny Yakimchuk, Cape Breton University

Canadian universities target international student markets to help curb declining student enrolment, but the resulting increase in the number of second-language students within the education system is not without challenge. Evidence indicates that limited English-language proficiency has a negative impact on the academic performance of second-language learners (SLL) at the post-secondary level. If educational institutions knowingly recruit students with language abilities that may impede academic success, then those institutions have the moral duty to provide the necessary student support systems to facilitate student success. It has been reported that the language barriers facing undergraduate SLLs have parallels with mild learning disabilities. Research also suggests that students whose first language is not English may overcome some of the language barriers through the use of assistive technology (AT) resources originally designed to support students with learning disabilities. The presentation will discuss the author’s current research on the use of literacy-based AT in support of SLLs. Although the presentation emphasizes the efficacy of AT for SLLs, there are implications for the use of AT to support literacy development for all learners.
Community-Based Teaching in Philosophy and Anthropology

Pamela Courtenay-Hall & Jean Mitchell, University of Prince Edward Island

“Community-based education” can mean any kind of education that happens out in the larger community, beyond classroom walls. But it happens most meaningfully when it engages students also in the work of the community, learning from community members. Our focus on community-based education is thus on education that engages students in relevant work placements in the community to help them:

- Gain first-hand experience of what they are studying in its real setting
- Meet and learn from respected practitioners in the community
- Gain bodily understanding of ways of life different from their own
- Encounter perspectives of people materially involved in the issues under study
- Do useful work -- collective labour -- in the larger community
- Gain experience that questions our society’s devaluation of manual labour (The further devaluation of manual labour has been one of the effects of our 21st century embracing of “the knowledge economy” as a stage of social progress.)

Community-based education also brings good things to the community practitioners engaged in it, enabling them to:

- Share their knowledge and perspectives with students
- Be recognized and respected as knowledge-producers
- Experience schools as places where their knowledge is respected, not marginalized

Community-based education is also invaluable for building bridges between the school and the larger community, through these and other ways that connect students more deeply into the community, and connect community practitioners more deeply to the school:

- Supervisors of work placements often serve as collaborating instructors in the course.
- Classes are organized around focused dialogue with community practitioners.
- Courses often offer some labour assistance to community practitioners through student field placements. This labour is more aptly described as “token” rather than “free”, because the time commitment it requires from practitioners is rarely compensated by the amount of labour “help” that they get.
The benefits community-based education bring don’t happen, of course, without considerable time building links to community practitioners, organizing schedules and logistics. Nor do they happen without professors sharing their epistemic authority with practitioners who are often more knowledgeable in the field under study than the professor is. These factors are no doubt the reasons why this amazing form of educational programming/engagement is not yet widespread. We have each been engaged in community-based education since 2003. Jean has done community-based teaching in anthropology, connecting UPEI students to disadvantaged youth in an after-school program. Pamela has done community-based teaching in philosophy and environmental studies, connecting UPEI students to farmers and people involved in food processing, in a 3rd year undergraduate course, We describe each of these initiatives below.

The Four “Rs” of Community learning in an urban area – Jean Mitchell’s Perspective

Community-based work brings together my teaching and research. For the past six years I have been working with student volunteers in a community-based After-School Programme in Hillsborough, PEI, a low-income urban area. The original idea for the After-School project emerged from community research that several of my students and I completed six years ago. I have, over the years, worked with the community to access funding for the project and I have also identified and supervised students from my anthropology and sociology classes to volunteer in the community. Community-based work is particularly important for anthropology students as many of them will be doing research or working at the local level. The skills that they learn and the relationships they develop by being in a community are invaluable. I link volunteer placements to two courses: a) Applied Anthropology and b) a Global Youth Cultures course. Students may also choose to do an honours project based on research in the community.

I think of the elements that are integral to the process as “the four Rs”:

1. Relationships. Community-based work fosters relationship-building, some of which is complex, difficult, but necessary. Senior student volunteers mentor younger volunteers in wonderful ways. The relationships between the youth and students have also been important and meaningful.
2. Reciprocity is central to building relationships. Students learn about mutuality and the value of returning to and giving back to the community when they do research. They also learn to consult the community about all phases of the research.
3. Representation concerns how we signify and communicate difference(s). This issue is of particular concern as some of the youth face marginality in various ways and students become aware of how some youth are represented in ways that further marginalize them.
4. Reflectivity allows students to reflect on differences and the ways in which we construct self/other relations, and the ways in which local and global processes and practices are connected.

Community-Based Ethical Inquiry in Agriculture and Globalization: Pamela Courtenay-Hall’s Perspective

One of my motivations in developing community-based education related to agriculture is that I was determined to set up a course that would challenge the conventional thinking that positions farmers as environmental villains. I wanted to help students learn about the diversity of agriculture, the complexity of the ethical issues in it, and the difficulties farmers face in an economic system that overworks them, underpays them, and demands in addition that they work unreimbursed as environmental stewards of their land.

I met local farmers at the Charlottetown Farmers’ Market, to make a list of those interested in participating in this educational initiative. The plan was to have the class visit each farm for 1-2 hours to get acquainted with the farm and hear the farmer’s perspective on key ethical and economic issues related to globalization. Then, in pairs, students would do volunteer labour on particular farms to learn first-hand, physically as well as intellectually, the nature of farm-work in that particular operation, and the challenges the farmer faces in trying to farm ecologically and survive economically.

The response was overwhelming. I had more farmers than spaces in the schedule. To help students learn about the diversity of farming, I contacted farmers involved in large-scale conventional (chemical-based) agriculture as well as farmers involved in small-scale organic agriculture. The comments students wrote on their course evaluations give an indication of how much students gain from community-based education. In different sessions of the course, 30-50% of the students called the course “life-changing”. Students have also written:

“[PEI farmer, Margie Loo] is so gentle on the earth and so knowledgeable about soil biology and farming. She is an inspiration.”

“I go to my economics classes and hear my professors talk about economic theories. But the farmers are talking about live economics. They know so much and they live it. I learn so much more from hearing them talk about the economics of farming.”

“I have never met a man [PEI farmer, Gary Clausheide] who lives so deeply the things that he believes in. He has devoted his whole life to growing food ecologically, with a lot of personal sacrifice, including income level. He is truly inspiring.”
Conclusion

From our experience, we would argue that professors and students should leave the comfort of the university because it is the best way to realize knowledge as socially-situated. It introduces students to people whose life experience may be very different from their own, and helps them have the chance to interact with people whose knowledge production emerges from the work that they do. It is also the best way for universities to overcome “ivory tower” isolation and academic elitism, and to meet student concerns for “hands-on” learning and community involvement. Universities have long had much of their teaching and research insulated from, removed from, and uncommitted to, the communities in which they are located, and by whom they are supported. It is time for this pattern to change.
What Works Isn’t Enough: Encouraging and Embracing Democratic Practices in Education

John J. Guiney Yallop, School of Education, Acadia University

In this short paper, I reflect on some of my practices aimed at living democratic principles in my teaching. I also reflect on my experience presenting at the Association of Atlantic Universities’ Teaching Showcase in October of 2009. Most of my teaching has been at the elementary school level. Throughout my elementary school teaching career, I was involved in giving professional development sessions to teachers, as well as mentoring teachers who were beginning their careers. More recently, I have had the opportunity to work with teachers as one of their professors in their Bachelor of Education program.

One summer, during my career as an elementary school educator, I attended a Summer Institute with Barbara Coloroso. Barbara Coloroso’s philosophy, in regards to teaching practice, is that it isn’t enough to use whatever works. She believes that it has to work and that it has to keep the students’ dignity intact. Dignity is grounded in our humanness. To be human is to be worthy of dignity. All of our relationships, therefore, including those relationships in universities, ought to maintain the dignity of those in the relationships. As well, in a democratic society, it isn’t enough to say that we will do whatever works. I believe that we need to find what works and what addresses most respectfully the needs of the students we teach. Whether teaching elementary students, delivering professional development sessions to teachers, working one-on-one with teacher candidates, or teaching university students, what I believe works and keeps students’ dignity intact is mutual respect and sharing power. Here, I concentrate on my work at the university level. At all levels, however, I believe that decisions about our teaching practice ought to be rooted in democratic principles, as democracy is the context for our relationships.

During my session at the Association of Atlantic Universities’ Teaching Showcase 2009, I offered an opportunity for participants to engage in conversations about democratic practices in education, and the principles which inform those practices. I shared two paragraphs that appear in all of my course outlines which I believe create opportunities for students to take a more active role in their learning, including decisions around the content and the form of that learning. As well, I discussed how the very idea of a course outline itself, given by the instructor at the beginning of classes, is problematic in that all of the decisions about teaching and learning have been decided before the instructor and students meet. I stated in my proposal for the session, and at the beginning of my session, that participants could expect to come away from this session with useful ideas that would hopefully inform their own beliefs and practices. I am also hopeful that the session, and this brief report, will offer further opportunities for conversation.

This following paragraph appears in the course description section of my course outlines:
This outline has been designed to give you the best possible learning opportunities in this course. With that in mind, it is important to note that each of us is responsible for our own learning. We also learn in community. The length of time spent on specific topics, the order in which topics are addressed, and the introduction of new topics may be changed in response to specific needs articulated during class and for which we achieve consensus in class.

I include this paragraph because I want my students to know, upfront, that this outline is a plan, a plan they can depend on, but not one they, nor I, need be limited by. Students tend to like having the plan, probably because it is useful to have a plan for the course responsibilities so that they can see how they might include those responsibilities with their other responsibilities – a feeling I share. I cannot recall a time when there has been significant changes in the course outline. There was one case where students requested a presentation by me that was not on the course outline; this was more an addition of responsibilities for me, rather than a change to responsibilities for students. Still, I feel that it is important that the paragraph above be included, and it is important that I be prepared to make changes to my course outline if there is consensus among students for that change.

This paragraph appears at the beginning of the assignment section of my course outline:

As part of this course outline, the assignments described below have also been developed with the intention of providing you with the best possible learning opportunities in this course. It is possible, however, that some of your learning needs may best be met by a self-designed assignment. If you would like to propose a self-designed assignment to replace one of the assignments described below, please submit a brief description of the self-designed assignment and specify which one of the assignments below you wish it to replace. Once approved, you may begin the self-designed assignment. The self-designed assignment is due during the same class as the assignment it is replacing.

Like the paragraph which opens my course description section of the course outline, this paragraph is there to make it clear that the course is for the students’ learning, and that students need to be involved in the decisions about their learning, and those decisions need to be more than whether or not to comply with the instructor’s decisions – there needs to be space for negotiation. This latter paragraph has been more frequently used by students than the former paragraph, but still, not as frequently as I would have thought. Perhaps students are content with the assignments I have designed or perhaps the extra work in designing an assignment is not considered a valuable use of time in such a short course; students may want to leave that effort for bigger work such as an honours research paper. It is also possible that students are used to being told what their assignments will be by the person whom they believe should know what they, the students, need to learn. Is the instructor not the expert, after all?

The discussion during my session at the Showcase, and with colleagues afterwards, that focused on those two paragraphs was generally welcoming of the ideas I offered, and some even extended those ideas, both during the session and in conversations.
following. Some suggestions included giving a menu of assignments and having students select from the menu and/or allowing students to decide on the weighting of each assignment, with no single assignment being less than ten percent nor more than forty percent.

It was, however, the discussion around the possibility of starting a course without a course outline and building the course outline with the students that seemed to generate the greatest response and the greatest concern. How will we ensure that the essentials are covered? I suggested that the essentials are not necessarily the same from course to course, nor from instructor to instructor. What about quality and rigour? I believe that students want, and will demonstrate, quality and rigour in their own learning – I trust that they will. What about accountability? My understanding is that my primary accountability, as the instructor of a course, is to the students taking that course. Is it not being accountable to ensure that the course responds to the students’ stated needs? It was said that the course outline is a contract between teacher and student. My concern there, however, is that the students have no role in writing the contract, and, in most cases, seem to have no way to negotiate it.

I appreciated the conversation with colleagues at the session, as well as the conversations which followed. I also very much appreciated the comments of one of my students who was present during the session; students assisting at the Showcase could attend sessions if they desired. My student told me that, following the session, she understood better my philosophy behind including those two paragraphs and that she saw the connection between my stated philosophy and my practice. Her words encourage me to continue to explore, through reflection and practice, bringing democratic principles into my teaching.
Integrating Learning through Internships

Nadya Ladouceur, Renaissance College, University of New Brunswick

The Canadian Internship Program at Renaissance College

The Canadian Internship Program is an essential component of the Bachelor of Philosophy in Interdisciplinary Leadership Studies offered at Renaissance College. Students have the opportunity to learn outside the traditional classroom and put theory into practice in a work environment with guidance from a mentor and a course instructor. The ten-week, full-time, work/volunteer placements vary according to students’ interests and opportunities. In the past, students have interned as camp councilors, environmental educators, project coordinators, research assistants, accounts management interns, and even farm hands. All placements are opportunities for students to observe leadership in action, develop their own leadership skills, learn about themselves in various work situations, and test their interest and aptitude for a particular career path.

The Learning Process

Renaissance College values experiential learning, which has been defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). This approach pushes students to constantly navigate between concrete experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and experimentation, all of which actively engage them in a holistic learning process. The conceptual foundations of the internship program are derived in part from Kolb’s theory of learning but also from Knowles’ self-directed model of learning (Knowles, 1984). In Knowles’ model, students take responsibility for setting and achieving learning objectives in line with their interests. The role of the instructor is seen as an enabling one.

The internship structure provides an opportunity to centre learning on students’ interests as they select their placements and set their own learning goals. The process also encourages students to build relationships with their mentors and colleagues as well as with the course instructors. Assignments are designed to facilitate students’ integration and understanding of the workings of their organisations and to support and guide achievement of their goals. Key components of this pedagogy are the goal setting assignments and progress reports submitted every two weeks during the internship.

Goal-Setting Assignment and Progress Report

Created in collaboration with the mentor at the start, the goals are validated by the course instructor and serve as a platform for dialogue during the internship. The goals are related to the tasks at hand and to Renaissance College’s six learning outcomes. Students fill out a table, identifying a specific goal, stating the concrete steps of action and timeframe necessary to achieve that goal, and giving the measure of success. The following is an example of a goal set by a student serving an internship as a farm hand on an organic Community Sustainable Agriculture (CSA) operation.
Internship Placement:  
Outcome:  
Farm Hand 
Problem Solving 

| Goal: Apply a structured problem-solving approach to solve weed proliferation |
|---|---|
| **Steps to Achieve Goal** | **Timeframe** |
| • Identify objectives, constraints, resources and values | 2\textsuperscript{nd} week |
| • Define key terms and research strategies developed by other organic farmers | 2\textsuperscript{nd} week |
| • Develop potential strategies (at least two) & discuss with mentor | 3\textsuperscript{rd} week |
| • Identify criteria to predict performance of each strategy | 3\textsuperscript{rd} week |
| • Facilitate discussion with farmers to select best strategy (criteria & values) | 4\textsuperscript{th} week |
| • Develop and implement plan | 5th week |

Measure of success:  
Success will be based on feedback provided by farmers and mentor and successful implementation of plan.

The progress reports, submitted every two weeks, help students reflect on and evaluate their experiences and readjust their goals as needed. This process provides flexibility, thus shifting the focus of the learning from measuring students’ performance to assessing their ability to adapt to change. Their reports include progress made, difficulties faced, strategies chosen to overcome problems, readjustments needed in terms of scope, steps, and timeframe, connection with first-year learning, and interactions with mentor and colleagues.

The learning process is enhanced by feedback from the course instructor. This feedback addresses students’ progress and suggests changes as required. Some students tend to set overly broad, complex, and ambitious goals, making it difficult for them to identify and follow concrete steps of action. They also have a tendency to underestimate the time needed to complete their goals, especially when the goals involve working with or consulting others. Feedback provided on their first drafts helps them create specific and realistic goals. Feedback also helps students connect experience to outcomes and classroom learning. It ensures students are critically analyzing their experience and providing specific evidence to demonstrate growth. It also encourages students to seek feedback from their mentor and co-workers which many students shy away from at first, thinking it is a sign of weakness. Finally, positive feedback and encouragement are provided.

Despite the heavy workload involved, students come back from their Canadian internship with a better sense of how their learning on the leadership program can be
applied to real life and work situations. They are also better able to reflect on their own performance, which leads to a better appreciation of their abilities.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the goal-setting exercise and the progress reports provide a platform for dialogue between the intern and the mentor and between the intern and the instructor. It positions the act of learning as a dynamic, relational, and reflective process. It is hoped that this approach provides students with an opportunity to take responsibility for their learning, to create meaningful relationships, and to learn from successes and challenges.

**REFERENCES**


Going to the Primaries: Fostering Student Research through Primary Sources

Wendy G. Robicheau, Acadia University

Fostering student research by including primary sources, particularly those found in archives, is rewarding for educators, students, and archivists alike. Archival institutions hold primary sources essential to local, regional, and national research. But, unless undergraduate students are encouraged to visit the archives or to actively search for primary sources, few tend to use these rich resources.

A Moment of Reflection

The Archives at Acadia University seeks out opportunities to introduce archival sources to undergraduates and education students. In the classroom setting, I place importance on the digital item and using critical analysis; whereas in the Archives, I place importance on the physical item to demonstrate critical research. I find that students are intrigued with the physical item and surprised by what they can learn from the physical as opposed to the digital version.

During my lecture on digital items and critical analysis, I have observed that students are openly unengaged. But there is a notable change in the group when the actual, physical item is given to them – especially in the context of a mystery to solve. Then, the students mull over the material, using the critical analysis methods that they found so unexciting just moments before. I have seen this transition many times during my sessions. Every time is the same – students become fully engaged when the actual item is given to them. This example, I believe, reveals that primary sources are necessary when teaching students to do research.

To demonstrate a potential use of primary documents in critical research requires an example. The scenario given here is that of an undergraduate student doing research on tidal power in the Bay of Fundy. This is a very current topic with a great deal of secondary source material available. While working on this topic, the student finds a title that reads, “Harnessing the Tides of the Bay of Fundy.” This article seems on topic. But, the subtitle seems a bit out of place: “Power Potentialities Derivable from the Installation of Current Motors at Cape Split to be Sufficient to Supply all Needs of the Maritime Provinces, While the Scheme Has Been Declared Feasible by Eminent Consulting Engineers.”

If the student is using her critical research skills, she should ask why tidal power is being generated at Cape Split and how could that power supply all the needs of the Maritime Provinces? Furthermore, when looking at the author, Principal W.L. Archibald at Acadia University, she would ask who is Principal Archibald? With investigation, the student finds that the source is actually not a current one; the article is a reprint from Industrial
Canada, August 1918. Where, then, would the student get more context for this article? A visit to the Archives and an examination of primary sources is an excellent place to start.

When the student comes to the Archives, she discovers documents that put the article reprint into context with similar documents for the Cape Split Development Company. The records of the Company show that tidal power was explored and proposed for a site at Cape Split, NS, as early as 1915. The student locates archived reports about the project, maps of the site, and documents that show how several members of Acadia University’s faculty and administration were involved in the tidal power project – including William Archibald, Principal of Acadia Collegiate and Business Academy. The student even finds schemata for the motor to be used at the site, invented by faculty member Ralph Clarkson. These discoveries may open a whole new aspect to the student’s research.

Although the amount of work involved in critically analyzing primary sources is a shock to some students, it is well worth the time taken to develop research skills. To be successful with this, archivists must work with educators to involve students in the research process – a three-way partnership. Structure is required too. Students are most successful when guided through or to sources as opposed to researching serendipitously. Good structure and proper guidance encourage students to make more use of the archives, not eliminate it. Finding innovative ways to bring students into the archives and to work with primary sources is an important aspect of an undergraduate education that can be fostered.

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1Article reprint can be found in the Cape Split Development Company fonds in folder 1989.001-CSD/5/2 at the Esther Clark Wright Archives, Acadia University.

2The Cape Split Development Company fonds (Accession 1989.001-CSD) is held at the Esther Clark Wright Archives, Acadia University. Many of the items in the fonds are available online.

3There is a very close connection between the Cape Split Development Company and Acadia University. George B. Cutten served as president of both institutions, while Vice-President and Managing Director of the Cape Split Development Company, Ralph P. Clarkson, was an Acadia University professor of engineering. Finally, the secretary of the company was William Liard Archibald, Principal of the Acadia Collegiate and Business Academy (Cape Split Development Company fonds finding aid, page 1).

4Patents for the Clarkson Hydraulic Current Motor are included in the Ralph P. Clarkson fonds (Accession 1900.004-CLA) at the Esther Clark Wright Archives, Acadia University.
Background and Definitions

There has recently been a great deal of interest among the Canadian post-secondary teaching community around the pedagogy of service learning and the potential that it offers to enrich student engagement in the learning process. Service learning is an innovative approach to higher education teaching where students work with community members to address local issues, and where academically rigorous assignments are designed to link those experiences back to specific classroom learning outcomes. The literature on service learning points to a range of benefits: an enhanced understanding of course concepts, the development of leadership skills, an increased understanding of community issues, and a reinforced sense of social responsibility.

Not every community-based learning or service experience meets the definition of service learning. In order for an assignment to be called “service learning” a number of criteria must be met:

- The service learning must be a for-credit assignment within a course, and students must be evaluated on how well they demonstrate their learning, not on how well they perform the service. In the case of co-curricular service learning, the service takes place outside of the context of a course; however, structured activities that deliberately facilitate learning must be part of the experience.
- The service learning assignment must help students better understand concepts that are core learning outcomes for the course.
- The community partners must be equal participants in the process: the idea for the specific service should come from them; they must be consulted throughout the process and the service experience must be flexible enough to be adapted to meet changing community needs; community partners must understand their role as co-educators. The service must be offered to a non-profit agency.
- The students must understand that they are privileged to be invited to learn from community experts, and they should focus their attention on community assets, not on community problems.
- The faculty members must work to build authentic, reciprocal relationships with the community.

Service Learning at St Francis Xavier

The Service Learning Program at StFX began in 1996 and has grown tremendously over the past years. The mandate of the program staff is to support faculty, students, and community agencies who participate in service learning activities. The program receives core funding from the University, but has also benefitted from two large, multi-year grants from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. Each year, approximately 800 students participate in academic service learning experiences.
through approximately 40 courses offered in most university departments. The program partners with approximately 60 community agencies each year.

Some other features of service learning at StFX include the following:

- The office is overseen by the Academic Vice President & Provost.
- Faculty members decide whether the service learning assignments will be mandatory or optional within a course.
- Depending on the assignment, students can either be asked to provide direct service to clients from a partner agency or to provide consulting or research services.
- Typical experiences require students to offer 20 hours of service over a 12 week semester. Students are encouraged to select service experiences with a population or situation new to them.

A Faculty Member’s Perspective

The second half of the presentation focused on a specific service learning experience. Murray Gibson, a faculty member in the Department of Fine Arts, described the mandatory service learning assignment in his Tapestry Studio course. Gibson’s students partnered with members of the local L’Arche community (a community for adults with developmental disabilities) to create a community tapestry project. Gibson had a number of goals for the service learning project:

- To engage his students, most of whom take art as an elective, more fully in the class, and, as a result, to enrich their understanding of the skill of tapestry weaving.
- To help his students develop an understanding of the role that art plays in society.
- To respond to a need from the L’Arche community to develop more opportunities to create art.

Students in Gibson’s class were matched with L’Arche members and worked together to weave a set of drinks coasters on table-top looms. The L’Arche community members came to campus once a week for most of the semester to work with the students on this weaving project. At the same time, the university students were also weaving tapestry panels depicting animals from Noah’s Ark, the central motif of the L’Arche communities. The inspiration for these animal tapestries came from the L’Arche community members who selected the animals and the colors their partner would weave. Through the semester the students maintained critical reflection journals. The journals served as a vehicle for them to explore a number of issues related to art in the community. For example, students considered the capacity of art to communicate when verbal communication is not effective. At the end of the course, the tapestries were unveiled in a public event.

Gibson noted a number of benefits of this type of assignment: the students were more engaged in the course; the students felt a sense of responsibility for the weaving
because they were doing it with a partner; students generally produced more technically sound and aesthetically pleasing tapestries than they had in previous years; the students developed a sense of social responsibility and their understanding of a people with whom many of them had little experience; the L’Arche community took up weaving in their own program and even began selling their creations.

Discussion

Some of the topics which were discussed by the group included the challenges of offering service learning assignments.

- The learning outcomes are often unexpected and can sometimes be difficult to predict, so flexibility is required of all the participants.
- This process is often time consuming.
- Creating and maintaining a relationship with the community is an integral part of the success of these projects, but it is a process with which many faculty members are not familiar.
Abstracts/Résumés

**Development of an Interactive Learning Community in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Literacy: The Web Site CAMI and its Educational Integration in Pre-Service Teaching**

*Sylvie Blain, Viktor Freiman, & Aïcha Benimmas, Université de Moncton*

The objective of this presentation is to describe the website "Interactive Multidisciplinary Learning Community" ("Communauté d’Apprentissages Multidisciplinaires Interactifs" or CAMI, www.umoncton.ca/cami). This learning community includes the pupils of the elementary and high-school levels which resolve problems or answer questions in mathematics, sciences, social studies and in literacy; their teachers who integrate this website into their classroom; and the students at the Faculty of Education who give feedback to the pupils. This site was developed by professors of the Faculty of Science at the University of Moncton in New Brunswick. The main goal of this site is to help students to make connections between disciplines, and between academic knowledge and practice. Indeed, by analysing and responding to real pupils who participate to the activities on the site, the students in pre-service teaching have a unique opportunity to make links between theory and practice.

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**From Silos to Integration: Minding the Map**

*Judith Buchanan, University of New Brunswick, Saint John*

A framework for interprofessional learning is used to develop an instructional map for an upper-level communications course. Course participants are a mixed audience of undergraduate students studying different health care disciplines, i.e. nursing, radiography, radiation therapy, respiratory therapy, and nuclear medicine. Modern-day health care is delivered by teams of health care providers, thus requiring a transition from silo work to teamwork. Learning with, from, and about each other allows these students to transcend their disciplinary silos and create an integrated community of learners for the purpose of developing the knowledge, skills/behaviours, and attitudes required for collaborative healthcare practice. The presenter will overview lessons learned in addressing the challenges of interprofessional/interdisciplinary teaching, and discuss plans to put a social networking strategy on the instructional ‘map’ for the next iteration of the course. This presentation should be of interest to health science educators and educators involved in, or challenged by, teaching an audience of learners from a variety of educational disciplines.
Better Ways of Integrating Learning: Models of Problem-Based Learning in a Professional Curriculum

Sue Dawson, James Miller, Lisa Miller, Tammy Muirhead, & David Sims, Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island

In a traditional veterinary medical curriculum, students first learn what is ‘normal’ before applying that knowledge towards understanding the ‘abnormal’ presentation of diseased or injured animals. As instructors of first-year basic science courses, we are challenged with finding ways to engage students in learning when their real interest lies with clinical cases. We have worked together to develop a two-semester course which uses a modified problem-based learning approach to integrate our separate disciplines, and to apply basic science knowledge to real clinical problems. These courses have evolved in response to student feedback, as well as the realities of our individual strengths and limitations. Criticism of the course often focused on methods of assessment, effective use of time, and the balance between basic and clinical knowledge. We have developed two different models of problem-based learning in the two semesters to address these concerns. In the first semester, we give student groups a carefully written paper case, and focus on the process of problem-based learning; in the second semester, students have much more autonomy and groups are responsible for finding a case report in the primary literature, and independently applying the problem-based process to their case.

Filling Gaps: Showcasing Student Learning and Contributions to Community Needs

Tanis Mihalynuk, Aheley Ramey, Heather Angell, Jenna Setlakwe, Alyson Cox, & Brittnee Zwicker, Acadia University

In winter term 2009, Community Nutrition course students were given the task of conducting a community-based needs assessment. The primary goal of this project was to identify gaps by systematically evaluating the chosen community in terms of its health, nutrition, and overall lifestyle status, its needs and the resources available to address these needs. The process included: identifying and establishing contact with the community partner of interest; defining the problem; creating a means of data collection and analysis; sharing findings; setting priorities; and choosing a plan of action. This session will provide an interactive overview of this process and highlight student findings, whereby students will showcase their learning experiences. Community projects summarized by students will include the Gaspereau Elementary School Garden Club project, and the Cooking Class Project designed for low-income women. Common themes reported by students will be examined, including reciprocal benefits, challenges and opportunities, prospects for in-depth, integrated learning, the need to focus on modifiable needs of the community and the ability to make a difference in a limited time frame. Ongoing interaction will be encouraged in this session, including an opportunity for audience members to work on a needs-assessment proposal for a community of interest.
Avoiding Post-Parchment Depression: Skills Portfolios for Reflection, Integration, and Transition

Shannon Murray, Hannah Visser, & Lisa-Marie Brunnen, University of Prince Edward Island

Students in non-professional programs often share anxiety about their futures, as well as some lack of clarity about what they have accomplished over four years, as our opening video interviews will show. After their professor gives a brief description of the student skills portfolio, two senior students from a capstone course will demonstrate their own portfolios and talk about the unexpected benefits of the process, as they come to understand the true nature of their accomplishments. This session explores the skills portfolio as an empowering tool for senior students as they look back over their undergraduate programs, and look forward to a life without classrooms.

Making the Liberal Arts Relevant to Business Students

Jeffrey Power, Saint Mary’s University

As educators in business, we usually focus extensively on subject content, perhaps with some integration of practical applications or topics from other business disciplines. However we rarely incorporate lessons from non-business disciplines, most notably the liberal arts, into our courses. Yet our programs typically require as much as 50% of a student’s course work come from outside business. This presentation is intended to show one approach to incorporating some aspects of classic English literature into a business class. I have chosen to use William Shakespeare’s writings as the medium to help demonstrate the relevance of a liberal arts education to future managers. This choice was made for two main reasons: his writings are extensive and therefore there are many examples to choose from; and he is well known, if not well read, by most students. Shakespeare provides us with many examples, both good and bad, of leadership and business issues being demonstrated and discussed. For instance, in Hamlet the character Polonius advises his son when he is leaving to go back to France, "neither a lender nor a borrower be". This can easily be used in class when discussing the risk of debt, for instance. His speech also contains several other good pieces of advice that would be pertinent to a discussion on a more personal level for young students who are away from home, often for the first time. This presentation will provide other examples that could be included in class lectures or discussions that deal with topics such as sunk costs (Othello), debt obligations (Comedy of Errors and The Merchant of Venice), or strategic management (Henry IV Part 2), to name a few.
Open-Minded Labs: How Do I Make Organized Chaos Fit Course Content?

Andrew Trivett, University of Prince Edward Island

The laboratory experience in science and engineering programs in some cases can be dry, disconnected, and very static for students. This paper presents a spectrum of laboratory styles, from the prescribed "follow the step-by-step lab procedure to get the right numerical answer" labs, to open-ended design challenges which involve independent background research and problem-solving by students. These are referred to as "open-minded labs". The author presents a view that this complete range of lab experience is important in supporting learning. The challenge when designing "open-minded labs" is to ensure that the experience for the students maintains close contact with the course content, while it supports their own sense of discovery and innovation. This paper will present practical tools and approaches for designing laboratory experiences that best match the course content and goals.

Community Engagement as a Developmental Process throughout a Degree

Alan Warner, Brenda Robertson, & John Colton, Acadia University

The value of community engagement as an educational tool in individual assignments and courses is well established and increasingly implemented. This session challenges participants to take a step further and consider the benefits, steps, levels, outcomes, and challenges to integrating community engagement as a set of developmental experiences across a degree. The first half of this session will present the concepts, processes, and principles in linking and developing a progression of experiences, from first-year orientation, course projects, and student-run professional associations, to a final core term-block experience with community research projects, international trips, and full-time practicums. Concepts will be illustrated using experiences from the Bachelors of Recreation Management at Acadia. The second half of the session will enable participants to identify opportunities and challenges to implementing community engagement experiences across years in a relevant degree program to them.
Revising/Responding: Writing in the First Year

Sandra Bell & David Creelman, University of New Brunswick

Abstract

In the fall term of 2009, David Creelman and Sandra Bell distributed a questionnaire on Writing, Revising, and Feedback to 120 mainly upper-level undergraduate arts students at UNB, Saint John. The following article is based on the responses to that survey. In the first section, Creelman explores the ways in which the techniques of process writing can be incorporated into a writing file for first year students. In the second section, Bell examines a variety of methods of providing feedback to students and the importance they play in the writing and learning process.

Introduction

Developing student writing skills has always been a challenge for university professors. That challenge has not diminished in recent years. In an attempt to learn more about the writing practices of our students we conducted a survey in the fall of 2009, and the results – integrated into this paper – are illuminating. (For a copy of the survey please see Appendix A.) When we surveyed 120 of our upper-level undergraduate students, the majority of respondents admitted that they were not confident writers. When asked to rate their own abilities, 43% of our students characterized themselves as mediocre writers and 16% viewed themselves as weak writers.

This lack of confidence is not surprising. Though provincial departments of education are increasingly using standardized tests to ensure that high school students are meeting specific literacy and writing standards, these mechanisms are geared towards basic literacy skills, not toward developing particular academic or discipline-specific skills. We know as well that universities have been accepting higher percentages of high school students than in previous decades, and thus professors can expect to be receiving a greater percentage of students who are less prepared than was the case with the first-year cohorts of the 1980s or 1990s. Finally, a one-term course seems brief when attempting to help a student become a more effective writer. Writing practices are deeply entrenched, and at best instructors can only shift the core abilities of students while attempting to increase their awareness of the technical requirements of their discipline.

In short, we can help our students become better writers; we cannot make them good writers. Moreover, writing programs which are built into first year courses are necessarily targeting a specific audience. Some first year students do not need much
help; they are already effective essayists. A few students will not be able to benefit from our help; they are too weak and need the remedial services most undergraduate courses cannot, in good conscience, offer. The remaining middle group is the real target for professors who want to focus on developing writing skills. They want to learn, they have the necessary basics to proceed, but they need structured help to get them to the next stage. The following article explores specific techniques that help students develop their writing skills, and outlines specific suggestions as to how we can best respond to their efforts.

Writing as a Process for First Year Students: David’s Perspective

In order to help our students develop their skills, Sandra and I have followed the established path laid down by researchers over the last twenty years, and have increasingly attempted to focus on writing as a process. In recent years, I have incorporated four distinct stages of the “Writing as Process” model into the student’s assignments, and have required that my first and second year students follow these stages as they create an ever-growing “writing file” or “writing portfolio” throughout the term. (For a sample of the writing file as described in a course syllabus, please see Appendix B.) Students are best able to understand the processes that precede effective writing if they work through four stages: 1) in-class modelling, 2) peer and professional reviewing, 3) required revision, and 4) required self-reflection.

Step 1: In-class Modelling

Writing is too complex a process to expect our students to master, or even to focus on, all aspects of the craft. We must help our students focus on those areas which matter most. In my discipline, English, the analytic essay is the primary form of academic communication, and thus in order to help learners develop effective arguments, I focus on introductions, paragraph unity, and the incorporation of evidence into the analysis. In the opening three weeks of class, each time we meet we explore a component of the analytic essay, and as often as possible the students explore real examples, culled from previous undergraduate papers, of introductions, paragraphs, and analyses, some of which are models to follow, and some of which are examples to avoid. Simply showing the students samples of good introductions is never enough to equip them to write them on their own, but at least they become familiar with the notions that strong opening paragraphs contain clear thesis statements, definitions for key terms, and an overview of where the paper is going.

Step 2: Peer and Professional Reviewing

Our survey of upper level undergraduates indicates that many students are well aware that the writing process takes time and that good essays cannot be churned out at the last minute. Only 17% of our students said they regularly write their papers at the last minute, while 58.5% of our students said they write and edit as they go. Nearly a quarter of the students (24.4%) indicated that they write and then rewrite in a conscious process of revision. Indeed, whether they are rushing their drafts or not, the majority of students have at least one other person review their papers before they are submitted.
Only 23.5% of students submit their papers without having it reviewed by another person. Most people use a review process of some type, usually asking an individual they trust to review their work:

- 22.8% have their essay reviewed by their friend
- 21.4% have their essay reviewed by a family member (9.4% specified the mother)
- 11.4% take their paper to the writing lab
- 7.3% have their paper reviewed by a classmate
- 1.3% have their paper reviewed by their professor.

The majority of students are already having someone look over their papers; however, that peer-review process is, at best, uneven. The readers are not always aware of the discipline specific expectations, and rarely has the reader studied the text. Instituting a peer-review process into the course structure formalizes and strengthens the review process which many students already see as beneficial. In our first and second year English courses, students are required to bring polished essays to class and participate in a peer-review process. Students are “trained” to look for particular aspects of writing, and spend a 50-minute class reading at least one, and more often two or three papers. There are numerous benefits to the system. Peer reviewing heightens the students’ sense of audience, decreases the incidence of plagiarism, and allows them to more accurately place themselves amongst their cohort. Many good writers start to realize that they should be confident about their abilities, and many weak writers begin to see more clearly the benchmarks they need to achieve.

Initially, the students are not, as yet, great editors, so the peer-review is accompanied by a professional review. That is, after the students read each other’s work, they pass in their papers, and I also add comments and suggestions. When the drafts are returned students have an opportunity to revise their work and both the draft and revision can count toward the final assignment mark. As students read the work of, and receive comments from, their peers and the professor, they develop a critical eye for their own writing. As the peer-review sessions conclude I usually ask my students to write a brief paragraph articulating what they discovered about their own writing habits as they read the essays of their peers. These post-review reflections are often frank and clear assessments of their own strengths and weaknesses. No one has ever complained that the process is not helpful.

**Step 3: Required Revision**

Once the students receive their peer-professional reviewed papers, they have from two to five days to revise the essays. Students approach this task in a variety of ways, and I encourage them to adopt some approaches more than others. For example, occasionally students make minimal or no changes, operate mostly in “correction” mode, or make only the changes which are clearly laid before them. This form of revision has the least impact on their writing, and while some of their writing habits may become briefly visible to them, they are not likely to change long-term habits. More satisfying revisions occur as sentences are added, paragraphs are substantially reworked, and in some cases sections of the papers may even be rethought and rewritten (J. Harris 586).
Clearly, this is the preferred approach and these are typically the behaviours of mature students who are self-motivated and functioning well in the university system. It would be optimal to find a way to require deep revisions from all students, but given the time constraints and other stresses under which we and our students work it would be unrealistic to expect this as the regular pattern.

**Step 4: Self-Reflection**

The writing file provides easy opportunities to encourage students to reflect on their work as writers. After they read the work of someone else, and after they complete revisions of their own papers, I ask them to produce self-assessments describing what they are learning about their own strengths and weaknesses as writers. These “assessments” are sometimes formulaic, but more often the students use them to be quite frank about their own work or about the essays of their fellow students. Students are encouraged to think about specific ways they can improve their next assignment, and while they may not be able to follow through on those plans, at least for a moment they are thinking about writing as a demystified process which they can shape and control.

**Challenges Associated with Writing Files**

The obvious weak spot when using the writing files is the difficulty of tracking the results. Most students’ marks increase between the process of drafting and revising, but it is very hard to know whether this is an artificial bump in their grade or a sign of real progress and growth. Certainly, the subsequent essays later in the term display many of the weaknesses which were evident in the first drafts, but stylistic development is a slow process, and many students do show significant improvement in the key areas we focus on. And after all, if becoming a good writer were a quick and easy process, we would all, already, be good writers. Even if the grades on the first assignments end up being a bit inflated, I am willing to live with that, in the hopes that the benefits gained on the “skills development” side are ultimately worth it. In the course of their degree, a little lift in a first year course is of little significance, unless that little lift has helped them develop the genuine skills which help them succeed at the upper level. That is ultimately the hope that drives all essay work in first year courses. Of course, helping our students develop their writing is only part of our job. Responding to their work after they submit it is the next significant component of the writing process. The complex issues associated with how we can best respond to our students’ work warrant close examination.

**Responding to Student Writing: Sandra’s Perspective**

Often we have spent so much time marking that we no longer even think about why we mark the way we do. I doubt that if I asked professors what their favourite part of their job is, that the answer “marking” would be near the top of the list—or anywhere on the
list at all. But it is clearly one of the most important elements to student learning.\textsuperscript{1} On the questionnaire that David and I handed out to undergraduate students, a number of students pointed out that all really useful feedback should be formative: even if summative feedback cannot be used to improve the piece of writing that has been marked, feedback should be applicable to the next piece of writing, or more generally, to skills of writing and argumentation at any time.

The vast majority of the respondents to our survey said that they received feedback either through marginal comments and a final comment (76\%) or minor corrections and a final comment (28\%). Only 15\% had received feedback using a rubric, and 2 students said they had not received feedback at all (!).

What became clear from the comments is that students want a lot of feedback. While a few (4\%) indicated that they were occasionally overwhelmed by the quantity or tone of response to their work, the majority indicated that the more feedback they could receive, the better. Fully 40\% indicated they wanted more feedback, with statements such as:

- “the more the merrier”
- “[I feel ] Underwhelmed, feedback is always appreciated”
- “sometimes professors give too little”
- “I like a lot of feedback because it shows that the professor took time to look through it and it helps for the next paper”
- “There’s never too much!”
- “Give me as much feedback as possible.”

While some could say, “I enjoy direct criticism” or “Be more direct with criticism. Being too nice only hurts,” and one even expressed a desire for “negative” feedback, another cautioned that “kind words go farther than unkind words.” Markers must always remember that a human being will read what is written.

Students indicated that there were different areas of their writing they would like more feedback on, and how they might like that feedback to appear. The most useful types of feedback were comments on content/the argument of the paper (17.5\%) and structural and writing advice (15\%); only 5.8\% stated that comments about such things as spelling and formatting were useful (10\% indicated that the least useful types of feedback were spelling, grammar, and formatting).

Students also commented about the delivery of feedback: most popular seems to be the style with which they are most familiar. Eleven indicated they thought marginalia and a final comment were most useful and a further 8 mentioned marginal comments specifically (they could more easily see exactly where their arguments or writing needed work). Only 3 students mentioned a rubric was useful, but then there were only 19 students who had received feedback by this means.

\textsuperscript{1} On a previous questionnaire I circulated on student engagement, the majority of student respondents said that knowing that they were going to be marked was an incentive to increase their engagement and performance.
The least useful types of feedback were those students considered vague or general: there were 17 comments on not understanding what the marker meant by vague symbols (such as a question mark, an X, or a checkmark) or generalized comments (and, on a cautionary note, almost 10% said they could not even read the marker’s handwriting!). In the final section of the questionnaire, when asked what advice they might give their professors about feedback, there was at least 12.5% who indicated that we should “be clear with what [we] mean,” or, as one student put it, “stop being so vague and tell it how it is!” A number wanted examples or suggestions for how to improve arguments and writing.

The majority of students who responded with more than a ‘yes’ to the question of whether or not their approach to feedback had changed over their undergraduate careers indicated that they now paid more attention and had learned to take feedback constructively rather than personally. As one student stated, “I now take it as constructive rather than feeling I failed.” So even if we’ve marked hundreds or thousands of essays, we need to remember that the student, especially the first-year student, will be reading our comments on a personal level (and perhaps inferring that we’re talking about more than their writing in that one piece of work).

Before we consider approaches to providing feedback, I just want to outline a few general words of advice students provided at the end of the questionnaire:

- “Be honest, be interested”
- “Write TO the individual and not as if you don’t know or care about the student and whether or not they improve”
- “go easy on us. We are just students who are still learning what to do. We are not perfect.”

When considering how to approach marking, markers need to know what it is they are focusing on. When marking, do you focus on the quality of ideas, the research and support of ideas, a clear understanding of material discussed in class or textbooks, the development of the argument, the quality of the writing, the details of formatting? And why do you focus on these specific components? What would you consider to be the most important component, and why? Unless we can answer these questions, we will not be able to model assignments or give students the feedback or the guidance they need to improve. “Put simply, you cannot assess what you cannot define” (Killen and Hattingh 73). And if we are not certain what we are looking for, how can we expect the students to know?

It is valuable to outline to students what you find important in their writing assignments before students hand them in. While few student respondents to our survey stated that they received feedback through rubrics, they had some interesting comments to make about them:

- “a separate marking rubric can also help as far as understanding what the prof is looking for goes”
- “a marking rubric helps me easily identify areas of concern, while written or verbal advice helps improve.”
Marking rubrics or heuristics (the University of Waterloo’s Centre for Teaching Excellence website provides a useful definition for these, along with examples) force us to outline what our priorities are when marking; they demand that we set clear goals/outcomes, and they can help us to structure/focus our teaching. Depending on the configuration of the rubrics, if they are handed to students before assignments are due, they can provide a clear outline to follow. When used as summative feedback, they can clarify for the students why they received the mark they did.

When considering a marking rubric or heuristic, you also have to consider the level of detail you wish to present: does it provide enough guidance? Does it overwhelm the student with too much information? As Ray Smith notes, “when comments about sentence-level correctness outnumbered comments dealing with matters of substance, my students usually assumed that the aim of essay assignments was to insure sentence-level correctness” (Teaching Resources Newsletter 9.1). Richard Beach expresses a more general concern that there might be a problem of students applying “rigid rules for assessing their writing, which in some cases create[s] writing anxiety,” and that it can restrict the marker: “Assessment then becomes a matter of checking their drafts against a set of ‘correct’ rules or maxims” (130). When does a rubric become overwhelming or too restrictive, for both the student and the marker?

Following are two rubrics that provide a narrative for different components of the written assignment, and a general descriptor of assessment: this is useful as guidance for the student, and also allows some flexibility in grading for the marker. They should, of course, reflect what you demand of different assignments.

Marjorie Jane Harris, with Table 1 on page 142 in “Three Steps to Teaching Abstract and Critique Writing,” provides a clear rubric based on a narrative structure. http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/pdf/IJTLHE28.pdf

The University of Waterloo’s Centre for Teaching Excellence provides a few different ways to organize such a rubric (and asks many important questions of the marker). http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching_resources/tips/responding_to_writing_assignments.html

I have created my own Peer Editing checklist (see Appendix C), more an heuristic than a rubric. When given to students well in advance of a written assignment (along with some modeling of key components in class), it provides guidance; and when used in a Peer Editing session in class (usually a 50-minute session devoted to students reading each other’s finished papers), it provides immediate feedback which can then be used by the students to improve their papers. Questions can be changed to suit the level of student (lower levels might need a different focus than upper levels; the checklist provided here is for lower level students, and thus is mainly focused on essay organization) and the course content.

Reviewing various rubrics and marking codes can help us to reflect on what we feel is important in student written assignments, to figure out whether this is conveyed to students in a timely manner, and to consider the method or structure we will use to communicate that information. What we present should be clear, with enough
explanation or modeling to be useful as a guide, but not so much that students become overwhelmed or lost in the detail, or that we ourselves become locked into a marking grid.

In the end, both of us have been encouraged by the responses students have given us as they have encountered our process model of writing and our attempts to provide detailed, specific, and timely responses. Having employed these writing-files and peer-review systems for more than three years, we are beginning to receive some long-term feedback about the procedures. Although this evidence is anecdotal, it is not unusual for both of us to receive comments from students who are now completing their degrees that the peer-review and modeling processes they encountered in our first year courses were among the most helpful moments of their first years as students. Such feedback certainly motivates us to continue experimenting with, and improving, the ways in which we incorporate revision and responses into our entry-level courses.

REFERENCES


Appendix A

[We gave this questionnaire to students in upper level English, Philosophy, and History classes (mainly because we believed that these classes would have a writing component in them), though when asked to indicate what their majors were, the students indicated they were from a variety of disciplines, including English, Philosophy, and History, but also everything from Sociology and Psychology to French, Information and Communication Studies, and Political Studies (and numerous others). D. Creelman wrote the questions regarding writing, and S. Bell the questions about feedback]

Are you in first year __ ; second year __; third year __; fourth year __; other __.
What is your major (or what might it be)? ______________________________

Writing

1. Please describe the process you typically use to write your papers. Please check:
   Do you tend to write in advance and develop multiple drafts? ______
   Do you write the whole and make minor corrections? ______
   Do you tend to write assignments at the last minute? ______
   Other. Please describe: ________________________________

2. Do you have other people read your papers before you submit them? If so, who reads your papers and why do you ask them for feedback?

3. Which of your computer tools do you tend to use when writing a paper:
   a) Spell-check ____________
   b) Grammar check __________
   c) Thesaurus _____________
   d) Other (please describe): _______________________________

4. Do you think you are a strong or struggling writer? Do you have a sense of what your specific strengths or challenges are when you write papers?

Feedback

5. What are the most frequent ways feedback on your papers appears? Please check:
   a) Marginal comments and a final statement? _________
   b) Final statement with some very minor corrections on the paper only?__
   c) A marking rubric (i.e., a separate sheet outlining sections that are being marked that explains how you did on each section)? _________
   d) Some other way? Please describe: _____________________

6. What kinds of comments or corrections do you find most/least useful, and why?

7. Do you ever feel overwhelmed/underwhelmed by the amount of feedback you receive? If so, why?

8. Has your approach to reading feedback changed over your time at university?

9. If you could tell your professors anything about their marking style, what would you say?

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Appendix B

The writing file will be compiled throughout the term. The file is the major component of the course and will include two short papers, one long paper, three self-assessments, and two post-peer-review reflections.

Two short papers (4–5 full pages each): The short papers will analyse a specific aspect of one of the novels we have examined in class. The first paper will focus on close textual analysis; the second paper will focus on learning how to conduct research using academic resources. Each short paper will be peer reviewed in class, and the papers will then be submitted immediately and marked by the instructor. The essays will be returned, usually within twelve days, and you will have at least two days to revise the paper and resubmit it. When I pass back the draft I will have recorded a grade in my records, but I will not yet make that grade available to the student. Once the revised version has been marked, the grades for both versions will be given to the student. The final mark for each short paper will be a combination of the draft mark and the revision mark. If you do not submit your work to the peer review process, you will automatically lose that half of the mark. Therefore, be sure to attend class on the days when a peer review session is scheduled. Each time we do a peer review, please bring your entire writing file, with all the term’s work inside.

One longer paper (7 full pages): The long paper will focus on one or two of the later texts in the course and will require a limited amount of research using resources available through the library.

Self-assessment: When you submit each revised short paper and when you submit your long paper, you will also include a brief self-assessment reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the essay you are submitting. Each self-assessment will be typed and will be at least five sentences long. Two sentences will focus on the strengths of the work being submitted, two sentences will identify areas that could be improved, and the final sentence will reflect on how you plan to strengthen that area of concern. The self-assessments may be commented on, but they will not be given a separate mark. The essay’s final mark will not be revealed until the self-assessment has been completed.

Post-peer-review reflection: Finally, each time the class completes a peer-review session for a short paper, students will produce a very short reflection piece. Having read and critiqued someone else’s essay could make you more aware of your own work as a writer. The post-peer-review reflection will ask you to comment on an aspect of your own writing that you became more aware of while examining your colleague’s paper.
Appendix C

Peer Review

Note for Editors: Be as thorough and objective as you can be; the point is not to be nice, but to be helpful. N.B.: Peer Editors need to print and sign your names at the bottom of this page.

Note for Writers: Remember that this is your paper, and you are responsible for the final product. You do not need to agree with everything the peer editors say, but take into consideration their efforts. Make sure you attach this sheet to your peer-edited draft, and attach both to your final good copy.

Title: Is it clear? Detailed enough?

Introduction:
Both the first and last names of the author(s) discussed are present. y__ n_
The titles of the texts discussed are included properly. y__ n_
There is a clear and detailed thesis statement. y__ n_

Main Body Paragraphs:
Each paragraph has a clear, focused topic sentence. y__ n_
Each paragraph remains true to that focus. y__ n_
Main ideas are supported with evidence from the texts. y__ n_
Ideas are presented in a strong order, with clear transitions. y__ n_
Each paragraph is fully developed (at least 3 or more sentences). y__ n_

Conclusion:
The main ideas are confirmed, without becoming repetitive. y__ n_

Assignment:
The paper understands and addresses the requirements of the assignment. y__ n_

Formatting:
Quotations are formatted according to MLA requirements. y__ n_
All quotations, summaries, paraphrasings, or borrowings from primary and secondary sources are properly documented. y__ n_
The Works Cited page includes all the texts referenced in the paper. y__ n_
The Works Cited page is formatted according to MLA requirements. y__ n_
Grammar, spelling, and punctuation have been checked. y__ n_

Ideas:
If you feel comfortable doing so, please indicate on the essay if there are ideas which are not clear or persuasive or supported. The writer can then address these areas.
Getting Hooked Early On: Motivating Student Learning in First Year Courses and Beyond

Thomas Mengel, Renaissance College, University of New Brunswick

Abstract

Students come to university with different backgrounds, with various expectations and values, and with a variety of personality and learning styles. However, traditional lecture-style teaching does not sufficiently take this into consideration and fails to engage most of the students. In this paper I will suggest Viktor Frankl's approach to motivation – creating something meaningful, experiencing something as meaningful, reframing something in a meaningful context – as a basis to improve student learning. Furthermore, I will discuss the DiSC personality types and Kolb Learning Style Inventory as means of framing different ways of learning and the resulting different needs in terms of teaching and motivating student learning. Finally, I will propose some conclusions in regard to learning outcomes, learning opportunities, assignments and assessment that may help better motivate student learning in general and particularly engage students early on in the learning processes.

Introduction

Supportive learning environments and student engagement have come to the forefront of post secondary education, particularly within the field of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the growing trend to compare the learning environments of different universities in North America on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), among other instruments, has resulted in an increased recognition of the need to improve student engagement (Huber & Hutchings, 2005; Kuh, 2003). University and college programs and structures, however, still reflect the traditional disciplinary focus on knowledge development and transfer. Conventional ways of teaching and the still dominant lecture style do not sufficiently recognize that students come to university with different backgrounds, with various expectations and values, and with a variety of personality and learning styles. As a consequence, student satisfaction with the existing learning environments in many universities both in Canada and the US still demonstrates a large potential for further improvement (Gonyea & Kuh, 2009; NSSE results, 2008).

In the following sections, first Viktor Frankl's approach to motivation will be presented as a basis to improve student learning. Second, the DiSC personality types and Kolb Learning Style Inventory will be discussed as means of framing different ways of learning and motivation. Finally, some conclusions will be made regarding how to help better motivate student learning in general and particularly engage students early on in the learning processes.
Beyond Maslow, Freud and Adler: Viktor Frankl's Approach to Motivation as a Foundation to Improve Student Learning

Maslow's (1943) “hierarchy of basic needs” (physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs) often is presented as a sequential pattern of need satisfaction. Maslow states the “pre-potency” especially of the physiological and safety needs (i.e., the urge to first satisfy these needs and to ignore others) to be particularly significant in the state of severe deprivation; in times of relative health and wealth, the pre-potency weakens. Furthermore, Maslow emphasizes the existence of variations, whereby people prioritize the satisfaction of higher level needs in spite of lower level needs not being fully met. Also, any particular human behavior can simultaneously serve the satisfaction of various needs from different levels. Finally, Maslow preferably interprets the sequential character of his hierarchy as stages of psychological development. As recently verified (Reiss and Haverkamp, 2005), young people tend to focus on the lower levels of needs, whereas the need for esteem and self-actualization is prevalent within the group of mature adults. As to the most important motive of human behavior, Maslow did agree with Frankl (1959) that “man’s primary concern is his will to meaning” (Maslow, 1966, p. 108).

In analysis of the approach of Freud and Adler, Frankl (1959, 1969) has pointed out that focusing on the satisfaction of the “will to pleasure” or the “will to power” are the result of the frustration of man’s primary “will to meaning” and often lead to an “existential vacuum”. While power can be a means to the end of finding meaning, and pleasure and happiness may result from the discovery of meaning, humans primarily search for individual meaning based on their personal situations. Frankl suggested that we discover meaning in what we do by realizing creative values (e.g., creating something at work or in our learning environment), in what we experience by realizing experiential values (e.g., experiencing meaningful relationships in our personal and professional lives), and in what we believe and think by realizing attitudinal values (e.g., developing new and healthy attitudes when suffering professional setbacks or personal crises). Furthermore, he proposes that we discover meaning by answering the questions ‘why?’ and ‘what for?’ based on our personality and on the situational context we find ourselves in; hence, our personal situation needs to guide our discovery. As a result, Frankl’s motivational theory may serve as an anthropological basis for the importance of values and meaning in motivation in general and in regard to motivating student learning in particular (Mengel, 2008a).

Personality Types and Learning Styles

What is of value to an individual differs from person to person and depends on their respective situational contexts. Furthermore, the way we learn is very much influenced by personal preferences for particular learning styles. As a consequence, motivating student learning will depend on the educator’s ability to appeal to different personalities and various styles of learning. The DiSC personality profile (Mengel, 2003; Ritchey & Axelrod, 2002) and the Kolb Learning Styles (Kolb, 1984; 2005) lend themselves to discovering individual preferences for personal values and for particular learning styles.
Based on a model introduced by the American psychologist William Moulton Marston the DiSC personality model was developed and applied successfully, particularly within the scope of self-development. The model differentiates between four styles of behaviour, based on the corresponding four basic types of personality (Mengel, 2003):

- Dominant behaviour (task oriented and extroverted),
- Influential behaviour (human oriented and extroverted),
- Steady behaviour (human oriented and introverted), and
- Conscientious behaviour (task oriented and introverted).

Most people tend to put their emphasis on these basic types and styles of behaviour or some combination of two of these types. Our crucial task as educators is to notice what motivates our different students, what attracts them, as well as what appears to be reasonable and important to them personally. Thus, the typical styles of behaviour of our students and their characteristic value systems can be identified and differentiated in regard to the basic types of personality.
For example, a student with a ‘dominant’ profile will predominantly value directness and courage, power and liberty, self-assurance and competition, as well as adventure and any kind of measurable results. Yet, an ‘initiative’ student will be especially attracted by human relations and feeling, spontaneity and candidness, as well as by personal recognition and common activities. To the ‘steady’ student stability and peace, accuracy and patience, specialisation and appreciation, clarity and loyalty, as well as modesty and reliability are of importance. Finally, for the ‘conscientious’ student conformity and accuracy, authority and clarity, objectivity and security, as well as quality and restraint are substantial. If we identify the basic types of personality of our students and their typical behaviour and value systems, we can appropriately adapt the teaching and learning environment and individual teaching styles and techniques to the needs of a particular class and of individual students.

According to Kolb (1984; 2005) a well-rounded learning process cycles through four different phases (see figure 2 below):

- Concrete Experience (CE): Learning by experience, relating to people, sensitive to feelings;
- Reflective Observation (RO): Learning by reflection, observing before judging, viewing from different perspectives, looking for meaning;
- Abstract Conceptualization (AC): Learning by thinking, logically analyzing, planning systematically; and
- Active Experimentation (AE): learning by doing, get things done, take risks, influence through actions.

While many people identify two neighbouring phases as their favourite learning preference, some may demonstrate a balanced pattern of two opposing (CE and AC or RO and AE) or even of all four learning preferences (CE, AC, RO, and AE).

The preferred entry point may be different depending on the preferred individual style of learning that Kolb identified based on the four phases:

- Diverging (Learning approaches including CE and RO): imaginative, many perspectives, broad cultural interests, specializes in arts and humanities, info seeking;
- Assimilating (Learning approaches including RO and AC): create theoretical models, assimilate disparate observation, inductive reasoning, likes abstract concepts, basic science and math oriented, acting on intellectual understanding;
- Converging (Learning approaches including AC and AE): practical application of ideas, well on conventional tasks, hypothetical / deductive reasoning, engineering / physical sciences; and
- Accommodating (Learning approaches including AE and CE): puts into action, adapts well, intuitive, practical / technical (business).
As indicated, most people have two strong learning style preferences that influence their motivation to learn. For example, a person with a strong emphasis on 'diverging' and 'assimilating' will most likely prefer to learn by reflective observation. Since this is true for both educators and learners, facilitators of learning processes with one particular learning style (combination) need to make an extra effort in regard to their teaching approach to not solely depend on their own preferred learning style but to address all learning styles existent within their particular class; most likely this will indeed include all existing learning style combinations. Again, this can elegantly and easily be accomplished by walking students through various learning activities covering all four phases of the learning cycle thus addressing all different learning styles.

Interestingly, the various phases of the learning cycle – and the associated learning styles – appear to correspond well with typical personal behaviour and values as captured by the DiSC profile (see figure 3 below; for the details regarding the values most likely associated with the individual personality profiles, please refer back to figure 1 above):
By designing the learning environment and teaching approaches holistically with a balance of the four different phases of the learning cycle and by considering the four basic personality types with their typical motivators (values), we will be more likely to address the individual motivation of all of the students in our classes. Furthermore, applying this combined model may help us address the basic human motivation of creating something meaningful (e.g., by creating a concept or a solution), of experiencing something meaningful (e.g., in relationship with other learners or in regard to the ‘beauty’ of a solution), or of developing a meaningful attitude (e.g., by developing a new understanding of oneself, of others, or of the context).

For example, in one particular leadership class – Practicing Leadership in Community Projects – students are invited to initiate, plan, implement, control and close a project within a community of their choice (Mengel, 2008b). Within the context of their choice (concrete experience) they need to identify a particular challenge or problem (reflective
observation), develop and evaluate various options that might solve the problem (abstract conceptualization), and implement and evaluate the solution (active experimentation). This will engage all different personality and learning styles as they can see and experience how they can personally contribute to and benefit from this learning opportunity. Particularly, the need to inspire others during the initiation of the project motivates the influential personality and the challenge to identify and describe the problem appeals to the steady personality. On the other hand, developing a corresponding solution might be of particular interest to the conscientious personality whereas the dominant personality is especially engaged when it comes to implementing the solution. Many students will enjoy creating a meaningful solution for a real problem within their communal context. Some will also derive meaning from doing this together with and for others or by deep thinking and reflection throughout the process. As a result, students and their communal counterpart may develop a new or different understanding of the challenges encountered, the solutions developed, and of the process applied.

Conclusions: Concrete Applications in the Learning Process

In order to better engage students in the learning process we need to better address their individual motives for life and learning in our teaching endeavours. Especially, we need to extend beyond our own values, preferences and interests and comprehensively address values and learning preferences of other personality styles that most definitely will exist within our student body.

In particular, a learning environment that addresses those issues needs to be designed around the following principles:

1. Class sessions and learning activities need to be well balanced and spread around the complete learning cycle. For example, designing a course or a module to include various learning activities like group work, individual reflection, logical analysis, as well as active experimentation or fieldwork will help create a balanced approach that addresses all phases of learning.

2. Teaching and learning needs to appeal to different personalities. For example, while competitive tasks tend to appeal to ‘dominant personalities’, students with an emphasis on behaviour associated with an ‘initiative personality’ appear to prefer cooperative assignments. Similarly, individual assignments on social topics seem to be of special interest to the ‘steady personality’ whereas the ‘conscientious personality’ often prefers the same kind of assignment but on scientific, technological or business related topics.

3. Teaching and learning needs to include elements that are well designed to allow for, to integrate, and to evaluate the discovery of creative, experiential, and attitudinal values. The learning environment needs to encourage students to create important results and relevant solutions, to experience meaningful relationships, and to develop healthy attitudes particularly in the context of challenges, conflicts and crises.

4. Meaningful assignments will assess student learning based on respective learning outcomes that are clearly defined and significant within the context of students’ lives and their professional futures (Zundel et al., 2006; Mentkowski, 2000).
Furthermore, they will consider various learning styles and personalities as well as relevant individual and community settings. Finally, these assignments will speak to creative, experiential, and attitudinal values both within an individual as well as within a community context.

5. Meaningful feedback will address student performance based on well-defined outcome criteria. It also will consider the student’s learning style and personality by explicitly acknowledging strengths and addressing opportunities for growth. Finally, it will speak to instances (as demonstrated by the student within the assignment) and opportunities (yet to be developed) for the discovery and realization of values in regard to self, to others, and to the relationship between self and others.

Summary

This paper has first presented Viktor Frankl's approach to motivation to develop a conceptual understanding of ‘meaningful learning’ and to present a foundation for improving student learning. In their learning, students want to do something meaningful, they want to make meaningful experiences with something or someone, and, finally, they want to be able to gain meaningful perspectives on what they encounter, particularly if they experience it as personally difficult and challenging. Secondly, this foundation has been expanded by and connected to the personality types presented within the DISC personality profile as well as to the learning cycle and respective phases and learning style preferences introduced by Kolb. The resulting comprehensive model of meaningful and values-oriented learning may help students and educators alike to conceptualize their individual learning and teaching, respectively. As a result, the suggested five principles for the design of a student learning environment may better support learning that is meaningful to students and thus motivate them to more actively engage early on and continuously throughout their life-long learning process.

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"I Think, Therefore I Learn": Student Learning Philosophies as Tools for Motivation, Retention, and Engagement

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Abstract

We teach in an era in which student engagement and retention are key components of our classroom strategies and attitudes, and we now understand that issues involving transitioning into adulthood and lack of engagement are pressing student problems. This paper investigates the creation of a learning philosophy as a motivational and focusing tool, particularly for first-year students. Modeled on guidelines used to develop a teaching philosophy statement, the student learning philosophy asks students to go through the same process of self-reflection, self-discovery, and self-actualization that we do as teachers while crafting our teaching philosophy. Asking students the important questions “who cares?” or “why am I here?” before they ask us these questions puts the drive and focus back to the student’s inner life, the only place where true motivation and engagement can take place.

Introduction

Student engagement is pervasively, and perhaps increasingly, one of the most important issues in higher education; how do we assist in motivating students into energized learners who take responsibility and control over learning and develop their own strategies outside the classroom’s walls? Ideally, engaged students are those who not only locate motivation, but take ownership of their learning process; doing so sets the stage for active learning and provides the student tools to move forward. How do we tap the source of motivation within each individual and connect with students’ passion for learning, and how do we encourage students to think about and articulate that motivation? As instructors, we have an important role to play in helping students engage; an obvious starting point is our clear communication of why the material we teach is important and relevant to the student. Indeed, although engagement can be fostered and measured in myriad ways, teachers and students alike would probably agree that people are more likely to be motivated to learn if they understand why they are learning. Through asking the right questions and allowing a space in students’ lives to contemplate the source and nature of their own engagement, we can harness inner motivation. The beginning of a course or a program of study is the perfect place and time for this kind of reflection, and the creation of a personal learning philosophy statement is an excellent exercise for students to explore their motivation and engagement. Common sense seems to dictate that committing to a course of action in writing – hence publicly – creates positive pressure to follow through with that commitment. Once students have articulated their learning philosophy, they can use it not only as a starting point, but they can also apply that philosophy throughout the course and turn to it in the more challenging moments of learning. As the first assignment in a course, the learning philosophy provides a rich opportunity to capture students’ minds and hearts.
The Teaching Philosophy and the Learning Philosophy

The inspiration for the kind of learning philosophy laid out in this paper came from the processes that are part of creating a teaching philosophy. The teaching philosophy statement has long been a standard medium through which instructors have discovered, refined, and expressed their unique approaches to teaching, and is at the heart of most faculty member’s teaching dossiers. Indeed, the crafting of a candid and unique philosophy is one of the most challenging elements of the dossier, and one over which teachers usually linger and even agonize. The crafting of the philosophy forces the writer to think broadly and deeply about both the how and the why of how he or she teaches. Translated into student terms, a learning philosophy asks writers to pursue the same process, focusing on learning goals, learning styles, trajectory of a course of study, articulation of personal learning challenges, habits and characteristics, as well as fostering an awareness of motivation factors and hindrances. As teachers think about mentors and important “teaching moments,” so too can students ponder significant “learning moments” and consider those who have influenced them. The teacher-student relationship and the roles of each are also brought into sharper focus through thoughtful reflection and writing.

Using the creation of a personal learning philosophy statement as a first or early assignment in a course has tangible benefits. It creates an ice-breaker between student and instructor, as the student discloses his or her own learning styles and behaviours identified through a learning style inventory such as VARK (Fleming & Mills, 1992), or other means, to a teacher who is trying to get to know students. Because it requires no prior subject matter knowledge, the philosophy can be assigned early in the course, allowing the instructor to get a sense of a student’s writing style, cognitive abilities, and learning challenges. We often struggle to get a course going and to encourage students to work hard from the first day of class, and the learning philosophy provides an early assignment that gets students into good work habits from the start. A learning philosophy statement is also difficult to plagiarize, partly because it is so personal, but also because the leading questions can be tailored to particular course goals and objectives. Because it is a personal statement as opposed to a display of subject mastery, students can start the term on firm ground and with positive feedback. It can also be a way to encourage students to look at the big picture of their educational trajectory and where the particular course fits.

Guiding questions for formulating a teaching philosophy statement address some more practical but also theoretical aspects of how and why a teacher teaches. Guiding questions written by Eileen Herteis for the Gwenna Moss Teaching Centre site at the University of Saskatchewan give a good overview of the kinds of questions helpful in creating a teaching philosophy (Herteis, 2010). Books on creating a teaching portfolio are also good places to mine appropriate questions that can be adapted to the student experience of learning (e.g., O’Neil & Wright, 2001; Seldin, 2003). Appendix A contains the Herteis guiding questions and my adaptations for student learning.

Implementing a learning philosophy assignment into a foundation course in music, engaging with students at the very beginning of a four-year degree program, proved instrumental in getting students motivated and thoughtful about their learning, and
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brought out some key characteristics that link directly to personal motivation. The process also makes students mindful, drawing their attention away from unexamined patterns of behavior and asking them to focus on the present moment and on the foundations of their learning strategies (Langer, 1989). The following excerpts are taken, with permission, from student philosophies (names have been changed).

**Process and Inner Drives**

"I am still debating the question, "Do I learn to live, or live to learn?" On the one hand, my fascination with the world of music is endless and its voice is stronger than any other voice in my life. I'm not sure if this is a healthy way to view life and learning but it is my way this point in my life. Perhaps living each new day hoping to learn what life brings that day would make me a less driven person. I am very goal orientated and I despise defeat or mediocre performance in any area. I know that balancing my workload so that I do not come to the point that I hate what I’m doing, because it has consumed my life. I hope that my love for music is going to help me through my degree."

-Amanda

**Changes in Attitudes**

"My approach to learning has always taken place in a somewhat traditional manner – especially when it comes to what I am learning about; which subjects I place value on, etc. Recently it has turned to more in-depth studies, requiring greater thought, and answers which you can’t just find in a textbook. I am beginning to find the people around me an invaluable source of information, be it factual or completely personal. Music, I find, is one of those studies, that (especially in practical playing), forces one to look deeper inside what they’re learning."

-Emily

**Critical Thinking and Reflection**

"My learning philosophy is made up of many experiences, and countless acquaintances, and therefore my words can only provide a shadow of its true form. I know that I try to be genuine in everything I do, and only pursue the things in life that I am passionate about. I always love remembering the quote “know thyself” from Socrates – it sums up quite nicely (in an abstract way), what part of our learning philosophy should be, and perhaps the best way to know exactly what our learning philosophy is. That each study should be full of personal reflection and discovery; whether it is music we are studying, or any other discipline."

-Carrie

**Strategies and Behaviours**

"My learning philosophy is based on certain key points that ensure I completely understand the teachings that I receive. One key point is *listening*; listening to the teacher, to other students and to class discussions. Although listening to a teacher’s lecture is great, I also try and listen to the outside world. I listen for any comments I
receive or hear from other people to not only better understand, but to reinforce my strengths and strengthen my weaknesses.”

-Jonathan

**Passion and Transformation**

“As of now, am I am not quite sure what the purpose to all this learning is. I do know, that there is a greater purpose to it, and I am excited to discover what those purposes may be. For the time being, I know it is my responsibility to learn as much as I can in the time that I have here at Mount Allison, and to emerge on that stage in four years not only with an education, but also as a better, wiser version of my current self.”

-Sarah

**Learning as Multi-faceted**

“Something I like about university already is that I am being forced to learn about so much more than just what is taught in my classes. I love learning because there are so many different types. I could not name them all, but there is learning about interpersonal relationships, and learning responsibility, and learning time-management, and learning how to present one’s self appropriately. I think university was a good choice for me because it is such a huge learning opportunity.”

-Hannah

**Ownership**

“It is a common belief that people go to university to "get an education". Learning, however, isn't something that we ever finish. Whether through school, extra-curricular activities or general discussion, it is something that we continue for our entire lives. I am not here in university to get an education; it is not even something that can be acquired. I am here to build an education.”

-Ellen

**Conclusion**

These excerpts from student learning philosophy statements read like glimpses into ideal students, and yet they were taken from students with all levels of ability and achievement in the course. Most instructors would be delighted to imagine that students end their courses or university life with these attitudes and this level of awareness; to be able to articulate and engender them in the first weeks of study is astonishing.

The learning philosophy could, then, profitably be employed at the beginning of an individual course, but also would be quite useful at the beginning of a program of study as part of the advising process. Students needing extra support or encouragement in their studies could find the creation of a learning philosophy an illuminating look at their own learning styles and challenges. A learning philosophy could even be revisited and revised in each year of study, allowing students to document their own progress and
changing approach to their work. In order to make the creation of a philosophy a meaningful and important assignment, it should be equal in weight to similar assignments in a course, and ideally would be one or two double-spaced pages in length. Grading the philosophy raises some interesting questions: as a reflection of a student’s inner life, the content of the philosophy would seem something difficult to grade. At the same time, the instructor would want to indicate to the student how well or completely the writer had communicated that philosophy. A pass/fail system would be an appropriate grading strategy for the philosophy, then, to avoid the impression that the instructor is disapproving or somehow censuring students’ descriptions of themselves. Alternatively, if letter grades are required, a simple rubric focusing on level of engagement, clarity of prose or expression, seriousness or care in preparation, or evidence of reflective thought could be used. The value that accrues from a learning philosophy assignment far outweighs any sensitivity surrounding grading, however. If students, as the above examples seem to demonstrate, can connect maturely with their own motivation in the first few weeks of post-secondary education, then the path ahead of them promises to be a more enlightened and engaging one.

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Appendix A

Statement of Teaching Philosophy: Some Guiding Questions

1. Why are you compiling a portfolio?
2. What excites you about your discipline?
3. How do you motivate students? Colleagues?
4. Do you have a role model?
5. Has your approach to teaching, changed? How? Why?
6. What kinds of activities take place in your classroom?
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7. Why have you chosen these activities?
8. What role(s) do students play in your classroom or lab: Listeners? Co-discoverers? Peer teachers?
9. Which aspects of your work do you enjoy most? Why?
10. How do you give students feedback?
11. How do you measure learning outcomes?
12. Which courses do you enjoy teaching? Why?
13. What have you learned about yourself as a teacher? How?
14. How do you encourage students and teaching partners to connect with you?
15. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching and other interactions with students?
16. What have you learned from teaching? About teaching?
17. How have you disseminated that learning?
18. How has your research influenced your teaching? Your teaching influenced your research?
19. Is there a teaching or learning incident that has been pivotal in your career? What? Why?
20. What are your teaching goals?

These questions can easily be adapted to a learner’s perspective and inspire the same kinds of thinking:

1. What excites you about the discipline of ____?
2. How do you motivate yourself to learn?
3. What have you learned from your peers or fellow students?
4. Do you have a role model? Are you a role model for others?
5. How has your approach to your own learning changed? How? Why?
6. Has technology affected the way you learn? How?
7. What kind of techniques and activities do you use to study?
8. Why have you chosen those methods of study or those approaches to homework?
9. What role do teachers and other students play in your learning?
10. What aspect of learning do you enjoy most? Why?
11. Which courses do you enjoy taking? Why?
12. What have you learned about yourself as a student? How?
13. Do you encourage professors to connect with you?
14. How have extra-curricular or work experiences influenced your learning?
15. Is there a learning incident that has been pivotal in your life? What? Why?
16. What are your learning goals or objectives?
17. How do you measure your own learning outcomes?
Orientation to the Real World: An Empowering Experience!

Brenda Robertson, Alan Warner, John Colton, Acadia University

Introduction

The Acadia Recreation Management Program has been in existence for nearly 40 years. Despite the longevity, there still exist many misconceptions regarding the nature of this academic program and the recreation profession more broadly. Although the focus of the program has been modified periodically based upon societal need and/or faculty expertise, the basic foundation of the program has remained consistent. The mission and core values serve to inform curriculum design and delivery. These, therefore, form the basis of the orientation experience.

The mission of the Program is to develop professional leaders who are critical and insightful thinkers as well as creative problem solvers. They are committed to promoting healthy, socially responsible, and environmentally sustainable lifestyles and communities in a broad range of human service organizations.

For the past decade, the program has held a traditional 72-hour student orientation weekend at a residential camp early in the Fall semester. In recent years, faculty observed a change in the nature of students entering the academic program and noted that student expectations for the program did not always match the program objectives. Therefore, beginning in 2007, numerous changes were implemented in order to enhance the first year experience and to assist with the successful transition into university and in particular into the Recreation Management program. One change was in the nature of the orientation experience, moving from a camp-based setting to a community setting where students would become immersed in the real life work of their chosen profession. The intention was that this experience would provide a frame of reference for the academic program upon which they were about to embark.

Outcome Goals for the Orientation

Program design is based upon the following goals:

- Engage students in a challenging community-based learning process;
- Facilitate knowledge transfer between the classroom and community;
- Explore the diverse dimensions of the professional field;
- Gain insight into the role of recreation through the eyes of potential consumers;
- Foster an understanding of expectations for a student in the program and the field;
- Provide an opportunity for students to assess their potential to succeed in the field;
- Build capacity between students, faculty, and professionals;
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- Increase awareness of community resources and opportunities for learning.

To date, two separate orientation program models have been designed and implemented. The first was based in the rural communities of the Annapolis Valley in which the University is situated. The second is an urban-based model implemented in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

Although led by faculty, design and implementation of the orientation involves mobilizing the assets and resources of a number of partners including senior students, alumni, recreation professionals, and community volunteers. Data have been gathered from participants as well as those involved in the implementation process. The results speak to the depth of learning that has been acquired as a result of specific components of the overall experience. The brief description of the two models follows.

Brief Description of Two Models

**Quest for the New World**

More than four centuries ago, the French established one of the earliest European settlements at Port Royal. They struggled, and almost perished, but were successful establishing their place in the new world by building relationships and a strong community. There is much to learn from the choices and challenges of past adventurers. Students used the stories of some of the early explorers and pioneers as metaphor for their quest to establish themselves in the ‘new World’ of Recreation Management.

Selected Program Components

- Investigate how French explorers were able to sustain themselves in the new world through forging relationships with the natural world and first nations inhabitants;
- Discover the essence of a fishing community that has survived for more than two centuries by mobilizing both natural and human resources;
- Gain a glimpse into the spiritual relationship that exists between First Nations people and Mother Nature through the songs and stories of a Métis elder;
- Explore the authentic self through immersion into a vibrant arts community where values are expressed through the artistic works;
- Discuss the concepts of power and control with military officers from around the world whose decisions involve life and death;

**Seeing the World Through Different Eyes**

Participants gained insight into the Halifax community through the eyes of those whose experience with city life has been very different from their own. Gaining access to this rare glimpse into the lives of those for whom recreation is not necessarily taken for granted was a privilege. This experience was made possible through the efforts of dozens of individuals who work in the service of the myriad of populations for whom HRM is their home.
Selected Program Components

- Investigate the diverse dimensions of the field by working alongside professionals (active living, outdoor education, special event planning, sport, youth development);
- Experience the city as certain others do through engagement in unique recreation activities fostered by the environment and culture of the community (circus skills, environmental education, graffiti art, historic interpretation, professional theatre);
- Build capacity with a mentor over an intimate dinner at a unique local eatery;
- Experience a different side of city night life with a lantern in hand wandering through an urban forest;
- Gain rare glimpses into the lived experience of groups of urban dwellers as they go about their daily lives (African Canadian, disenfranchised youth, elderly, first nations, homeless, immigrants).

Conclusion

It has been four years since faculty embarked upon this rather ambitious initiative and results to date have been extremely positive from the perspective of engaging and empowering students. Brenda Robertson is developing a comprehensive guide to planning academic program orientations based upon the Acadia Recreation Management program experience.
Avoiding Christmas Graduation: Facilitating the Success of First Year Students

*Alan Dick, King’s Edgehill School*

Many students find navigating the first year of university to be challenging due to a variety of reasons, which may include skills not learned and other skills that need to be unlearned if they are to find continued success at university. This session will focus upon the following four aspects of this situation: learning the limitations of multitasking behaviour as it applies to learning, as well as the implications of this upon using laptops for note-taking; showing students how to organize aspects of their studies and how to take notes; showing students how to use and evaluate web sources (going beyond Wikipedia); the application of just-in-time teaching methods using the web to improve student engagement and enrich learning. This session will be of interest to any faculty and staff working with students who wish to teach study-skills courses or integrate some of these strategies into their courses and tutorials as a way to improve student confidence and success at university. The website for this session, as well as the pre-session online activities, may be found at Moving to Catch the Digital Train, http://movingtocatchthedigitaltrain.blogspot.com, under the heading “AUU Showcase Session”. Participants are encouraged to take the survey found at this website so that the session may better match their interests and experience.

"Who Do You Think You Are?": Metaphor as a Tool for Student Self-Discovery and Empowerment

*Jane Magrath, University of Prince Edward Island*

Today’s first-year students are often represented as "confident", "assertive", and "entitled" Millennials whose expectations, experiences, and attitudes are quite different from those of their university instructors. This popular representation fosters the perception of a "generation gap" between instructor and student that can result in anxiety and misperceptions on both sides of the desk. This session introduces participants to a simple 10-minute writing exercise that encourages students to discover and share their experience of university with each other and with their instructor—a process that tends to challenge the popular representation of the "Millennials", and narrow the perceived generation gap. Through an exploration of metaphor, students are able to surface and discuss their experiences in ways that connect them to each other, and reveal them to be more similar to than different from the students their instructors were many years ago. This exercise can be used with a wide variety of students from a wide variety of disciplines, and works not only as a tool for discovery, but also to empower students to effectively understand and claim agency in their university experience.
Abstract

We have completed a research study utilizing sound field amplification technology in classrooms of young children. Our findings indicate that the technology (including speakers and microphones installed in classrooms) enhanced the listening and learning environments. In our own university classrooms, we utilize sound field systems and believe that there are many benefits. Other universities around the world have found this as well. In this paper, we will describe the benefits of using portable sound field technology in university classrooms. Today, all university students must be empowered to take control of their learning, to hear, and participate actively in classrooms. With the high potential of hearing loss in young people (because of the use of music listening devices) and the fact that there are just as many distractions in university classrooms as there are in other classrooms, sound field technology can contribute to students’ empowerment.

Introduction

Our research study included 60 kindergarten to grade 3 classrooms of children (Flagg-Williams, Rubin, & Aquino-Russell, 2009; Rubin, Aquino-Russell, & Flagg-Williams, 2007; Rubin, Flagg-Williams, & Aquino-Russell, 2006). Elementary classrooms are typically environments full of sounds. Much of learning depends on making sense of spoken messages and being able to hear is fundamental for learning the phonology of speech, which underlies learning to read. In our study, sound field amplification systems were installed in 31 classes and 29 did not have the technology. The sound field systems included small wireless pendant microphones for teachers, four mounted speakers, and a handheld microphone for students. We found that the technology enhanced the listening and learning environments. Implications of the study included: (a) the need for routine hearing screenings to help identify students with educationally significant hearing problems that could be addressed in the critical early years; (b) structural modifications, avoidance of noise sources, and classroom arrangement should be considered in designing or renovating schools; (c) amplification can help teachers use time efficiently, can help students focus more easily, can improve student learning, and can improve teacher voice health. Education and follow-up on using the sound field systems is an important component.
Our research and that of many others have focused on young students. However, we believe that all students, including those in universities, could benefit from this type of technology by assisting all students to participate more fully in the classroom. More efficient communication allows for a calmer, more respectful teaching-learning environment, less repetition, and saves the teacher’s voice as well.

**Sound Field Amplification Technology**

Our research involved sound field amplification technology that was permanently installed in elementary classrooms. In universities, amplification systems are typically installed in larger lecture theatres but not in average-sized classrooms. Studies of the acoustical quality of university classrooms have found that listening conditions are often less than adequate and involve complex design considerations (Larsen, Vega, & Ribera, 2008; Hodgson, 2004; Kennedy, Hodgson, Edgett, Lents, & Rempel, 2006; Yellin & Scott, 2005; Woodford, Prichard, & Jones, 1999).

With the high potential of hearing loss in young people due to the excessive use of music listening devices (American Medical Association, 2008), and the fact that university classrooms have many distractions, sound field technology can contribute to empowering students. Some distractions include: students walking in and out, chatting with others, cell phones going off, computers, projectors, background noise, heating and ventilation systems, classroom equipment, outdoor noises, hallway activities, etc.

In our own university classrooms, which are small, long, and unusually shaped, we have found that utilizing portable sound field systems improves the classroom soundscape. Portable systems are a solution for us. In this paper we will describe the benefits and introduce you to the technology.

**Personal Experiences in University Settings**

Both of us have used sound field amplification in our respective university environments. Our experiences have many similarities and a few differences.

**Joan’s Experiences**

I have been using the portable system in teacher education courses for approximately four years. Since being engaged in our research project, I realized that my Bachelor of Education students could benefit from being provided with the opportunity to use the system. As more public schools install sound field amplification systems in classrooms, they are more likely to be expected to use this technology when they enter the teaching field. Through my role-modeling and by trying the system themselves, the students gain comfort, familiarity, and an understanding of this technology as a tool for classroom teaching.

Another reason for using the technology is that in my personal experience I have found that my university students do not typically let me know they have difficulty hearing in
class. Some may not want to be singled out as ‘different’. Some may not feel the need to mention a mild or temporary hearing loss. It may not have occurred to students that they could benefit from mentioning a hearing challenge. In some cases, students’ attention may simply have wandered or a noise occurred near them. The most serious student could sometimes be appearing to ‘chat’ in class because he/she simply needs to ask a neighbour: ‘What did the professor just say?’ When I use the portable sound field amplification system and engage the students in a discussion of its effects, usually some will say they find it much easier to hear. Those who mention this have typically not mentioned that they had difficulty when amplification was not being used. Some have said that they did not know hearing in any university classroom could be as good as they perceive it to be with the portable amplification system.

From my perspective as the classroom instructor, a benefit when using the portable system is that I can speak with my voice volume at a normal conversational level. When I do not use the system, I sometimes have a sore throat after a class. This can be true even if lecture-style teaching was not the main teaching technique used that day. A pedagogical benefit that I have noticed when using the system is that students can hear me equally in all parts of the room even if I move around the room for any reason. Finally, I have found the handheld microphone to be a good pedagogical tool for engaging students in respectful listening to each others’ contributions during class discussions.

**Survey**

We recently asked one of my B.Ed. classes to respond to a brief survey after they had had an opportunity to experience my teaching with the portable sound field system and to use the handheld microphone for a class discussion. The survey was completed early in the semester, so the students had only a few opportunities for the experience. Nevertheless, the findings from our survey were representative of spontaneous comments from students in previous classes in both of our settings, as well as from the elementary classroom teachers and students interviewed during our research.

The written survey was anonymous and included the following questions: (1) What is it like for you to have your professor use the system? (2) What is it like for you to use the handheld microphone? (3) What are the benefits and/or drawbacks of using classroom amplification in your university classroom? and (4) What do you think would be the benefits and/or drawbacks of using amplification when you are teaching in your own classroom?

Some of the perceptions of the students in regard to the professor using the system were that they saw a difference in how they attended and focused since my voice was clear, words were easily distinguished, and they were able to hear equally well from all parts of the room. They also mentioned that this seemed to help them feel more relaxed in the classroom setting. They noticed that the background noises which are typical for any classroom were not as apparent.

In regard to the handheld microphone, students reported they were more engaged and they wanted to have a turn with the “talking stick” which made them feel what they had to say was important and that others were listening. One student even mentioned
having more fun because of the “rock star effect.” Others felt that speaking into the microphone was somewhat awkward. Some felt apprehensive about trying the microphone, which had only been used two or three times in the class since it was early in the semester. We have found that students require time to get used to using the microphone and to hearing their own voice amplified.

When these teacher education students considered the benefits of using the system in their own future classrooms, they mentioned: it could save their voices; they would not need to yell to be heard; people with soft voices could be heard better; all students could hear no matter where they sat; and they would not need to repeat themselves as much. When they considered any drawbacks they might encounter, the students mentioned: passing the microphone around could take too long; the handheld microphone could spread germs; discomfort with using the system if unfamiliar with it; and the possibility of technical problems, such as feedback or volume control. As with the other comments made by the teacher education students, these ideas are quite similar to those mentioned by elementary school teachers in our study.

Catherine’s Experiences

I have completed my own research with university students who live with a different sense of hearing (Aquino-Russell, 2004; Aquino-Russell & Santopinto, 2006, 2007a,b,c). I prefer these words (different sense of hearing) as descriptors of the lived experience rather than the words: loss of hearing, hearing loss, hearing impairment, or deafness because of the stigma that is attached to those labels. University students in that study described experiences where not being able to hear in classrooms diminished their learning, their participation, and their feelings of acceptance. They also believed that by having technology of all sorts, their learning was enhanced.

Just as Joan mentioned, I too realized the importance of enhancing the soundscape of classrooms since being involved in our research project with sound field systems. In addition, the fact that I live with a different sense of hearing made me even more committed to finding something to improve the soundscape in my classrooms. I have lost 90–95% of my hearing in each ear and wear bilateral hearing aids. I have noise in my head (a condition known as tinnitus) which, at times, is louder than peoples’ voices (especially my husband’s voice).

I made a request to my university to purchase a portable amplification system to assist me in my hearing and this request was granted. I use the system in all of my classes with students in the Baccalaureate of Nursing program. The benefits of using the portable system are many. I have students who also live with a different sense of hearing. They have commented on their joy of hearing wherever in the classroom they sit. As well, those students who have normal hearing appreciate being able to hear me and their colleagues with softer voices. From experience, there are always those persons who could not be heard without yelling during the time without the system. Those students who have very soft voices simply cannot use a stronger voice no matter how many times they may be requested to do so. The microphone and portable amplification system enable their voices to be heard across the room. Those students appreciate not being constantly asked to speak up or to repeat what they just said. They have commented
that it gives them more confidence when speaking in front of the class. In addition, there are minimal requests for repetition, which saves time.

I use the clip-on microphone when doing classes; this allows me free use of my hands (which comes in handy, since I’m Italian and love to use my hands when talking). We use both the clip-on microphone and handheld microphone when students are doing presentations and pass along the handheld microphone when students have questions. This creates some movement in the class, which during a three-hour class is welcomed as well.

Students have come to request borrowing the portable equipment for other presentations in other classrooms, which, to me, shows their appreciation of the equipment.

As for drawbacks, occasionally the microphone is positional and the system may squeal but that noise can be stopped in a flash. I must say, however, that I see more benefits to using the system than drawbacks.

Conclusions

People differ in how they learn, hear, and understand. This includes university professors and students. We believe that all university students must be empowered to take control of their learning, to listen, to be heard, and to participate actively in classrooms of learning. We believe that improving the soundscape in your university classroom can contribute to the empowerment of students.

Acknowledgement

Funding was received for initial research (Benefits of Sound Field Amplification in Kindergarten through Third Grade – A Provincial Study) from the New Brunswick Department of Education in 2006.

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Learning to Listen: Taking the “Ouch” Out of the Language Requirement

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Abstract

In our increasingly internationalized environment, many Canadian universities are responding to the growing demand for graduates who can demonstrate some level of cultural sensitivity and competency by including a foreign language requirement in some or all of their programs. While no one disputes the need to have at least a nodding acquaintance with a language other than English or French, the learning process can be stressful for many students, and the ability to listen and to comprehend what is being said in a foreign language is often the most challenging of the four language skills. Audiovisual software available to language instructors is often outdated or irrelevant to students’ needs, especially at the introductory level. This paper will describe the development of a website which uses mini-video clips to help students improve their listening strategies at the introductory, intermediate and advanced levels so that their listening experience is less frustrating and more productive. Although the site is designed for students of Spanish, the concept is applicable to other contexts.

Introduction

Of the four language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—the latter has been neglected both in the classroom and as a topic for research, although tasks of listening comprehension and other aural activities are often the most difficult and stressful for students. Not only are there no visual references to help with comprehension, but unlike their participation in speaking activities, when they listen, students are passive recipients of the information that is transmitted with no control over its speed or manner of delivery. The complaint of, “They’re talking too fast!” is a common one in any language classroom. Nevertheless, we need to focus on the development of these skills as the ability to “hear”; that is, to comprehend and process what is being said in the second language is of primary importance now that language instruction has an increasingly communicative focus.

There is a paucity of research in general about listening comprehension in the language classroom, especially with respect to the anxiety which aural activities often provoke. Recent literature on language instruction often examines the process of listening only in combination with speaking, in a broader examination of the communicative skills. Although the central role of the affective domain in the language classroom has been amply demonstrated (Arnold Morgan, 2000), few studies examine the way in which this affects listening comprehension (Vandergrift, 2007). The situation is even worse with respect to introductory-level students, as the majority of studies which do deal with listening comprehension focus on students at the intermediate and advanced levels (Field, 2003).
Some attention has been paid to listening comprehension strategies (Berne, 2004), focussing on the methods used by language learners to process the information they are receiving aurally. There is evidence that listening comprehension improves when learners receive strategy instruction (Thompson & Rubin, 1996). Goh (2008) concludes that L2 learners who learn to use metacognitive processes can improve their listening skills; Alberding (2004) and Coto Keith (2002) make a case for teaching specific listening strategies. Other studies have looked at factors, such as status relationships between interlocutors, which may affect listening comprehension (Carrier, 1999) or methods used to evaluate listening comprehension (Cheng, 2004). However, these studies have focussed more on the participatory role of the learner in the listening process, and there has been little attention paid to the type of material which is used for aural activities.

From a pedagogical point of view, one of the crucial elements in language teaching is to provide “comprehensible input” to the students (Krashen, 1981). Krashen (1996) also recommends what he calls “narrow listening”; that is, a modification of narrow reading in which a student is exposed to repeated and varied material on a topic which is interesting and familiar in context, thus providing the comprehensible input s/he needs to improve her/his ability to understand what she or he is hearing. This technique has demonstrated good results especially with beginning students (Dupuy, 1999).

It is generally accepted that authentic comprehensible input is most effective in the learning process (for example, see Hwang, 2005): seeing and hearing native speakers in their own environment increases interest and motivation on the part of the learner. However, there has been some debate about whether truly authentic material is appropriate in all situations. Even when carefully prepared and presented, it can often be very challenging particularly for beginning students; the use of material which is too far above a learner’s current level of competence can prove discouraging for students, even to the point of lowering their self-esteem. These affective factors have a negative impact on academic achievement (Arnold Morgan, 2000; Krashen, 2004). Instructors often compromise by modifying the material so that it more closely approximates the level of competence of the students. This type of “semi-authentic” material better meets the needs of beginners and can be adapted for use at any level of ability (Robin, 2007; Vandergrift, 2007).

Some analyses of the needs of beginning students suggest that it is effective to teach them first to work with bottom-up processing; that is, the ways in which meaning can be extracted from individual words and phrases (Berne, 2004; Field, 2003; Nunan, 2003). The tendency of native speakers to produce high-frequency sequences of words or “chunks” of language (Field, 2003; Vandergrift, 2007), and the frequency of the “conversational routines” (Richards, 2003) which make up a good part of colloquial speech have also been noted. There is also evidence to show that when students have the option of controlling the speed of what they are listening to, both their overall comprehension and their ability to recognize individual words improve (Robin, 2007; Vandergrift, 2004). However, care should be taken to ensure that natural stress and rhythmic patterning are not lost when speech is artificially slowed (Vanderplank, 1993). Bill VanPatten (1996) has developed a focus on form approach in his work on input processing and in his later work on processing instruction (2004). The goal of input
processing is, ultimately, production, although students are not expected to speak during the instruction, and it must involve what VanPatten calls “structured input”; that is, language which conveys both syntactical and semantic information to the student, and in which learners are encouraged to focus on certain structures while performing meaningful activities. Continuing this emphasis on structured input, Saroli (1999) has developed listening comprehension activities which practice the recognition of commonly-used grammatical structures presented in language “chunks” through repeated exposure to the same phrase with slight modifications.

Technology is playing an increasingly central role in language learning and the possibilities it offers have been recent topics for research. One enormous advantage of incorporating technology into language classes has been its potential for allowing students to access materials anytime and anywhere and to listen to a recording as many times as they need to: the positive impact of learner-centered education has been well documented (for example, see Decker, 2004). Hulstijn (2003) describes an application he has developed called “123LISTEN”, which allows students to repeat as many times as they wish a short oral text which has been divided into fragments and which provides written transcriptions of each phrase. Hulstijn holds that it is both possible and necessary to teach listening skills and that multimedia is a valuable tool for improving the automatization of linguistic information processing on the part of beginning students. A number of studies have explored uses of technology in language classrooms and have found that the provision of subtitles (Robin, 2007) or of advance organizers and captions (Chung, 1999) had positive effects on listening comprehension.

In the classroom

Although language instructors may be perfectly aware of the latest studies in second language acquisition, they do not usually have time to develop their own materials, and must depend on the supplementary materials that accompany most language textbooks. Even though many recent language programs provide stimulating and innovative material and use the latest technology, the topic of listening comprehension is often the least well handled and it is often difficult for an instructor to find auditory input that is useable in a language classroom. Much of the listening comprehension material seems often to be produced with an eye to outdated ideas or to the use of the latest hardware in the classroom or language laboratory, without much thought to the student who will be using the material, and until recently there has been little attempt to provide authentic input.

High-quality listening material is especially important for beginning students, who need particular attention as they develop techniques for the comprehension and processing of spoken language and who can easily be discouraged if they perceive the task as beyond their capabilities. At this stage, attention to the affective factors in a classroom can make all the difference, and it is important to provide tasks for students that will result in a high rate of success.

As an example of the types of listening comprehension materials that are typically provided for use in the Spanish-language classroom, the auditory materials accompanying one widely-used introductory textbook consist of:
Technology has advanced, but the content and pedagogical approach has not changed much in the past ten to twenty years. What is needed in language classrooms is material designed specifically for aural comprehension practice which focuses on the special needs of beginning students. Keeping in mind the results of recent research studies in this area, it seems that the best material would be semi-authentic structured input, presented in a format which allows students to listen in fragments accompanied by the written text, in accordance with their needs and their level of ability. The material should consist of repeated and/or recycled topics and use familiar vocabulary, allowing the students to achieve a high success rate and thus improving the affective domain by decreasing the stress associated with listening tasks.

The "Español en Vivo" project

What, then, is the solution to this dearth of high-quality auditory material? With the idea of creating something that our students would find both useful and interesting, I elaborated a project whose purpose would be content generation, keeping in mind Krashen’s idea of "narrow listening" or repeated listening on a limited topic. The goal was to create a library of authentic audiovisual material relevant to the needs of Acadia University students, which would be available for use in Spanish language classes at all levels, and of potential interest to other universities. My intention was to strike a balance between VanPatter’s “structured input” and authentic scenes of native Spanish-speakers interacting naturally. The project would involve filming university students, with whom our own students could identify, speaking and interacting in a variety of settings and about many different topics ranging from the most basic greetings to longer conversations about, say, classes or plans for the weekend. The video clips would then be processed and digitized. The final product would consist of a bank of short individual clips of not more than one minute each. By practicing with the
video clips students would improve their level of ability and on transferring these learned skills of listening and comprehending to the classroom, their confidence would increase.

These video clips would be different in a number of ways from other audiovisual materials designed to practice aural comprehension. First, topics would be recycled so that students could see and hear short conversations about, for example, the introduction of one friend to another or an invitation to a party, at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels of difficulty. Second, many of the dialogues at the introductory and intermediate levels would be filmed twice (or more in some cases) using different people and with slight modifications in the scripts so that students could hear the same language used with minor variations. Third, each clip would be filmed twice using exactly the same script: the first time with the actors speaking slowly and the second time speaking at a normal speed. In this way and without the need for artificial technical methods of reducing the speed of the articulations, students would if necessary be able to hear the same phrases spoken in real time but more slowly by the same people: a possible solution for the complaint of “They’re speaking too fast!”.

Other advantages of these video clips would be that they are:

- available online for both classroom use and individual student practice;
- flexible: instructors could pull a number of short clips to use as desired. The segments would be general in theme so could be used to accompany any textbook.
- varied in topic and level, so they could be used by learners at any level from introductory to advanced;
- short: focussing on one easily-accessible linguistic element at a time without including extraneous information that might confuse the student;
- natural: the segments would be semi-scripted leaving room for changes by the actors, with emphasis at all times on natural language and interaction;
- visual: as well as hearing Spanish spoken, students could use visual cues such as facial expressions to interpret meaning;
- culturally valid: the clips would use real students from a variety of racial backgrounds, and be set in recognizably Hispanic locations;
- contemporary and relevant material would have greater impact on students.

In the summer of 2004 a grant from Acadia University allowed me to travel to the Agrarian University of Havana, Cuba, where I spent two weeks with a videographer, also from Acadia, filming the students and professors who gave of their time and their talents most generously. The procedure was as follows: for each unit in the textbook we use at the introductory level I had written several short dialogues using the topics introduced and the target vocabulary for that unit; most of these are topics that can be found in any introductory Spanish text. The scripts for the dialogues were no longer than three or four lines each for the earlier units and slightly longer for the later ones. The actors involved in each scene went through it with me and we discussed any syntactical or lexical changes they wanted to make to the scripts so that these would be as natural as possible, always keeping in mind the level of ability of the students who would be using the material. It was not always possible to incorporate the actors’ suggestions but in many cases these resulted in a more colloquial and contemporary flow of language.
Then, we spent a few minutes rehearsing the scene before filming it. I chose not to allow the actors to go over the scenes more than once or twice before filming so that the scenes would not seem too “rehearsed”. As the dialogues were short the actors had no major difficulties in memorizing them. The scenes which were intended for use at the introductory and intermediate levels were filmed twice using exactly the same script, once at a slower and once at a slightly faster speed; by allowing students of Spanish to hear the scene at an unnaturally slow speed they would be able to comprehend much better when they heard it again at spoken more naturally (Robin, 2007). The actors did have some difficulties with the technique of speaking more slowly while at the same time maintaining a natural rhythm, as they had never before had to do anything like this, and several times it was necessary to repeat the filming in order to achieve the desired effect. To allow for the recycling of themes for students in intermediate and advanced language classes, the same topics were filmed at three levels of difficulty.

Although I had written the scripts for the introductory level, leaving spaces only for individual material (names, ages, etc.) and allowing the possibility of modifying language which the actors felt was unnatural, when the topics were repeated for students at the intermediate level I left the situations only partially developed. For example, with the topic of “La familia”, (“The family”) one of the dialogues which was filmed at the introductory level was:

A/ ¿Tienes hermanos? (Translations are provided in Appendix 1.)
B/ Sí, tengo (...).  
A/ Es/Son mayor(es) o menor(es) que tú?
B/ ...

At this level, the two actors worked with a script which was more or less fixed, but they could use their own information to complete the gaps. As we went over the scene they decided what they were going to say and we rehearsed everything once or twice before filming. This same dialogue was filmed twice with different actors who made their own changes to the responses, and with each pair of actors the scene was filmed at two speeds. In this way, students would have the opportunity to listen four times to what was essentially the same material but with minor modifications.

At the intermediate level, this topic was recycled with a much more open dialogue:

A/ ¿Tienes una familia grande?
B/ (…)

As in the majority of the scenes at this level, the question would be familiar to students but each actor interpreted the response as she or he wished. Of course, we reviewed everything before filming so that I could be sure the language and the lexicon the actors wished to use would be suitable for the level of ability of the students who would be using the video clips. For example, one of the final versions of this script was:

A/ ¿Tienes una familia muy grande?
B/ Sí, tengo tres hermanos, una hermana con un sobrino, cuatro primos y cinco tíos.
At the advanced level, in addition to being longer, the dialogues were essentially improvisations. I gave the topic to the actors, who developed a scene based on it. For example, for the topic of “The family”, I gave them the question:

A/ ¿Cómo es tu familia?  
B/ (…)

The actors could develop their own interpretation of the scene, but within the previously established limits: it had to be a short scene which focussed on the topic without straying into other areas of conversation. As at this level the scenes were intended for use by advanced students, I did not control the speed at which the actors spoke even when a strong regional accent was detectable. These scenes would be the challenge!

The week we spent filming produced over three hours of usable material, which the videographer tells me is an excellent result. On our return to Acadia University and over the summer of 2005, the hundreds of film clips were organized on a website called “¡Español en vivo!” which is available to anyone with internet access. This site is based on thematic units, most consisting of clips aimed at students at introductory (two speeds), intermediate (usually two speeds) or advanced levels. For example, for the first topic, “Saludos y presentaciones” (“Greetings and introductions”), students can select clips from the category “Basic”, which offers a variety of very short scenes using the formal “usted” or the informal “tú”, each filmed at two speeds; “Intermediate”, in which the language used is more varied and the actors speak more quickly, or “Advanced”, in which the actors improvised their own scenes on the topic of formal and informal introductions. Another tool we provided for students accessing the website is the option of being able to see the tape scripts for any of the scenes after they have played through once without the text. As in the study carried out by Hulstijn (2003), students may listen to the dialogues either with or without the written text, but on the “¡Español en vivo!” site they must listen first without seeing the text. Students may also opt to hide the text again once they have seen it.

The Study

In order to integrate the website “¡Español en vivo!” into the classroom in a systematic way and to see how effective it was in its goal of improving students’ listening comprehension ability, a small study was designed to compare two introductory Spanish classes taught by the same instructor. The only difference in the way these classes were treated was that the experimental class used the “¡Español en vivo!” website as the basis for a participation mark which was included in each student’s final grade, while the control group was given writing activities in the form of crosswords or online discussion groups for their participation mark.

The participation assignments, eight in all, were given at the end of each unit of study. For each one, the experimental group had the task of listening to five or six video clips using language from the topic which had been covered in the unit, from the “¡Español en vivo!” website. As the challenges of assessing objectively whether a student has or has
not listened to a film clip are obvious, it was decided that the students would be required to repeat and record each of the dialogues they had listened to so that their participation could be measured. The tape scripts were made available to them so that they would be able to do this without the added stress of having to record an unseen dialogue. For their convenience, the film clips the students were required to listen to for each unit were copied to a separate page in the university course management system.

Both the experimental and the control groups were given a pre- and a post-test which measured their listening comprehension ability. As the post-test was not administered until three months after the pre-test, it was felt that the same test could be used, thus eliminating any possible difference in difficulty between the tests. The results for students who did not write both a pre- and a post-test were discarded, leaving a sample group of 17 in each of the experimental and the control groups. Students in the experimental group were also asked to complete a survey on their use of the film clips.

**Results and Discussion**

The test marks for the pre- and the post-tests were averaged for both of the groups. The average mark for the control group was much higher than that of the experimental group on the pre-test (12.97 out of 25 or 51.88% for the control group, and 10.47 out of 25 or 41.88% for the experimental group). It is worth noting that the control group performed significantly better than the experimental group in all of the written tests given during the semester, and in fact, this group had a larger number of strong students (in their third or fourth year of study) in comparison with the test group, which comprised mainly first year students. This difference is the most probable cause of the higher class average.

The starting point for each group is not at issue here, though; rather, the difference in average scores between the pre- and the post-tests would indicate any improvement in listening comprehension made by each group. In fact, both groups performed better on the post-test: the control group had an average score of 16.88 out of 25, or 67.53%, while the experimental group averaged 13.26 out of 25, or 53.06%. In other words, the control group improved an average of 3.91 points (15.64%) while the average improvement of the experimental group was only 2.79 points (11.16%).

While these results are obviously disappointing from the perspective of the comparison of the two groups, they should not be interpreted to imply that listening practice has no effect or may even have a negative effect on listening comprehension abilities. There were a number of flaws in the methodology: one improvement would be to have a larger sample of students, allowing for two groups which were large enough so that individual high or low scores had less effect on the average for that group. It might also be argued that the amount of listening practice carried out by the experimental group (eight short assignments during the 12 weeks the semester lasted) was simply not enough to have an effect on performance, and that doubling or tripling the number of assignments might result in higher scores on the post-test. A statistical analysis of the results might also indicate areas where methodological changes could be made.
Instructors often make the mistake of underestimating students’ awareness of the processes involved in their own learning; the survey completed by the experimental group after the post-test contained some valuable observations which should be kept in mind in any future study in this area. Almost half of the students who completed the survey (9 out of 19) mentioned the fact that they perceived the activity as having helped their pronunciation and their speaking ability as much or more than their listening comprehension. Typical comments were: "It helps me orient my pronunciation."; "Being able to hear my voice when I played it back was helpful. I was able to actually hear my pronunciation."; "It was useful because it forced us to practice our speaking and pronunciation."; "It was really helpful to hear the proper way unfamiliar words were pronounced, and then work on pronouncing them yourself."; "Although you said the listening activities were to help us with our listening comprehension, I personally found it helped me more with my spoken Spanish.”

Although one of the central limitations of the study, that students were allowed to see the text in order to record their versions of the dialogues, had been apparent from the start, it was felt that the benefits of being able to check whether students had completed the activity - student recordings of the dialogues were interpreted as evidence that they had in fact listened to them - outweighed the disadvantages of having them actually see the text. One or two students did mention that having the text available meant that they relied more on reading than on listening comprehension. In a future study, other ways of ensuring that students have listened to the dialogues should be explored, perhaps by having them answer multiple choice questions or finding specific information, always allowing students to see the questions before starting to listen to a scene so that they are not faced with having to read, listen for gist and find specific information all at the same time. Nevertheless, from a pedagogical point of view, the students seem to have benefited from the speaking as well as the listening practice. It is worth noting that a number of students commented that it was helpful to them to have the written text available, reinforcing their feeling of achievement at being able to complete the activity more successfully, so that the affective benefits of this aid to comprehension should perhaps also be considered.

Whether or not the extra listening comprehension practice activities resulted in a significant improvement in listening ability on the part of the students, their response to the activity itself was positive. The average response to the question "Did you find that this activity was useful for improving your listening comprehension?" was 3.7 out of 5; the average response to the question "Did you find that this activity was useful for improving your spoken Spanish?" was 4.1 out of 5, and the average response to the question "Did you enjoy completing this activity?" was 4 out of 5. There were many positive comments on the activity: "I liked it..."; "I liked how there was a variety of different scenes/situations..."; "I enjoyed trying to listen to the clip without looking at the written dialogue..."; "The audio part is helpful..."; "It was useful..."; "It was good to have more practice speaking and listening outside of class, I thought [it] was very useful, and I did notice a change in my ability to comprehend Spanish speakers."; and so on. The only negative comments focussed on frustration arising when the actors spoke quickly or their speech was unclear, or when strong regional accents were detected.
In conclusion, then, although the actual comparison study of the benefits of the type of listening comprehension activity showcased in the “iEspañol en vivo!” website had a number of methodological flaws, the activity itself was enjoyed by the students who felt that their listening comprehension and particularly their spoken Spanish had benefited from the extra practice. A next step could be to compare this type of listening activity to a more traditional one or to see how much listening practice is necessary before improvements can be detected statistically. In any case, the author is incorporating the website into all of her language classes as an enjoyable way of exposing students to the Spanish language and Hispanic culture.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the AITT of Acadia University for the grant which made possible this work, my videographer Dave Sheehan for his patience and his talent, and I especially want to express my heartfelt thanks to the students and the professors of the Agrarian University “Fructuoso Rodríguez Pérez”, Havana, and particularly my “actors”, without whose unstinting enthusiasm and cooperation this work could never have been completed.

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**Appendix 1: Translations of the dialogues used as examples**

**Topic: The family**

**Introductory level**

A/ Do you have brothers or sisters?  
B/ Yes, I have (...).

A/ Is/Are he/she/they older or younger than you?  
B/ ...

**Intermediate level**

1. A/ Do you have a large family?  
   B/ (...)

2. A/ Do you have a very large family?  
   B/ Yes, I have three brothers (and sisters), one sister with a nephew, four cousins and five uncles (and aunts).

**Advanced level**

A/ What’s your family like?  
B/ (...)

**Footnotes**

1 Krashen now refers to this as the "Comprehension Hypothesis"; see Krashen, 2004.

2 In order to avoid confusion between the students who would use the final product and the students who offered their time to help in the creation of the video clips, I have used the term “actors” when referring to the students and professors who participated in the filming.
From the Teaching Innovation and Improvement Fund

I would like to give my wholehearted thanks to the students and professors at the Universidad Agraria de La Habana "Fructuoso Rodríguez Pérez" and especially to my "actors", without whose help this project could never have been completed.

The "Español en vivo" website is available at: http://socrates.acadiau.ca/courses/span/saroli/espanolEnVivo/index.htm

This was purely coincidental as students may register for any section of introductory Spanish.

This number is higher than the number used to calculate the data as all students who had participated in the activity completed the survey whether or not they had taken both the pre-test and the post-test.
Organic Chemistry Flashware – Visualizing and Interacting with the Unseen

Ghislain Deslongchamps - University of New Brunswick

Organic Chemistry Flashware is a collection of interactive web-based multimedia courseware for teaching and learning organic chemistry. Optimized for both classroom projection and individual usage, it enhances the traditional lecture experience while providing students with a rich and interactive environment for individual study. Over 150 multimedia animations cover the college-level curriculum, with an emphasis on the arrow-pushing notation, resonance, reaction mechanisms, and orbital interactions. Interactive multimodal representations can be found throughout the collection, i.e. static vs. animated mechanisms, flat vs. tetrahedral structures, line-angle vs. bond-wedge drawings, arrow-pushing schemes vs. orbital interactions, etc. For each reaction, animations of key localized orbital interactions are presented with didactic emphasis. Stereo-electronic effects are highlighted throughout the collection, a pedagogical first. http://flashchem.nelson.com.

Assessment 2.0: What Could [delete] Should Be!

Gregory Fleet – University of New Brunswick

This paper presents the early stages of a research project examining how the range of web 2.0 services (social networks, read-write/collaborative web sites, etc.) might play a unique and powerful role in formative assessment in higher education. This interactive session will engage the audience in a series of discussions around formative assessment models, practices, and the role these new web services might play in self-, peer-, and instructor-evaluation. The goal of formative assessment is to help improve performance and accelerate learning through feedback (Sadler, 1998). Feedback can come from individuals (self, peers, tutors/supervisors/instructors) and intelligent software. Feedback can also be a planned (formal) activity, or a more spontaneous (responsive) activity (Cowie and Bell, 1999). More recently, Yorke (2003) and Nicole et. al. (2006) have sought to model these players, goals, and tasks to illustrate the process of formative assessment in more formal tasks and self-regulated learning, respectively. Yet, the ease of creating social networks (groups of peers) within or beyond the university, as well as the numerous ways we can electronically interact as individuals, can have dramatic impacts on both formal and responsive feedback. Discussion will examine the confluence of these issues.
Biohazard! Online Learning Modules for Human Anatomy and Physiology

Kirk Hillier & Scott Schaffner, Acadia University

Acadia students have been involved in the development of a series of interactive, game-style software modules to aid in Human Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) instruction. Using a series of case-study decision-making adventures, this innovative software will provide students with opportunities to solve murders (through autopsy), provide emergency blood transfusions, diagnose diseases, examine athletic physiology, or engage in surgery. Unlike other A&P software tools that provide users with "anatomy content learning" experiences (via animation, virtual dissection, etc.), this technology utilizes a problem-based learning (PBL) approach to provide students with immersive, interactive, real-life learning situations. By coordinating teaching with ‘role-playing’ resources, students learn how concepts gained in classroom theory can ultimately be applied to a better understanding of these ‘real life’ experiences. Further benefits include cost-saving for expensive laboratory exercises, enhanced resources for virtual classrooms, and advancement of a novel ‘gaming’ learning style.

Providing Focused Feedback to Build Writing and Thinking Skills Using Adobe Captivate

Donovan Plumb, Mount Saint Vincent University

Providing effective and focused feedback to students on their written projects plays a key role in developing writing and thinking skills. All too often, however, instructors provide feedback that serves to justify grades rather than to support students in identifying achievable next steps they can take with their writing and thinking. This session demonstrates how Adobe Captivate can be used to develop a flash video that captures screen images and verbal commentary to provide focused feedback to students on their written assignments. Using this software, instructors can shift their focus from providing evaluation that justifies grades to feedback that enhances student learning.
Driven by Distraction: Harnessing Video Games to Engage and Empower Learners in the Post-Secondary Humanities Classroom

Jon Saklofske, Acadia University

It is difficult to dismiss Robert Fulford’s claim that "stories touch all of us, reaching across cultures and generations". From oral transmission through to print-based literary narratives, stories and storytellers have been celebrated worldwide as essential instruments of cultural exchange on local and global levels. The best stories are those which not only entertain and inform, but involve us somehow, generating an empathetic understanding of diverse characters and situations beyond ourselves. I hope to demonstrate that while traditional narrative forms encourage the development and expansion of globalized perception, digital game-based narratives have the potential to achieve much more. Gamers are directly involved in narrative development, and their engagement with a story is active, causal, and consequential. Role-playing through and designing narratives within an interactive and often collaborative virtual environment demands creativity, a balance between independent thought and interdependent action, and an immediate application of learning in tandem with traditional strategies for critical reflection, awareness, and understanding. Using commercial games, independent titles, a gamespace designed specifically for my students, and an interactive narrative toolkit developed at Acadia as examples, I will argue that an activity usually dismissed as escapist and reductive can actually enhance opportunities for process- and performance-based learning.

The Use of Videoconferencing Facilities to Enrich Student Learning

James Whitehead, St Thomas University

Students at North American universities tend to attend universities close to home, while others are increasingly staying at home and taking online programs. While faculty strive to introduce different ideologies, cultures, and information, there is inevitably a limited pool of diversity/knowledge upon which the students can draw. The invitation of visiting speakers to a classroom can help to augment the experience, but can be expensive and/or impractical. Videoconferencing and other conferencing facilities need not be inhibatively expensive nor complicated, and can be applied in virtually any classroom with limited equipment. This presentation, by an enthusiastic videoconference neophyte, will introduce some of the different available technologies, as well as suggest some of the methods in which they could be employed. The session will provide an opportunity to hear how attendees may have used conferencing technologies to enhance the student learning experience, or share challenges that they hope could be solved using such technology.
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Colton, John is an associate professor in the School of Recreation Management and Kinesiology. His research interests include sustainable community development, aboriginal tourism, and agri-tourism. He is a sustainability trainer; trained as a Natural Step Associate, for organizations across the Atlantic Provinces and works as a sustainable tourism evaluator for National Geographic.

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Follows, Scott is an associate professor in the Fred C. Manning School of Business at Acadia University. Dr. Follows is one of the nation's leaders in the development of computer generated virtual learning environments and a 'Champion' of technology enhanced learning. In 1998, Dr. Follows founded the Acadia Centre for Virtual Learning Environments which produces virtual learning environments for the university and corporate training markets. His first virtual learning environment, Thirst for Knowledge, was distributed by Pearson Canada. As a researcher, Dr. Follows investigates methods to improve learning through the use of technology. Dr. Follows has taught at the university level for 18 years and was recognized for his innovative and engaging classroom style when he was given the Outstanding Teaching Award in the Faculty of Professional Studies.

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Guiney Yallop, John J. is a parent, a partner, and a poet. Dr. Guiney Yallop’s research includes poetic inquiry, narrative inquiry, autoethnography, and performative social science. He uses these methodologies to explore identities, communities, and emotional landscapes. His writing has appeared in literary and scholarly journals. He has presented his work at national and international conferences. Dr. Guiney Yallop is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Acadia University. He lives in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, with his partner, Gary, their daughter, Brittany, and their pets.
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Hermida, Julian is the Chair of Algoma University’s Senate Teaching and Learning Committee. He is also Assistant Professor with the Department of Law and Politics. Julian conducts research, publishes, and gives presentations on a wide array of teaching and learning topics. He specializes in media literacy, academic reading, inclusive teaching, and deep learning. Prior to joining Algoma, he taught at Dalhousie University, where he was recognized with the 2004-2005 Award of Excellence for Teaching. Julian holds master’s and doctoral degrees from McGill University’s Faculty of Law and a postdoctoral degree from the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Law (Common Law section). He has also studied higher education teaching and learning at the University of Montreal and at Harvard University. He also holds a doctoral degree from the Catholic University of Cordoba in Argentina. You can learn more about Julian by visiting his website at www.julianhermida.com.

Hillier, Kirk is an Associate Professor of Biology at Acadia University. He has a PhD in Biology from Memorial University of Newfoundland and joined Acadia in 2007 following post-doctoral studies at the University of Utah. The Hillier lab maintains research program focused on olfactory neuroethology and animal behaviour, with particular focus on the sensory physiology of pheromones. In addition, Dr. Hillier teaches courses in Human Anatomy and Physiology, Comparative Animal Physiology and Entomology. Future plans will include commercialization of pedagogical software for anatomy instruction.

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Mihalynuk, Tanis is an assistant professor in the School of Nutrition and Dietetics at Acadia University. Her eclectic research and career path spanning several countries and nearly two decades has taken two primary streams: 1. strategies for enhancing teaching and learning process and outcomes; and 2. Health promotion and disease prevention. Her research pursuits have included the use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in various areas of inquiry, including: 1. Medical nutrition curriculum development and related evaluations; 2. Fostering community-campus partnerships and service learning; 3. Deriving optimal teaching and learning strategies in distributed medical education; 4. Educational, partnership, and environmental innovations for health promotion and disease prevention. Her teaching interests are aligned with her research pursuits with the goal of providing local, provincial, national, and international stories, perspectives and lenses.

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AAU Teaching Showcase: Acadia University, October 2009

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Robicheau, Wendy B.A., LT Dip, M.A., is the Deputy University Archivist at Acadia University. During her career, she has worked with the archives of Saint Mary’s University, Cape Breton University (the Beaton Institute), and Acadia University as well as Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management. Robicheau has worked closely with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives, the Iona Heritage Connection, and the Kings-Hants Heritage Connection to further the interest of heritage in Nova Scotia. Her research interests include the development and implementation of information literacy programs for students. In the past, Robicheau has researched and written about archival databases, specifically ArchWay: Nova Scotia’s Archival Database.

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Sampson, Gina was working as a service learning community support Coordinator at St. Francis Xavier University at the time of the 13th annual AAU Teaching Showcase.

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