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2006

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Proceedings / Actes

Edited by / Sous la direction de
Allyson Hajek and
Elizabeth Noseworthy

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

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Memorial University of Newfoundland
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Memorial University of Newfoundland

From Vision to Voice: The New Story of Teaching and Learning

Pratiques innovatrices en enseignement et en apprentissage : de la théorie à la pratique

Conference Organizing Committee
Comité d'organisation du colloque

Colleen Collett
Elaine Crocker
Maureen Dunne
Allyson Hajek
Elizabeth Noseworthy
Arlene Power

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This edition of the *Association of Atlantic Universities Teaching Showcase Proceedings* represents the scholarship, dedication, and hard work of many individuals to whom we are very grateful. In January 2006, staff of the Instructional Development Office began planning for the October Showcase with generous support from our parent division, Distance Education and Learning Technologies (DELT), and from the Office of the President. Special thanks to Organizing Committee members Colleen Collett, Elaine Crocker, Elizabeth Noseworthy, and Arlene Power whose careful planning and attention to detail ensured that everything ran smoothly and that the Showcase provided a rich learning experience for all who attended.

Peggy Miller and Kristine Hamlyn, members of DELT's Marketing and Business Development team assisted in promoting the Showcase and provided gifts of appreciation for our presenters and special guest speakers. The co-chairs and committee members, Elaine Crocker and Colleen Collett, were assisted in the proposal review process by Daph Crane, Kjellrun Hestikin, Gerona McGrath, and Dennis Mulcahy. Calvin Rose and the student staff of Classroom Support Services collaborated with Colleen Collett to provide presentation equipment and technical support to session facilitators. Mark Shallow ensured no technology malfunction in the lecture theatre of the Inco Innovation Centre. Carm Porter assisted Arlene Power in managing the finances and generously volunteered her time to help with on-site registration. Poster presenters were assisted by Elizabeth Noseworthy who also used her formatting and editing skills to help prepare this volume. Our gratitude also to the many volunteer hosts who welcomed, introduced, and thanked each session facilitator.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to colleagues in the region who work to improve teaching and learning in our Atlantic Canadian institutions and who traveled to Memorial to share their stories. This edition contains 20 papers presented at the AAU Teaching Showcase in October 2006.

Allyson Hajek
Co-Chair, AAU Teaching Showcase 2006
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Remerciements

La présente édition des *Actes de l’Expo-Enseignement de l’Association des universités de l’Atlantique* est le fruit de la mission professorale, de la conscience professionnelle et du travail ardu de nombreux individus que nous remercions sincèrement. En janvier 2006, le personnel du Bureau du développement pédagogique s’est mis à la tâche d’organiser l’Expo-Enseignement du mois d’octobre conjointement avec notre division d’attache, Distance Education and Learning Technologies (DELT) et le bureau du Président. Nous remercions tout spécialement les membres du Comité d’organisation du colloque, Colleen Collett, Elaine Crocker, Elizabeth Noseworthy et Arlene Power. Une planification consciencieuse et minutieuse a fait de l’Expo-Enseignement un succès et ce fut une occasion d’apprentissage importante pour tous les participants.

Peggy Miller et Kristine Hamlyn, membres de l’équipe du marketing et du développement des entreprises de DELT, ont aidé à promouvoir l’Expo-Enseignement et ont offert les cadeaux de remerciement pour les présentateurs et les invités spéciaux. Lors de l’évaluation des propositions de communications, les coprésidentes et membres du comité Elaine Crocker et Colleen Collett ont été appuyées par Daph Crane, Kjellrun Hestikin, Gerona McGrath et Dennis Mulcahy. Calvin Rose et le personnel étudiant du Service de soutien dans les classes ont collaboré avec Colleen Collett afin que tous les besoins techniques des présentateurs soient rencontrés. Mark Shallow s’est assuré du bon fonctionnement de la salle de conférence au Inco Innovation Centre. Pour sa part, Carm Porter a aidé Arlene Power à la gestion des finances en plus de se porter bénévole lors de l’enregistrement en ligne. Elizabeth Noseworthy a aidé les présentateurs par affiches et nous a également offert ses compétences en formatage et révision pour la préparation de cette édition. Nous voulons également remercier les nombreux hôtes bénévoles qui ont souhaité la bienvenue aux facilitateurs de session, les ont présentés et remerciés.

Enfin, nous exprimons notre gratitude aux collègues de la région qui travaillent afin d'améliorer l'enseignement et l'apprentissage dans nos institutions du Canada atlantique et qui sont venus à la Memorial University afin de partager leurs vécus. Ce volume contient 20 articles qui ont été présentés à l'Expo-Enseignement de l'AUA en octobre 2006.

Allyson Hajek
Coprésidente, Expo-Enseignement de l'AUA, 2006
Memorial University of Newfoundland

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Foreword

Heave to, cast out your killick and bide awhile with us.

On October 28, 2006, Memorial University of Newfoundland welcomed nearly 170 colleagues from the Atlantic Region to the Association of Atlantic Universities' 2006 Teaching Showcase. The theme of the conference *From Voice to Vision: The New Story of Teaching and Learning* invited us all to claim and proclaim the new narrative that is emerging as a dominant theme in our colleges and universities. This narrative explores and celebrates the interrelationship of good teaching and effective learning and investigates teaching as an important scholarly activity. The participants in the Showcase were the impassioned tellers of this story. We engaged each other as both story-tellers and story-listeners, telling and re-telling our individual stories of lived experience, and collectively strengthening the power of good teaching. As a natural enhancement to our story-telling adventure, participants were surrounded by Newfoundland's rich narrative heritage.

Dr. James Downey, President Emeritus of Waterloo University and a native Newfoundlander, was the keynote speaker at the conference. He noted that "a narrative shift is taking place in the culture of Canadian universities, a shift that bodes well for the place of undergraduate teaching and learning, a shift to which this dynamic conference, unimaginable a decade or more ago, bears eloquent witness." The response to his address was overwhelmingly positive. Dr. Downey's intelligent humor, his eloquent use of language and his engaging story-telling ability set the context for the conference.

The keynote address was followed by four sets of concurrent sessions, featuring 40 seminars as well as roundtables and poster presentations. Over 80 presenters from 16 universities and colleges in the Atlantic region took part.

The day concluded with a plenary session panel discussion. Teacher-scholars from Memorial University, both the St. John's campus and Grenfell College campus, as well as from the University of Prince Edward Island, conducted a lively discussion in response to the question posed, “In what practical ways can universities and colleges strengthen the teaching and learning environments in their organizations?” Chaired by Dr. Doreen Neville, the Associate Vice-President (Academic) of Memorial University, each of the panelists, all 3M Fellows, offered helpful and sometimes provocative insights from his/her own teaching experience. Dr. Shannon Murray from the University of Prince Edward Island, Dr. Georg Gunther from Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, and Dr. Michael Collins from Memorial University offered viewpoints from differing perspectives and the audience engaged the panel with interesting comments and follow-up questions.

Showcase participants represented diverse disciplines and post-secondary institutions. We are grateful for their participation and response to the Showcase which confirmed that we in Atlantic Canada are, in fact, living a new story of teaching and learning.

Maureen Dunne
Co-chair, AAU Teaching Showcase 2006
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Avant-propos

Virez, jetez l'ancre et demeurez avec nous un certain temps.

Le 29 octobre 2006, la Memorial University of Newfoundland était l'hôte de presque 170 collègues de la région de l'Atlantique lors de l'Expo-Enseignement 2006 de l'Association des universités de l'Atlantique. Le thème de la rencontre, *Pratiques innovatrices en enseignement et en apprentissage : de la théorie à la pratique* nous invitait à revendiquer et à faire connaître une nouvelle façon d'enseignement qui est actuellement un thème dominant dans nos collèges et universités. Cette nouvelle façon de « raconter une histoire » examine et célèbre l'interdépendance entre un enseignement de qualité et un apprentissage efficace et fait de l'enseignement une activité de recherche importante. Les participants à l'Expo-Enseignement ont évoqué ce phénomène avec passion et ont établi un dialogue entre eux, en racontant leurs vécus et en écoutant ceux des autres. Ils ont donné vie à leurs expériences personnelles en enseignement et, ensemble, ont renforcé l'importance d'un enseignement fructueux. Enfin, puisque les participants baignaient dans le riche héritage narratif propre à Terre-Neuve, le cadre a rehaussé l'expérience narrative.

M. James Downey, Ph.D., président émérite de la Waterloo University et Terre-Neuvien de naissance, était le conférencier principal de l'Expo-Enseignement. Il a soutenu « qu'un changement narratif s'opère dans la culture des universités au Canada, un changement encourageant qui augure bien quant au rôle de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage auprès des étudiants de premier cycle. Cet Expo-Enseignement passionnant, que l'on n'aurait pas pu imaginer il y a dix ans où à peine, en est un témoignage éloquent. » L'auditoire a réagi de façon extrêmement positive aux propos de M. Downey. Son humour intelligent, ses paroles éloquentes et son habileté à conter une histoire ont créé un climat propice pour l'Expo-Enseignement.

La présentation de M. Downey a été suivie de quatre ensembles de séances simultanées, dont 40 séminaires, des tables rondes et des présentations par affiches. Plus de 80 présentateurs de 16 universités et collèges de la région Atlantique ont participé.

L'Expo-Enseignement s'est terminé par une assemblée plénière et une discussion en groupe. Des professeurs-chercheurs des campus de la Memorial University à St. John's et du Grenfell College, ainsi que de la University of Prince Edward Island, ont eu une discussion animée sur la question : « De quelles façons pratiques les universités et collèges peuvent-ils améliorer l'enseignement et l'environnement de l'enseignement dans leurs institutions? » Sous la présidence de Mme Doreen Neville, Ph.D., Vice-présidente associée à l'enseignement à la Memorial University, les panélistes – tous des fellows 3M – ont décrit leurs expériences et ont offert des idées qui parfois nous interpellaient mais qui étaient aussi pratiques. Mme Shannon Murray, Ph.D., de la University of Prince Edward Island, M. George Gunther, Ph.D., du Sir Wilfred Grenfell College et M. Michael Collins, Ph.D., de la Memorial University ont expliqué, chacune d'une perspective différente, leurs points de vue. Par la suite, les participants à l'Expo-Enseignement ont posé des questions aux panélistes et ont fait des commentaires pertinents.

Nos présentateurs à l'Expo-Enseignement sont des praticiens de diverses disciplines et enseignent dans différentes institutions postsecondaires. Nous les remercions d'avoir participé et d'avoir répondu en si grand nombre à notre Expo-Enseignement ce qui illustre qu'effectivement, nous, professeurs et professeures du Canada atlantique, vivons une nouvelle aventure en enseignement et en apprentissage.

Maureen Dunne
Coprésidente, Expo-Enseignement de l'AUA 2006
Memorial University of Newfoundland

From Vision to Voice: Stories of Innovative Practice in Teaching

Pratiques innovatrices en enseignement et en apprentissage : de la théorie à la pratique

Kay Barrington
Centre for Nursing Studies

MUDD Mapping: My Understanding through Dialogue and Debate

> "I dialogue so that I can be successful. I am successful because I work the dialogue until I understand all the components of a concept."
>
> *K. Barrington, 2006*

Abstract

When was the last time you interrupted your routine of 'transmissal teaching' and focused the lens of teaching and learning more intently onto the learners? When was the last time you put down the chalk and invited the learners to take up the chalk? When was the last time you stopped doing all the talking and encouraged to your learners to 'talk out loud – express their perceptions and understandings?'

This paper describes an interactive strategy called MUDD Mapping: **M**y **U**nderstanding through **D**ialogue and **D**ebate. In this activity, the teacher and the learner engage in a teaching-learning partnership, through the use of experiential and hypothetical talk. Learners are invited to take the mud of their courses (usually the course objectives) and sculpt the mud into something that makes sense to them, something that they can understand. MUDD Mapping relies on a commitment by the learner to complete required readings, to take new knowledge from these readings, and to test the relationship/relevancy to a main or central concept. The teacher is present during a MUDD Mapping activity, but acts chiefly as the facilitator for the process, with 'intervention' status reserved for when the learner is experiencing difficulty.

MUDD Mapping: What is it?

MUDD Mapping is an interactive teaching-learning activity, wherein the central activity is dialogue and the main participant is the learner. The overall goal of MUDD Mapping is to bring learners together so that they can engage in purposeful dialogue. Purposeful dialogue is defined within the parameters of MUDD Mapping as dialogue that leads to improved and sustained 'understanding' of a particular subject matter. The exact modes of dialogue that are used in MUDD Mapping are experiential dialogue and/or hypothetical dialogue. In experiential dialogue, the learner talks about past experiences that can be related to the topic at hand. Experiential dialogue has the potential to foster a connection between past experiences and new learning. In hypothetical dialogue, the learner proposes or hypothesizes, 'what if'. This latter mode of dialogue has the potential to foster a discovery for new learning.

The foundation of MUDD Mapping is built around the conviction that dialogue is the single, most important feature in the quest for learner success. Dialogue allows learners to think out loud, to bring their ideas, views, positions, propositions, and the like out into a larger forum. In this larger forum, learners can affirm, validate, modify, or add to their knowledge base. MUDD Mapping provides the forum for dialogue so that the learner can work towards (a) affirming existent knowledge, or (b) discovering new knowledge.

In a MUDD Mapping activity, it is the learner who carries on the dialogue. Prior to the activity, the teacher (facilitator) provides an overview of the purposes and ways of dialogue, but does not directly enter into the learner's circle of dialogue.

The MUDD Acronym: Learner Focused, Learner Friendly

Every word in the acronym, MUDD, has been intentionally assigned, so that is it learner focused and learner friendly. The acronym begins with the letter M, which represents the pronoun *my*, indicating ownership. *My* implies that the learner is taking ownership for learning and is doing so at the very outset of the activity. *My* takes the attention away from the teacher and refocuses the lens where it should be… on the learner! *My* is a measure of the learners acquisition of knowledge as well as a measure of how well they integrate/immerse themselves into the teaching-learning process. I sometimes think that when learners are completing course evaluations, they do so in the context of putting themselves outside the teaching and learning process, devoid of the *My* factor responsibility!

The letter *U* refers to *understanding* and it is the second word in the acronym. It denotes that the teaching and learning bar has been raised from simple memorization or rote learning to more the complex conceptualization of material. At this crucial juncture in the MUDD mapping process, the learner attempts to draw new conclusions from recognized knowledge sources (e.g., required readings, journals, etc.), as well as from their experiences. It involves dialogue that seeks to find the answer to the question 'why' and that hypothesizes "what if". Throughout dialogue the learner begins to exhibit many forms of hypothesizing, e.g., supposing, proposing, contemplating, and entertaining. Understanding is more likely to occur when the dialogue moves from a tentative position statement – I think I know – to a more confident position statement wherein there is greater confidence and conviction – I am [more] certain that I know.

The third word in the acronym, *dialogue*, represents an outward, measurable expression of one's understanding (or misunderstanding) about a concept or idea. Dialogue that is experiential (experiences that connect to the concept) and hypothetical (open to affirmation or new discovery) gives way to a more informed view of a concept or idea. Dialogue provides rich opportunity for a learner to hear another person's perspective and compare it to his/her own. This comparison allows the learner to maintain his/her original view, modify it, or abandon it altogether.

The last word in the MUDD acronym is *debate*. It is used when a learner has a strong knowledge base sufficient to allow him/her to enter into a debate with another learner on a particular concept. At this level of a MUDD activity, the learner would be able to independently engage in the rigor of debate (not to be confused with argument), using a knowledge base (academic and/or experiential) as the foundation for dialogue. Debate involves higher level thinking, similar to what one expects in a critical thinking exercise. Hence, a senior or graduate level learner would benefit from the opportunity to use 'debate' in a MUDD Mapping activity.

Early Planning Considerations

1. **Review principles of adult learning and self-directed learning:** Both the teacher, as facilitator, and the learner, as the active participant, must clearly understand and subscribe to the principles of adult learning and self-directed learning. In order for MUDD mapping to be successful, the learner may need an introductory session that explains the relationship between these principles and the expectations of MUDD Mapping.

2. **Secure the right tools:** The tools consist of a flip chart or other large marking board, as well as several erasable markers. The marking board should be strategically placed so that it is in the center of the learners' seating arrangement.

3. **Design the physical set-up:** Arrange an area where a circular seating plan could be accommodated, or a seating arrangement that would allow for ease of eye contact between participants. It is recommended that the typical row-on-row classroom seating, be avoided, as it suggests structure to an otherwise unstructured learning activity. In a recent MUDD session, the merit of this planning consideration played out in one learner's post-MUDD activity comments, "At first I was a bit hesitant because of the whole 'public speaking' thing. I like the smaller groups better because we are sitting around the table at the same level and all giving and adding to the topic that is being discussed."

4. **Call for participants:** All learners should be invited to participate. Learners must familiarize themselves with and agree to follow the "Rules of Engagement' (see Box 1). Bullet A of the Rules of Engagement, states that "Learners must acknowledge that they have read the required readings". The value of this criterion was supported in a learner's post-MUDD activity comments, "MUDD Mapping helps to get a better understanding of material, but it is good to know or read material before hand."

Box 1. Rules of Engagement

MUDD Mapping: Rules of Engagement

A. For the Learners

- Learners must acknowledge that they have read the required readings.
- Learners must acknowledge that they have completed any pre-assigned activities.
- Learners must demonstrate willingness to 'dialogue' by taking a turn at presenting a word or phrase that connects to the central theme or concept.
- Learners must be receptive to constructive and ongoing criticism of peers and the teacher.

Learners must come prepared to engage in dialogue (experiential and hypothetical). Therefore, before the session begins, learners are reminded that they must agree with and have complied with these rules of engagement. Failure to do so means that the learner can be excluded from the session, or, asked to leave during the session. This is not a punitive action, but an affirmation to those who come prepared, that there will be purposeful and meaningful dialogue, based on knowledge. You cannot have a MUDD session without a commitment to dialogue.

B. For the Teacher

- The teacher will explain the process of MUDD Mapping [the principles of adult learning; experiential and hypothetical dialogue].
- The teacher will secure the tools needed for MUDD Mapping.
- The teacher will begin the activity by identifying the central concept to be MUDD Mapped.
- The teacher will move outside the learners seating circle, once the central concept is mapped, but will remain present, so as to offer any needed re-direction and/or clarification.

A teacher should not lead a MUDD Mapping session if he/she (a) does not support the principles of adult learning and (b) does not value learner dialogue.

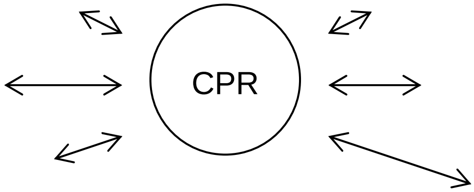
MUDD Mapping: Sequential Steps

MUDD mapping is a series of short sequential steps. The nature of the topic as well as the actual learner dialogue will determine the length of a MUDD activity. An activity can span anywhere from 20 minutes to a full 50 minutes. It can be presented as an alternative to a class lecture, or, it can be presented as a review class.

Step one: The teacher extrapolates a single central theme from an objective in the course outline or syllabus. That key word is transferred into a circle, strategically drawn in the middle of the flip chart. Multiple two-way arrows are then drawn as extensions from the circle. These arrows act as the links between the central theme of the course and the learners' perceptions of various concepts related to the central theme.

Sample: Let's use a course that most people would be familiar with. Let's use Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), an activity that involves teaching individuals how to respond to an unconscious victim, with an interruption in airway, breathing and/or circulation patterns. A plausible objective for the CPR course would read as follows "Initiate two-person CPR on an adult". From this, the teacher would isolate the word *CPR* and would write it the center of the circle. Next, the teacher would draw as many two-way arrows as possible, extending from the center of the circle out to the periphery. The arrows could be called 'dialogue arrows', in that they are the points on the flip chart where the learners will write words or phrases that relate back to the central word, CPR.

Figure 1.

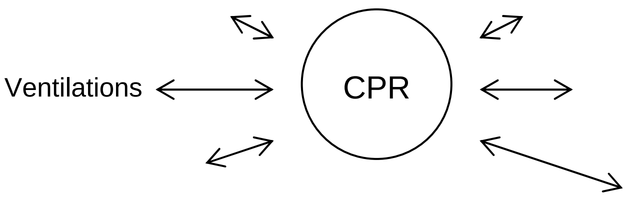


Step two: The teacher invites the learners to come forward (one by one) and write a single word or two at the tip of an arrow, any arrow. The teacher moves outside the learners circle. The word that a learner chooses may come from their notes, the required readings, a video, etc. Through dialogue they must demonstrate how the word relates to the concept that has been written in the center of the flip chart.

Sample: A learner comes forward and writes the word *ventilations*. The learner shares what he/she understands about that word and how it connects with the inner circle word/phrase. The quest for better understanding is filtered through dialogue. Experiential and hypothetical dialogue is encouraged. Experiential dialogue may arise when the learner describes a CPR activity that he/she has witnessed. The learner can ask other learners in the room for help, or other learners can challenge what the learner at the flip chart is presenting. MUDD Mapping does not discourage the use of print material during the activity, e.g., having their textbooks open. This freedom to have ready access to the print material reinforces that MUDD Mapping is a learning activity as opposed to a testing activity. A word of caution: emphasize that access to print material does not replace the prerequisite Rule of Engagement that speaks to the need to have the read the material before the MUDD session begins!

In step two, other learners can interject, seek clarification, and offer a differing perspective. When the learner at the flip chart, feels that he/she has a greater understanding between the word in the center and the word that he/she wrote, then another learner comes forward and makes a similar entry, using another new word. The process repeats itself until all connectors (words and phrases related to CPR) have been presented. There should be an ongoing demonstrable saturation of dialogue between learners. This would be an indication that the MUDD activity is a success!

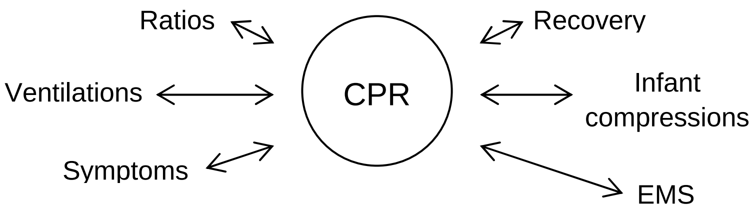
Figure 2.



The teacher can offer prompts, encouragement, support and reinforcement on an as needed basis, but remains outside the circle. At any time, anyone in the group can seek additional information, add new information, or challenge the information being presented. The ability to challenge is the highest point in the MUDD process, as it represents, debate. A MUDD mapping session can provide the advanced learner (senior or graduate level) with the opportunity to enter into a debate, that is, to take a stand on a particular position, using knowledge as the foundation, massaging it to a level of understanding and bringing it to a forum where he/she can confidently engage in therapeutic debate.

Step three: Once all key phrases/words have been exhausted and are represented as appendages to the circle and when the learners feel that they the words/phrases have been successfully connected to the center of the circle, the MUDD Mapping activity is complete.

Figure 3.



The Application of MUDD Mapping – A Second Illustration

The use of MUDD mapping is not confined to any particular subject area, or any specific psychomotor competencies. It can be used in a variety of educational settings. Box 2 contains an example of its use in a social studies course (secondary or post-secondary context) where the learners must write a 50% paper on an assigned topic. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the learner’s understanding of a particular topic. In the paper, the learner is expected to speak to a number of issues that are central to the topic. Providing an opportunity for a MUDD Mapping activity prior to the writing of the paper could prove quite useful to the learner!

Box 2. Social Studies Illustration of MUDD Mapping

Note: The readings within this example are fictitious and were created to illustrate the use of MUDD Mapping in a Social Studies context.

Social Studies 000B

Objective extrapolated directly from course outline/syllabus: To write an essay on school-grounds violence.

MUDD Mapping activity: Teacher explains MUDD Mapping, complete with principles of adult learning and self-directed learning. Learners are given a copy of the *Rules of Engagement*.

The teacher names the central concept to form the basis of MUDD dialogue – Violence. Hence the MUDD mapping session will be on Violence.

Learner pre-requisites:
A. Readings
- Read chapter 26 of course textbook
- Read Current Affairs section of *The Globe and Mail*
- Read Statistics Canada Report on Violence in Schools
- Visit web site on 'bullying' (give web site address)
- Read reports on behavior disorders among adolescents

B. Activities
- Interview a local teacher to get views on subject of school-grounds violence.
- Interview a parent of an adolescent who has been the target of school violence.
- Visit a community heath center that provides support to victims of bullying.

Here are some words or phrases that are likely to have been generated from the readings, and that the teacher might expect the learners to create as appendages to the concept *Violence* in the exercise. Note that the teacher does NOT provide these words as a list. They are generated by the learners, as a result of completing the learner Pre-requisites!

Peer pressure	Drugs
Teacher – student ratios	Television
Computers	Parental supervision
Bullying	Disabilities

Proceed with steps of MUDD Mapping as described earlier.

FAQs

Q: The Rules of Engagement suggest that the ‘quiet’ learner should not be permitted access to a MUDD activity, unless he/she is committed to carry out dialogue. Is this fair to the learner who’s afraid or uncomfortable in speaking up in a group?

A: This is absolutely fair for a MUDD activity. Because MUDD Mapping is based on dialogue, you must have a commitment by participants to dialogue. Without dialogue you do not have a MUDD Mapping activity. The Rules of Engagement must be applied in order to safeguard the activity.

However, during a MUDD session, the degree of participation is not something that is not monitored, therefore the quiet learner can be reassured that any amount of dialogue, no matter how brief, is acceptable. Hence, the quiet learner can be engaged in the activity as long as there is some measure of dialogue. What is NOT acceptable is NO dialogue!

As educator’s we have a responsibility to help the quiet learner be successful in not only the academic world, but the ‘real’ world where dialogue is an expectation! In addition, to give permission for a learner to attend a MUDD activity, without any up front commitment to dialogue is unfair to those learners who have agreed to, and expect that there will be, dialogue.

Q: Can MUDD Mapping be done with large groups?

A: While the size of the group is somewhat dependent on the nature of the subject to be discussed, the group size should not be so large that is it impossible for the group to carry on audible dialogue. It is perhaps a good idea to break a larger group (e.g., 60) down into smaller sub-groups (e.g., 10 –12). The teacher, as facilitator, would then circulate back and forth to the groups. In MUDD Mapping, the teacher is acting as facilitator, which means he/she does not have a constant presence with one group.

In a MUDD activity involving a group of senior nursing students, the students were divided into smaller working groups. While they were in one large room, they were well spaced apart so that they could comfortably hear one another.

Q: Is there any particular subject matter or program of studies that works best for a MUDD Mapping session?

A: MUDD Mapping can be applied to any subject that requires a learner to reach an understanding of a particular subject. It has the potential to work for any K–2 curriculum subjects. It also has the potential to work for any post-secondary program of studies. The applications for its use are limitless – mathematics, English, history, sociology, etc.

It is important to keep in mind that the nature of the subject is only one factor in answering this question. Inherent in the applicability and subsequent success of a MUDD Mapping activity is the teacher's (facilitator's) enthusiasm for and leadership in using a MUDD session so that the dialogue that does take place and does lead to understanding.

Q: Are there any cautions to be considered in the use of MUDD Mapping?

A: From experience, the single, most resounding caution would be to take care with the application of this activity so that it retains its original intent – dialogue to promote understanding. Without dialogue, the goal of MUDD cannot be achieved. The Rules of Engagement must be clearly explained and consistently applied.

Q: What are the benefits of dialogue?

A: Dialogue promotes interaction, which in turn, generates an exchange of ideas. Without dialogue, or insufficient dialogue, classrooms becoming nothing more than a repository of facts, figures, formulas, steps, and the like, wherein the learner simply collects information without ever knowing what's behind that information.

Q: Who are the benefactors of a MUDD Mapping activity?

A: In MUDD mapping, there are rewards for both the learner and the teacher. The teacher's reward is found in the satisfaction gained from listening to the learners as they dialogue about a concept, as they move from a tentative way of thinking to a way of thinking that is more informed. It's a teachers' paradise to be in a teaching-learning environment where the learners are formulating and verbalizing their understanding of course concepts, through dialogue. The learner's reward, on the other hand, lies in knowing that he/she can 'walk the walk and talk the talk'. It's a learners' paradise to be in a teaching-learning environment where the learner feels safe to explore perceptions and understandings related to the course and to be able to test out the validity of these perceptions in a constructive way. MUDD Mapping is not rocket science but it has the potential to give a power boost to the most mundane of materials to be taught!

Where to from Here? – Creating a Virtual Team

Using the elements of a Virtual Team, as described in Julia Loughran's article "Working Together Virtually: The Care and Feeding of Global Virtual Teams", I have partnered with another Canadian professor, outside my own province, to create a virtual team. Together we will explore the further use of MUDD Mapping in our respective post-secondary settings. The results of our efforts will be shared as an oral presentation at the 2007 Society for Teaching and Higher Learning in Education (STHLE) to be held in Alberta this June.

Below is some of the positive feedback received to date:

"I tried it out with my students and it worked like a charm…the students led the discussion and they were very confident with their knowledge."

"…it [MUDD Mapping] was a hit with the students and really helped in identifying their understanding of the material."

"This was definitely the most rewarding and thought provoking class I have ever taught, when I didn't teach at all, I mean in the traditional teaching methods I used in the past."

"It would be a great tool for every class in Nursing dealing with concepts."

"This was an excellent class. It was great to interact with classmates while learning. It helps to see the view of others. It would be great to use on other courses."

"It shows a different and dynamic method of teaching."

"MUDD makes objectives more understandable and clear."

"I enjoyed MUDD after I gave it a second chance. It is very helpful to hear people explain things in their own words."

"MUDD Mapping helps to get a better understanding of material, but its good to know or read material before hand."

Conclusion

MUDD Mapping is a great way to get learners more involved in their own learning. It brings the responsibility and focus of learning back to the learner, while retaining the role of the teacher as facilitator. Hence, it is an activity that can foster the partnership of teaching and learning. What greater satisfaction is there in education, than to know teachers and learners have worked together so that at the end of the day, learners can 'walk the walk… and talk the talk!'

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Facilitating Dialogue Across Disciplines: A Thematic Learning Community at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College

Abstract

The reputation of Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, a campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland, is a narrative in which undergraduate student teaching is at the heart of the institution's mandate. Central to this narrative is the premise that a lower student/faculty ratio enhances the learning environment as it increases the potential for interaction between the two. However, a growing awareness in post-secondary education is the necessity of students interacting with each other as an important element in facilitating intellectual growth and constructing a sense of belonging within the academy. At Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, a psychology and a French professor piloted a thematic learning community project in the fall of 2006 bringing together 16 students registered in introductory French and psychology courses. These students attended both classes together and met once a week for an additional 50-minute session. The premise of the additional session, as well as the project itself, was to enable students to appreciate the overarching themes connecting two seemingly unrelated disciplines and to understand better the interconnectedness of their first-year undergraduate experience both intellectually and personally. This paper will outline how the learning community project at SWGC fits the institutional mandate, how it has been influenced by recent trends in pedagogy of higher learning, and how the project was designed and executed.

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College (SWGC), the west coast campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland, fosters and promotes excellence in undergraduate teaching. Throughout its history, SWGC has consistently placed students at the heart of its mandate, and its small campus setting encourages students to engage in regular contact with faculty members. Despite the intimate learning environment, however, a first-year student beginning her or his studies at SWGC will still encounter many of the hurdles that new university students often experience. Specifically, students cope with a course load in which each course is seemingly disconnected from others, resulting in a sense of fragmentation in the first-year experience. A pilot project at SWGC, offered for the first time in the fall semester of 2006, helped first-year students establish thematic and study-based links across two of their courses. Participating students were enrolled in the same section of an introductory psychology and French course, and an additional weekly session was organized with students and faculty present. This project's historical context within SWGC and Memorial University, its relevance to the modern academy, its method, and its assessment will be outlined.

In order to achieve one of Memorial University's founding mandates – to educate citizens of the province – the university has engaged in a number of strategies aimed at improving retention at the undergraduate level. In the past, a key initiative was the establishment of a Junior Division of faculty in 1968, in which faculty members were hired based primarily on competency in teaching. In 1975, the Regional College in Corner Brook (later to become Sir Wilfred Grenfell College) was opened and was comprised largely of faculty from Junior Division. In the early years of the institution, beginning in the 1976-1977 academic year, a Basic Academic Skills course was introduced for students who were deemed to be 'at risk,' meaning that their averages were below the 65% admission average. Students were enrolled as a group into foundation courses in English, math, psychology, history, French, chemistry, and a basic academic skills course with a view to transferring into regular studies during the second semester should their skills improve to the necessary level. The program was widely viewed as a great success in the early years of SWGC. Sullivan and Wilson (1980) credit much of this success to the support of faculty and the coordination of material across the courses so that students were able to apply study skills from their Basic Academic Skills course across the disciplines. This program contained many elements of what today constitutes a learning community.

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College has, since then, evolved considerably in terms of its course offerings and its faculty complement, both of which have had a significant impact on the manner in which students are now taught. SWGC has evolved from an institution in which students took their first year or two of courses before moving on to another campus into a degree-granting institution within Memorial University of Newfoundland. SWGC today offers a liberal education in arts and science and a professional education in business, education, nursing, theatre, tourism, and visual arts. As a result, while SWGC maintains its small campus setting, faculty are increasingly divided into disciplines, and they are increasingly focused on their own areas of research. Tussman (1997) has identified this division of faculty into disciplines as one of the causes of the decrease in cross-disciplinary work that now characterizes the academy. In addition, due to the fact that faculty at SWGC are increasingly hired to teach specialties, as in the wider academic world, faculty tend to see their research as their priority and are being encouraged in this perception (Finkelstein, Seal, & Shuster, 1998; O'Meara & Rice, 2004). Research means specialization, and the teaching of research specialization is, usually, reserved for classes at the third- or fourth-year level. Faculty are increasingly expected to focus on their research and senior-level teaching so as to accommodate the larger number of upper level courses and independent student research projects that are part of a degree-granting institution. Despite these increasing demands on faculty, the overwhelming majority of first-year courses at SWGC continue to be taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty. With the significant faculty turnover reflecting changing demographics that has characterized the recent past and that will continue to be prevalent in the near future, therefore, it is important to find new ways to ensure that teaching maintains its historic place as a priority for faculty at Grenfell.

One way in which faculty can be encouraged to engage in teaching-based initiatives is through interdisciplinary collaboration with colleagues that is not necessarily limited to research. Sir Wilfred Grenfell College's Academic Plan (2004) reaffirms the importance of collaboration across the disciplines as a priority for SWGC, and such collaboration can have significant impact on both teaching and research within the institution. This interaction has become increasingly visible in recent years with the development of cross-disciplinary degree programs such as Social/Cultural Studies, Humanities, and Sustainable Resource Management. Such interaction across the disciplines allows faculty to find links between their course material and motivates them to adapt their course offerings. However, many courses that bridge disciplines and that are cross-listed are often offered at the third- or fourth-year level after students have completed introductory and intermediate level courses in each discipline. Students are able to see coherence across the disciplines in such senior-level courses. For these students, however, a sense of belonging has often already been established for them. The challenge for SWGC is to create this same sense of belonging and coherence for students in their first year of studies.

Recent research examining the transition of Newfoundland and Labrador students from high school to university has revealed a number of difficulties that suggest the need for support mechanisms in which university faculty can play a role. These challenges for students include a change in teaching style, differing academic expectations, stricter grading practices, and a modified system of time management (Sharpe, 1996). These adaptations can occur over time, but Sharpe (1996) suggests that an objective of university educators should be to facilitate such adaptations in a timely fashion. In addition, Birnie-Lefcovitch (2000) of Memorial University reported that there is a distinction to be made between students' perception of change upon their integration into university and the reality of what that change entails. In order to ensure that this transition is as seamless as possible, Birnie-Lefcovitch (2000) recommends that the university provide structures and opportunities that enable students to create relationships with their new peers. A tool for retention of students, then, is to ensure that support mechanisms are put in place for students in their first year of university so that the transition faced by university students can be facilitated from the earliest possible point in their studies.

A useful model for addressing student retention in the first year is that of the learning community. The idea of a learning community has been in existence for decades, and it refers to a variety of curricular approaches that intentionally link or cluster two or more courses, often around an interdisciplinary theme or problem, and enroll a common cohort of students (Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, & Gabelnick, 2004). The comparison of the university to a community is entirely appropriate for a setting like Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, as the student and faculty population is small enough to create a sense of intimacy similar to that found in a community. A learning community is premised on a student-centered teaching environment and can take many forms. A common characteristic of all models is that rather than relying on the lecture as the most effective method of undergraduate teaching, learning communities are constructed on the premise that students will learn more effectively if they are provided with a holistic and coherent approach to their education (Smith, et al., 2004). In other words, students must see how their courses fit together and be engaged in that connection.

For many professors, the learning community approach can initially appear daunting, as most faculty members have not been taught in that manner themselves and tend to see the academy as composed of separate, unrelated forces, due to the fact that they have increasingly specialized in particular domains over time (Senge, 1990). Creating a learning community at the first year level at SWGC also allows faculty to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration in a similar manner as they might in preparation for upper-level courses. Faculty members establishing learning communities also engage in conversations about their pedagogical methods so as to ensure that students are able to see how courses fit together. Similarly, at the first year level, common themes among linked courses in a learning community are the intellectual growth of the students and their sense of belonging to the institution.

There are a variety of approaches to establishing a learning community that intentionally link or cluster two or more courses, usually around an interdisciplinary theme. Developing the most effective learning community for a group of students is challenging and involves a significant amount of adjustment on behalf of faculty. As a general rule, a learning community links courses from different disciplines and brings together students as well as faculty and staff. A learning community also provides a holistic, coherent approach to the undergraduate learning experience. A variety of models exist, and choosing the appropriate one requires a careful examination of the environment in which it is offered and the objectives of students and faculty participating in it. Gabelnick et al. (1990) presented the four main types of learning communities: linked courses, in which students register for pairs of courses and assignments are coordinated; learning clusters, in which students do courses together as a group and may attend additional sessions; first-year interest groups, linking together courses that have common themes along with weekly meetings with a peer advisor; federated learning communities, which present overarching themes that link courses together with a Master Learner facilitating regular seminars; and, finally, coordinated studies, in which there are no boundaries between courses, and one faculty member teaches an entire course that straddles different disciplines in a non-traditional schedule. In this SWGC pilot project, the model chosen most closely resembles that of a learning cluster.

Although the learning cluster model is the one that most closely resembles the pilot project at SWGC, the model was tailored to suit the goals of the project. The learning community pilot project at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College began from discussions among faculty and staff members on the SWGC Student Retention Committee. Dr. Michael Newton, professor of Religious Studies, proposed the concept as a viable method to enrich the first-year learning experience and to enhance student retention. The authors agreed to develop, execute, and evaluate the first leaning community at SWGC during the fall semester of 2006 by pairing two of their individual introductory level courses. Students participating in the project enrolled as a cohort in both Psychology 1000, taught by one of the project facilitators, and French 1500, taught by the other project facilitator, and attended an additional 50-minute weekly session. A total of 16 students were enrolled in the learning community pilot project. French 1500 consisted of these 16 students only, and Psychology 1000 embedded these 16 students in a class of 90. In addition, a peer mentor, a fourth year psychology honours student with a minor in French, attended the weekly sessions as an active participant, assisted in session planning, held a weekly office hour, and provided tutorial support and academic consultation to the students in the learning community.

Prior to the first meeting of the facilitators to identify links between French 1500 and Psychology 1000, they independently wondered about the extent to which thematic links between these two courses could be found. After the first meeting, however, it was clear there were many overarching themes. The facilitators met on a regular basis throughout August, 2006 and began exploring common links in their courses by comparing course syllabi and textbooks. Once discussion began, it was discovered that there were many themes linking French and psychology that were not, at first, immediately apparent. Many of the themes linked overarching concepts rather than specific learning objectives, and it was around those overarching concepts that the weekly sessions were structured. As a result of the facilitators meeting on a regular basis prior to the beginning of the fall semester, it was discovered that some of the interesting links between the courses included memory, learning, the process of language acquisition, principles of reinforcement, brain physiology as it relates to speech comprehension and production, dreaming in a second language, and the motivation to learn French. These links also assisted in establishing goals for the project.

There were four main goals of this French-psychology learning community. Before sharing the goals of the project with the students, the facilitators requested that each student submit his or her own goals for the learning community. Upon reviewing students' goals, it was clear that there was significant overlap with those of the facilitators. The first and primary goal of the project, as well as the goal for any learning community, was to elucidate the common themes in introductory French and psychology in an effort to enhance students' intellectual coherence. Rather than experiencing each course as separate and disconnected, the goal was to explore how learning in one course related to and augmented learning in the other course.

The second goal of the project was to assist in skill building for these first-year students. As discussed earlier, a challenge for first-year students is adapting to university standards and environment, and the skills that the facilitators sought to improve were ones that would assist students in their adaptation to university. In addition, it was important that students see how their university education can be applied to vocational opportunities. This goal was addressed by offering sessions on library skills, resume writing, and interviewing skills (maximizing the transfer of skills they are acquiring in first-year university to the marketplace), study skills, identifying learning preferences, and adjusting to the demands and expectations of university.

A third goal was the enhancement of students' institutional awareness. Due to the demands of beginning a program of study in a new setting, first-year students may not sufficiently recognize the resources available in a university and, therefore, may not access the services or participate in the societies and social activities available on campus. It is sometimes not until students reach their third or fourth year of study that they truly feel connected to the institution. The goal of fostering students' awareness and sense of connection to the university in the first year grew from this knowledge. Sessions were, therefore, provided to highlight the resources Sir Wilfred Grenfell College has to offer students, including information on academic support services, scholarships, and employment opportunities within the university. The sessions also included information on social activities, clubs, and societies. Representatives from these various groups met with the learning community students to provide information and to extend an invitation to participate.

The final goal was facilitating relationships, and this goal permeated all aspects of the project. There were four key relationships established and fostered through the project. First, by bringing together a group of students through the commonality of French and psychology courses, the aim was to enhance the sense of connection students felt with their peers. In relatively large classes, students can complete a term without getting to know their peers. The learning community project, therefore, was designed to bring a group of students together on a smaller scale and on a regular basis to facilitate peer relationships. The second relationship facilitated by the project was the relationship between students and faculty. As mentioned, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College offers a small campus setting, but first-year students do not always have significant contact with their professors. In classes with many students, such as introductory psychology, unless students initiate contact with their professor, interaction is minimal. For students in the learning community project, they met with their French and psychology professors on a weekly basis outside of classroom hours. The third type of relationship facilitated by the learning community project was the relationship between the students and other members of the university community. These relationships were facilitated by having staff and faculty members attend and participate in relevant sessions. For example, the coordinator of the Learning Centre led a session on a topic relevant to her expertise. There was also a session exploring professors' activities in the summertime. This session allowed the students to meet professors they otherwise would not necessarily have met, to learn about their research, and to tour their laboratory and studio space. Finally, the fourth type of relationship facilitated by the project was the relationship between students in their first year and students in their senior year of university, which was primarily achieved through the peer mentor. The project provided the opportunity for the students to meet and interact with a senior-level student on a regular basis, a relationship that would not likely have developed otherwise.

An integral component of the learning community pilot project is its evaluation which, at the time of writing, is still ongoing. This evaluation involves both the students in the learning community and a matched control group. The students in the control group were also enrolled in Psychology 1000 and French 1500 and were matched with students in the learning community on age, gender, admissions average, and urbanity of hometown. A questionnaire was developed to assess the first term university experiences of both groups. The learning community students also received a second questionnaire to assess their learning community experience. The questionnaires for both groups consisted of questions answered on a Likert-type scale as well as open-ended questions. After completing the questionnaire in the final weekly learning community session, the students were then asked to engage in a discussion about their experience in the project and to provide feedback. The faculty facilitators were not present for the evaluation or the discussion, as it was led by the peer mentor. The questionnaire packages were mailed to the students in the control group with two stamped, addressed envelopes in order to return separately the signed consent form and the questionnaire. In addition, the evaluation includes written reflections about the learning community project from the peer mentor and the two faculty facilitators. Reponses to the questionnaire were anonymous, confidential, and voluntary. Each participant signed an informed consent form before completing the questionnaire. The data collected in the evaluation will be analyzed quantitatively (Likert-scale answers) and qualitatively (open-ended questions, discussion, and written reflections). The GPA and retention status of the control group and the students in the learning community will be tracked over the course of their four-year degree. This procedure for the evaluation of the learning community project has been approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee at SWGC.

It is hypothesized that students in the learning community pilot project will report an increased level of intellectual coherence, interpersonal connectedness, and institutional affiliation as a result of their participation. This hypothesis, however, has yet to be verified. It is hoped that the evaluation will adequately represent the experiences of first-year students and the impact of their involvement in the learning community project. The results of the assessment of the project will contribute to the overall assessment of the learning community concept in the modern academy as a way of fostering student learning and increasing faculty's connections with their students – as well as with each other.

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From Vision to Voice: Rural Helping as Listening to the Tales that Teach

Abstract

People who work in small communities as professional "helpers" (e.g., teachers, nurses, social workers, ministers) are often trained in urban centres with primarily urban views of the world assumed. In the SSHRC-funded research reported on in this session, we conducted interviews with over 40 such helpers in a range of small New Brunswick towns and villages, listening to their stories of the challenges such work presents. Drawing on what they have shared with us, we are currently designing curricula that aim to better prepare helpers in various professions to work effectively in rural areas, where the narrative complexity of everyday life is especially apparent. This can make issues such as confidentiality, personal and disciplinary boundaries, and professional ethics uniquely problematic. Given such issues, the curricula we envision equips people to listen for stories that teach: their own stories as persons and professionals; the stories of those whom they serve; and the local-to-global stories by which their communities are impacted and in which they are embedded. In respectfully and reflectively listening for multiple stories at once, "helping" becomes transformed from a process of "experts" responding to those "in need" to one of mutual listening and learning.

Listening to the Stories That Teach: An Introduction

This paper outlines a research study that we are currently conducting on the nature of rural helping in general and, in particular, on the kinds of curricula that will prepare students in various helping professions to practice in small communities. Our guiding conviction is that such curricula need to incorporate a narrative perspective. By "a narrative perspective" we mean a perspective which assumes that human beings are fundamentally storytelling creatures, that stories are the lifeblood of rural settings, and that learning these stories is essential to effective helping within them.

The impetus for this study has been our experience that people who work in small communities as professional helpers, e.g. teachers, nurses, social workers, ministers, are often trained in urban centres with primarily urban views of the world assumed. Our own practice as rural helpers ourselves – a nurse, a social worker, and a minister of religion – has shown us the limitations of current perspectives on helping, particularly helping in rural and small town settings. In our SSHRC-funded research, we have conducted interviews with over 40 people who “help” in rural communities in New Brunswick, a primarily rural province. These helpers include professionals as well as volunteers and community developers. We asked them to share stories with us of experiences that have highlighted the skills, knowledge, and qualities that they have found necessary to help effectively. They also told us how they learned what they needed to know to work in a rural environment. Our own experiences, as well as our participants’ stories, have thrown light for us on many of the challenges of working in rural communities, among which are dealing with stress and burnout, accessing suitable support and resources, coping with multiple roles, and developing a balance between personal and professional life. In this paper we will reflect on key themes that have come through these stories and taught us what a narrative curriculum for rural helping could entail.

In employing a narrative perspective, we have come to the realization that our own stories themselves, derived from living and working in various rural communities, have issued in the models of rural helping that each of us has implicitly constructed. During the first stage of our research, therefore, we explored with one another our own models of rural helping. We then interviewed New Brunswickers who have been employed in rural communities as professional helpers, or who serve as volunteers, unpaid helpers, or community leaders. Participants included representatives of our own professions, plus teachers, police officers, medical doctors, daycare workers, politicians, and more – individuals with experience in a wide range of small communities, whether aboriginal or non-aboriginal, and different aspects of the New Brunswick economy oriented around fishing, farming or forestry.

Drawing upon our interview data, we are currently designing curricula that we hope will better prepare helpers in a number of professions to work effectively in rural areas. Based on our analysis of this data, as well as our reflections on our own experiences, what has emerged for us is that a principal component of the curricula we envision is, in short, learning to listen for the stories that teach: for example, their own stories as persons and professionals; the stories of those whom they serve; and the local-to-global stories by which their communities are impacted and in which they are embedded. Rural social work researcher, Brian Cheers (2004), supports such a perspective by saying that a rural community is "a community where narratives meet" (p. 14). In respectfully and reflectively listening for multiple stories at once, helping thus becomes transformed from a process of "experts" responding to those "in need" to a process of reciprocity through mutual listening and learning. By engaging with community members, that is, professionals can begin to relinquish their "expert helper" identity, an identity that requires directing processes and making decisions. It requires a shift from doing to listening, from teaching to learning, from self as expert to other as expert-partner, from a sense of solo practitioner to one of good neighbour. To use the words of David Brandon, (1982) "helping is like selling water by the river" and drawing upon the rich range "of personalities, skills, knowledge and experiences". This is particularly the case within rural communities where the skills and resources of community members themselves are so accessible. In a similar vein, one of our participants described what she learned as akin to Aboriginal spirituality in which "we are all related" and responsible for the well-being of the community as a whole.

Stories about Effective Rural Helping

From our research we learned that professional helping differs from helping done by people in the local community. This difference led us to question the very term helping itself with its connotation of "doing onto others". We found that paternalism existed in professional rural helping models and assumed "*beneficence* on the part of the scholar-practitioner and *a problem* on the part of the healthcare recipient" (Cody, 2003, p. 289). Our participants, like ourselves, considered professional helping curricula to be urban-bound as they recalled dilemmas that these teachings created for their work in rural settings. They told us that different professions held different definitions and models of “helping”, and that in small communities these definitions often clashed. Police officers, for example, endeavoured to “serve and protect” the public with an authority-based model, while some social workers had a mandate to protect vulnerable populations with a provincial policy-based model. Some of these models are derived from overall differences in professional values and ethics. For example, nurses may focus on an ethic of caring for all, whereas some social workers may espouse an ethic of social justice. All too often ethical codes act as barriers to working from the community’s needs and its internal stories. Organizations employing helpers in rural communities also held different positions on the act of helping itself. In instances such as child abuse, social control seems to be an integral part of helping, while in counselling situations, social control and helping are diametrically opposed. In addition helpers themselves come from different value bases. One minister may see his work as a “calling” which requires an open-door policy, yet another may keep rigidly to a “day off” and insist that parishioners seeking counselling make appointments in advance. On the other hand, a community leader may consider helping activities simply to be part and parcel of their lives as members of the community. For one such participant, an Aboriginal social worker, her role was to keep a “healing watch” on her community.

Life in rural communities, we learned from our participants, is often shaped by historical relations with other communities, or by the seasons with farming and fishing, for example. In addition, government decisions regarding, for example, health care delivery, child protection, or access to resources, often do not reflect people’s needs. Instead, they end up creating further problems: problems that bureaucrats may in fact discount because of the urban lens through which they are looking. In other words, policies, though well-intended, sometimes adversely impact rural people’s lives, obvious examples being policies associated with the Indian Act and with legislation controlling farming, fishing, and lumbering practices. One of our Acadian participants identified how policies for Acadian citizens often kept them in poverty and illiteracy, which fostered continuous dependency on social welfare support, rather than providing them with means to better their lives through their own efforts and choices. Another participant, involved with immigrant populations in a rural setting identified that,

> Under Canadian Immigration policies, only immigrants can benefit from English or French second language training. So we decided that those who were Canadian but didn't speak English and those who were on work permits could also take part... So it's now very inclusive.

These citizens found ways for all those in their community who needed language training to access it and increase their chances of getting employment. They were more inclusive than the federal policies toward international immigrants to Canada.

Changes in the broader, international scene – vis-à-vis global markets, multinational corporations, free trade agreements – can profoundly affect rural communities in ways that are often not assessed or addressed. For example, in Nackawic, New Brunswick, the economy was based primarily on the lumber industry. When the local mill, owned by a US citizen, was shut down, the village drastically changed, because of ensuing lay offs, loss of pensions, and the closure of local stores and banks. Hopeful options concerning new jobs or plant openings failed to materialize. When the foreign markets for New Brunswick's potato crop closed down, rural farmers chose to donate their crops to food banks and international aid programs, rather than see them wasted.

Our participants taught us that professional, personal and practical education for rural helping requires developing a model that moves beyond the term "helping" itself. The foundational principles of such a model would be that it: is based on community stories; uses communities themselves as places of learning; focuses more on practice leading to theory rather than the other way around; and examines everyday experiences from the needs of the people themselves. It would also acknowledge differences, recognize common issues, and examine the impact of both upon helpers and communities alike. The power and place of stories, rituals, metaphors, and relationships within communities would be honoured as well, given the impact that they have on everyday life and for the hidden or silent ways in which they shape decisions and directions.

Effective helping in rural communities, our participants identified, is based on reciprocity and attending to the community's needs, as perceived by community members themselves. Our interviewees thought that a theory-practice relationship arising from theories about helping did not capture the unique complexities within their small community. Experiences in rural settings had led these professional helpers to understand the need to draw on practice as the basis of theory, rather than vice versa. In trying to suspend previous knowledge bases from urban curricula, they faced personal dilemmas such as negotiating a boundary between personal and professional life. Rural helpers, particularly rural helpers who live in the community where they work, cannot easily construct a boundary. One participant told us that she was asked for counselling when she was still wearing her nightclothes, another thought it was necessary to spend leisure time in another community. Indeed, our research has led us to question the whole distinction between "personal" and "professional".

Our participants found that accessing the diverse stories of rural communities assisted them to work effectively. Rural practice in the helping professions seemed to call for flexibility, openness to possibilities, understanding of local history and story, listening rather than directing, an understanding of the sense of "home" or "place" to those living there, and experiencing the community on its own terms. Upon reflection, we wondered how much of this was also true for urban practice, and what did this mean for professional curricula as a whole. Is a curriculum revolution required?

A new approach to helping – suspending our paternalistic notions of intervention and our need to control decisions that do not require our control – would allow for those whose lives are most directly affected to contribute to the process (Friedman, 1990). Although situations of public safety and protection may require professional intervention, such situations could be examined to determine if some degree of choice is possible.

A democratic type of curriculum may be in order – a more dialogical one where learning from narratives, questioning values, and learning qualities such as working with uncertainty have equal significance with learning the professional skills required for practice. In this discovery approach to learning from experiences and stories, knowledge and meaning unfold in discussion and those involved can come to a common understanding. Conversations in which significant problems are addressed can push ideas forward so that the expertise of many emerge and can be valued. In preparing students for such open-ended narrative practice, we, as professional educators, can engage with our students in examining key helping values, qualities and skills useful in rural practice. As role models, educators can show new practitioners ways to be effective in rural settings and guide them to trust their own and others' expertise. Narrative inquiry into our own professional images and metaphors of power, paternalism, caring and authority can reveal for us the barriers we create in rural practice. This new approach leads us to ask new and different questions. For example, do we carry with us in our academic language, a sense of power over situations? Do we have attitudes that stigmatize or aggrandize rural as "the sticks" or as "idyllic havens for respite"? One participant said that in a small setting, where things appeared friendly, she encountered hidden stories that she described as "two solitudes" – Francophone and Anglophone. This led her to question whether other solitudes, based on religion, ethnicity or class exist.

How do we help students find the wonder of learning within rural settings without the use of "magic cloaks" from paternalistic socialization imbedded in professional agencies or hierarchical institutions of power? How can they learn to be with people, to reach out, to open up and trust themselves in uncertain situations to what a community needs? The answers to these questions require an understanding of our own world views along with the strengths and limitations of this new metaphor of helping. Then we can open up to learning what the rural community's world view might be through its metaphors.

O'Connor (2003) argues for a "humble approach" (p. 188) where we suspend our "oughts" and "shoulds" and entertain a degree of uncertainty until the community comes to define what it wants. Restorying, she says, is recommended in order to shift from an "either–or" version of the situation to a "both–and" working through a community story in a more cooperative manner. A professional needs to enter into the storied world of the community. In this way, the professional becomes a guide, a keeper of the community's story, a friend or fellow citizen accompanying the other on their journey in their own "home" territory.

Respecting the community as expert in their own lives allows for the unexpected to happen. People teach themselves within their own place, time, and story. For example, one rural participant worked to bring two rival communities together for local athletic and social events to bridge the distance between them. Focussing on such events shifts the attention from a curriculum based on skills and content to one centered on learning values and developing qualities of personhood. The other is no longer a stranger but a neighbour, a person for whom we do neighbourly things. One of our participants talked about the differences he saw between old village council meetings and current ones. Today's representatives, he noted, go by urban models of political posturing, while previous sessions involved community members gathering around a table to discuss a problem and identify who in the community was the best person to deal with it. They didn't necessarily look for the one with the most education but, in his words,

> We looked around at our community and asked who could help.… We have people here to help, and when the resource is on our doorstep, we tend to use it. It is sort of a door-to-door approach versus an urban model of leaving home to find it elsewhere.… When the community needs things done, or they need someone to help, we try to be there, to find the tools, simple tools, accessible tools, so they can do it by themselves.

By not expecting ourselves to be accountable for changes and honouring the strengths of a community to be accountable for itself, we, as rural professional helpers, may be able to avoid being all things to all people, burning-out, or feeling conflicted by our professional codes.

Oddly enough, the participants who lived within communities and helped out because of their internal understanding of local needs did not experience the issues that professional helpers encountered. This raises a question about "helping from within" and what that means. Is effective helping by professionals and non-professionals rooted in an ethic of community care or good citizenship? Do our students need to learn what being a good citizen in each rural community entails? Citizenship involves working with others. In our colleague Tom Bateman's terms, citizenship is defined as "engagement" and "participation" (2007, personal communication). Cheers (2004), however, takes us further by actually challenging our professional identities.

> We are not the center of the social care universe, we are not the sun holding the system together with our magnetic appeal and political indispensability…social care is an expression of human society – of all the relationships and interactions amongst people groups and organizations… It is also an ongoing expression of interaction between people responding to each other subjectively, intuitively, and spontaneously from the narratives they live (p. 10).

How, then, do we provide curriculum that will facilitate this learning? How do citizens engage and how do they participate? How do we get beyond the stories and become part of the fabric of the community and thus become someone who works from within? How do we reach a position where the rural community becomes the place where community members and professionals meet? These crucial questions need to be explored in our curricula for rural helping.

Narrative Curricula for Effective Rural Helping

Old curriculum models, including behavioural and outcome-based models require proving competency and expertise in helping others by "doing onto". According to our participants, these models have not assisted them in rural settings. Models that help teachers and students to become guides, accompanists, and mentors rather than experts and fixers seem to have more potential for helping in rural practice.

Shifting from old curriculum notions embedded in our psyches and professional practices can be difficult. When stressed we may revert to old ways. Learning narrative reflection as an on-going practice or autobiographical inquiry as a first-line of examination in stressful situations may provide professional helpers with a backup protection against burnout. Education of this kind sensitizes students to "story", to the narrative nature of rural life, to their autobiographies, and to the narrative stories embedded in rural communities. It begins with them and helps them unpack some of the barriers that silently impede their success as rural practitioners. Brandon argues that we need to know ourselves first and identify the biases, fears, and tensions that live within us before we can venture to professionally guide others.

A recurrent theme was that much of the learning about helping in rural communities must take place within the communities themselves. It is outside of the university that students will learn to relinquish the academic myths and assumptions about rural helping that we may have unknowingly perpetuated and, instead, to listen non-judgmentally to the stories recounted by community members themselves that reveal insights into the community over time. Understanding how a community has maintained its continuity through difficult times can help us guide them in future difficult situations. This would lead to a reversal of the current thinking that the academy should be the primary place of learning, and would challenge those who educate helpers to find ways of rooting the curriculum in the everyday life experiences in the community. In listening to the told and untold stories, students can reflect on their implications. McKenna (1997) states: “the shortest distance between human beings and The Truth is a story” (p. 134). In hearing the meaning of community narratives, students can gently become a part of the fabric of the community and someone who works from within.

This conclusion leads us to agree with Cheers (2004) that we need to shift from a therapeutic mindset of client-clinician to community member. Such a shift would require a rethinking of our practices and a re-conceptualizing of a number of constructs such as social justice, community, caring, dependence, as well as need (White, cited in Cody, 2003). Our definition of these constructs will be different in each unique rural community. This calls for curriculum exercises that guide students to work with uncertainty rather than predictability. It requires educators to navigate through uncertainty and help students develop a sense of flexibility.

New professional helpers – including those who have had little experience of rural helping, those who have some understanding about rural issues, and those who are insiders to a particular community – need to explore their knowledge (or relative lack of it) as outsiders to a particular rural community, and need to find ways of gaining credibility amongst the rural experts. Those who had little knowledge about rural issues may make inaccurate assumptions. As one participant told us, several novice helpers entered the community with “citified ways” about appropriate professional boundaries or about standards of cleanliness in the kitchens of working farms. Unlearning as well as learning was important for the students with limited experience of rural Canada. The students with little knowledge about rural communities will need help in acquainting themselves with issues that are important to rural people – including issues of poverty, depopulation, or living in the workplace if the workplace happens to be a family farm. Those who have some understanding about rural life, but not of the particular community where they will practice, need to explore how they can use this knowledge in the new setting. One participant told us that she looked around the homes of her clients and took cues from what she saw. For example, the simple phrase "bear-meat tastes good" enabled her to establish rapport with a hunter who had a bear head on his wall. Another visited his clients with his work boots on, ready to talk with the farmer while he was loading hay. For all newcomers to a community, learning the local stories helps bridge the distance from outsider to insider. Helpers who are insiders, such as an Aboriginal social worker who returned to his home community as a professional helper, had a different challenge. He wanted community members to acknowledge that he might have learned something of value to them during his professional education.

An issue mentioned by several participants was the challenge of developing ethical practice in an environment where the professional Code of Ethics had a poor fit with the reality of rural life and rural helping. For example, one social worker asked, "How do you maintain confidentiality when everyone knows the social worker's car?" Even if she parked a distance from the clients' homes, she would probably be seen entering the home, causing the neighbours to talk. It is advisable for students to explore ethical challenges and consider how to resolve them before encountering them in actual practice.

As we reflected on these issues, our view that autobiographical work is an important component of the curriculum was affirmed. Students, we believe, benefit from considering their own lived experiences of rural communities in order to decide what they need to learn and unlearn and how they might position themselves as professional helpers. This autobiographical work can guide them in reflecting on the skills and qualities needed to be good citizens in the communities in which they work. There are a number of ways that this education might occur. Students may work closely with experienced practitioners (local or professional) who will mentor them as they relate their own stories to the individual, family and community stories in the rural settings where they work. Indeed, many of our participants felt that students in professional programs needed to work in the field with local experts to learn ways of accessing rural stories and their meanings. Also, university teachers might assist students to explore their own notions of rural practice and the implications these notions bring. Students may also benefit from explorations with their peers about the experiences and challenges they encounter in their practice. These discussions will feel more authentic if they take place in the rural community rather than in the "ivory tower". After the students have explored their own stories and the web of stories within a community, the professional literature can be examined and its benefits and limitations for rural practice discussed and evaluated. When professional knowledge does not fit the reality of rural life, rural helpers need to develop new theories and methods of practice that are rooted in community stories.

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Values Reasoning for Critical Thinking: Completing the Process

Abstract

Values reasoning is a multidimensional process designed to help students assess value questions or claims, make defensible judgements about issues and resolve value conflicts. This overall process and sub-processes help students develop critical ways of thinking and dispositions to make wise and effective decisions in different contexts and subject areas. Several sub-processes of values reasoning introduced at the 2005 AAU Teaching Showcase will be reviewed briefly and the remaining sub-processes will be introduced. These include pairing value principles with factual claims, identifying points of view and testing a value judgement with the Universal Consequences and Subsumption Tests. The contribution of these additional sub-processes to critical thinking will be explored

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In the midst of unprecedented social, cultural, economic, technological and political change, university students need to develop critical ways of thinking and dispositions if they are to address contemporary challenges and problems. The early twenty-first century is an era of paradoxes with increasing emphasis on human rights and embracing of pluralism along with increasing violence, alienation and continuing prejudice and discrimination (Rovinescu, 1991). Critical thought and action is much needed in today’s world.

Values reasoning is one process designed to enhance students’ critical thinking by helping them to assess value questions or claims, make thoughtful, reflective and justified value judgements and resolve value conflicts. Previously, MacCleave and Eghan (2006) illustrated how selected sub-processes of values reasoning contributed to students’ open-mindedness, acceptance and respect for diversity, perspective-taking and sensitivity to ethical dimensions of problems.

The entire values reasoning process is complex and requires a considerable time investment to address adequately. Instructors cannot always provide extended blocks of time in a busy term. However, various sub-processes of values reasoning that contribute to critical thinking can be employed effectively in a shorter time frame. These can be applied flexibly to a variety of disciplinary or subject matter issues across the humanities, natural and social sciences. Thus, selected sub-processes were introduced in relative isolation before attempting to coordinate them into the whole process (MacCleave & Eghan, 2006).

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to complete the values reasoning process by first reviewing the sub-processes introduced at the 2005 AAU Teaching Showcase. These include distinguishing factual claims from value claims, selecting a value claim to explore, locating supporting and refuting factual claims and testing a value judgement with the Role Exchange and New Cases Tests. After this review, the remaining sub-processes will be introduced as follows: pairing value principles with factual claims and identifying points of view. The Universal Consequences and Subsumption Tests will be considered as additional ways to test value judgements. Contributions of these sub-processes to development of critical thinking will also be addressed.

The following is a brief review of the sub-processes introduced at last year's conference.

Distinguishing Factual Claims from Value Claims. Factual claims describe "what is the case". These claims can be tested for truth and falsity by asking whether the claims are factual, whether evidence exists to support their truth or accuracy and whether sources are reputable.

In contrast, value claims imply a criterion of worth. They cannot be evaluated as true or false but can only be justified through logical argument. Value claims are recognized by an evaluative term such as best/worst, important/unimportant, desirable/undesirable, appropriate/inappropriate and so on. The words "ought", "must" and "should" signify prescriptive value claims. Thus, all value claims contain a value object (the thing being rated or evaluated) and a value term (the term that indicates worth) (Arcus, 1980; Hultgren, 1980). Consider the following example: Everyone is obligated to live a healthy lifestyle. In this value claim, the value object is “living a healthy lifestyle” and the value term is the word “obligated”.

Selecting a Value Claim or Question to Explore. Students need to identify an overall value question or problem to analyze. They need to give the background and explain why the claim or question is considered a problem within their discipline or profession. The importance of identifying issues or questions to explore was emphasized by Elder and Paul (2005a) who claimed that “it is not possible to be a good thinker and a poor questioner” (p. 3). Recall that a value question or claim is recognizable by the presence of both a value object and value term. Another example of a value claim related to living a healthy lifestyle would be the following: Daily physical education should be mandatory in elementary schools. The value object is “mandatory daily physical education in the elementary school” and the value term is “should”.

Once the overall value claim or question has been identified, it must be clarified to ensure that everyone will share the same understanding about its meaning. Concepts can be defined or examples and non-examples of relevant concepts and terms can be explored. It is difficult to gather appropriate evidence for further analysis if the phenomenon evaluated by the value claim or question is unclear.

Locating Supporting and Refuting Factual Claims. Evidence in the form of supporting and refuting factual claims is gathered by reviewing literature related to the overall value claim or question selected for analysis. To provide breadth and depth of insight into the issue, the list of supporting and refuting claims should be comprehensive, logically related to the overall claim and impartial. Although there need not be an equal number of supporting and refuting claims, the overall quantity and quality of claims on both sides of the analysis should be fairly balanced. One-sided or lopsided arguments are not impartial.

Supporting and refuting factual claims are organized in a Reasons Assembly Chart. The overall value claim or question is placed across the top of the chart. Supporting or positive facts are placed to the left of a vertical line in the middle of the chart whereas refuting or negative facts are placed to the right of this line.

This visual line up of claims helps students better assess the relevance and logic of evidence gathered.

To follow is an example of a Reasons Assembly Chart featuring the value question previously stated as a claim: Should daily physical education be mandatory in elementary schools? In this example, supporting and refuting factual claims are presented along with accompanying value principles and points of view. Both value principles and points of view will be further examined in a later section of this paper.

Value Question: Should daily PE be mandatory in elementary schools?					
Supporting Claims (YES)			**Refuting Claims (NO)**		
Point of View	Value Principles	Factual Claims	Factual Claims	Value Principles	Point of View
Health & Safety	Childhood obesity should be addressed.	Obesity in children has increased over the past two decades.	Children are already physically active during recess and lunch hour.	Children's current physical activity should be acknowledged.	Health & Safety
Moral Health & Safety	It is important to consider the health risks of obesity.	Childhood obesity is associated with increasing risk of diabetes and other health conditions.	Parents are considered the key protectors of their children's health.	Parental responsibility for children's health should be recognized.	Moral Health & Safety

Testing the Value Judgement with the Role Exchange and New Cases Tests. This was the final sub-process introduced at last year's conference. These tests will be reviewed when two new tests are introduced later in this paper. Before conducting the tests, it is important to establish the relevance of facts gathered as evidence. This step is taken after students have carefully assessed their factual claims and made necessary changes.

Establishing the Relevance of Facts

There are two ways of clarifying the relevance of factual claims to the overall value claim: 1) Identify and pair a value principle with each factual claim to reveal the reason why the claims is relevant to the overall value claim, and 2) determine the point of view from which each factual claim is made. These sub-processes make the relationship between facts and values apparent and explicit. Facts in and of themselves are just the "tip of the iceberg". Facts do not stand in isolation as "nuggets of truth", even if well established, but are positioned or rallied in different ways to provide evidence or support a position or argument in a debate. It is at this point that values enter the picture (MacCleave, in progress).

Theorists critiqued the strict separation of facts and values in positivist versions of research (MacCleave, in progress). The first step in the values reasoning process, distinguishing facts from values, may inadvertently invite the "fact/value separation" critique. However, students of values reasoning are cautioned that the fact/value distinction is complex and ambiguous at times. This separation allows inquirers to decide how best to test or judge a particular claim. The later step of identifying the value principle underlying a factual claim is based on the assumption that a relationship exists between facts and values. The way a fact is positioned in an argument and recognition that facts are aligned with different perspectives or points of view reflect a value orientation (MacCleave, in progress). Value neutrality is not assumed.

What is a Value Principle?

In simple terms, a value principle is the value position behind a particular fact and has two distinguishing characteristics. It is stated as a generalization. That is, the values principle relates a particular factual claim to a broader class of related ideas. The second characteristic is the inclusion of an evaluative term such as a prescriptive term (i.e., should, ought, or must) or descriptive/evaluative term (i.e., such as beautiful/ugly, important/unimportant, good/bad, relevant/irrelevant and so on). This characteristic parallels the use of an evaluative term in the overall claim or question.

Consider the following example:

> **Overall Value Claim:** Persons should use scarce resources wisely.
> **Supporting Factual Claim:** Food conservation allows more people to be well nourished.
> **Value Principle:** Practices that promote health and well-being should be encouraged.
> (Adapted from Hultgren, 1980 in MacCleave, 1995, p. 24).

This value principle is stated as a generalization and connects resource use to broader notions of health and wellness. It also has a prescriptive evaluative term "should".

This value principle example reveals a logical connection between a factual claim and the overall value claim or question. At this stage in the process, students often discover that factual claims that they assumed were negative are actually positive and vice versa. In an earlier version of the values reasoning process, Coombs (1971) noted that value principles "determine whether the facts support positive or negative evaluations" (p. 15). The sub-process of identifying value principles helps reveal the reason why a fact supports or refutes the overall value claim.

The same fact may support or refute an overall value claim or question, depending on the underlying value principle associated with the fact. Consider the following example:

> **Overall Value Claim:** Segregated housing should be provided for the elderly.
> **Factual Claim:** Segregated housing separates the elderly from other age groups in the community.
> **Supporting Value Principle:** It is good for the elderly to be among peers who understand their needs.
> **Refuting Value Principle:** It is unfortunate to segregate the elderly because different generations have much to learn and share with each other.
> (Adapted from AVER, 1978)

The two different value principles in this example are stated as generalizations and both contain evaluative terms. The supporting value principle includes the term “good” whereas the refuting value principle for the same factual claim features the evaluative term of “unfortunate”. Reasons why the same sentence can be used to either support or refute the overall claim are also revealed in these value principles. For example, being with understanding peers is a supportive reason for segregated housing whereas being isolated from different generations is a reason to refute the overall claim.

To organize value principles in the Reasons Assembly Chart, a second column is made to the left of the supporting factual claims and to the right of the refuting factual claims. Value principles are matched with corresponding factual claims in the chart.

Contributions to Critical Thinking

Identifying and pairing value principles with factual claims sensitizes students to the assumptions or value orientations underlying factual claims. They become more aware of the reasons why a claim supports or refutes an issue. If students discover that the facts they labeled as negative are actually positive, they are demonstrating greater depth of thought and enhanced recognition of the logic and relevance of positioning particular facts in an argument in a particular way.

Recall that the value principle is stated as a generalization. Students exhibit breadth of perspective when they are able to relate their factual claims to a broader class of ideas. Depth, breath, logic and relevance represent important intellectual standards, according to Elder and Paul (2005b).

Engaging with this sub-process may help alter students’ styles of thinking. Elder and Paul (2005a) contrasted dogmatic absolutists, subjective relativists and critical thinkers. Dogmatic absolutists are those who reduce questions and all evidence to matters of fact and seek a single “correct” answer to a question. Subjective relativists believe that answers to all questions are a matter of opinion or preference and one opinion is as good as another. In contrast, critical thinking requires careful reasoning and judgement based on considering both facts and related values. Identifying value principles that connect factual claims to the overall value claim or question helps students better understand the relationship between facts and values.

What is a Point of View?

Point of view refers to the type of reasoning required for justification. As statements from either side of the Reasons Assembly Chart are compared, the point of view from which each is made must be considered. Awareness of point of view helps to avoid supporting a claim from one point of view with reasons appropriate for a different point of view. For example, if a claim is being made from an economic point of view and is being justified with reasons that are health and safety considerations, then the reasons are not appropriate. Criteria for assessing economic claims typically differ from criteria for health and safety claims.

To follow are examples of common points of view from which claims can be made, followed by a brief description:

> **Moral:** concern with what is just, fair, ethical, moral, right with regard to how other people are treated
>
> **Prudential:** concern for one's individual interest with regard to being wise, smart, shrewd, clever in meeting one's needs
>
> **Aesthetic:** concern with beauty and appearance with words such as pretty, elegant, and exquisite
>
> **Health:** concern with physical and psychological safety, health or well-being and safety
>
> **Economic:** concern with cost and efficiency with words such as cheap, useful, efficient, and functional
>
> **Intellectual:** concern with truth, reliability, validity and knowledge with words such as scientific, rational, true, accurate, valid, and reliable
>
> **Environmental:** concern with the state of the environment with words such as clean, non-polluting, and environmentally sustainable

Religious: reflective of views of various formal religions with words such as pious, devout, godly, and doctrine

Ideological: concern with revealing the world view of various competing philosophical stances such as Marxist, neo-liberal, feminist post-structural, and liberal humanist

(Adapted from Hultgren, 1980)

In the values reasoning process, moral points of view, where relevant, take priority over other points of view. Students sometimes confuse moral and prudential points of view. They might need to be reminded that moral points of view are based on the equal and impartial consideration of everyone's interests whereas the prudential point of view is concerned with what meets one's own interests.

To further explore points of view, consider the following example:

Overall Value Question: Should persons in a vegetative stage be kept on respiratory tubes indefinitely?
Supporting Factual Claim: Respiratory tubes keep them alive.
Supporting Value Principle: Whatever measures preserve life should be encouraged.
Point of View: Moral/Religious
Refuting Factual Claim: Keeping vegetative people on respiratory tubes costs taxpayers a lot of money.
Refuting Value Principle: It is unwise to spend too much money when results are questionable or uncertain.
Point of View: Economic

Identifying points of view has implications for the arrangement of claims in the Reasons Assembly Chart. A supporting claim from a moral point of view should be positioned opposite to a refuting moral claim for the sake of logic. For this reason, claims might need to be reorganized once points of view have been identified. Further, more than one point of view may apply to a single factual claim or question. Ensure that at least one perspective is shared in such cases. If no counter point or contrasting claim from a similar point of view can be found, an empty space is left opposite to the unmatched claim.

Contributions to Critical Thinking

Identifying the point(s) of view related to a fact helps students think about perspective with greater breadth and depth. The meaning of point of view in values reasoning differs from that used by some critical theorists. For example, Elder and Paul (2005b) spoke of point of view as one's personal perspective or that of others. In values reasoning, point of view refers to the type of reasoning required for justification, whether moral, prudential, economic, ideological and so on. Students learn to examine a claim or question through a number of alternative lenses and that multiple ways exist for examining issues.

They also learn the logic of matching points of view when reorganizing claims by perspective in the Reasons Assembly Chart. That is, a supporting factual claim and related value principle from moral point of view need to be counter-argued or contrasted with a refuting factual claim and related value principle from a competing moral point of view. Thus, identifying points of view enhances the breath, depth and logic of students' thinking and they become more comfortable dealing with complexity.

Testing a Value Judgement: Introducing Two New Tests

The final sub-process in values reasoning entails testing the value judgement based on examining the factual claims, value principles and points of view arranged in the completed Reasons Assembly Chart. Students need to decide whether the supporting or refuting claims make a stronger case by considering both the quality and quantity or salience of claims presented. For example, five strong claims made from a moral point of view might be considered a stronger case than eight claims made from other points of view.

Four tests are used to ensure making a final decision that is intellectually and morally justified. Each test uncovers different dimensions of the values issue explored since these tests are drawn from competing philosophical theories. Rather than trying to resolve age-old philosophical disputes, values reasoning allows us to examine pragmatically what each test might reveal about a particular value judgement.

Previously, MacCleave and Eghan (2006) introduced the Role Exchange and New Cases Tests. These tests will be reviewed briefly and two new tests will be introduced: the Universal Consequences and Subsumption Tests.

The **Role Exchange Test** focuses on the consequences to others inherent in the final value judgement. This test helps students consider who would be the most advantaged and who would be the least advantaged if a value judgement were accepted. It also asks students whether they would be willing to trade places with the most disadvantaged in this situation.

The **New Cases Test** helps students consider the impact of changing contexts and circumstances on a particular value judgement. Students are asked to imagine alternative situations where their judgement might apply and whether they could accept its application in a new situation.

Universal Consequences Test

The Universal Consequences Test helps students consider how broadly or universally their value judgement can be applied. They need to consider the impact or consequences of accepting their value judgement and related actions if everyone were doing the same thing everywhere. According to MacCleave (1995), "a decision that might be acceptable for a local situation may have disastrous consequences if more broadly applied and vice versa" (p. 44). This test poses the following questions: What would happen if everyone did that? How would you like it if everyone did that?

Some students find that it helpful to reverse the question and ask: "what would happen if the value judgement were rejected by everyone, everywhere?" When considering the intellectual and moral defensibility of a value judgement, it is a good idea to compare it with other alternatives. This test can raise ethical issues that were not thought of when considering the factual evidence gathered to support or refute a claim or when using the other tests.

Subsumption Test

The Subsumption Test helps students consider whether their value judgement follows from a higher order principle. Remember that moral claims take precedence over claims from other perspectives such as intellectual or aesthetic. If one were faced with two or more conflicting moral claims, Cox (1981) recommended that the claim that is life confirming should take precedence "except in cases where life confirmation would result in drastic loss of justice or freedom, or quality of life or would result in severe or unending suffering" (p. 249). An example of a higher-order principle being followed is the case of a high school counselor whose student client confides plans to commit suicide. The counselor's choice is between maintaining confidentiality versus the possibility of loss of life for the student if the plans are ignored and intervention is not pursued. As the higher-order principle, protecting life would take precedence over maintaining confidentiality. In anticipation that such conflicts may arise, counselors often advise students of the limits of confidentiality.

To apply the Subsumption Test to your value judgement, the following questions are posed: Is there a higher order principle involved in this judgement? Is the judgement logically related to this higher-order principle? Is this higher-order principle acceptable? Should this higher-order principle take precedence over competing principles?

Testing a tentative value judgement takes place before making a final judgement to accept, modify or reject the overall value claim or question examined. Modifications to the original value judgement are often generated through the testing process.

Contributions to Critical Thinking

The Role Exchange Test encourages perspective taking and empathetic understanding through assuming the role of another imaginatively. The New Cases Test encourages students to be open to changing contexts and circumstances. The Universal Consequences Test helps students think of the results of their values reasoning in more universal terms. They gain a perspective on how broadly or narrowly their value judgement can be applied. Finally, the Subsumption Test helps students make more sensitive and defensible judgements. They must prioritize points of view by giving precedence to life-confirming values (Cox, 1981). They must also discern the salience of competing moral points of view. Adjudicating between competing moral principles requires complex thought and the ability to deal with uncertainty. Even if students encounter issues that are difficult to resolve, testing value judgements helps them to better understand the supporting and refuting sides of an issue and their moral basis.

Conclusion

The values reasoning process has much to commend it in terms of developing students' critical thinking. Experiences with this process help students develop greater depth and breadth of thinking. They also become more familiar with common standards of rationality and the use of logic in taking a reasoned position on an issue. The standards of coherence and relevance are also central to values reasoning.

The only drawback to this process is its complexity. Learning the values reasoning is time consuming and may initially be overwhelming for some students. If they persist, however, students usually realize the benefits of the process and take pride in the growth of their critical thinking. To ease students into the process or to develop critical thought within a limited time frame, it can be helpful to introduce selected sub-processes of the overall process. As one example, students may already be familiar with participating in a debate. They could test the results of the winning position by using the four ethical tests associated with values reasoning.

There are countless possibilities for adapting values reasoning for use across different subject areas and disciplines. The benefits of adopting values reasoning in whole or in part far outweigh the demands.

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Design for a Real-world Relevant "Introduction to Business" Course: Students Learning to be Players Instead of Spectators

Abstract

Business faculty, librarians and instructional design specialists at Memorial University of Newfoundland have partnered together to design a new Business 1000 course. The new course design addresses concerns from the corporate sector that business graduates lack real-world relevant knowledge and skills.

This paper describes traditional "orthodox business school management education" which teaches students to look at contexts and situations, creating what we call management Spectators. We go on to describe a new model for management education which would put students into the here-and-now realities of business management and encourage situational analysis, creating what we call Players.

The new model fosters critical thinking and information literacy skills in students to help them become more real-world relevant. In the new course design assignments and activities are structured as learning experiences rather than mere testing tools. In order to reflect the real-world environment students work in teams on business analysis and planning projects that may lead to a business plan. Through a "discovery learning" model, each team will necessarily learn about functional areas of business (accounting, finance, marketing, and organizational behaviour) in the course of completing the projects. Students will also hone their information literacy skills as part of the projects, learning how to identify information needs, where to get relevant and timely information, and how to critically analyze/evaluate the information they find.

Introduction

Since at least the early 1980s, concerns have been continually expressed that university business schools, their programs, and their graduates lack relevance to real-world business and management situations and practices. It therefore appears surprising that business corporations have continued to hire these business school graduates. In resolving this seeming contradiction we suggest, first, that managers and human resources professionals who have been doing the hiring must have perceived these graduates as relevant to the jobs that they were hired for. Second, we suggest that it is later on in their corporate careers, perhaps as they move into positions that are managerial rather than technical, that business school graduates begin to demonstrate their lack of relevance to the real world of managing the business. It follows that business schools have focused on producing graduates that business corporations have continued to hire.

The North American business school management education "industry" through its accreditation body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSBI), has made collective responses to the expressions of concern (See Porter and McKibben, 1987; Management Education at Risk, 2002; Eligibility Procedures and Standards for Business Accreditation, 2003). Also, and perhaps for competitive reasons, many so-called top-ranked business schools have been advertising program initiatives towards relevance, often including communications and interpersonal, or so-called "soft," skills, and teamwork and leadership developmental activities. Although producing "relevant" graduates may not have been necessary in the past, it appears that business schools are now facing "intense criticism for failing to impart useful skills, failing to prepare leaders, [and] failing to instill norms of ethical behavior" (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005).

We believe that it is not difficult for teachers to potentiate, or even to develop, in business school students, the real-world relevance to managing the business that has always been needed. Hence, in this paper we are proposing a design for a real-world relevant "Introduction to Business" course – as a means of starting students in their business program as we would mean them to go on. We begin with an overview of the current state orthodox business school management education, and its role in teaching the reality of managing a business in today's world. We then discuss "typical" business students, their needs and learning styles, and the ways in which we capitalize on their strengths in the proposed course. We conclude by outlining a sample learning activity and course schedule.

Organizational Management Spectators vs. Players Managing the Business

We perceive that, in practice, taken-for-granted Organizational Management is power and politics. Talking publicly about the practical exercise of power and politics is, however, socially unacceptable and can be damaging to one's position. Organizational Management discourse, i.e., what organizational managers (can) talk about publicly, is therefore the socially acceptable, politically correct, and unreal mask for what managers do privately in exercising power. Orthodox business school management education (OBSME) is an important component of Organizational Management discourse, with all of its characteristics as a socially acceptable mask for power. OBSME discourse rationalizes power as legitimate, i.e., as authority, and as necessary for direction and coordination of the organization. It also provides organizational "safe-talk," including normative and prescriptive content on leadership and teamwork – but what managers say publicly need bear no connection to what they do!

This discursive content has been the stuff of OBSME curricula, pedagogy, and ideology. In line with its role as a masking discourse, OBSME would not be expected to include critical thinking and situational analysis regarding here-and-now realities of managing the business. Instead, students must have been taught only to **look at** the context or situation, and not to put themselves as **acting in** the here-and-now reality of the situation and carrying out relevant critical thinking and action. As well, business school management courses are textbook courses; because textbook theory is suitably normative or prescriptive, saying only what should be done generally at all times and in all situations.

Organizational Management is perceived as "Spectator" management because, being primarily concerned with organizational power and politics, it only **looks at** the business reality. Accordingly, it must be non-relevant to the real world of the business (even though it may be very relevant to the world of organizational power and politics). OBSME programs have been, and continue to be, the means for producing Organizational Management Spectators. These are the business school graduates who go on to perpetuate the ranks of Spectator management in business corporations.

Accordingly, we define Managing the Business as the activities and processes that are the purposeful business enterprise of the corporation or organization, and its activities and processes are primarily concerned with accomplishing desired results **in** business situational reality. "Players" Managing the Business are critical thinkers **acting in** the real world situational here-and-now, and are those who can create and deliver valuable results.

Only decisions and actions made by Players **acting in** situational reality can be real-world relevant. We therefore suggest that educating Players in Managing the Business should be straightforwardly based on real-world information and on situational critical thinking. As Matthew Stewart (2006) suggests, "intelligence, common sense and problem-solving skills are what really matter, and…'management theory' is no science at all".

Recognizing Real-World Relevant Students

High-school graduates in 2006 were born in 1988. They appear to be more self-aware and involved in determining what they value and want as individuals. They are more self-reliant and pragmatic in spending time and effort in getting what they want. We believe that such individuals are highly real-world relevant in their personal lives.

More mature individuals who have been working for some time in the real world can only be more real-world relevant. They are experiencing the realities of organizational management power exercised over them. They know what it is like to be "bossed around".

Students leaving high school in 2006 have grown up with information technology and the Internet. They are highly information-aware even if they may not be "information-literate"[1]. These individuals are accustomed to using the Internet to find real-world information using Google and other search

[1] "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000).

engines. Indeed, they can perform an information search at the click of a mouse that not too long ago took months or years of library research. Such individuals, even as first-year students, are likely to find textbook theory-based business school education restricted and unreal.

We believe that students' own real-world relevance can be harnessed for learning. Their self-awareness and self-reliance can be used to break away from textbook theory, find information on business realities, and practice situational analysis and critical thinking – as Players asking what, why and how.

Student interest and critical thinking can be stimulated by asking them to find information by searching secondary sources, and by observing and analyzing businesses in operation, as customers, as visitors, or as employees.

Further evidence of students' self-reliance is seen in the popularity of online university courses among students today. Students want to manage their own time, and are willing and able to balance work, lifestyle, and learning style. Online courses give students more flexibility than traditional classroom-based courses. We believe we can capitalize on student's self-reliance as learners by offering our course in an online environment.

Furthermore, through the creation of authentic activities that immerse students in the business environment, encouraging them to become 'players' rather than merely 'spectators,' we are in fact engaging them in significant learning experiences. These powerful learning experiences not only supply students with the foundational knowledge of how to successfully run a business, but also provide them the opportunity to apply this knowledge through engagement in these authentic activities, to integrate this knowledge with prior ideas so as to create connections, and to discover the personal and social implications of what they have learned. This in turn changes the degree to which they care about the subject at hand and, in addition, teaches them how to learn (Fink, 2003). This type of learning environment will ultimately bring about significant and lasting changes that continue after the course has ended: enhancing the individual's life, enabling him or her to contribute to their communities, and successfully preparing the individual for the world of work (Fink, 2003).

Aims and Means for Student Learning

Real-world Knowledge Content

Knowledge content and pedagogy must move away from looking at or being applicable to the context or type of situation (students taught to be Spectators) to being derived from or applied **in** the situation (students learning to be Players). Real-world business enterprise practicalities and processes must be the bases for content.

It follows from the critical thinking approach that there must be standardization of terms and definitions, and consistency in their use.

It also follows that textbook information would be used largely to provide basic business concepts in terms of frameworks, items, terms and definitions, and some illustrative examples.

Real-world Situationalization and Critical Thinking

Relevant business education should explicitly focus on the real world of managing the business, recognize the power and political realities of organizational management, and promote learning of critical thinking with here-and-now situationalization.

The course will introduce the realities of business enterprise, including business processes and the situational realities of managing the business. To be real the course must be down-to-earth in focusing on the fundamentals of “the business” and on the business processes that drive and accomplish these essentials. Accordingly, business is seen as identifying customers, realizing what they value, selling and delivering to customers what they value, and getting paid and making a profit, all in competition with other businesses that may be seeking the same customers and other resources. Other factors and considerations, such as morality, social responsibility, legality, and technology, can be discussed relative to the effects they may have on these fundamentals. The course would demand critical investigation and thinking about business and organization realities and about what to do in managing them for results.

The course would take a business strategic and operational process approach to delivering customer value, profitability, and overall competitiveness. This would be fundamentally different from the OBSME functional approach that is traditionally taken.

Information Literacy

Information search and evaluation is a fundamental first step in critical thinking. Students must learn to find and create data and information, and they must learn to evaluate and validate it – in short, they must become "information literate."

Many academic libraries have adopted the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (2000). Librarians understand how to effectively navigate today's information management and retrieval systems, and often teach students how to find, evaluate, and use information. As information specialists, librarians are important collaborators in the design of a course and its research assignments and activities.

For the purposes of the real-world relevant "Introduction to Business" course in question, these Standards would be incorporated as guiding principles for student learning activities and assignments. Students will become real-world relevant as they carry out information searches to find their own examples for illustration, application, and analysis. Students' library and Internet search skills, and their overall information literacy, would be developed and improved.

COURSE DESIGN

Real-world Knowledge Content

We conceptualize four Business Connection Processes to customers and for making money. These would form the knowledge content of the course, and will serve as topic headings in the course schedule as follows:

1. **Customers buying value:** What are customers buying and what do they want to buy, what do customers value and how do we make money on it?

2. **Communicating, selling, and customer purchasing:** How are we selling to customers, and how do we make money doing so? (Here, selling includes marketing or at the very least communication or promotion of the product or service value package to the target customer).

3. **Making, assembling, storing, transporting, and delivering:** How are we making/assembling and delivering the product or service value package to the target customers, and how do we make money doing so?

4. **Getting paid and making money:** How are we getting paid and how are we controlling working capital liquidity, costs, and investments, and how are we making money doing so?

Real-world Situationalization and Critical Thinking

Each of the above four Business Connection Processes would be analyzed systematically in five areas:

1. Preliminary business connection identification (as a place to start the analysis)
2. External analysis (including customers, market and competitors)
3. Business connection (for customer value and for making money)
4. Company business operations and organization
5. Company financial performance and financing

We use the analogy of the detective or crime scene investigator (CSI). The fundamental questions are always: What? When? Where? Why? How? and Who? A business connection involves two actors, i.e., the customer and the company, on either side of the connection, and both actors must be kept in mind when asking the questions.

To illustrate this systematic analysis, we take the example of restaurants. We look at Business Connection Process 1 (Customers Buying Value) and begin analyzing that process in a preliminary way (according to preliminary business connection identification above):

> Consider restaurants, the many different types that exist and the different customer user segments that they are targeting, and competing

for. It is useful to consider the restaurant "value package" based on functionality, quality, and performance specifications along with price. There is a continuum from high functionality, etc. at a high price, to restaurants with lower service specifications at a lower price. An evening meal at a fine dining restaurant may cost approximately $100 per plate, but at Swiss Chalet it may cost $20 per plate. At McDonald's and other competing fast food outlets there are no plates, and the cost of the meal may be around $10. It follows that there are many more restaurants targeting the lower prices segments simply because there are many more people who only want to, or can only afford to, pay lower prices. (You get what you pay for, and you pay for what you get!)

Clearly, these different restaurants are targeting different customer or market segments. It needs to be recognized, however, that individuals can fall into more than one segment. For example, we might go to a fine dining restaurant for a special occasion such as a romantic dinner for two on Valentine's Day, but eat at Swiss Chalet because we simply cannot face cooking a meal on a Saturday evening. Alternatively, we may choose an ethnic restaurant (e.g., Chinese, Thai, Italian, Indian) simply for the different food experience.

As well, there are many different specific types of customer who fall into one segment. For example, the fine dining customer segment will contain specific customers who may be special occasion diners, business entertainment diners, and gourmet diners.

Each and every restaurant is aiming to cause potential customers falling into its target user segment to value its service offering over and above that of other restaurants competing for that same segment. Only if the restaurant gets sufficient numbers of customers to cover its costs and make a profit will it stay in business.

Learning Activities and Assignments

Students today are assignment-focused. After all, students earn grades by completing assignments, not by reading supplementary materials or simply attending classes. We believe assignments and activities can be learning experiences themselves, rather than mere tests of classroom learning. To that end, the assignments and activities we have developed are inquiry-based. "Inquiry-based learning refers to teaching and learning that is active and problem-driven, rather than primarily passive and lecture-based" (Sandhu and McDonald, 2007). Given an example such as the restaurant scenario above, there are many sources of information a student might consult to flesh out the problem and find a solution:

- talk to local restaurant owners directly
- visit a restaurant's Web site
- read restaurants' annual reports (especially for chain restaurants)
- find government statistics on consumer spending on food
- find secondary scholarly research in this area

Our information literacy objectives for the activities and assignments are that students:

- determine their information needs
- discover the most effective way of finding the needed information (e.g., interviews, observations, searches)
- evaluate the information for relevance, authority, accuracy, and currency
- manipulate and interpret data to bear on the specific situation or problem
- make findings from that data and information
- draw situational conclusions based on findings

In the course of activities and assignments students will be given some information sources to explore, will be taught how to use key library resources, and will be expected to brainstorm and use some information sources on their own.

Figure 1. Example Learning Activity

Click on the following link to view Canadian spending patterns for the year 2003.

Statistics Canada. *Spending Patterns in Canada, 2003*. http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/62-202-XIE/0000362-202-XIE.pdf

1. Seek out the average expenditure per household on food purchased from restaurants.
2. How does this number compare with the average expenditure per household on such services/products as communications or transportation?
3. Discuss on the Forum if and how you would use this data if you were a restaurant owner. How would it impact your business decisions?

This activity would teach students the potential usefulness of government statistics as a resource, the free availability of such statistics online, give students experience reading large tables of numerical data as well as drawing conclusions from such data, and would encourage students to think critically about the data and share ideas with fellow students.

Possible Course Schedule

This is for a 13-week distance-learning on-line course.

Module	Week	Topic
1	1	Introduction to the Course
2	2	Business Environment and Information Sources for Managing the Business
3	3	Measuring Financial Performance and Financial Position
4	4	Business and Society, and Managerial Morality and Ethics
5	5 & 6	Business Connection Process (1): Customers Buying Value
6	7 & 8	Business Connection Process (2): Communicating, Selling, and Customer Purchasing

7	9 & 10	Business Connection Process (3): Making, Assembling, Storing, Transporting, and Delivering
8	11 & 12	Business Connection Process (4): Getting Paid and Making Money
9	13	Course Review

Conclusion

We believe that the proposed course design fosters real-world relevance in students. The course design is based on business processes rather than "functional silos". The assignments and activities are inquiry-based and help develop crucial information literacy skills, which are largely missing from traditional OBSME approaches. Online course delivery takes advantage of students' self-reliance as learners, and gives students greater flexibility in balancing school, work, and life commitments. With this course design, we provide a foundation for students to find and incorporate real-world relevance in all the courses that will follow in their business school programs.

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Values and Voices at Renaissance College: The Story of the Vision Quest and Learning Journey at UNB's Leadership School

Abstract

Developing a vision and mission statement can help to focus the educational efforts and increase the accountability of colleges and universities (Collins & Porras, 1997; Steward & Carpenter-Hubin, 2001). At the same time, engaging students and including community representatives *in* this process further increases the potential of learning about the process significantly; through process checks, in-class discussions, and reflection papers these experiences become the case-in-point of individual, organizational, and community learning (Senge, 1990; Heifetz, 1994; Parks, 2005).

This paper tells the story of how faculty, staff, students, and community leaders in and around Renaissance College in 2005-06 discovered their shared values, identified a joint mission, and developed their strategic objectives for future learning and teaching at the College. First, it will set the stage and present the development of the script by discussing the background, the need for focus, the opportunities of joint learning, and the resulting process design. Second, it will demonstrate how the script was implemented by investigating how the voices were united, how the learning was facilitated, and how the vision was created. Finally, it will present and critically review the results and lessons learned and discuss how a voices-to-vision-process can focus and enrich the experience and culture of learning and teaching in institutions of higher education.

Developing the Script

The script for the story to be told is based on Renaissance College's particular background and the resulting challenges, the College's need to focus, the opportunities of joint learning, and the resulting design of the process.

Background [1]

Three specific features will help to understand the unique background and challenges of RC: The nature of its leadership degree program, RC's comprehensive set of learning outcomes, and its collaborative approach to teaching and learning.

In 2000, Renaissance College (RC) accepted its first students as the University of New Brunswick's (UNB) leadership college. Being the first – and still only – Canadian institution offering an undergraduate degree program in interdisciplinary leadership studies, RC each year accepts 25 highly capable learners of various backgrounds. The selection process for this intensive program is based on a carefully balanced set of criteria including academic performance, demonstrated leadership potential, volunteer and community service, diversity of backgrounds and skills in areas of arts, music, athletics or culture. Focusing on emerging leaders, UNB and RC continue "to mobilize its intellectual resources to help students make a positive difference in the world" (Renaissance College, 2005b).

Graduating from this RC program, students will have received a Bachelor of Philosophy (B.Phil.) degree in interdisciplinary leadership studies with a UNB minor and will have been exposed to a multitude of perspectives and experiences. The curriculum consists of a variety of courses from different academic disciplines as well as of national and global internships and community research and leadership projects. The learning processes are facilitated by faculty "integrators" (three full-time and ten part-time) from the College, the larger UNB campus, and beyond and evaluated by both students and faculty.

In particular, students complete 132 credit hours, 87 credit hours in RC courses around worldviews, problem solving, science, citizenship, wellness, public policy, integrative forum, learning portfolio, and leadership – including a national and international internship – as well as 45 credit hours in various electives from a UNB minor.

[1] The following has been adapted from Mengel (2006) and Zundel et al. (2006).

In addition to the content related learning objectives of each course, the interdisciplinary program is designed such that students will have demonstrated their level of mastery of the following learning outcomes upon completion (RC Council, 2005):

- Knowing oneself and others
- Personal wellbeing
- Multi literacy
- Social interaction
- Problem solving
- Effective citizenship

These outcomes "are intended to serve as a set of interactive standards by which an experience of progress can be assessed throughout the phases of a Renaissance College education" (RC Council, 2005, p. 4). They also, in an integrative way, feed into the students' ability to be and act as effective leaders.

At RC collaboration is a way of life. Faculty and staff have jointly developed outcomes based learning and crafted the overall structure. Often together with students they continuously facilitate, review, and improve the learning process. One of many examples of collaborative design and delivery is the Learning Portfolio process used to assess student growth and competency in the learning outcomes. All RC faculty members assess graduating students' portfolios and attend public presentations held to have external assessors provide feedback to students on their portfolios. The integrators' workshop held each spring evaluates the portfolio work and proposes modifications and improvements.

The Need for Focus

All three components presented above – the comprehensive and interdisciplinary character of this program, its integrated outcome-based approach, and its particularly collaborative design and delivery – contribute to the highly energized and labour intensive learning environment at RC. On the other hand RC's acknowledgement of the importance of educating well-balanced personalities and its emphasis on the personal well-being of both students and faculty call for continuously refocusing its efforts.

Furthermore, a university leadership school – as every organization – has ample opportunities to progress and grow. Its development can go in various directions (e.g., business leadership, educational leadership, community leadership etc.) and be based on different educational paradigms (e.g., higher education, professional development, skills training etc.). As a matter of fact, through RC's engagement in the university community and beyond a variety of further opportunities of involvement are being presented to the College and its members. However, given the limited existing resources and the challenges universities in Canada and beyond are currently facing, choices need to be made. While the founders of RC had laid the ground work by creating and implementing the College's first vision, mission, and purpose, changes in the constituencies and environment of the College throughout the first five years of its existence have called for revisiting the original vision as it was no longer sufficiently "present" as a helpful guideline within the decision making processes. In addition, UNB's efforts to redefine its strategy in the light of increasing financial constraints (McLaughlin, 2006; Betts & MacDonald, 2006) needed to be considered and taken into account.

Finally, the leadership literature agrees that "one of the most important practices of leadership is giving life and work a sense of meaning and purpose by offering an exciting vision" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 112; Mengel, in print; Thomas, 2000). Hence, it was obvious that the college community was in need of a clear and jointly developed vision and strategy to guide its day to day decisions and actions.

The Opportunities of Joint Learning

Given RC's mandate and self-perception as "leadership school", RC needed to review its own values and vision as basis of its leadership behaviour and in order to effectively teach students about that. Modeling the way and talking the talk as a major element of effective leadership became of crucial importance (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Furthermore, engaging in that process together would not only create a framework that could help guide the actions of the College, but it would at the same time engage all involved in learning about the many facets of such a process. Initiating, planning, executing, controlling and closing a vision-strategy project could accommodate both, the need to create a valuable product – values, vision and strategy – as well as engaging into meaningful leadership and learning processes based on a real-life project.

Hence, this project could serve as the "case-in-point" (Heifetz, 1994; Parks, 2005) of leadership education by creating the shared experience that could be utilized to facilitate the learning about adaptive organizations and the development of adaptive skills. Finally, this project could initiate a process of continuous organizational learning at the College and beyond by introducing students, faculty, and staff into "the art and practice of the learning organization" (Senge, 1990).

The Resulting Process Design

Based on its unique background and the resulting need to focus as well as on the learning opportunities and objectives identified, faculty and staff members started the dialogue in November 2005. After reviewing and discussing various approaches, they suggested adapting models of vision-strategy development as introduced by Collins and Porras (1997) and Steward and Carpenter-Hubin (2001) as well as creating a core project team ("The Core Team") consisting of two faculty members (including the dean of the College), three staff members, and four students representing all cohorts of the B.Phil. program. The RC Council – the College's executive body – approved the suggestion in January 2006, initiated the project and served as its steering committee. The Core Team's mandate was to review the existing vision, mission, and priorities of RC in order to jointly develop a set of current values, a shared vision and a well understood mission, and an integrated strategy to be implemented in 2006. Furthermore, the suggested process was to provide various constituents with several opportunities to engage and consisted of the following main steps[2]:

1. Review existing documentation and consult with constituents to gather ideas for an updated values-vision-mission statement (01-02/2006)

[2] For details see Appendix A: RC Vision Strategy Process

2. Update/create a values-vision-mission statement and identify core areas for a strategy (02-03/2006)
3. Develop an integrated strategy for the College with detailed objectives for all areas (03-04/2006)
4. Implement an ongoing vision-strategy review process allowing for continuous improvement and update (05/2006)

Several opportunities were built in to allow a variety of constituents to fully contribute to and decisively influence this process:

- Students, staff, and faculty were represented by members of the core project team, they would be consulted early on in the process, and they are also represented in RC council. Furthermore, they would participate in the major vision/strategy workshop. Finally, all would be able to contribute to developing and implementing the detailed strategy and objectives; in addition, students were encouraged to take on directed studies courses related to this activity and to choose assignment topics in relationship to this process;
- Alumni would be consulted early on in the process and were invited to participate in the major vision/strategy workshop;
- UNB management and members of the larger community (parents, sponsors, and friends of RC) would be consulted early on in the process and would participate as members of an advisory board.

Implementation of the Script

This section will describe how the steps towards achieving the three major objectives were implemented. First, the steps and approaches taken to consider and integrate the various stakeholders will be demonstrated. Second, it will be explained how opportunities of joint learning were explicitly built in and utilized. Finally, the vision-building itself will be outlined and described.

Uniting the Voices

Based on its original plan, in January 2006 the Core Team created a stakeholder matrix that identified ten different groups and described how, what, and when these would contribute to the process and its envisioned results. A major objective was to be as inclusive as possible and thus to go beyond the immediate stakeholders of faculty, staff, and current students of the B.Phil. undergraduate program. In addition, RC founders, the UNB administration and leadership, community partners, the greater public, alumni, graduate students and other undergraduate students associated with the College were invited to participate. The whole process was controlled by the RC Council.

In January and February 2006, the Core Team conducted interviews and consultations with various representatives of different stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, RC founders, UNB leaders and administrators, community partners, and greater public), invited participation through email communication, and consolidated the results of this consultation process. Furthermore, these results were enriched by collecting and making publicly available the (process) documentation that had been developed in the first five years of the College's existence and that would ensure consistency with the voices of "the past".

All stakeholders were invited to participate in an externally facilitated two day vision development workshop in mid-February and to contribute to a virtual open space that was allowing to browse through existing documentation and to engage in an open dialogue around the visioning process from January through to the end of the project[3]. Again, it was the Core Team's responsibility to consolidate the results of the workshop as well as of the online dialogue and to feed these back to the larger stakeholder communities for their comment.

Facilitating the Learning

Innovative and experiential learning were cornerstones of RC's mandate to contribute to transforming education since its proposal stage (Renaissance

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[3] The online space was made available through WebCT, UNB's online education platform

College, 1998, 2005, 2005b). Learning based on projects conducted in internships, research, and in regular coursework play a major role in RC's educational framework. Through jointly responding to needs identified in communities that are part of or related to UNB and RC and by developing and implementing a solution for the problem(s) defined, the RC learning community not only creates and interprets knowledge, but it also helps integrating the knowledge creation process into a process of meaningful community development.

Hence, the challenge and opportunity of this process was to integrate learning "about" values, purpose, and strategy and their significance for leadership processes and leadership education while at the same time learning "how to" lead and manage a process of values, purpose, and strategy creation. This challenge was responded to by putting increased emphasis on studying models of creating a vision and strategy and on reflecting about the process while engaging in it. Furthermore, this objective provided yet another rationale for engaging the learning community of RC comprehensively in that process and in the reflection about the process.

The Core Team provided students, faculty, and staff with the opportunity to more intensively study models of creating a vision and of project management. Furthermore, it also put extra effort in not just communicating results of all steps back to the various stakeholders but also in engaging in dialogue about the process and the respective lessons learned. Thus, this process became the "case-in-point" (Heifetz, 1994; Parks, 2005) of many project meetings as well as classroom discussions and reflections in student assignments. Students, faculty, and staff were discussing the challenges and necessary changes of the process. Furthermore, they lived through these experiences and understood that they had to live with the results. Hence, they created knowledge about and feeling for as well as meaningful products and results of the process. By being immersed in the systems they studied as well as re-created and by withdrawing from them in reflective dialogue, students and faculty alike developed the "art of seeing the forests and the trees" and of "rewriting the code" (Senge, 1990). As one student member of the Core Team put it: "I learned so much about the process and its project management by being a part of the team: it changed my level of awareness and my mastery of skills as well as my way of thinking!" (Personal communication, December 2006).

Finally, the concluding learning highlight of the project was the lessons learned activity conducted at the last Core Team meeting that will be fed back into similar processes in the future. In addition, the implementation of a Strategy Assessment Team that will continuously monitor the implementation process and provide feedback to the RC Council, will contribute to the continuation of the learning process.

Creating the Vision

Based on the broader discussions at the workshop as well as the online dialogue and the consolidation of its results, the Core Team worked on creating values and purpose statements as well as on their translation into two strategic objectives for 2011 and 2013 and into six strategic areas and respective goals for the College. In an iterative process these were presented to stakeholders and the RC council, further refined and finally approved by the RC council in April 2006.

Finally, the Core Team, together with faculty and staff involved with the operational activities and decision making of the College, developed an implementation framework that did spell out the details for implementing the strategic goals and objectives over the next two to three years. Again, this last step and its results were approved by the RC council on November 28th and thereby the jointly created vision, purpose, and strategic plan was implemented and the respective project concluded; while this happened later than originally anticipated, the project still met the objective of getting implemented in 2006. The successful completion of the project was celebrated by the whole RC community on November 30th, 2006, at one of the traditional "common meals" (Roderick et al., 2005).

Results of the Vision Quest and Learning Journey

The core result of the described process was the Vision and Strategy of Renaissance College (Renaissance College, 2006). Furthermore, in addition to initiating an ongoing process of organizational learning this project rendered some lessons learned that were harvested at the end of the project to be fed back into the College and its core processes.

RC's Vision and Strategy: Values, Purpose, and Strategic Areas

The first and foremost result of the College's vision-strategy process was the creation of the values and purpose of the College[4] and its strategic objectives, areas and goals as well as its implementation plan as approved by the RC Council in April 2006 and in November 2006 respectively.

In particular, Renaissance College values

- active, holistic, and interdisciplinary learning culture,
- leadership,
- community,
- mindful openness,
- excellence, and
- congruence.

Based on its values, the College has identified the following main reasons of its existence:

- Our primary purpose is to nurture and develop leadership potential and engaged citizenship through the liberal education of our students.
- We are a learning community focused on experimenting with and modeling highly effective, innovative teaching and learning practices; citizenship; and leadership.
- We improve post-secondary education by engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

In a next step, the values and purpose have been translated into two strategic objectives around achieving excellence in providing liberal undergraduate education and in contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning in

[4] For details see Appendix B, RC Values. These can also be accessed online at http://www.unb.ca/renaissance/academic/RCPurposeValues.php.

leadership and liberal education within the next five to ten years as well as into the following strategic areas of involvement and further development for the College:

- RC program,
- RC curricula,
- scholarship,
- community life and involvement,
- communication with the communities, and
- monitoring and feedback.

Finally, the strategic areas have been further broken down into detailed goals for each of the areas and the resulting strategy has been translated into an implementation framework and plan focusing on concrete steps for the next two to three years. While the first five strategic areas are concerned with specifying and developing the rather traditional areas of scholarly activities – teaching, research, and service[5] – the last strategic area listed enforces an element that often gets overlooked in strategic initiatives: the need to continuously initiate and adapt to changes by monitoring the implementation of the plan, by analyzing any "deviations" in regards to the existing framework – values, purpose, strategy, and strategy implementation within the larger environmental context – and by feeding back the results of the monitoring activities into the strategic organizational processes. This will be the College's opportunity to stay true to its values and to keep the vision alive by incorporating and considering them in their decision making processes, by continuously improving the status quo, and by leading necessary changes.

Reviewing the Journey: Lessons Learned

The last but by no means least opportunity of organizational learning within any given project is to critically reflect on what went well, what didn't go well, what should be changed next time around, and on what needs to be acted on immediately (Mengel, 2005). In its final meeting for this project, the Core Team reviewed the "Expectations and Concerns" expressed at the beginning of the

[5] In more recent terms: the scholarship of discovery, integration, teaching, and application; Boyer, 1990.

process and conducted a "Lessons Learned" activity based on the above mentioned questions[6].

In spite of the great satisfaction of the Core Team members with their involvement in the project, with the project results, and with their overall project management, the experience of this particular process appeared to have again demonstrated the validity of two project management principles: one can never communicate enough and one can never be sufficiently inclusive (Mengel, 2006b). In spite of its efforts to communicate with all stakeholders in order to inspire their participation and to keep them "in the loop", the Core Team felt that the objective of broad participation beyond the students of the B.Phil. program was not as successfully met as the other goals of the project. The implementation of the project results and the continuous process of monitoring and feedback will have to put special emphasis both on broadening the basis for participation and feedback as well as on catching and effectively responding to early signs of missing out on significant stakeholders in the implementation of the project results and in the further development of the process.

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[6] For details see Appendix C: RC Vision-Strategy Process – Lessons Learned

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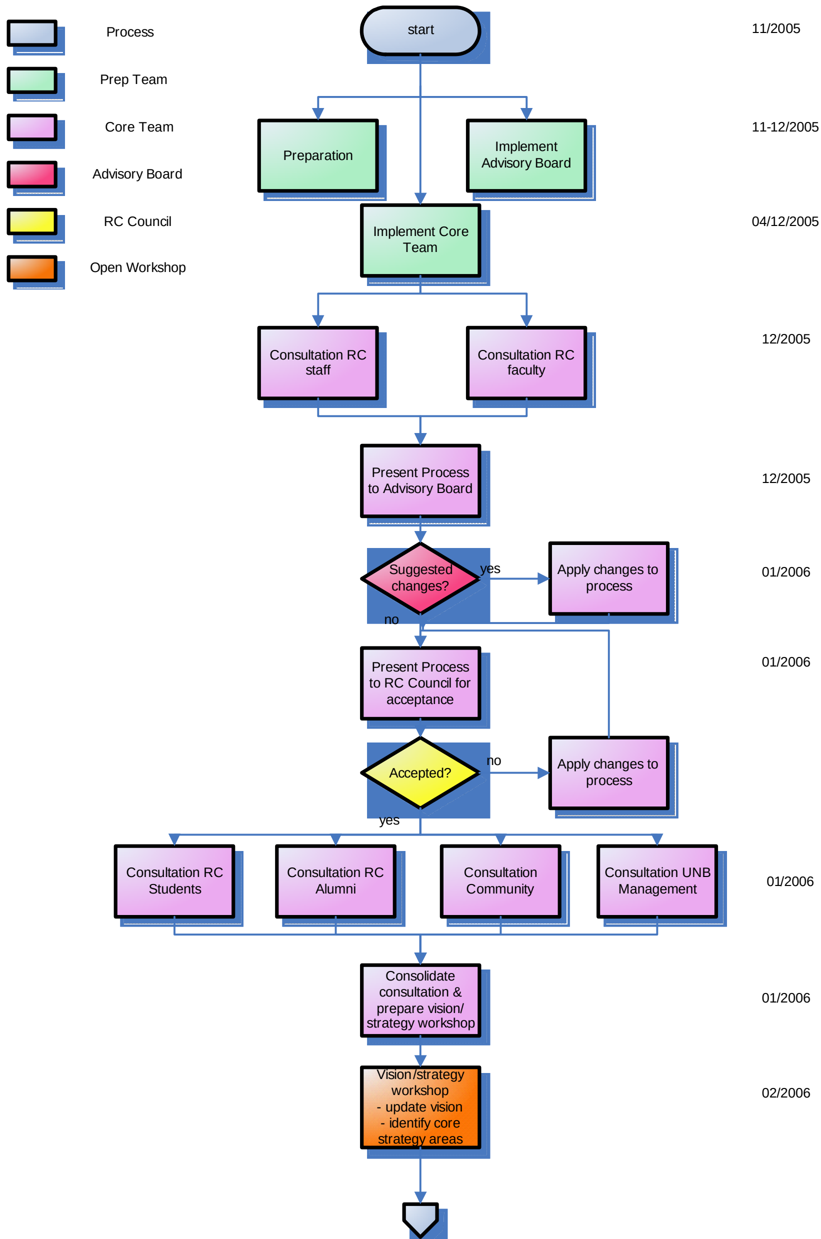
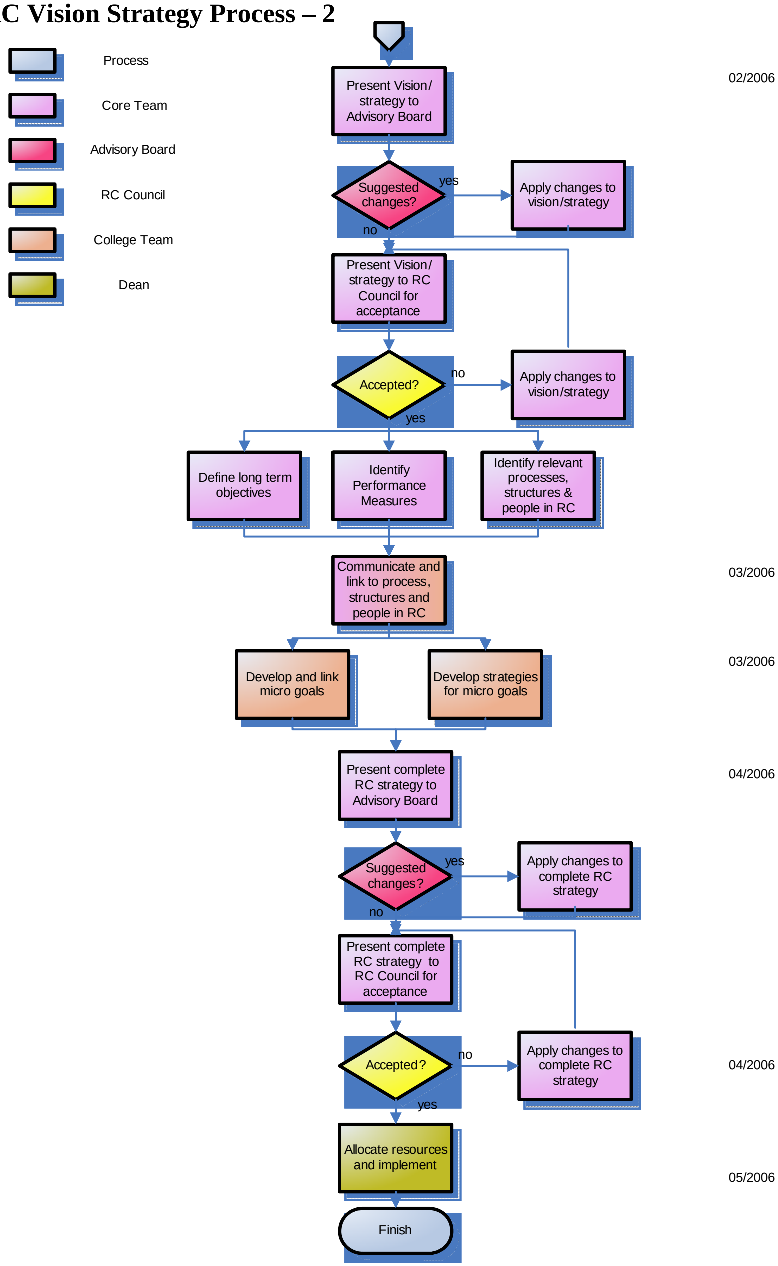
Appendix A

RC Vision Strategy Process – 1



Appendix A

RC Vision Strategy Process – 2



Appendix B
RC Values

Renaissance College values the following:

1. Active, holistic, and interdisciplinary learning culture

We practice experiential, outcome-based learning, in an interdisciplinary setting. We value holistic and integrated learning which engages learners in all their capabilities to find and process information and gain knowledge, and grows the whole person. Experiential learning is the application and interpretation of lessons learned in concrete activity to the academic realm and the subsequent expansion of these ideas, incorporating them into one's own worldview. We value the diversity of experiences, values, and talents of our community as a rich resource for personal growth.

2. Leadership

We are committed to enriching people's leadership capabilities intentionally through the study, practice, and demonstration of leadership in all aspects of society and in a variety of cultures. Renaissance College inspires its students and faculty to explore leadership opportunities within and outside the Renaissance College community.

3. Community

We feel a sense of responsibility for building a just, good, and civil society, at all levels. We commit to engaging in local, national, and global communities through critical thought, inclusive dialogue, and direct action. Through community events and social interaction we forge meaningful interpersonal relationships. These relationships create a support network that guides students through their academic and experiential endeavours.

4. Mindful openness

We believe in a continuously developing consciousness of self, others, and environment. We recognize the role of big ideas in the decisions and phenomena of everyday life. We are intellectual explorers, seeking out new ideas while engaging in critical analysis of them.

5. Excellence

We seek high achievement in all we do. We understand that it is through diligently striving to do our best that we achieve personal and community growth. Therefore, we commit to continuously challenging each other to seek the highest standards of teaching, learning, leadership, and citizenship.

6. Congruence

We strive to live by our community values and model the College's learning outcomes in our academic and co-curricular work. We will iteratively evaluate these values and our actions, to bring them into ever closer agreement.

Appendix C

RC Vision-Strategy Process – Lessons Learned

1. What went well?

- Overall: Good direction → need to focus on monitoring
- Workshop: turnout, engaged, well organized
- Team and teamwork, contribution by student members
- Way students were trusted, accepted into, and involved in activities, and how input was taken into account
- Good project management
- Good learning for students and everybody else about the process
- External consultant for workshop
- Online platform got input that would not otherwise have been gathered

2. What didn't go well?

- Too many curricular details
- Not enough communication
- Lack of contribution from community (leaders) unless we went there and got it
- Online platform: Very low participation
- Overall: Very low participation from BIS- and MPhil-students, alumni, and external stakeholders
- Some students did not feel encouraged (looking for action right away)

3. What would we change next time?

- Raise student representation in Core Team and other activities
- More introductory information to get students on board
- Clarify expectations and objectives: Be more explicit
- More information on an ongoing basis to stakeholders outside of Core Team

4. What do we need to act on?

- Bring closure to advisory board communication
- Archive information on RC network drive
- Work hard on keeping alive (joint responsibility of RC executive and legislative bodies)
- Review level of communication and involvement of BIS- and MPhil-students, and alumni (joint responsibility of RC executive and legislative bodies)

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Process-based Learning: A Model of Collaboration

Abstract

Cape Breton University's (CBU) Community Studies Department works collaboratively to design, implement, and evaluate the core courses of the Bachelor of Arts Community Studies (BACS) degree program. These core courses are called Community Studies (COMS). Unlike other departments, the COMS department is not formed around one particular discipline. The faculty backgrounds are from disciplines such as sociology, adult education, women's studies, kinesiology, and social work. This mixture of backgrounds, along with the ability to work collaboratively, has been a source of strength for the department.

The COMS courses involve process-based learning. Some of the components of these courses are group work, problem solving, critical thinking, reflective learning, self-directed learning, and experiential learning. The role of the faculty is to facilitate the learning objectives of these core courses for the students rather than lecturing on specific topics. Consultation, collaboration and the sharing of materials and ideas among the faculty are vital to teaching in this non-traditional environment. Reviewing teaching methods, course outlines and objectives as well as graduate outcomes are ongoing practices. The students in these courses also need to collaborate. They work in groups to carry out their research and other activities. This paper highlights a model of faculty collaboration and student collaboration in the COMS 300 Community Intervention courses. Students in these process-based learning courses are expected to conduct research and implement projects that address community issues.

Background

The BACS degree was the first degree offered at CBU more than 30 years ago. In 1974 Xavier College, a Junior College of St. Francis Xavier University, and the Nova Scotia Eastern Institute of Technology merged to form the College of Cape Breton. This newly established institution was given the mandate to develop innovative and unique programs that would not duplicate the already established degree programs found in other Nova Scotia universities. The BACS degree was created to fulfill this mandate. Final approval for the degree, from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, occurred on August 7,

1975. The institution's name "College of Cape Breton" was changed to the "University College of Cape Breton" in 1982 and in 2005 it was changed to "Cape Breton University."

The BACS degree began with 25 students and currently there are over 400 students enrolled in the program. The COMS department delivers the core COMS courses in the degree. It was one of the first departments at CBU to embrace distance learning. Departmental members worked out the difficulties with technology while offering COMS courses synchronously with student groups spread across wide geographic distances. Because of their efforts, the BACS degree became the first degree at CBU available on-line via the World-Wide Web. In addition to departmental functions, the COMS department is the administrative unit most involved with the operations of the BACS degree because it is responsible for the core courses. This includes, but is not limited to, academic counseling for students, registration, recruitment, new program initiatives, and ongoing program review. These degree, department, and course responsibilities are accomplished in a collaborative environment.

A goal of the BACS degree is to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue. Thus, COMS faculty who have various disciplinary backgrounds and viewpoints, collaboratively develop and deliver the COMS courses. The COMS courses are modeled after an educational approach at Utrecht University Medical School. They combine classroom learning (theory) plus work placements and community intervention projects (practice). Career aspirations, community, and collaborative learning in small groups are major aspects of COMS. Students work cooperatively rather than competitively. Learning how to work effectively in groups is essential. The central philosophy of these process-based learning courses is that students be given opportunities for learning how to learn for themselves and what they learn should have relevance to their career aims and personal development.

Process-based Learning

The COMS process-based learning pedagogy embraces both theory and practice. A process-based learning approach to education involves the facilitation of the learning process. Typically, a professor, known as an “advisor” in the COMS courses, assumes a facilitator role and ensures that the participants’ experience is valued as a rich resource for learning. This approach embraces students’ participation in their own learning. Knowles (1984) claims that a process-based learning design consists of seven elements: climate setting, involving learners in mutual planning, involving participants in diagnosing their own needs, involving learners in formulating their learning objectives, involving learners in designing learning plans, helping learners carry out their learning plans, and involving learners in evaluating their learning. Process-based learning provides a way for life experiences to be incorporated into the course material. Barker (1989) explains that a process-design approach helps students “to see that phenomena (facts, experiences, objects, and concepts) can be described from several points of view simultaneously” (p. 43). His strategy is to use students’ prior life experiences to introduce them to the formalities of contextual analysis and multiplicity thinking. COMS process-based learning pedagogy includes the following components: community involvement, self-directed learning, reflective and experiential learning, group work, problem solving, and critical thinking.

Well-developed critical thinking skills are essential in today’s modern world. Refining our ability to choose amongst competing ideas, and to act appropriately in a given situation is of the utmost importance (Hughes, 1996, p. 16). With its emphasis on process-based learning, COMS courses provide the ideal setting for students to encounter, understand, employ, and enhance their critical thinking skills. Shermis (1992) notes that critical thinking skills should be developed in a process-based learning environment that encourages students “to raise questions, cite evidence, and respond to queries about the meaning and validity of their knowledge” (p. 45). According to Brookfield (1987), this type of critical thinking is a way of being open to alternatives in examining a topic. In being open to alternatives, students are able to develop an awareness of assumptions, pay attention to the context in which the ideas are generated, and become skeptical of single answers to problems. This is what happens in a COMS classroom. Nixon-Ponder (1995) claims that critical thinking skills can be developed and strengthened in a process-based learning environment by using a tool called ‘problem-posing’. However, she discovered from personal experience that “some students had a difficult time with the non-traditional format of the class. Most were not used to being asked their opinions or beliefs. They did not believe in themselves; they did not believe that they were capable of helping to build the curriculum of their class” (p. 12). Some COMS students experience similar problems but they become acclimatized to this format. In COMS courses, students develop their problem solving skills in response to the real-life situations that arise during their community involvement and group interactions. Central to the COMS pedagogy is working in small groups. Schneider, Corey and Corey (2002), as do others, support the concept of small groups. They maintain that group size should be no more than eight people (p. 107). After more than thirty years of teaching in small groups, the COMS faculty concurs with the literature on small group learning. Small groups promote interaction, communication, problem solving, collaboration, and commitment to the group. Additionally, Burn (2004) contends that groups can enhance productivity. In the context of the COMS courses, students work collaboratively to research, design and implement a project.

Throughout the COMS courses, reflection is encouraged and integrated into the course requirements. Mezirow (1991) describes reflection as “the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience” (p. 104). Reflection is a key component of the COMS courses and central to experiential learning. Since these courses include experiential learning in addition to a theoretical requirement, learning through reflection is important in order to bring meaning to these experiences. As students work together in their groups conducting research and community projects, they are accumulating a multitude of experiences. Critical reflection is necessary to learn from these experiences and to apply this learning in new contexts. The students are encouraged to reflect upon their experiences throughout the process to better understand the complexities of the situation and to problem solve as necessary. The students reflect through writing assignments as well as through discussions within their group and with the advisor. This provides the opportunity to examine assumptions, to gain new knowledge and ideas, and to obtain deeper insights. There are several learning models that include reflection. The Kolb model, for example, is an experiential learning model that emphasizes the importance of experience in the learning process (as cited in Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 12). The British Further Education Curriculum and Development Unit (FEU) model also includes reflection. The FEU (1981) states: “The individual’s experience needs to be followed by some organized reflection. This reflection enables the individual to learn from the experience, but also helps identify any need for some specific learning before further experience is acquired” (as cited in Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 13). Apps (1994) suggests that educators should encourage students to reflect upon their individual experiences in order to understand themselves better personally and professionally. Since COMS courses involve self-directed learning, critical reflection of the students’ experiences is important. Self-directed learning is a particular learning format that provides students with the primary responsibility for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating their own learning experiences (Brookfield, 1986; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Self-direction provides COMS students with a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning and allows students to focus on their interests thus encouraging a higher level of participation. COMS students have several opportunities to experience self-direction. In groups, with the guidance of an advisor, students accomplish their course objectives both in the classroom and in the community. Merriam and Caffarella stress the fact that self-directed learning can occur both inside and outside institutionally based learning programs. Self-directed learning is one of the approaches utilized to develop skills that are valuable to students engaged in their communities. In the context of BACS, “community” does not only involve the local community where CBU is located. It refers to numerous communities across Canada and in other parts of the world. BACS students can complete COMS courses by distance in the communities where they live and work.

A Model of Collaboration: COMS 300 Community Intervention Course

In the COMS 300 Community Intervention courses, students work in small groups of approximately eight student and focus on problem solving, critical thinking, self-directed learning, reflective learning, and experiential learning. These courses encourage students to identify their own personal assumptions, entertain other points of view, build their skills of inquiry concerning a problem or issue, do library research and test hypotheses. The emphasis is placed on community intervention. Once a community issue has been identified and examined, students seek to intervene in the community in a practical and positive way. Students conduct extensive secondary research and if needed, primary research, to fully understand the theory associated with the issue they have identified and the community intervention project developed to address the problem.

COMS 300 begins with problem identification. This usually takes place through brainstorming, examining the community through newspaper articles and other media, as well as talking to various community agencies/resources. Once the student group has identified a community issue, they begin the process of determining what the best method of intervention might be. They research how this problem has been addressed in the past locally, in other parts of Canada, and in other countries. The first term focuses mainly on conducting secondary research on the topic itself or other areas where the students need to self-educate. As well, there are usually meetings with people in their chosen community, along with the planning and design of their intervention.

Students do an oral presentation in mid-October. It is then that they present their ideas for intervention to the entire full time COMS faculty. The faculty listens to the presentation and then meets to ascertain the ethics of the intervention and to determine whether the students are far enough along to be allowed to proceed with their plan. Within a few days they receive a written report from the advisor team, either giving them permission to proceed or asking the student group to present again at the end of term. This process serves two purposes. For the student groups who are proceeding well and have their plan well defined, this gives them an opportunity to begin their intervention sooner rather than later. For those groups who are still unclear or uncertain about their plans, the October presentation gives them the opportunity for early feedback and guidance. For those student groups who re-present in November, the same process is repeated. There is a third and last chance for approval in January. If, still, at that time the student groups are not given permission to proceed, the intervention becomes a virtual intervention and they are not able to go into the community. This rarely happens, however, the safeguard is in place.

Most of second term focuses on the intervention itself. During this time student groups are in the community executing their intervention and the level of self-direction is at its highest peak. At the same time, the students return to the classroom to analyze the process and the learning as well as their actions and reflections. They prepare for their final oral presentation, attended by the entire full time faculty, where they usually briefly demonstrate, by some visual medium, what their intervention was. In addition to their presentation, there is a question and answer component where faculty has the opportunity to question the group and to discuss the community intervention project. The final group report analyses the entire years' process and learning and integrates the theory with experiential learning.

Throughout the academic year and at the end of each term, students and their community intervention projects are assessed through individual and group papers, individual and group oral presentations, peer and self evaluations, and tangible evidence from the community intervention projects. The types of tangible evidence vary depending on the particular project. For example, it may be in the form of program evaluations, letters of assessment from those involved with the community intervention projects, video interviews with community individuals, pre-tests and post-tests.

The COMS 300 course is designed to offer students the opportunity to achieve the following: the skills associated with self-directed learning, the confidence and understanding necessary for assuming an active role in community life, the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively engage in group work, broad and adaptable primary, secondary and applied research skills, the ability to effectively analyze a wide variety of issues from different perspectives, flexible, audience-sensitive, written and oral communication skills, and the ability to respond creatively to problems and develop solutions. These objectives are infused throughout the course, providing coherency of philosophy, pedagogy, and evaluation that is adhered to by all COMS advisors.

Teaching a non-traditional course demands a non-traditional approach. COMS faculty call themselves advisors and see themselves as facilitators for their students rather than professors in the traditional classroom. The advisors and students become co-learners as the COMS 300 Community Intervention proceeds. Advisors consult with each other on possible advising issues as challenges can arise with the groups and the community interventions. Faculty collaboration is an integral part of this course. Advisors are involved in all the COMS 300 projects. The primary objective of this collaborative effort is to increase the effectiveness of the process and thus the students' learning. Unlike faculty in other disciplines, who may deliver the same courses individually without consultation with their peers, COMS advisors collaborate extensively. There is a sharing of ideas, student handouts, assignments, and student learning exercises. Collaboration is maintained through regular department and teaching meetings, shared participation on department projects and almost daily lunch gatherings. Due to the nature of teaching in a non-traditional environment, COMS advisors are continually reflecting on their teaching. The advisors have found that a high degree of personal commitment to one another helps the team with high performance. Also, their community experience enhances the COMS courses.

Over the years the advisors have reflected that there are common elements necessary for effective student collaboration. These include commitment to the task and interest in the project selected. Advisors will ask the students to carefully choose their community intervention based on whether there is consensus on the choice of community intervention, and interest and enthusiasm for it. There are also group dynamics elements, for example, there needs to be an opportunity for equal input and responsibility, lots of discussion and energy, and trust in each other for a successful community intervention. In order to facilitate student collaboration there needs to be a manageable number of members in the group and group members should have equal interest and commitment to accomplishing their community intervention. It is important for them to have agreement on the goal which needs to be accomplished in a time specific period. The project must also be of a large enough scope that there is a role for everyone as well as an opportunity for students to try new roles.

Not every group works effectively though. Sometimes members quit, the community project is not as successful as it could have been, or the collaboration is just too hard. Challenges that advisors face include student apathy, lack of interest, no agreement on the goal or process, personality issues, conflict issues, and lack of leadership. As the student group works through the process of completing a community intervention there are a number of issues for students and advisors to collaborate on.

The classroom and the community become a safe laboratory/environment in which students can experiment with different roles and learn new skills. Completing the community intervention gives students a sense of autonomy and empowerment as they learn how to solve problems by themselves. Course evaluation is based more on group work (70%) than individual work (30%), emphasizing the significance of working collaboratively and effectively in a group setting to complete a community intervention.

Community Intervention Projects

COMS students have implemented various types of intervention projects to address community problems. Here are some examples of these projects: increasing the profile of food banks in the community, designing and implementing safety programs for young children and parents to address child safety issues, information fairs for seniors, cemetery reconstructions, implementation of school breakfast programs, the design and delivery of an after school reading program to address literacy problems, organizing career fairs for high school students, recruiting volunteers for community organizations, the design and delivery of after school physical activity programs to address the problem of inactive children, the development and inclusion of drug education programs in the classroom curriculum at the junior and senior high school levels, environmental workshops for junior high school students, conducting a popular theatre program at a local youth center to help children deal with various problems they were experiencing, and organizing a forum on the topic of gay marriage.

Some of the above intervention projects have continued in the community while others end when the students finish their course. For example, the following projects continued to make an impact on the community. A day care center playground was repaired and made wheel chair accessible. A local day care had recently renovated their building and during the renovation, the playground was badly damaged. Although the day care had some money for renovations, it was limited. A COMS group took on the challenge of making the playground wheel chair accessible and also planted, with the children, small vegetable gardens for them to harvest and include in their lunches at day care. The garden was a "learning garden" and taught children about planting and growth. According to the day care director, the project exceeded their expectations. "It was amazing to see everyone join together from the community as well as the students to see the project through. The team of students was resourceful and committed to this community project. All children still enjoy the walkway around the yard. Our garden is replenished in the spring by the children and staff" (Campbell, 2006).

A new elementary school was built but it did not include a school library. The COMS students worked with the principal and a librarian from the local school board to establish a library in the school. Among other accomplishments, they recruited and trained volunteers to operate the library which continues to provide services to the elementary students. The former Principal explained, "just as I have retired from the teaching profession, these university students have long since moved on in life, but the impact of these students has resulted in a lasting legacy to each and every one who participated; the library is still utilizing the methodology they developed and the Harbourside library is successfully fulfilling the purpose that these students set out to accomplish when they assumed the challenge of launching our school library" (Beaton, 2006). The COMS 300 students who completed the elementary school library project as noted above, acknowledged that the project had an impact on the group as well. "Our skills improved as we continued with the intervention. Communication skills, interpersonal skills, writing skills, research skills, and leadership skills were used frequently throughout the year. We recognized which of these each group member excelled in and used this knowledge to improve ourselves as a group. We also allowed group members who lacked in areas to improve and practice these skills" (COMS 300 group paper, 2001). The impact of these interventions on the community and on student learning is substantial.

Conclusion

The COMS 300 Community Intervention course highlights faculty collaboration, student collaboration, and process-based learning. Through experiential learning, students in this course are expected to conduct intervention projects that will have a positive impact on the local community. The students' role is to learn to work collaboratively in a small group as well as collaboratively with a community group while implementing a community intervention. The advisor's role is to help ensure that the central theme and design of the project(s) will enable the student groups to explore the community issue while keeping in mind the process-based learning components outlined in the paper. In this non-traditional environment, advisors consult, collaborate and share ideas with each other and groups of students in a transformative manner. This paper has addressed the evolution, design, and implementation of the collaborative model used in the COMS 300 Community Intervention course.

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The Joyful Noise of Learning: Active Learning Strategies for Large Classes

Abstract

We couldn't stand the crossed arms and blank faces of the students in our large first year course any longer so we completely revised the course to highlight experiential learning opportunities and boy are we glad because it turned out really well. We designed a new course to centre on a Sociology Workbook that is similar in style to a hands-on science lab manual. Students buy the workbook with their texts, engage in active in-class learning projects outlined in the workbook, and then record their results to be handed in at the end of each class. In addition, the course now includes real-world case studies and activities that engage students in practical and applied examples of the theoretical issues addressed in the course material. We also included analyses of contemporary best-selling books that address relevant social issues so that students have the opportunity to participate in current debates about issues of social importance. A research assignment was developed reflecting the traditional methodologies of our discipline, which provides the students with the opportunity to conduct primary research and develop valuable research and analysis skills.

The Problem

During any brainstorming session to develop new pedagogical solutions, there is inevitably one wag who stops the discussion by asking "what exactly is the problem that this is a solution for?" So we shall start our discussion of new solutions by reviewing the problems we face in teaching large classes. Our large class consists of 160 students in a one-term first year course that we team-teach with two (and sometimes three) faculty members. This course is taught twice each year and makes up two fifths of each of our teaching duties. On occasion we have access to 100 hours of a Teaching Assistant's time but we are often responsible for all the marking on our own.

We face the usual list of problems associated with teaching large classes such as management of the paperwork: handing out, collecting, and recording tests and other assignments, make-up work; management of distractions: talking, late arrivals, early departures; perceived anonymity of the students: difficulty of learning names, of taking attendance, of getting students to come to class, of getting students to participate in class, of getting students to do assignments in a timely manner; lack of flexibility in class activities: difficulty in varying activities, in doing group work, in enhancing critical thinking and writing skill; and diverse background and preparation of the students. In addition, the students in large classes are also experiencing significant challenges to their learning, especially if they are new to the college experience. These include: not knowing what is relevant or important information; hesitation in asking questions or in other ways indicating a lack of knowledge; hesitation in appearing "smart" to their peers; lack of experience with time management, studying, or other skills necessary for success in college; perceived anonymity which allows them to challenge authority and to push boundaries.[1]

In addition we have identified the "Bart Simpson" factor as especially challenging. Bart Simpson is a cartoon character from the long running FOX TV animated series *The Simpsons*. He is trouble-making ten year old with a bad attitude towards to school – he begins each show writing detention lines on the blackboard. A best selling Bart Simpson's T-shirt sports the phrase "Underachiever – and proud of it". His sister Lisa is our ideal student – an eight-year old intellectual and saxophone player with a social conscience and aspirations to become President. A popular Lisa quote from the show is "Relax? I can't relax! Nor can I yield, relent, or... Only two synonyms? Oh my God, I'm losing my perspicacity! Aaaaa!" While it is a joy to teach the Lisa Simpsons in our classrooms, we also have to contend with increasing numbers of Bart-influenced students. (The show began in 1987 and its influence on today's youth is becoming apparent in our classrooms). The Barts sit in the back row of the class with their arms crossed over their chests, unwilling to engage in any discussions or activities. In addition they create a silencing effect on the

[1] Gedalof, A. (1998). *Teaching Large Classes* (Green Guide No. 1) Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Gross Davis, B. (1995). Preparing to Teach the Large Lecture Course, in *Tools for Teaching*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

would-be Lisa's of our classroom by sneering at others who participate and disrupt class discussion with their private chatter. One recent example occurred when we recruited a tall student to assist us in pulling down the projector screen. The female student volunteer had her back turned to the class and was reaching up for the tangled cord when one of the Barts wolf-whistled at her. We immediately chastized the action but the culprit remained anonymous due to the large class size.[2]

As we puzzled over solutions for this course, we realized that we may have been self-selecting for passive students in the way in which we had structured the course. Because of the lack of consistent funds for Teaching Assistants we have often had to primarily evaluate this course through multiple-choice exams. The students who could stomach this style, or even excelled at it, were not necessarily suited for the active engagement that was expected in the upper-year courses in our department. We were concerned that we were doing a disservice to our students when we were only able to offer a lecture-based first year introduction to our discipline that was so far removed from the actual skills and expectations of the rest of the program. We believe the students are not only bored by and uninterested in a first year class of this type, but we also found that the students arrived in the second year without the necessary skills to succeed in the discipline at our school or elsewhere.

A final aspect to our problem is connected to our discipline. In Sociology we introduce students to an analysis of the power relations and inequality structures of their own society. They are often resistant to examining social systems that they have become accustomed to accepting as "normal" and are not always eager to accept a critical analysis of their "taken-for-granted" assumptions. This resistance may not be as common in courses that teach material that is less familiar to the student and for which they have no prior assumptions. Their discomfort with examining the precepts of their own society seemed to be exacerbated by a lecture-style pedagogy in which the professor instructed them that the world didn't necessarily operate in the manner that they thought it did.

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[2] While some have associated Bart and Lisa with gendered behaviour of young men and women, our experience is that Bart and Lisa-like behaviour comes from both sexes.

Solutions Tried (and Failed)

In order to solve many of the above problems with the course, we instituted a variety of solutions culled from STLHE publications, Teaching Showcase articles, the *American Sociological Association Teaching Resource* manuals, from the *Teaching Sociology* journal and online discussion list as well as from our own imaginations. First of all, we decided to team-teach the course so that depending on the number of faculty involved, we would only be responsible for 4-6 weeks of the course. This allows us to put more energy into the course but for a limited time period. Historically, Introduction to Sociology had no tutorial assistants and was evaluated by machine marked multiple choice exams.

In each of our sections, we introduced a variety of activities and group work to better reflect our upper level courses. We sought to bring in the techniques we use in our other classes that make us popular teachers. In Intro, we stressed to the students that all activities, not just the lectures, would be evaluated by questions on the multiple choice exam associated with the section. For example, in Judith Doyle's class on the Sociology of Work and Occupations, she played the students two songs with work related themes. To emphasize the work themes, the lyrics were shown on the screen. She then asked the students to get into groups and asked each group to select a concept from a hat. (The concepts were taken from the chapter they were to have read for that class). Each group then had to create one stanza/verse of a song addressing that concept. Their songs were then written down onto acetates which the students presented and had to explain how their song related to the concept they had selected. Although this was a popular activity, it was marred by some individuals leaving the room once the activity was introduced. In each of the three times this activity was done, a small portion of between 10-20 students would simply pack up and leave the classroom once it was clear that the lecture portion of the class was concluded.

Erin Steuter also found that students would leave the classroom during films or talk throughout the films. These films were on engaging topics such as the influence of Disney films or the global protest movement. The leaving occurred despite introducing the film with comments about it being testable on the exams and having activities associated with the film afterwards. It certainly seemed that we had a significant minority who felt that if there was not a lecture, then they would leave the classroom. Erin also worked on improving the multiple choice questions to make them of a higher order. Higher order multiple choice questions go beyond recall of the textbook or lecture and instead focus on synthesis, analysis, and application of the course material.

Rather then punishing those who did not attend, we sought to reward those who did. We continued to try and make the classroom a rewarding place to learn and to reflect classroom activities and lectures in the exams. Judith Doyle introduced sign-in sheets and would release on WebCT the overhead/PowerPoint slides only to those who had attended class. However, an analysis of the exam answers compared to attendance showed that even those who had not attended specific classes were able to answer correctly multiple choice questions that had specifically referred to an overhead/PowerPoint slide. We could only conclude that they were sharing the overhead/PowerPoint slides.

Although we felt that our changes had made the classroom a better learning environment, we knew there was a minority who held the firm belief that attending classes was optional, another group seemed to think that attending was good enough and they did not need to participate in group work or activities and another group who wanted to be evaluated by some other means than multiple choice exams. It seemed we needed another solution that continued our emphasis on providing a diversity of learning experiences, that rewarded those who came to class and engaged with the material, and that sought to provide a diversity of evaluation techniques.

Solutions: A New Experiential Approach

In the summer of 2005, we had a chance to redesign our Introduction to Sociology course. It was decided that it would now be split between two faculty members and supported by some student markers. We thought long and hard about our objectives for the course and decided that we wanted to increase the engagement of the students taking the class, vary assessment beyond multiple choice questions, provide primary research and critical thinking opportunities to the students in the course, and provide relevant pedagogical training to senior student teaching and research assistants. Above all, we would emphasize a more experiential or discovery based model of learning.

We consulted with members of the Physics department who first pioneered this experiential learning system at our university. With their advice and balancing our objectives with the money available for student teaching assistants, we decided to introduce a workbook, a book analysis, and a research assignment.

The Workbook

The new course design centres on the Sociology Workbook. It is similar in style to a hands-on science lab manual. Students buy the workbook with their texts and it comes hole-punched in a binder. The workbook consists of an introduction, details of assignments, in-class activities, and the Sociology Department Handbook. The introduction section includes the syllabus, the submission policy and procedures for the in-class activity worksheets, the evaluation rubric by which all of their assignments are marked, and finally, a learning styles quiz in order for them to better understand how they learn and suggestions on how to maximize their learning based on that quiz. The assignment section of the workbook includes details on the book analysis, research assignment, and bonus assignments. The Sociology Department Handbook provides program details and study, writing, and researching tips. The heart of the workbook is the in-class activities.

In-class Activities

It is important to us that students engage in active in-class learning projects. In order to encourage that engagement and to reward it, we have designed the in-class activities worksheets. On these worksheets, we explain the activity and provide space for the students to record their answers. The worksheets are handed in at the end of each class. They are marked in two batches of ten and returned to the students before the exams for those sections. The in-class activities worksheets include: writing reflections (a Quickwrite) on videos; analyzing gender role socialization through toys; and considering the relationship between structure and interaction in the classroom through the idea of 'haunting by ghosts of social structure.'

Making Paper Planes

One of the most popular activities involved making paper airplanes as a way in which to convey theories of social inequality. The core theory which we were addressing that day in class involved the argument that social inequality is largely a result of inadequate access to resources. Erin Steuter started class without a prior lecture on the topic and instead directed the students to their workbooks which contained instructions to make an elaborate paper plane. The class was divided into three large units, each of which was given varying amounts of supplies with which to construct the airplanes. When the time-limit was concluded, each student was asked to successfully sail their plane down to the instructor. Those who had access to the proper supplies (paperclips to weight the plane, proper quality of paper, a sample of a completed plane etc.) could tangibly see their success in the clear flight of their plane. Those whose planes didn't sail complained loudly that the assignment was unfair because not everyone had the same opportunities to succeed. This then served as the introduction to a lively and engaged discussion of theories of inequality which the students then thoughtfully wrote out in their worksheets.

In December 2005, we conducted a survey of the class to ascertain the affect of our changes to the course. Students said the following about the worksheets and in-class activities.

> "The workbook assignments helped understand and apply what we were discussing and reading about and the projects were actually interesting and fun to do."

> "I liked the workbook sheets. They drove home the point of the lecture by making us write in our own words, and broke up the montony [sic] of a long lecture."

> "My favourite part of the course was the worksheet activities because I was able to hear what other students had to say. It was beneficial to my understandng [sic] of the course material."

> "I particularly enjoyed the paper airplane activity as it further helped me to understand the concept, as well as to help me recall it more accurately in my mind."

> "I really enjoyed the topic of socialization. I have an interest in children and am planning to go into teaching, therefore I found primary and seconday [sic] socialization held my attention. Also, I found the "Ghosts" in-class assignment interesting for the same reasons."

> "My favorite aspects of the course were the interactive activities that we did in groups like the day we made the paper airplanes or the day we chose the toys and analyzed the packaging."

Book Analysis

One of things that we decided to introduce was an assignment that analyzed contemporary best-selling books that address relevant social issues so that students would have the opportunity to participate in current debates about issues of social importance. To date we have had the students read Joel Bakan's *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* and Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber's *Trust Us We're Experts: How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles with Your Future*. Next year we plan to included Ben Bagdikian's *The New Media Monopoly* and John De Graaf, David Wann, Thomas H. Naylor's *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*. Members of the American Sociology Associations' Teaching Sociology listserv report success with *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things* by Barry Glassner. In this assignment we ask the students to read the book and submit written answers to a series of questions that we have outlined for them. The questions tend to seek knowledge of detailed understanding of the book's core argument and examples to ensure that the students have read it! In addition, we include questions that ask the students to apply course concepts and theories to the book content to test their ability to connect the course material to the new examples and insights in the text. The students have been very positive about this exercise.

> “I really liked the assignment on *The Corporation* by far, it's interesting to see the workings and ethics of commerce and the effect it has on our society.”
>
> “The analysis of *The Corporation* and the study of capitalism was my favourite because it furthered my already partial distrust in our system and made me want to fight for change, or at least steer my life in a different direction than supporting capitalism and inequality among humans.”
>
> “I enjoyed the book analysis part of the course because it broadened my spectrum on the realities of the business world.”
>
> “The book analysis was best because it was extremely informative and yet creative enough to remain interesting.”

Research Assignment

The final project that we introduced was a research assignment which reflected the traditional methodologies of our discipline, and provided the students with the opportunity to conduct primary research and develop valuable research and analysis skills. To date the research activities have involved media content analysis in which students examine the media to identify the representations of various groups in society. In one of the assignments the students were asked to follow the media coverage of the 2006 Winter Olympics which were taking place during the term. They conducted original data collection from media articles and then compared the way any two groups are represented in the media coverage. Topics included: male and female athletes (hockey teams and snowboarders in particular!), white and visible minority athletes, straight and gay and/or lesbian athletes, able-bodies and disabled athletes, and athletes from particular countries etc. They needed to prepare a code sheet, document their results, and explain the meaning of their findings using sociological concepts. We had slated a period of class time near the end of term to have a class discussion of their research findings. However as that day approached we were concerned that asking 160 of them to share their results with the rest of the class would result in blank stares and a dearth of volunteers. As panic is the mother of invention, we came up with a very successful idea in which we asked each one of them to choose one significant statistic from their data which uses a number from 1-100. Then they were asked to write out what that statistic meant. For example 80 = the percentage of time that the media attributed the success of the women's hockey team to external factors such as coaches and supportive family members. Then we would call out the numbers from 1-100 numerically and whichever student had that number as their significant statistic would stand up and read out their results and tell us something interesting about their research project.

We didn't have the opportunity to survey the students about this project because it was due after the last day of classes. However, informal feedback from them was very positive. Many students were eager to talk about the particular results that they discovered in their research. This was particularly helpful as a way of connecting with the students outside of class, so that if we would meet one of them on the campus and they would stop and tell us that they enjoyed the course, we would often ask them what topic they had done their research project on then we would have a starting point for an academic discussion which wasn't often the case without a project of this type.

Reflecting on Our Changes

Overall, we are very excited by the changes we have made. The experience of teaching is much improved for us and, as the quotes from the students attest, for the students too. Indeed, each of us wanted to thank the students after our sections, a feeling neither of us had had before. Since one of our goals in introducing these changes into this course was to better select for sociology majors, we are looking for indicators of that change. So far, the 46 per cent increase in enrolment in our required second year course encourages us. We are also encouraged that we are selecting for active learners who relish research, critical thinking, and have a better understanding of both what sociology is and how it is done in our department.

Another consequence of our changes is that we have reduced the number of Bart-like students and increased the number of Lisa-like students. We have noticed that about 10-20 students drop the course after the first day when they realize the amount of work and participation required in the course. We suspect that these students were looking for a ‘clap-for-credit’ course and may have been some of our Bart-like students in previous years. More importantly, the Lisa-like students now feel that there is something for them in the course. They are thrilled to have a chance to show how bright they are through the in-class activities, the book analysis, and the research report. Additionally, the in-class activities worksheets seem to move some students from the Bart camp to the Lisa camp. We have noticed that some students who put little effort into the worksheets for one batch and as a consequence received a low or failing grade on them, make an effort in their second batch of in-class activities worksheets. This experience of making the effort seems to have the effect of further engaging them in the material.

The paper airplane activity was one example where we really saw the difference that moving away from a strictly lecture-format could have an impact on the way in which the material was received by the students. Prior to these innovations, a lecture on the structural aspects of social inequality and differential access to resources would have raised a lot of skeptical looks from the class. The process of competing with their classmates to make successful airplanes with unequal access to resources, however, made for a powerful personal understanding of how that theory plays out in real life.

However, we have learnt a few things from these changes. One of them is an insight into the student culture of sharing. As they shared access to overheads/PowerPoint slides previously, it seems they also share answers and research findings. This was particularly true for the book analyses and research reports. Some students came to complain about their mark for the book analysis which they felt was lower than for the person whom they had helped who had not read the book. When it was suggested that perhaps they should not share their work with others, many retorted that it was a person they could not say no to. It was not that the person was threatening them but rather that social obligations meant they had to share their work. Another student explained that part of student residence culture required her to share her work, especially for first year courses. If she did not, she would not be considered a good residence citizen.

Organizing the course in this manner requires more than one marker to cope with all the assignments which has some implications for catching plagiarism. When multiple faculty members or teaching assistants are sharing the evaluation duties, it can be a challenge to identify situations in which students are submitting similar or even identical work. We had an experience with this in the past year in which two students handed in the identical research paper. The identical papers were placed on top of each other as they were submitted for marking and were not separated in our distribution of papers to the markers. The plagiarism was spotted and prosecuted. This incident has given us some concern about how to prevent student cheaters from handing the work of their peers from the current class or even recycling assignments from the previous years. Changing the book assignments and research topics from year to year is doable, though it is often hard to drop a great book such as *The Corporation*, which the student's loved. The in-class activities that are part of the workbooks are much harder to transform on an annual basis because they often very novel activities which take a great deal of preparation. As a consequence of this new insight into student culture, we have limited the number of student assistants we have as any duplicated work is more likely to be caught by one student marking half the assignments than one student marking a quarter. We have also alerted our student assistants to be aware of shared work.

Teaching large classes remains a challenge that many of us have to face. We are very excited about the changes that we introduced and feel that they have re-vitalized the first-year experience of our students. As teachers there is nothing like stepping back and watching the animated faces of the students busily working together on their in-class activities and emanating a joyful noise of learning.

Fact vs. Fiction: Who are our Learners?

À qui enseignons-nous réellement?

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Knowing our Students: The Transition Year Program at Dalhousie University

Abstract

How well do we actually know and understand the students that we teach? Are we aware of their motivations, goals, learning styles, fears, expectations, and needs? How much do we know about their past educational experiences? What should we try to better understand with regard to our students, and what are some ways to increase our understanding? These questions will be examined and discussed, especially as they pertain to teaching and learning in the Transition Year Program (TYP), a one-year program designed to increase the successful participation of African-Canadian and First Nations students in degree programs at Dalhousie University. Many of our students overcome great hardships and obstacles to achieve academic success. Several graduates of the program are the first in their families to get a university education. In order to try and answer some of the identified questions, and to demonstrate the tremendous impact that the program has had in the lives of our students, some students' stories will be told.

As I was walking down the front steps outside the TYP house the other day, a young student who happened to be passing by piped up, "What do they teach in there?" I told him it was the home of the Transition Year Program, designed to prepare African-Canadian and First Nations students who do not meet standard entrance requirements for degree programs at Dalhousie University. "Wow!", he said, processing the obviously unexpected answer to his innocent question. As he walked me to my car, he continued to ask questions and expressed his surprise that there was a need for such a program. That student's surprise is fairly typical of the reactions I have received when explaining what I do. Despite our best efforts to ensure equality and to promote and celebrate diversity within the education system, many students remain disadvantaged, be it socially, financially, or psychologically. The fact is that still in 2006 we need programs such as the TYP to increase diversity on our campuses and to encourage pursuit of university studies by disadvantaged students. To some, TYP is an expensive and unnecessary program, a strain on resources, especially as not all of our students graduate (though 27 out of 30 graduated in 2005) and not all of those who do, complete a degree. The fact is, when given adequate academic, psychological and financial support, many of our graduates go on to earn at least one degree and enter the workforce with a competitive edge, inspire others around them, and, having broadened their minds, increased their self-confidence as learners, and achieved great personal growth. Many of them choose to give back to their communities as social workers, educators, researchers, businesspeople, artists, and community leaders.

While pursuing a doctoral degree in French Studies at Dalhousie University, I worked part-time as a Study Skills instructor, a job which proved to be immensely rewarding and the perfect complement to the teaching I was doing in the French department. I was invited to serve as interim coordinator for the program one year, still as a PhD student, so I was very fortunate. The experience I gained there has proven to be extremely valuable in terms of my teaching in French and in Gender and Women's Studies. I feel that I have developed what may be termed a holistic approach to teaching. It is also my belief that education should be challenging but liberating. The Transition Year Program should inspire hope and empowerment. As bell hooks writes, "My hope emerges from those places of struggle where I witness individuals positively transforming their lives and the world around them. Educating is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness." (hooks, 2003, p. xiv). I work hard to understand my students, to get to know what drives them, what, if anything, they think is holding them back, and where they see themselves headed in the adventure of learning. Besides the satisfaction I derive from witnessing students grow and gain confidence in themselves as learners, the biggest reward for training as a study skills counselor came in 2003 when I got the opportunity to work in the Transition Year Program. Since accepting that offer, I have learned a lot about myself, but, more importantly, about students who are new to university study, and, more specifically, students who find themselves in racial minorities. This paper is designed in part to provide some general information about the Transition Year Program, but also, perhaps, to provide some food for thought. Most importantly, I would like to introduce some of our students, and, in keeping with the theme of the conference, to share their stories. To this end, my paper will be interspersed with student success stories, each of which has been featured on the Dalhousie University web page (*www.dal.ca*).

The Transition Year Program

The Transition Year Program was born in 1970. It is a one-year program designed for Aboriginal and Black students who do not yet meet standard Dalhousie entrance requirements. Dalhousie University, in partnership with the two communities, established TYP to redress educational inequities faced by members of the First Nations and African Canadian communities. The program's staff includes members of the Dalhousie University community and the First Nations and Nova Scotian Black communities. We prepare students for university in a number of ways. The core curriculum includes five full-year courses: Native Studies, Black Studies, English, Mathematics (one of three courses, depending on individual objectives), and Strategies for University Learning. Additionally, with the approval of the Director, students can take a credit course at Dalhousie. For example, some students this year are taking an introductory sociology course, others are taking courses in introductory Spanish, theatre and music. Last year one student took a course in International Development Studies. He wants to ultimately combine that area of study with Architecture, and one of his goals is to design housing in poor countries. This demonstrates once again the desire of our students to give back in some way to those less fortunate. If students successfully complete TYP with a 'B' average, they become eligible for tuition fee waivers for their first degree, as long as they remain in good academic standing.

Success Story – Diane Obed

Diane Obed comes from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador. She successfully completed the Transition Year Program two years ago and is currently working conscientiously, as she always did, on her courses in sociology, psychology, French, and environmental studies. Diane first heard about the program from a friend, so she decided to apply and was chosen by the Labrador Inuit Association for sponsorship to travel to Halifax. Diane, like many of our Aboriginal students who come from living on the reserve to life in the unfamiliar city of Halifax, was extremely homesick at first, but she stuck it out. She now realizes the benefits of having a strong support system and how that helped her to reach her goals while living away from home. She was one of two recipients that year of the Morris Saffron Prize for highest academic standing. Diane plans to pursue an education in Social Work, before returning to her hometown to contribute to the Aboriginal community.

Diane gradually became more confident in herself as a learner as her year in TYP progressed. By the end of the year, she was able to very competently deliver an in-class presentation, which was something she admitted she never thought she'd be able to pull off. Not only was that presentation confidently delivered, it was also brilliantly structured, highly informative, and academically strong. As Diane deftly fielded questions from her audience, I remember feeling quite astonished at how far she had come in such a short time. At the graduation ceremony, as she accepted her certificate of completion and then the Morris Saffron prize, we the instructors and the Director felt extremely proud. Moments like that one make all of the daily frustrations – and they are plentiful! – worth it. Diane's story clearly illustrates the effectiveness of the program and the positive impact it has in students' lives.

The call for papers for this conference prompted me to pose some simple questions. How much do we know about our students? What motivates them to succeed? What can we at TYP do to learn more about these things? What am I doing to increase my understanding of my students? I pose these questions because although I think I am already doing quite a good job at trying to understand my students, I suspect I could do a lot more.

What *do* we know about our students?

First of all, we know our students' ages. We accept students of diverse ages, from teenagers to elders. We know where they are from and which target group they belong to (which is sometimes both). Most of the students come from Nova Scotia, many from local communities, primarily in Halifax Regional Municipality. Some Aboriginal students come from various Cape Breton communities – Chapel Island and Whycocomagh, for example, and occasionally we accept students from other provinces. Though the Program still serves the local communities, recently we have had increasing interest from students residing in Nova Scotia, but originally from elsewhere. Currently, we have students from Jamaica, Sudan, and Ethiopia, and some of our graduates are from Kenya and Sierra Leone. So, we have an increasingly diverse student population in several senses.

Applicants submit to us a standard application form, their high school and any other educational transcripts, three reference letters, and a personal statement in which they explain their reasons for applying to the program. From those statements we can glean certain details about their family situation, their past educational experiences, their sense of direction, and their career interests. The application package thus provides our first opportunity to learn a little about our candidates. Occasionally, the application is so strong that without further ado we offer the person a place in the program. Usually, though, we sift through the applications – typically around 75-85 applications per year for 30 spaces – and we select the stronger applicants for interviews. First, they are required to complete a math test and an English test. The interview provides a great deal of additional information, such as how the student heard about TYP, how much they already know about it, and if they know any graduates. We learn more about why they are interested in it, what strengths they think they have as students, and whether they enjoy reading. One interviewer often attempts to determine if potential students are serious about attendance and strongly committed to academic success, while another will try to ascertain what the candidates do for fun. We ask if they have a sense of what they might do for a career. We are seeing increasing evidence of what has been termed the 'CSI factor', as many students express a keen interest in majoring in forensic science!

So, these first two steps in the application process – the personal statement and the interview – provide crucial information, but still, what we learn about our potential students at this point is restricted to what they want us to know about them. It is useful, but it is only a start.

How can we learn more about our students?

The obvious response is to talk to them. I learn a lot about my students in the short time immediately before and after class. My office door is always open, which encourages students to drop in if they need to talk to me. Another way to get to know students is through some orientation activities. This year, in an effort to give students a chance to get to know each other early on, we extended our orientation from one to two days and during the second day had some small group discussions about their goals and expectations. We then had a scavenger hunt, designed to help students find some useful resources on campus and required them to collect information from several locations including Dalplex (the sportsplex), the Counselling Centre, the Career Centre, the Black and Native Student Advising Centres, the library, and the math help centre. Prizes were awarded for information gathering and for team names, which included Logical Diversity, Divided Minds, and The Power of One! The general idea behind this second day of orientation was that, unlike the first, which is information overload day, it should be community building and should encourage teamwork, and help students to relax.

Where possible, we organize visits to sites of historical and contemporary significance in the local communities, such as the Native Friendship Centre or the Black Cultural Centre. It is not just about what we learn there, but also, little stories tend to come out about students' relatives and friends. Last year, students visited the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, where there was an exhibition on ancient Egypt that coincided with the topic they were studying in the Black Studies course. One year the students had an exchange visit with students from the Transitional Year Program at the University of Toronto. Last year the students organised a movie night and invited the instructors. So, there are fairly frequent extra-curricular events and activities, which allow instructors and students to interact in a more relaxed environment. I think we learn a lot about our students and what drives or motivates them from these sorts of activities, as we get to see a side of the students we wouldn't otherwise. These activities help develop a rapport between students and instructors that, I think, helps us understand our students a little better. On graduation day last year, students took over a portion of the ceremony and presented each of the instructors with a fun certificate. There is usually a fairly good atmosphere in the TYP.
Each student is assigned an academic advisor – one of the instructors – so that person tends to get to know the student a bit better and can keep an eye on how they are doing. In the English course, taught by renowned writer Lesley Choyce, the first assignment is to write about a life-changing moment or event. Students often choose to write about a negative time in their lives. Some students have

expressed that they found this cathartic and that they felt that the instructor(s) knew a bit about them which made them feel a bit more accepted and understood. In Native Studies, the group project and accompanying presentations on a book often reveal personal stories about parents, grandparents, or other relatives who experienced life in the residential schools. These are often painful stories, but we do not believe that that means they should not be told. Ultimately, it is the students' decision about what to include in their essays and presentations. This course component has shown that other students learn in a very profound way about the realities of what they are reading about.

Indeed, our students have a lot to learn from each other and a lot to teach the instructors. Personally, I have learned about all kinds of things from the horrific to the ridiculous. I now know, for example, about flocabulary (rap lyrics). When I asked for a metaphor, one student suggested 'my words are cannibalisitic, they will eat you up!' On another occasion, a student presented his reflection on how his year had been in the form of a study skills rap. I have to admit that as he began, I was grimacing, but by the end, I was enjoying it so much that I was hoping he would give me a copy!

TYP students represent different stages of life, and diverse life experiences. They have varying abilities, and some language issues. They are not necessarily the fairly typical, computer savvy, short-attention span, millenial students, as focused on in some other papers in this collection. Rather, many arrive with a limited familiarity with computers, uncommon stories to tell of troubled pasts, but with a great deal of drive and determination and gratitude for the chance at proceeding to university. When I was a first year student, I can honestly say that I did not have that drive. What I most certainly did have was a great deal of invisible privilege, to use Peggy McIntosh's term. I rely, therefore, on my students to teach me what it is like for them as they prepare to enter academia.

Success Story – McCollins Jones

One student who taught the others a lot, especially about Africa, was McCollins Jones. McCollins is a recent TYP graduate who has overcome many obstacles in a journey that has taken him from civil war in Sierra Leone to Nova Scotia. When the civil war broke out in 1991, McCollins was enrolled in community college and was unable to finish his studies. A national sports star (he won a track and field gold medal for his country, and he brought it to the interview), McCollins used his talents to help child soldiers, working to get them out of the war and involved in sports programs. He volunteers with the organization *Right to Play*. A family connection brought him to Nova Scotia. Sierra Leone shares strong historic ties to the province. Black Loyalists who left Nova Scotia in 1792 settled in Sierra Leone. McCollins was always interested in re-establishing this link with his ancestors. His is now exactly where he planned to be - in the Bachelor of Management (Recreation) program at Dalhousie.

Strategies for University Learning

Study skills courses are often undervalued. This is a shame, as they can often be the most important components in the academic success of new students. The course that I teach, Strategies for University Learning, is designed to provide basic study skills and a lot more. There are sessions on motivation and goal setting, dealing with distractions, and learning styles. Many of our students are visual learners, so we discuss ways to compensate for a teaching/learning mismatch. Another topic explored is culture and learning, as discussed at the Teaching Showcase in 2004. I try to give some assignments that require a degree of subjectivity, so that students can put something of themselves into their work. I regularly ask what, if any, difficulties they are having studying. I encourage them to work with each other and to create study groups. There are a few now that meet each week, and are completely student-driven.

When we talk about motivation, money always comes up, as does being a role model. I have never experienced poverty. I have never been a single parent. Most of my teachers at school and university were White. Though I pride myself on being able to recall what it felt like for me as a new university student, I'm not sure I can ever fully understand what it is like to be a TYP student. I have not experienced many of the personal problems that I know my students have. In school classes, people didn't turn and stare at me whenever there was a reference to white people. I never hid in the basement when my grandparents who raised me thought I was at school. If the teacher didn't ask me for an answer even though my hand was up, I didn't feel it might have something to do with the fact that I was White. So, our discussions about how to get and stay motivated often provide important insights into the nature of privilege and oppression.

We regularly share successes and brainstorm ways to address challenges students are having. Sometimes, through our discussions, I can detect possible learning disabilities, so I refer students to the Learning Disabilities counselor for what is called a pre-assessment. Typically, we detect real learning disabilities, such as ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, and sometimes dyscalculia, many of which have somehow gone undetected in school. We then have to ensure that the student has the necessary support for note taking or exam writing or whatever is required. The alarming part about this is that students frequently tell us that they were put in resource or special education or just that they felt stupid throughout their school years. This is surely an area for further research.

I hope to have outlined some of the ways I try to get to know and understand my students and support their learning in a holistic way. I try to help them develop more self-awareness and more independence as learners, and hopefully to realize that education is liberating and empowering and can be transformative. One of the readings we do in support of this is from the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, where he writes about how reading and expanding his vocabulary gave him a sense of hope and of freedom.

At the heart of most of the learning strategies we explore is the crucial role of good time management. Interestingly, some of our most successful students are single parents, often mothers, because not only are they driven but they also seem to manage their time extremely well. Many students are obliged to work part time, and at least three this year have horrible work hours. We talk about how much work is too much and how that can affect concentration and academic success, but that they need to support themselves financially. Striking the balance between studies, work, and other responsibilities is one of the greatest challenges faced by our students.

Success Story – Ashley Paris

One student whose time management skills were spectacular was Ashley Paris, of Truro, Nova Scotia. Ashley successfully completed the Transition Year Program in 2004, and plans to pursue a career in nursing. She also received the Morris Saffron Prize for highest academic standing. Ashley had a busy year, balancing her studies with several jobs in the customer service field. She has been involved with figure skating for most of her life and has competed in various competitions throughout Canada. She has received numerous skating medals and an award for Female Athlete of the Year, awarded by Sport Heritage, Truro. She has also volunteered as an amateur skating coach and enjoyed helping her community by teaching children the joys of skating. Ashley taught *me* about time management!

Conclusion

The seemingly straightforward question we were asked to reflect on for this conference, 'who are our learners?', is certainly the first question we must consider before embarking upon any journey into teaching and learning, and it is perhaps the most important question we as teachers can ask ourselves. The answers to that question can help us ensure that our teaching is effective, engaging, and relevant and, in the case of the Transition Year Program, that the program will not only ease the transition to university, but will demonstrate the transformative power of education. Our students have stories to tell us. We must take the time to listen and to learn.

Thanks to Diane Obed, McCollins Jones, and Ashley Paris for giving permission for their names and stories to appear in print.

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Teaching the Sound Bite Generation

Abstract

Generation Y, those people born after 1981, also known as the sound-bite generation, have grown up in a visually rich environment complete with multi-channel televisions, computers, and video games. Generation Yers, as a result, have developed a visual learning style, which is different from previous generations that were predominantly auditory learners. (1) It is important that we, as educators, are aware of this change in learning-style and take it into account when we teach. This paper will discuss some of the adjustments the authors and their colleagues have made to incorporate this new style of learning into the classroom environment.

During a trip to Las Vegas for a conference in 2000 we took time to visit the museum at the near-by Hoover/Boulder Dam[1]. Both of us were interested in finding out about the building of the dam. As we moved through the museum we found that it was setup with small 'sound bite' audio-visual stations. There were young school children everywhere pressing buttons for snippets of information. It was irritating and cacophonous. We were looking for something chronological and contiguous that gave us a complete yet concise history of the dam. Finally, on the top-floor of the museum, we found at small theatre, which was showing the history of the dam in a documentary film of about twenty minutes in duration. We sat down among a group of grade-school children to watch. By the end of the presentation, we were the only ones in the theatre. The children, it seemed, did not have the necessary attention span to watch all the way through. At the time, we simply assumed that this was because of their relative youth combined with their "school-trip" excitement level, but it seems that their behaviour and the staccato methods the museum had adopted to tell the story are

[1] The Boulder Dam was renamed the Hoover Dam during Herbert Hoover's presidency, but it had been named the Boulder Dam for the canyon it was originally to occupy. Ultimately, it was built in Black Canyon, but by the time that decision was made, the name "Boulder" had stuck.

both indicative of and responsive to a growing trend that is now apparent not only in children, but also in young adults.

Today's university student typically belongs to Generation Y – that is, they were born after 1981. These people have grown up with, or experienced the development of the internet, cell phones (that now carry pictures as well as sound), video and computer games, and any number of television channels. (2) It is hardly surprising, therefore, that they tend to rely heavily on visual learning. As Jo Anne Vasquez pointed out in her keynote address to the North Carolina Science Leadership Association, learning styles have changed dramatically since the early 1950s. In the United States during the 1950s a person's typical learning pattern included 30% visual, 43% auditory, and 27% kinesthetic sources whereas today it is 47% visual, 19% auditory, and 34% kinesthetic. (3) She also points out that in the 1950s the average 14 year-old had a vocabulary consisting of approximately 25,000 words, but by the year 2000 it had dropped to 10,000. (4)

The result stemming from this visually-saturated learning environment seems to be that people's attention spans are decreasing. At a recent graduation dinner, we found ourselves sitting across from a production manager for CBC Television News. We had a conversation about how much time is allotted to news-stories. During our conversation, she said that every story should be told within thirty seconds, but that you can stretch it to a minute if it is a riveting story, after which time the viewer loses interest. She said that newscasters have to take into account the fact that we now live in a 'sound bite' world and that people's attention span, even for a good story, is limited. Some professions are also beginning to address the changes in the demographic and applying new techniques to grab and hold people's increasingly wavering attention. In law, for example, the realization has been made that 40% of the jury pool have been raised on computers, videos, the internet, and cell phones, and have shorter attention spans and have developed a visually based learning strategy. Lisa Brennan in writing for the National Law Journal suggests that: "They are more likely to zone out during a rambling presentation—no matter how eloquent—than they are during a succinct statement punctuated by electronic visuals meant to give them the feeling that they figured it out for themselves." She points out that law schools are beginning to add courses, as part of their curriculum dealing with the use of technology and novel advocacy skills, which will help lawyers to reach this new type of jury. (5)

Generation Y in the University Classroom

At the beginning of the semester John Pursley of Alabama University asks his creative writing class what it is they like to read? The response is typically; "I don't know," along with pregnant pauses and uncomfortable shuffling of the chairs. Over the last few years he has begun to realize:

"The fact is most of the students have read and do read on occasion, but the majority of their reading seems to be portions of what is assigned to them and what they cull from internet blogs and their friends' facebooks, rather than out of any real love of literature. And though I can understand their fascination with the sort of voyeurism the internet provides, especially as an alternate to assigned reading, it troubles me when the first words out of a student's mouth are I don't like to read, which is almost inevitably followed by, I want to be a published writer…" (6)

The problem facing university instructors, such as John Pursley, is how do we engage this new breed of student and foster a love of our particular discipline? One answer may be to fight fire with fire and, to extend the metaphor, thereby blaze the path less trodden. One of the authors, in an English literature class, talks about the genres of literature and, to cement the requirements in the students' minds, not only discusses the literature that is part of the course work but will ask the students to categorize the movies that are currently playing at the theatres and to support their arguments with reference to the plots.

Visual Presentations

Certainly, in a discipline such as English, visual presentations have long had their place. With modern media it is very simple, for example, to present film versions of plays that students may be studying. Playwrights have always written plays to be seen and heard, not read, but seeing and hearing first may be a useful and intriguing introduction to a closer textual analysis. In English and other disciplines, documentaries may also be a useful introduction to information to give dynamic, visual representations of material that might not otherwise be readily available. A case in point, which brought this home recently to one of the authors, was a documentary on Roman Britain. This, from British school-child recollection, was inhabited by men in short leather skirts who, when they weren't littering the countryside with piles of rubble and amorphous shards of pottery, built long, straight, boring roads while speaking a language which apparently killed them. In the documentary, and through the wonders of modern computer graphics, roads traced on modern maps led to cities of ancient ruins that rebuilt themselves before the viewer's eyes, shards formed pots that took their places in the buildings and the dead came to life through their own words in recently discovered letters translated into idiomatic English. One letter was from a merchant who was due to make a delivery to a fort. He said he would be unable to do so, "because," as the translator quoted, "the roads are too bloody awful." Thus, thanks to the dynamism of modern technology, this distant history, eroded through time and slime, re-formed not only Roman Britain, but also the author's opinion of Britain's Roman period as something interesting and accessible. Of course, it is not always possible or necessarily desirable to include a full-length feature in a classroom setting, but modern software allows us to "cut and paste" not only words, but visual images into a PowerPoint presentation that may be used to augment course material.

PowerPoint

Since it appears that the current students are strong visual learners and technology has afforded us the use of 'power point', then we may easily chose to use it where advantageous. This is not to say that we should use this technology, as the name implies, to list point after point, but to bring visual texture into the classroom, using 'power point' as 'power picture' (7). In introducing a figure important to the course, for example, one might present his or her portrait to put a face to the name and use short film clips to bring the material to life. The old adage, "A picture's worth a thousand words," has always been true, but gone are the days of fumbling with upside-down, back-to-front overheads – today, visual images may be more easily, dynamically, and integrally presented.

Coming Online

Our students now have unlimited access to the internet, whether at home, or at university and it has become increasingly apparent that they rely on the information they find there as a basis for their research. Certainly the internet highway has made the research-journey faster, but since there is no license required to use it, it may be necessary to give students an internet highway code to enable them to travel in safety without becoming lost or misled. Of course, it is easy to advise them to consider the source of papers or documentary material, but the informal nature of some of their preferred sources, such as “wikis”, “blogs”, and “chat-rooms,” while potentially providing useful information makes monitoring more involved.

Wikis

As a case in point, last year one of the authors taught a new third year psychology class on Vision. As part of the course requirements, students were asked to make a fifteen-minute presentation on an aspect of the visual process to be vetted by the instructor. On the whole, these presentations were successful and informative. What struck the author were the citation indices at the end of the presentation and how heavily they relied on internet information - most specifically, wikis. A wiki is defined on Wikipedia as “a type of website that allows the visitors themselves to easily add, remove, and otherwise edit and change some available content… This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for collaborative authoring…” (8)

If students are familiar with this internet tool, surely we can use it to our advantage. Instructors could access wikis pertaining to the subject that is being discussed in class and compare and contrast the information in them to information from reliable primary sources. They could setup web sites in which students could contribute to the development of wikis concerning a particular subject as they become more familiar with the topic area, as opposed to simply using a wiki as a quick reference source.

Blogs

Another commonly used information source is the blog. The term “blog” is short for “weblog”. “A weblog is a journal (or newsletter) that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or the Web site.” (9)

Again, knowing that this web-tool is frequently used by students to gain access to information, then using it within the classroom may allow us to reach a larger number of students. Some classes, for example, could ask the student to design their own blogs on a particular topic. Blogs could even be used as a replacement for reflective journals. In this way the instructor could use the instruments of learning and communication that the students are familiar with help them to start to think about and express themselves on a particular topic, but for formal research it can only be a jumping-off point. A colleague of ours actually spends time in class directly comparing a blog from a reputable site to a primary source from a referred journal to show the inconsistencies in the information provided. He points out that blogs are not reviewed for accuracy and often contain an author’s opinion rather than straight fact and though they maybe a good starting point when researching a topic the student should always dig deeper and always seek out primary sources. In this way he is bridging the gap between what is known and what is there to discover.

Online Chat Groups

Chat rooms are very familiar to the current crop of students. We recently, downloaded MSN on to our computer so we can have real-time conversations with our sixteen-year-old nephew in Ottawa. He seems to be very comfortable with this form of communication and prefers it to email. A number of instructors at our institution have already set up chat rooms for their courses, thus giving the students yet another forum in which to discuss the topics covered in class. Some of the instructors have noticed that some of the quiet and shyer people in class take full advantage of the communication medium to express themselves.

Conclusion

The idea of integrating these new media tools in the classroom will be uncomfortable for many of us because it means that we have to engage in a new style of teaching to come to grips with this new style of learning. Nevertheless, as instructors, it is our responsibility to instill an interest in our subject. The authors believe that once we instill the interest in the subject matter the student will begin to dig deeper of their own accord. In this fast-paced, media-rich world, we want our students to develop an interest which lasts longer than the thirty or sixty seconds allotted to news stories while realizing, like Adam Sandler's character in the recent science-fiction movie, *Click,* that the instantaneous gratification which new technology affords is no substitute for deeper consideration.

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Y Gens in Higher Education – Who are they and what do they expect from us?

Abstract

The growing interest in Canada about the student and their student opinions about post-secondary education experiences has become the latest focus in public print media in 2006. As members of post-secondary institutions, what do we really know about students and their learning expectations? This question is explored through the lens of a professor and a student. The article provides a professor like overview of the "vision" of the Y Generation students and shares the "voice" of a Y Gen learner. The emergent story for university teachers appears to lie in the collaborative exploration of teaching and learning experiences.

Who are the students in higher education today? For an increasing number of educational experiences, both the teacher and student are somewhat invisible to each other through the increasing distance and online course offerings. Larger classes and face to face teaching experiences, while later providing a real time image of students, does not reveal the multi-faceted Y Generation or "Gen Y" or "Ygen" student. The determination of the cohort constituting the Y Generation like other demographic demarcations has variability. Wikipedia (2007) has identified persons born between 1978 and 2000 as defining this cohort. Characterized as impatient, skeptical, blunt and expressive, image driven, young, adaptable, technologically savvy, learning orientated efficient multi-taskers, and tolerant the Y Gens comprise the largest generation since the baby boomers (NAS, 2007).

Much of the current discussion and literature relative to Y Gens is typically found in relationship to the work place from both a career planning and employer perspectives. Foster's (2006) interview of Linda Duxbury, Sprott School of Business, describes four distinct generations in the workplace: 1) Veteran Generation who were born before 1946; 2) Baby Boomers, born 1946-64 and make up 58% of labour market; 3) Generation X, born 1961-1974 and described as over educated, under utilized, and under achieving; and 4) Generation Y, Millennial, Nexus Generation, born 1975 and beyond. In the article, Duxbury states that the later generation in Canada has "seen their parents downsized… go on stress leave… take Prozac and get divorced… and claim they will never put a job ahead of their life… Throughout their lives this generation had been challenged by parents and teachers to have opinions and ideas and logically to argue their case…as a result they don't take things at face value, they want to argue and understand them. They also have the reality that the future will likely hold more jobs than qualified people to fill them" (Foster, 2006, 16).

In sum, this generation gap is described as, Boomers who see the younger generation as lazy, Gen X who thinks the youngest generation are spoiled and want boomers to quit because impeding their career, and Gen Y feel that no one respects or listens to them, They want an opportunity to learn and a mentor not a boss to tell them what to do. (Foster, 2006, 17). With increasing numbers of students in this Generation participating in higher education, a core debate in our knowledge economy often centers on learning for learning's sake or job preparation. The resultant employer appetite for the theoretical and practical to become more apparent in curriculum is keeping stride along with student expectations for the teaching and learning relationship.

To gain further insight into this inter-generational picture of Y Gen learners, this paper explores the vision captured traditionally in student's social and demographic data and the voice of a student to offer insight into the presenting question – Who are our learners?

The Vision

The vision of students who comprise these learners is influenced by the selection of the viewing lens. A historical lens highlights the variance in generational landscapes, a demographic lens creates a wide angled image of students, a financial lens automatically focuses on the access element of the student and higher education relationship, and the "zoom" lens illuminates student diversity.

Historical Lens

In 1998, Ron Nief created the Mindset List as a humorous way for educators to connect with first year students with generation relevant examples. Almost a decade later this list has become an internationally "utilized guide to the intelligent but unprepared adolescent consciousness" (Nief & McBride, 2006). This list links the mindset of the professorate to that of the entering class. For example, a professorate world view experience in 2006 might be as described in the following statements:

- As children we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.
- We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back before dark. No one was able to reach us.
- When we rode our bikes, we had no helmets.
- We drank sugar soda.
- Students failed a grade in school.
- Idea of parents bailing us out if we broke a law or did not obey others was unheard of.

The Mindset list (2006) recognizes,

> Most 18-year-old students entering the class of 2010 this fall were born in 1988. They grew up with a mouse in one hand and a computer screen as part of their worldview. They learned to surf the internet as they learned to read. While they were still in their cribs, the 20th century started to close as the Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet bloc disintegrated, and frequent traditional wars in Latin America gave way to the uncontrolled terrors of the Middle East. … entering students form "a generation that has always been 'connected' and is used to things happening in 'real time,' like live satellite coverage of revolutions and wars, instant messaging, and movies on demand. They expect solutions for every problem, from baldness to diseased organs. To the chagrin of teachers and parents, they've developed their own generational means of communication
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>> They are wireless, yet always connected.
>> "Google" has always been a verb.
>> They grew up in mini-vans.

> They have always been able to watch wars and revolutions live on television.
> They have always preferred going out in groups as opposed to dating.
>
> (Nief & McBride, 2006)

Demographic Lens

With increased emphasis on recruitment and retention in Canadian higher education, data about students is more relevant, user friendly, and accessible today than in the past. Generally, we know that there are 1.7 million full-time and part-time students in Canada with 970,000 in university and 736,000 in college. University enrolment has been on the incline. For example between 1999-2000 and 2003-04, student participation in higher education increased by 20%. Variance in these rates is evident across the country – with B.C. reporting the lowest rate at 13.5% and Nova Scotia the highest at 39.0% (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Financial Lens

The financial lens provides insight into understanding the learners in context to their relationship to a significant variable in education – its cost. Such a lens would show, for example in 2004-05, that undergraduate university tuition for Canadian Students reported a 3.9% increase overall for an average rate of $4172. This takes into account four provinces (MA, NL, QC, ON) who had capped fees increases. Interestingly, the highest fees ($5984) were reported in Nova Scotia – the place of the highest participation rates – and the province of Quebec residents in Quebec paid the lowest fees at $1683. Further, analysis would reveal the range of funding sources which students access to fund post-secondary students studying full-time would be described as: 7% – employment prior to school; 64% – employment during the academic year; 58% – non-repayable from family; 36% – grants, bursaries, scholarships; 26% – government student loans; 17% – investment income (RESP); 16% – repayable from family; and 14% – private loans or lines of credit (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Diversity Lens

Perhaps the greatest shift in diversity in higher education has been the increased participation of women in postsecondary studies. For example, over half of the student population is now comprised of female students. Likewise, the perceived homogeneity of students of the past is becoming refocused on the celebration of each unique student as evidenced in the creation and revision of academic policies and services. The identifiable diversity in higher education has become more apparent in the last five years (Farr, 2005).

Such diversity has been driven by an equity/human rights agenda by student advocates such as persons with disabilities. Other emergent agendas drive a social justice agenda recruiting and supporting marginalized groups such as Aboriginal students and economic and cultural agendas as evidenced with international student recruitment. For example, Aboriginal person's participation in PSE is currently one-half of that of the Canadian population. Increasing research such as the *Best Practices in Increasing Aboriginal Postsecondary Enrolment Rates* has provided useful information on how to best prepared for the increased participation of this cohort over the next ten years (Malatest, 2002).

The trend towards increased international recruitment efforts by Canadian educational institutions is often linked to the financial incentive which drives such recruitment. In 2004, for instance, the average tuition fees increased 4.5% ($11,307) for graduate students and 5.6% ($11,903) for undergraduates. This reflects an average 3 times the price of Canadian students. Government policy has also been changing to accommodate this trend. In April 2005, the Federal Government made changes to off-campus work and post-graduate stay/employment regulations. The 2002 *College and University Study* revealed that 5% of university and 8% of college students are self-reporting disabilities and seeking services and/or accommodations. Such a "zoom" focus provided in these examples adds an important layer of understanding about students. Traditionally, as educators we rely on such lenses accompanied by learning style assessments and the "getting to know you" introductory class exercise to frame our vision of the learner.

From Voice

To what extent do we, as educators, have a true picture of the learner of today? Students have much to offer to inform the teaching and learning process (Tucker, 2006). Below is an excerpt from the voice of a student which describes the Y Gen Learner in relationship to authority, grades, future, peers, and technology (Hardy Cox & Courage, 2006):

> My name is Charlotte Courage and I am a forth year Bachelor of Social Work student here at Memorial University. I was born 21 years ago today so I fall right into the middle of the Y gen. When I first met with Dr. Donna to discuss this project, I will admit that didn't know what to say. It is hard to make assumptions for an entire group of people that is so diverse and unique. One of the defining features of my generation is a large unwillingness to unquestioningly conform and a constant battle to be individuals. It was very challenging to remove myself in order to objectively describe my generation from the inside out. I once heard that it is impossible for rabbit to describe what he looks like when he jumps through a field. Being a part of my generation is all I know and this is the first time that anyone has ever expressed any interest in delving into my reality to explore what makes my generation unique.
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> Before I begin I think it is important that you know a little bit about me. As I said I am a fourth year student currently completing a field placement at Choices for Youth here is St. John's. I am class president which gives me the opportunity to sit on school committees and act as a liaison between students and faculty. I am currently employed part time at a museum where I have worked for the past three years. I am also a Brownie leader with the Girl Guides and I have been in Guiding since I was five years old so Guiding has a special place in my heart. I am also big sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters and I am very involved in my church. I also try to maintain some semblance of a social life…"try" being the operative word.

So, what does is mean to be a Y-Gen??

1. We are cynical of authority.

I have grown up skeptical of authority. This should come as no surprise. As a Newfoundlander I have witnessed the demise of our fishery and watched politicians scramble to pick up the pieces. Our people are leaving this province at astonishing rates for the riches of Alberta or Ontario. I cannot count how many of my friends parents have been laid off from jobs after working there for the entirety of their adult life.

I see people in authority as people who, for whatever mix of luck and ambition, landed in the position. Therefore I refuse to cave and cower and give them unwavering respect just because of their position. I have witnessed figures of authority come and go. We have recently seen federal and provincial politicians involved in financial misappropriations. Federal politicians feel entitled to call fellow politicians ‘dogs’. Municipal council meetings resemble a poorly written Saturday Night Live sketch or an episode of Codco. How can I then look up to these people and respect their authority?

This attitude then transfers over into the classroom. As academic gowns went out of fashion, so did the unquestioning obedience of students towards their professors. I respect professors because they respect me. A PhD isn’t going to be enough to get respect. Respect is to be earned and I can’t promise that it will be easy.

2. We are grade driven.

I love to learn. At the risk of being called a nerd, I would say that I have a passion for learning and I adore university for that very reason. However, I would be lying if I said that grades were not important to me. The reality is that there is very little that I will do academically, if there is no numerical grade attached. There are demands being placed on me on a daily basis and they are often overwhelming. Therefore, alternate assignments, optional lectures and other non-mandatory activities must take a backseat to work that must be done. I would like nothing more then to be able to take part in optional activities but I cannot do so at the expense of my graded work.

There is a huge misconception that we are only interested in activities that have some kind of pay out. I have grown up in a consumer driven society and many people falsely assume that we do not do optional work because there is no payout. After all, I am a part of the MTV, instant gratification, Microsoft generation. If anything it is the opposite. I desperately wish that I could take part in these extra curricular activities but I am too consumed with the constant demands of those who not only can reward me with high grades, they can also punish me with low grades. If you truly want me to participate in an activity, add a small numerical incentive and I will be there.

3. We are future focused.

For me, it is not a question of "if" I will attend graduate school. I started researching master's programs before I was accepted into the BSW program here at Memorial. I am faced with questions such as do I want to stay here at Memorial, or will I enter a university that does not require working experience before entering their program, or will I wait two years and attend another school? For me, getting my master's is a given, not a choice. Realistically, the positions that I am interested in require an MSW or several years of experience. I cannot manufacture years of social work experience, but I can attend graduate school and speed up the process. I also want to attend graduate school because I am not content with a degree that will only give me generalist knowledge. I need to excel and I want to gain specific knowledge in areas of interest to me.

This focus on the future means that I am constantly thinking about these factors. I am not in my program just to obtain a passing grade. While minimal passing grades will still give me a Bachelor's degree, it will not get me into the graduate program of my choice. I need to have top marks because they will be important in a few years time. I do not want to look back and realize that I missed my opportunity because I allowed myself to settle for average, when I am capable of more.

I believe that this vision for the future is extremely important to realize for professors and faculty. I truly believe that there should be more supports for those who plan on pursing future education. What I have learned has been through my own research but I feel that there needs to be allowances made for those who are not just looking for a passing grade. We are looking to be competitive and for many of us, we don't even know what competitive means because we only have short life experiences to draw upon.

4. We see ourselves as a group.

Before we were all accepted as a class into the Bachelor of Social Work program, very few of us knew one another. Now I can honestly say that we are a very tight and cohesive group. While I realize that this is not typical of every faculty or group of students I will tell you about my class. We have a very active social committee in my class and each semester we have about a half dozen planned class activities which usually draw 30-40 of my classmates. Out of a class of 45 that's pretty good. I also see my classmates outside of school, more than I see some of my high school friends. We truly do see ourselves as a group and we support each other. Before papers are due our listserv email group is buzzing with emails from classmates asking for advice or suggestions. We feel close enough that we can ask for help and know that in a short time someone will respond. Whenever papers come back there is always discussion in the society room and it is not rare to see swapping of papers so that we can help our fellow classmates see where they might have gone wrong, or to see what they wrote that obviously was right on target.

Our group dynamic is very important when any kind of conflict arises between a classmate and a professor. Our peer support is unbelievable, when one person has a problem it can quickly become a class problem. We also try our hardest to be supportive and helpful for each other. For example, if I was to email a professor with a question and I think the answer would help the class, I will forward it to the listserv. We are a cohesive unit and we strive to have every member succeed. While there is some natural competition when it comes to grades, the majority of the time, we are supporting each other every step of the way and we become legitimately concerned when one member begins to fall behind.

5. We are technologically savvy.

The creation of our listserv has been both a blessing and a curse. It has allowed us to share information on mass scales; however it also means that it takes very little effort to fill up our inboxes around assignment times. It is normal to receive an upwards of 60 or 70 emails a day when there is a big paper due. I clearly cannot read them all, but I make an honest effort to read most.

Our listserv has also given us an academic edge. For example one of my classmates typed up 15 pages of definitions for a final exam and she then sent it out to the class. She did it because she didn't want the rest of us to waste time typing them when she had already done the work. She also did it as a way to 'one up' our professor. At times our class takes on a mob mentality and it feels like it is us against the professors and administration. By sending out the definitions, she was in a lot of ways ensuring that our class would excel. We share information at a speed that rivals anything that CBC or CNN can produce. 45 people sharing information can be a pretty powerful thing. Networking is an understatement.

So where does this leave you? For many of you, my generation remains a mystery and I cannot imagine that we are an easy group to teach. We may come across as cocky and lacking respect but behind this there is a need to be heard. We also want to hear your life experiences because deep down we are all anxious of what the future might be for us. Just remember that we are a group who has grown up in an uncertain world, who look to you to help be a part of securing a positive university experience.

From Vision and Voice: A New Story to be Crafted

Students have always been unique. This is not new. What is new is the increased recognition of the academy on such individual differences or voices. Seeking new ways to first understand the student and then to have them understand the faculty imperative requires more deliberate and integrated approaches to teaching. The current vision/profile of Canadian students in higher education reflects an increasing participation rate of students (especially female students), increasing tuition fees and debt load, and increasing competition for professional programs. This is accompanied by trends which indicate growing diversity in students: 1) increased participation rates of aboriginal students; 2) increased recruitment of international students; 3) increased disclosure and requirements to support students with disabilities; 4) increased number of students working full and part time to fund education; 5) increased pressure for job and career preparation and theory practical connect in learning; and 6) increased competitiveness among undergraduates as they plan for graduate education options. The Y Generation characterized as racially and ethnically diverse, independent, empowered, future focused, and technically savvy add an important contextual layer to the proceeding view. Recognition of intricacies and interdependence of both vision and voice of the learner is critical to today's educators. Student voices introduce a powerful and insightful critique of learning expectations. Educators' assumptions regarding curriculum design, course communication, course delivery and evaluation can only be enhanced through listening to Y Generation learners and forging productive partnerships with them in the learning process.

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Interlude Intrigue: Student Views on Listening to Peers in the Classroom

Abstract

Providing students voices with opportunities to share in classroom interaction is important and valuable. In this article I discuss my integration of assigned "interludes" which required students in an Introduction to Social Work course to give brief oral presentations of three types: identification of role models for the profession of social work; explanation of an excerpt from The Canadian Encyclopedia of Social Work (Turner, 2005); and a critique of an image of social workers found in any type of media. Through written feedback students provide insights into the value of this teaching method as well as suggestions for improving the process.

Turner, F. (Ed.). (2005). *Encyclopedia of Canadian Social Work*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

In the process of designing any course, an important challenge is the diversification of teaching methods in order to avoid continuous lecturing by the professor. For some time now, the value of student participation in the teaching and learning process has been recognized as essential to a quality classroom experience (Erickson, 2007; Weisner, 2004) and the ways in which a teacher invites students to participate is limited only by the imagination. Establishing an effective balance between the student and teacher's voices can pose yet another challenge (Patterson, 2000). Too much time allotted to student participation in each class can potentially disallow a sufficient amount of instructor time for interpreting and disseminating content relative to the course. In the research described in this article, I applied a new teaching strategy which provides students with more class time listening to the voices of their classmates and I engaged my students in an assessment of its effectiveness.

In June, 2006, I taught an Introductory Social Work course which is required for students registered in a Bachelor of Social Work degree program. I experimented with a teaching approach that required every student to take responsibility for three “interludes”, or oral presentations intended to ensure students would continue to be engaged and interested throughout the day. I intended to explore the degree to which students valued opportunities to hear from other students, whether the quality of their learning experience would be enhanced, and if one of the three types of speaking opportunities would receive more positive feedback than another.

Three different types of presentations were assigned: The first was selecting an entry from the *Canadian Encyclopedia of Social Work* by Frank Turner. Students borrowed this book, browsed through it, and freely selected any entry to present to the class along with a relevant question or comment. The reason for this choice was to nudge them to gain familiarity with the book as a resource for future academic work and to inspire students with the range of areas in which social work has involvement.

The second was an “image of social work” that had appeared in a book, movie or conversation, an assessment of the accuracy of the portrayal, some insight into how it may have developed, and a reflection about changing and responding to inaccurate images about the profession. One of my goals in assigning this was to lay the foundation for using critical thinking skills and to prompt discussion of reasons why what the public or media perception about a given situation is often different from the perspective of social workers involved in cases because of the nature of the work where confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

The third was identification of an individual who reflects social work values or ideals, and who the student recognizes as a role model, with my goal being to mutually inspire class members through their own stories of amazing people whose role modeling provided them with strength and courage.

Completing each interlude gave the student 5% toward their course mark. More specific criteria were not provided intentionally, to encourage variety and creativity in the work. Full marks were awarded for having completed each of the three presentations; they were not assessed according to evaluative criteria.

Possession of a prior Bachelor’s degree is a requirement for this program, thus students held a certain level of maturity and confidence in the academic context, although most did not know one another beforehand and this was their first course in the program. The course was taught in the month of June in an intensive, full day format (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) which was a factor that motivated me to seek ways to change the daily routine and provide varied activities for class members. The class was composed of only 15 students and this small number was obviously a key factor in experimenting with this type of teaching method and assignment; the larger the class, the less time one has to provide students with opportunities to do individual oral presentations.

On the final day of the course, as standard University evaluations were distributed, I also invited students to anonymously complete another evaluation form which was placed in a sealed envelope and left with the Departmental Assistant until all grades had been submitted. All 15 students chose to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire asked for responses to the following questions:

- As the student presenting each of these “interludes”, did you find any of the three more valuable or interesting to prepare than one or two of the others? If so, please explain which you appreciated doing the most.
- As a student listening to the interludes of other students, did you find that one type was of greater value than another type? Overall, has the use of interludes been valuable for your learning during this course?
- Students in the class received 5 marks for doing each of their interludes, similar to a participation mark. Would you recommend that the interludes actually be graded rather than marks automatically given for completing them?
- Would you increase their value in terms of marks? If so how much would you make them worth?
- Do you believe some interludes should be worth more marks than others (assuming all three were assigned once again)?

Findings

Responses to the questionnaire have been analyzed under the following headings:

- Value students found in the different types of interludes (the role model, media image and encyclopedia entry) as learning/teaching tools;
- Student feedback with regard to the marks allotted to the interludes and whether grading would be preferable to automatically assigned marks for conducting the interludes;
- Overall suggestions and insights with regard to the impact of the interludes on learning and classroom atmosphere.

1. Student views of the value of the interludes

a. Role model interlude:

The word "inspiring" was often associated with this particular interlude. One described it as "powerful stories about where we are all coming from". An appreciated benefit was the chance to learn something personal and to provide unique insights about each class member. There was also recognition that disclosing self-knowledge of this more personal nature contributed significantly to group development and the sense of belonging to this specific group.

Another interesting comment was that hearing who had inspired each student to become a social worker gave cause to reflect "why we were all here". Several commented that it appeared other students particularly enjoyed sharing who their role model or inspiration was.

b. Image of the profession interlude:

Amidst the expressed appreciation for the images of the social work profession interlude there were comments that thinking about how others view the profession and acknowledging how others perceive the roles to be provided helpful insights. Students said it offered the chance to explore ideas about the profession, that it was enjoyable to prepare and share, and that it encouraged thinking about what stereotypes students will face when they venture out into the professional world. The fact that students needed to seek different media images to present the topic was also identified as a significant part of the process.

On the negative side, one student commented that although the "image of social work" interlude was valuable and pertinent, he or she found it became somewhat repetitive as additional students brought forth negative views held by the public regarding the profession. Another said the image of social work assignment tended to have a fairly narrow scope, thus making it was difficult to not repeat what others had done – especially as the weeks progressed.

c. Encyclopedia excerpt interlude:

One comment on the subject of the Canadian Encyclopedia of Social Work Interlude was that it was the most useful because it offered the chance to learn about topics not touched on in class. For one student, the process of looking through the book and gaining information on topics in all areas of social work stood out as being the most valuable aspect of this interlude. The same individual noted that "you only get what you put into it" thus decided to look over the entire book to "get a feel for it" and this was extremely beneficial to them.

Another concurred with appreciative comments about being required to make a selection from the Encyclopedia, saying she or he enjoyed seeing the "diversity and unexpectedness" of some of the entries in the Encyclopedia; things this person hadn't previously thought of as being part of social work. Gaining awareness of the connections of different topics to the profession was said to be exciting and encouraging. Others said the Encyclopedia interludes were very educational, informative and automatically and easily initiated great discussions. Through discussions further knowledge was seen to be generated.

The most common comment of appreciation for the Encyclopedia interlude was it invited a delving into many diverse topics that students may not otherwise have had the opportunity to examine.

d. Overall comments regarding use of interludes in the course:

An interesting comment made by one student was that they enjoyed all three types because each provided an opportunity to express the self in three different ways. Another noted the requirement did not generate pressure or stress around making any of the presentations, and a third student liked that there was no time limit.

One student summed up their positive appraisal of the interludes by saying “I think they are all necessary to help us learn about social work, and each other, and to create a welcoming, sharing community within the classroom.”

2. Student views regarding grading of interludes

As already mentioned, for completing each of the three interludes, students were given a total of 15 participation marks. Agreement with assigning grades in this way was nearly unanimous, for several reasons. One noted that since evaluative grading was not going to occur, the guidelines were less specific which enabled students to approach the assignment in different ways. Had each presentation been judged, this student felt grading would have become highly subjective whereas the minimal guidelines required offered room for broader interpretation and thus creativity.

Another student was of the opinion that grading of this assignment (and grading in general) was neither necessary nor desirable because all class members had “worked very, very hard to get to this program. We are all very dedicated academics and future social workers.”

A comment I found particularly noteworthy and worthy of further reflection was: “We would not be as authentic if grades were given.” A related comment was that “…no one feels pressured to ‘out do’ someone else and we all feel free to be ourselves and present our experiences.” The notion of taking away pressure was echoed by other respondents. One student stated that the learning was “significantly more meaningful” because of the absence of judgment and of the pressure generated by grades. This author finds it disappointing – but not necessarily surprising – that the implication is that grading itself creates unwelcome competition and taints the “performance” and topics.
One student suggested grading would have created too much stress for people for this particular assignment and “may keep them from discussing more emotional topics”. Another noted that “everyone put in lots of time and effort. Grading them is too arbitrary. I felt less inhibited and freer in my own presentation of the interludes than I would if I knew a grade was riding on them.” Repeated in different ways was the belief that the format was more

conducive to a relaxed team focused environment and that “a grade would only foster competition and hinder group bonding in the early stages”.

On the topic of the actual percentage value given (5% for each of the three interludes), it appears students were satisfied with equal assignment of marks among the three, and most (12/15) recommended leaving the 15% total as it was. A rationale proposed by one student was that “People have strengths in different areas. If the goal of the interludes is to enhance learning then each interlude should be valued equally.” While variance in the type of contribution to learning different interludes offered was acknowledged, the fact that “some individuals are more emotional and others more intellectual” was seen as positive and as providing additional support for maintaining an equal value for each interlude.

A sole advocate for giving higher marks for the description of a role model interlude made the suggestion “because it can leave students feeling vulnerable and giving a piece of themselves instead of researching and giving back the information”. The suggestion appears to be that asking students to potentially demonstrate vulnerability is deemed worthy of a higher percentage of course marks.

3. Overall comments/suggestions/insights about the use of interludes

Student feedback of a more general nature about the use of interludes provided additional insights into the importance and value of using an “interlude variety pack” in a classroom setting. Comments suggest the interludes play a significant role in contributing to an atmosphere conducive toward effective learning: “I think it helped us get used to talking to the class, got us thinking about social work from a lot of different angles, helped us to know more about each other, and we learned a lot, too. I give them the thumbs up!” In a similar vein, this student wrote: “They build community and acceptance among class members. They help us to discover how we see ourselves as social workers, how others view us (what we will encounter out in the world), and help us to learn more about areas of research we may pursue.”

In addition, the phenomenon of tapping into creativity and challenging self limits was identified as having been accomplished through the assignment. As one put it: “Each (interlude) had a basic challenge that I faced and given these were the first presentations we had to do before the entire class it was initially difficult.” Being required to present in front of the group was identified as very challenging by some, yet in the same breath one respondent commented that “any additional ones would be welcomed”.

A note of gratitude was expressed by a student who said: “I really enjoyed/appreciated the work all my classmates put into these activities. It gave me a better sense of my abilities as well as their own.” The most enthusiastic of respondents wrote: “I loved the interludes! They were a great idea and I’m so glad you chose to include them. They were very fun to do and to present, and I feel I learned so much I might not have thought of otherwise.” Another student went so far as to recommend using the same format in other classes because the interludes encourage participation, openness, and discussion.

Discussion

Conducting this research study has provided a valuable opportunity for reflection on this teaching experiment. Students’ comments in this course revealed that in this course, being required “to talk about our influences and experiences” through the interludes was recognized as something that in their view occurs less often in other faculties.

Feedback helpfully indicated that holding the presentations at different times during the day was considered enjoyable and “kept me looking forward to them”. One valuable suggestion that surfaced was the notion of setting a time limit at the very beginning and establishing a 10 minute maximum for presentation and discussion, “so that they don’t take up too much time and make completing class work difficult”. I concur with this opinion, although some students appreciated there being few parameters around the assignments. Another fair critique was that “...sometimes there seemed to be a squeeze to get them in” followed by the suggestion “Maybe students could choose 2 of 3 to present and hand in a written form of the 3rd (or omit) to save on time.” This will be a valuable idea for the next time I am using the interlude approach. Students were given freedom in the dates to present their interludes; a schedule of class days was provided and signups were invited according to student preference. While this respected students' personal scheduling and task management preferences, it also impinged slightly on what might have been a more ideal balancing of learning activities on some days.

A primary reason for offering triple occasions for students to do brief individual presentations was my desire to infuse energy into a schedule of day-long classes, that inherently risked being long and drawn out, at a time of year when few would choose to be indoors. Yet an ongoing fear is that I may have gone "overboard" in offering up too much time for student sharing and not enough for my own facilitation and sharing of content. The following comment which succinctly captures what seems to be consensus about the value of these interludes also underlines the cause for my anxiety in relation to the degree to which I have been adequately available and responsible in sharing knowledge in the classroom:

"I think that so far, the interludes are as helpful to me in this class as our following discussion and classroom group work and assignments. Because we get to delve into a small snippet of information about so many different topics, like creativity and the Cree healing theory, we're able to get so many more perspectives about things that we may not have otherwise had the opportunity to hear about."

On the one hand, I am pleased to read the affirmation that the interludes were indeed of great value to student learning. On the other hand, I question whether the other course assignments that also involve teaching and learning, which are graded and worth much more than these participatory assignments should not clearly be more "helpful" than these brief student presentations. In the future, I would like to examine how "snippet" teaching/learning moments can become incorporated into larger assignments in order that the articulated value, significance and contributions of these types of "interlude" activities can have a more dominant status in the learning experience of the student.

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Anthology

Anthologie

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Bridging the Gap Between Higher Education Teaching and Learning: A Problem-based Perspective Generates Creative Results

Abstract

Three students from the Education 6300 Teaching and Learning Intersession, 2006 class collaborated with their instructor and her colleague to illustrate the quality work that is reflective of Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Education and graduate students. Through a problem-based pedagogical format, these students were challenged to revamp the Bachelor of Education Degree at a fictional university. In response, they developed a technologically astute interactive presentation with PowerPoint slides, a web site, and a promotional video. Visual, auditory, and activity-based components attempt to blur the line between teaching and learning in higher education.

Introduction

In an age when teaching responsibility and accountability for delivering appropriate learning experiences to post-secondary students is high, preparing effective educators is of paramount importance. In reform-minded higher education settings, improving the quality of teacher education programs has high priority (Hammett & Collins, 2002; Kumar & Natarajan, 2007). Lui and Qi (2006) suggest that, “the way teachers are trained and prepared can significantly affect how they teach in the classroom, and the education children receive would shape how they work, live and interact with people from different backgrounds” (p. 24). Wildman (2007) referring to the work of Bok (2006) calls attention to “an overwhelmingly conservative bias in instructional methodology, with upward to 70 or 80 percent of faculty members continuing to rely on the lecture or some close variation as the mainstay of their teaching” (p. 23). And Poplin and Riviera (2005) advise that, “we must accept that the university has been as much a part of the system of education that has created achievement gaps as any other group, perhaps more so, and we must be radically prepared to try new things to change it" (p. 35).

Lindblom-Ylänne; Trigwell, Nevgi and Ashwin (2006) recommend that, "one way of improving student learning is to support teachers in developing more student-centred approaches to teaching" (p. 295). They explain that teaching can be teacher-centered wherein teaching is viewed as "the transmission of knowledge" (p. 285) or, it can be student-centered whereby teaching is seen as facilitating student learning, and the focus is on having students construct their own understandings and knowledge. This student-centered or constructivist approach utilizes an instructional design that is activity based with multimedia strategies that cater to individual learning styles in which "both educators and learners function as active partners" (Kumar & Natarajan, 2007, p. 90) in the learning process.

This new educational paradigm moves away from the didactic lecture-based mode of instruction toward a goal of enhancing the ways students "think and augment knowledge building within authentic problem-solving contexts" (Kumar & Natarajan, 2007, p. 89). Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (2000) suggest that constructivism "focuses on issues of individual cognition" and there is a "shift in thinking about thinking" (p. 65). Underpinned by the constructivist philosophy, learner-centred or "problem-based" inquiry caters to students' diverse learning needs and expectations (Kumar & Natarajan, 2007; Oliver, 2007). In problem-based learning, students take primary responsibility for self-directed learning. Motivation to learn comes from this empowerment coupled with participation in a socially interactive activity of experiential dialogue and reflection with other people; what one discovers as a result of this process acts as the driving force for the learner to continue with his/her investigation (Barr & Tagg, 1997). Dalsgaard and Godsk (2007) indicate that by transforming traditional modules into problem-based blended learning, they reduced lecturing time, supported both repetition and educational differentiation and thus solved their "compelling need to meet new curriculum requirements" (p. 41).

Hmelo-Silver and Barrows (2006) suggest that the problem-based "active learning" strategy is defined by the following characteristics: (a) learning is driven by challenging, open-ended problems; (b) students work in collaborative groups; and, (c) teachers take on the role as "facilitators of learning".

Participants in problem-based learning initiatives assert that they become much more interested in their work. Students take ownership of their learning, see themselves as responsible for gathering and presenting information, and learn from social interaction and their own voices in the classroom. In this alternative to traditional learning, rather than provide knowledge, the teacher's role is as facilitator who guides the learning process (Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006). The problem-based strategy is transforming conventional higher education classroom lessons, advancing inquiry learning.

Problem-based Learning Assignment

Getting answers, solving problems, discovering why things happen and figuring out how to make improvements are a few common, widely accepted constructivist educational objectives. A problem based learning assignment was chosen for this component of the course because it embraces the question-and-answer dialectical approach, and incorporates formulation of a thesis-antithesis-synthesis (Savery, 2004). And, Barr and Tagg (1997) suggest that in problem based learning each member of the classroom group feels wanted and believes their opinion matters. Thus, thinking, reasoning, creating, and expressing are enhanced through close work with other people, from conversation and working on something together. Teamwork is a very powerful learning source (Perkins, 2004).

Consequently, in partial fulfillment of the course, Education 6300 – Teaching and Learning, during the 2006 spring semester, students were given problem-based learning scenarios and were instructed to divide into groups of three or four and develop a feasible solution to the problem selected. The final product would be a 30-40 minute presentation of a proposed solution to the problem. The solution was to include an overall statement of goals for the project and the theories, ideas, and books of literature that were used to guide the development of the proposed solution. The overview of the model was to be described in a five-page submission using a format of choice, for example, text, diagrams, concept maps, web page, and so on.

In completing their task, students were expected to focus on their assignment, expressing their ideas clearly and purposefully (developing them beyond mere statement), and research, apply, and accurately document relevant sources using the American Psychological Association (APA) research style. It was explained that creativity and innovation in both content and delivery would be highly regarded in this student-centred pedagogical approach wherein the instructor acted as a facilitator and guide. Thus, it came to be that three students chose to revamp the bachelor of education degree at the fictional University of New Lantosia. A copy of this assignment is attached in Appendix A and you may access the students' suggested solution to the problem online at *www.mun.ca/educ/newlantosia*. The web page includes a PowerPoint presentation and promotional video.

Atlantic Universities Teaching Showcase

Shortly after conclusion of Education 6300 proposals were invited for the Association of Atlantic Universities Teaching Showcase entitled *From Vision to Voice: The New Story of Teaching and Learning* to be held on October 28, 2006 at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The Education 6300 course instructor invited a Faculty of Education colleague and three graduate students to submit a proposal to this conference. This proposal entitled *Showcasing an Innovative Approach to Shared Teaching and Learning Roles through a Problem-Based Perspective* was entered in the Anthology section where creativity and uniqueness were encouraged. It was selected for inclusion at the conference and during the presentation participants were encouraged to solve several other problem scenarios related to the University of New Lantosia. They were invited to design a course delivery model for the diverse University of New Lantosia student learners and/or create a professional development in teaching program for the University's faculty members." These scenarios are provided in Appendix B.

Reflections on the Teaching and Learning Process

Part of the course description for E6300 is as follows:

> …the course introduces ways of thinking which are self-reflexive and critical, which challenge established traditions, and which provide frameworks for rethinking teaching and learning in the context of efforts to improve education and to enhance educational equity (*www.mun.ca/educ/grad/index.html*).

Referring to the course excerpt given above Ron explains that,

> These words could be applied to the students of the course as they read and reflect on their textbook and other course readings, and make in-class presentations as graduate students. These same words could be applied to those same people, not in their role as graduate students, but in their role as professional teachers. Finally, course professors can also take on the dual roles of student and teacher as well. All these interpretations came into play during the work done by Kirk, Ron, and Jeff for Dr. Devereaux's Teaching and Learning course. By giving her students many options in the methods they could use to present their course work, Dr. Devereaux proved she was open to new approaches and ways of learning, certainly indicative of her ability to be a student while maintaining her role as professor. By taking a unique approach to their final presentation, including the humorous advertisement, the students proved they were capable of learning the required material and teaching it in a unique manner. Dr. Gerry White's neatly crafted problem scenario began as a teaching tool, but became for him a learning one, as he eventually joined forces with the others in preparing for the Atlantic Universities Teaching Showcase. The course description excerpt printed above has been met and exceeded with this novel interplay of people. Dr. Lorraine Devereaux, Dr. Gerry White, Ron Collins, Kirk Farrell, and Jeff Piercey have all been active teachers and learners, in the truest sense of the word.

In reference to the problem of revamping the Bachelor of Education Degree at the University of New Lantosia, Gerry adds that,

> When I made up this activity I envisioned the project would require a fair bit of dialogue and sharing of ideas in the professional learning community. The final product far exceeded my highest expectations. The time, energy, effort and genuine interest put into this project left little doubt in my mind that we have top notch teachers in our classrooms who by the nature of the final product of this activity are clearly genuinely interested in improving the training of teachers in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Hats off to these graduate students and their instructor, Dr. Lorraine Devereaux on a job very well done.

And, regarding his experience with our team, Jeff says that,

> I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working collaboratively with everybody. This was indeed a worthwhile exercise, by improving the quality of teacher education we should be able to bring about improvement in teaching.

Kirk expands on our colleagues statements suggesting that,

> One of the themes of our presentation was blurring the lines between teaching and learning through a learner-centred pedagogical approach. I believe that it is important that in teaching we see ourselves embedded in the learning process; facilitation sometimes means taking a back seat and allowing the lead roles to be played by students. In post-secondary education, and especially in graduate classes, students have a wealth of experience, both formal and anecdotal, on which to draw and contribute. Shared responsibility for teaching and learning means that all participants have a stake in the content, direction, and goals of the experience. From our experience, the classroom that embraces problem-based learning can result in a nurturing environment that produces some amazing and educationally profound results.

And Lorraine concludes that,

> This whole reciprocal teaching and learning process has been an exhilarating experience for me. Our team members, individually and collectively, epitomized the concept of sharing our work, experiences, expertise, and knowledge. Gerry set the seeds for this teaching and learning process by sharing his problem scenario with me. Ron, Kirk and Jeff's exceptional presentation brought me to my feet with laughter and applause, but most importantly, brimming with pride in my students' work.

Conclusion

A constructivist learner-centred, problem-based approach has driven our teaching and learning experience at Memorial University of Newfoundland to great heights. The process described within our manuscript encompasses three different stages of teaching and learning. These include:

- the problem scenario development, utilization, and classroom presentation,
- the extended learning conference session, and
- culmination through manuscript publication.

We feel honored to share our work and experiences in teaching and learning with others.

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Appendix A
Problem Scenario #1 – Classroom Assignment

Revamp the UNL Bachelor of Education Degree

The Faculty of Education of the University of New Lantosia has been preparing K-12 teachers since 1967. In this one-year post-degree teacher preparation program for primary/elementary and secondary students, 150 students enroll and finish the program each year. 20 full-time, two adjunct, and several sessional faculty offer a variety of courses and field-based experiences to students in the areas of curriculum, teaching, learning, human development, philosophy and history of education, assessment, and the context of schooling. The program has not changed significantly since its inception. Students complete 15 courses in the first three semesters prior to completing a 12- week student teaching experience in a school. In the past two years, some minor changes have occurred in the program. A one-week field experience has been introduced in the fall and winter semesters. Preliminary survey feedback from students about these two short experiences is very positive and several students have suggested that longer field experiences be incorporated into the program.

At a recent Faculty Council meeting, the topic of reform in teacher education was added to the agenda. The topic generated considerable discussion among faculty, with many articulating that the current program could be strengthened in several ways. As one faculty member said,

> Although we do many things well, there is much room for improvement. There are gaps in the program. For example, we don't have a whole lot of integrated experiences in the program where the student has an opportunity to engage in critical reflection about teaching and learning.

Two weeks ago, the Dean received a document signed by 100 students, requesting that a Classroom Management Course be offered in the upcoming semester. At the end of the meeting, the suggestion was made that consideration should be given to revamping the entire program.

Within two weeks of this meeting, the Dean had invited several people to be part of a committee that would examine the current program with the ultimate goal of proposing a new conceptual framework and model of delivery that would reflect current research in teacher preparation and best practices. The committee consisted of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, three faculty members, a high school teacher, an elementary school teacher, and a consultant from the Department of Education. The Dean was adamant that the new program would incorporate courses in the two areas of concern outlined above (i.e., integrated experiences and classroom management).

At the first meeting of the group, all committee members shared their beliefs about effective teaching, learning, and teacher preparation. Acknowledging that many different perspectives were represented at the table, the group developed a plan for how they would approach the task. It was agreed that with the time frame allocated, it would be impossible to complete a proposal for a revamped degree for primary, elementary, and high school teachers. Instead, the group asked permission from the Dean to complete only ONE degree with the two other degree programs being examined in subsequent months. The Dean agreed that the committee could come up with a proposal for either the primary, elementary, or high school education students.

The task:

Assume you are sitting on the committee. In groups of three, you are expected to develop a model that will reflect current research about effective teacher preparation and address the concerns/feedback as outlined above. The Dean expects that the report will contain the following:

- mission statement,
- set of guiding principles,
- brief summary of research, and
- proposal of core courses and the rationale for each.

Appendix B
Problem Scenarios: Conference Session

1. Design a Course Delivery Model for the Diverse Student Learners at the University of New Lantosia

The students in our classes at the University of New Lantosia are unique in their personalities, cultural experiences and values. Different students prefer different learning environments, learning modalities, and they all exhibit unique strengths, talents, and/or weaknesses. If we are to be successful in leading our students through their degree program, we must provide a variety of learning approaches so that diversity can be recognized and provided for in every course offered at this University. Understanding the various ways that people learn, interact with and process information can help us modify the way we teach so that all students can have an equal opportunity to succeed.

There has been a great deal of work on learning styles and multiple intelligences over the last two decades. The works of Rita Dunn and Kenneth Dunn on individual learning styles, Howard Gardner on multiple intelligences, and Anthony Gregorc on mind styles have been cutting edge. The challenge facing us is to adopt a course delivery model that fully meets the needs of the diverse learners enrolled at our University. In short, long gone are the days of strictly lecture and note taking.

The task:

In groups of three, assign the roles of student, faculty member and administrator. It is from these perspectives that you assume the challenge of proposing a course delivery model that will fully meet the needs of the diverse learners that are enrolled at our University of New Lantosia.

2. Develop a Professional Development in Teaching Program for the University of New Lantosia Faculty Members.

The University of New Lantosia was established in 1967 and is located in a northern, rather isolated locale. It offers a variety of degree granting programs in science, arts, engineering, law, education, business, and commerce. The University has 8,000 full-time students and 300 full-time teaching faculty members. The University has seen an expansion recently in its student body, but the number of faculty has not changed.

Machiavellian's Magazine has just released its annual issue of university rankings and the University of New Lantosia did not fare well. In a survey of UNL students it was found that many students are not happy with the education they are receiving. Across all faculties and departments the top complaint of students was the quality of instruction.

The President of the University of New Lantosia has decided that there is some truth to the survey published by the magazine. An internal review has found that while all professors at the university have a minimum of a master's degree and 70% of the faculty hold doctoral degrees, very few have taken any courses or professional development in the area of teaching and learning. Some issues of concern at UNL also identified by Machiavellian's are

- a lack of accommodations and modifications for students with learning disabilities,
- a lack of differential education for the gifted, and
- overly didactic teaching styles and a deficiency in experiential learning.

The President has called together focus groups to look at these issues concerning teacher training for professors at the university. Each group consists of a student, a faculty member and a member of the university administration.

The task:

In groups of three, assign the roles of student, faculty member, and administrator. It is from this vantage point that you will argue and devise a regimen for teaching the UNL professors to teach. Some questions you may consider:

- What makes a good teacher? What are the values, skills, and aptitudes of a good teacher?
- What tools, technological or otherwise, will professors require to teach?
- What will students require to learn? Will teaching to the individual be a possibility?

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Avoiding the Plagiarism Pitfall: Preventing Plagiarism in Undergraduate Research

Abstract

For faculty teaching in academia, plagiarism is a common concern. With the ever-increasing availability of electronic information, many worry that it is becoming a greater problem than ever before. To manage the problem, instructors often seek ways to detect plagiarism once it has already occurred in student work. Unfortunately, this process often involves considerable time and effort, and instructors may feel they are compromising their roles as educator and mentor by instead becoming “plagiarism police”. At the same time, efforts at detection may not meet with success – if discovering that a student has plagiarized can be called a success – because it is not always easy, or even possible, to identify plagiarized work.

Instead of focusing on detection, then, this paper promotes ways to prevent plagiarism before it occurs. An essential first step toward prevention is gaining an understanding of the myriad reasons why students plagiarize. This understanding will help the instructor with the next steps: educating students and raising their awareness of plagiarism, and developing teaching strategies that reduce opportunities for cheating while helping students avoid plagiarism-prone situations. This paper, then, will begin with an examination of why students plagiarize, and will go on to explore strategies for preventing plagiarism before it happens, in four ways: by creating student awareness; encouraging students to be better time managers; designing plagiarism-resistant assignments; and enlisting the help of others at one’s institution.

Introduction

For instructors teaching in a university setting, plagiarism is a common concern. With the ever-increasing availability of electronic information, many worry that it is becoming a greater problem than ever before (Auer & Krupar, 2001, p. 415; McKeever, 2006, p. 155-6; McLafferty & Foust, 2004, p. 186). To manage the problem, instructors often seek ways to detect plagiarism in the work of their students, turning to librarians, detection software, and the literature for advice.

However, while one can employ strategies to combat plagiarism once it has occurred, detection is in many ways not an ideal solution.

It is often difficult – sometimes impossible – to identify plagiarized works. While in some cases writing quality might suggest that work was not done by the student, in other cases plagiarized material may not be so different in quality from the student's own work, making it harder to spot (Auer & Krupar, 2001, p. 421). Also, some students are simply "better" plagiarizers than others, more skilled at hiding or integrating borrowed passages or falsified sources – making it more likely that instructors will detect accidental plagiarizers than deliberate cheaters. Finally, the sheer effort of vetting student papers to find evidence of plagiarism can be a barrier, unless plagiarism detection products are employed – and these tools are neither foolproof nor free of controversy (Foster, 2001; McKeever, 2006; Strawczynski, 2004; McGill 2004; Anti-Cheating 2006).

Indeed, even when plagiarism has been detected, instructors often feel powerless to address it. Julia Christensen Hughes and Donald McCabe, in the first cross-institutional study of academic misconduct in Canada (in press), found that "in response to suspected cases of academic misconduct, many faculty (46%) and TA's (38%) reported having ignored the incident." These statistics appear shocking until we look at the reasons given by those respondents, which often relate to a sense of powerlessness - for example, "the dominant explanation was the lack of evidence or proof (85% of faculty and 79% of TAs)". Other challenges reported include a lack of time and administrative support to pursue such cases. Clearly, even when educators have detected plagiarism, the problem often goes unresolved.

Finally, by focusing their efforts on detection, instructors may skip something fundamental about plagiarism – a clear understanding of why students plagiarize – and may compromise their role as educators by taking on the less desirable role of "plagiarism police". Michael Freedman (2004) poetically describes this frustrating experience when he writes, "…the angst of detecting others who have plagiarized gnaws at the pit of my stomach… I dread reading the student work when once I looked forward to the delightful prospect of encountering new ideas and revelations from wonderful students" (p. 546-7).

Freedman (2004) goes on to describe detection as “a misdirected and often wasteful use of time”, and argues that, “we must reject a reactive stance that puts us on the defensive and erodes the empowering mentor/mentee relationship” (p. 547). These words reflect the position of this paper and the workshop on which it was based. In the following paragraphs we promote proactive efforts to understand and prevent plagiarism before it occurs, over reactive attempts to catch students who have already plagiarized. The paper will examine why students plagiarize, and focus on developing preventative strategies in two ways: by raising student awareness of plagiarism; and by designing assignments that reduce opportunities for cheating while helping students avoid plagiarism-prone situations.

Why do students plagiarize?

This is not a straight forward question to answer. There are some famous cases in the academic world of distinguished researchers and writers who have been accused and found guilty of plagiarism. One of the more famous cases in the last few years was Stephen Ambrose, an award winning writer of history and biography. His punishment was simply a warning, or as Kaltenbaugh (2005) states, a slap on the wrist that had no effect whatsoever. Thus, it is incorrect to think that secondary or post-secondary students are the only ones who plagiarize – but it is at those levels of education where people should be taught about plagiarism and methods to prevent it. Before looking at some approaches to help prevent plagiarism, it is important to understand some of the reasons why students do plagiarize.

Many things happen in people’s lives that interact or conflict. When it comes to students working towards their degrees or diplomas, they have various responsibilities they need to juggle: time, work, family, and studies are some of the main ones most people can relate to. It is not uncommon today for students to have a part-time or full-time job. This along with their studies creates a very long work week. As well, there may be family commitments: picking the kids up after piano lessons or hockey practice and then making sure they are fed and do their homework. There is also the classic issue of procrastination (Szabo & Underwood, 2004; Gresham, 2002). Feelings of time pressure may lead people to use what they think of as a shortcut to help themselves out.

Related to these personal pressures are some social pressures – for example, the pressure to do well. Instead of concentrating on learning, people simply want the grade: the end result becomes more important than the process. Szabo & Underwood (2004) discuss how Behaviourist Theory helps explain people's choices. They want positive outcomes; therefore, those who are driven for success may cheat to get the desired marks, while those who are not driven and want to avoid poor marks may cheat to fulfill their needs (p. 181).

There is also peer pressure to contend with: social approval from friends is a powerful influence, so if peers cheat, a student might wonder, "what's the big deal? They didn't get caught, so why worry about it?" For people who have low self-esteem or are still trying to find their place in the world, using any means necessary to get the desired result can be very tempting (Szabo & Underwood, 2004; Gibbons, Mize, & Rogers, 2002; Hughes & McCabe 2006). Peer pressure may also discourage students from reporting a fellow student who is cheating. Even when they feel that plagiarism is wrong or unfair, they may worry that exposing a classmate will affect their social place amongst students. Research shows that students will not report on their peers (Hughes & McCabe, in press).

Other individual characteristics that may explain why people plagiarize are attitude and behaviour. Those with a strong work ethic, greater self-esteem, a greater tendency to feel guilty about doing something wrong, a tendency to treat people fairly, or a strong desire to learn are much less likely to plagiarize (Hughes & McCabe, in press). Students who focus on their studies and are less involved with extra-curricular activities are also less likely to use shortcuts in completing their tasks. People with opposite attitudes, or who lack maturity and experience, are more likely to use any means necessary to complete tasks (Szabo & Underwood, 2004; Gibbons, Mize, & Rogers, 2002). Another attitude that can lead to plagiarism is the "pragmatic" or "business approach" to life. Unless something concrete is to be gained, time studying may be seen as a waste. Knowledge may be seen as irrelevant (Gresham, 2002).

Besides looking at the student side of the issue, there is also the instructor's perspective on why students cheat. Faculty members and their teaching assistants often believe that student's do not fully understand the institution's policies regarding plagiarism. There may also be a difference of opinion or different understanding between students and instructors as to what constitutes cheating. For example, students may not understand faculty expectations regarding collaborative projects, where they are expected to work together, but hand in “individual” work. Also, for assignments where individual work is required, students may turn to each other to help because of the time pressures already discussed. Collaboration is an effective teaching method but unclear expectations can lead students to think that copying from each other in such a situation is not considered cheating (Hughes & McCabe, in press; Hughes & McCabe, 2006; Szabo & Underwood, 2004). Communication and clarification is a necessity in such cases.

Classroom or institutional culture may even create a situation where students are encouraged to cheat because they believe the repercussions are insignificant. As already examined, faculty may feel that they lack the proof, time, or institutional support to pursue suspected cases of plagiarism. They may also feel that even when they can prove their case, the penalties adopted by the institution are ineffective. Finally, faculty may fail to take action because they are themselves unfamiliar with the institution’s policies regarding plagiarism, or simply because they wish to avoid conflict (Hughes & McCabe, in press; Hughes and McCabe, 2006).

Similarly, student perception of faculty attitudes may have an impact on plagiarism. If the instructor seems disengaged from a student’s interests and academic life, the student might feel that plagiarism is acceptable because “no one cares, not even the professor”. Also, with the many responsibilities of faculty, it is easy for students to believe that if they do cheat, they will not be caught, or that if they are caught the punishment will be minimal (Hughes & McCabe, in press; Hughes & McCabe, 2006; Gibbons, Mize, & Rogers, 2002). Correspondingly, if students feel dissatisfied with the quality of their educational experience, or believe that the institution is not concerned with their aspirations, they may question why they should care about academic integrity.

At the classroom level, then, instructors should work to ensure that assignments have meaning for students and are not perceived as mere “busy work.” At the institutional level, the university should work to help all students realize that the learning process is more important than the grades. Knowledge is most relevant when it is placed in a context that students understand (Hughes & McCabe, in press; Szabo & Underwood, 2004).

At the centre of all these classroom, and institutional, level concerns is the number of students in the institution. More people than ever before are attending post-secondary schools and this creates added pressure for administration. More students does not translate into more instructors or more support for instruction. Instead, there is usually less time for quality interaction between a student and instructor (Hughes & McCabe, in press; Szabo & Underwood, 2004).

Culture and technology are two other factors that should be considered when examining why students plagiarize. Awareness of cultural differences is very important when working with international students. Sowden (2005) and Hughes & McCabe (2006) both discuss how the idea of intellectual property is very much a western concept. Students from non-western cultures may not be as familiar with issues like plagiarism. Hughes & McCabe (2006) also ask if students who are learning English can or should be held to the same standards as those whose first language is English (p.53)? Some cultures believe that when knowledge becomes common to the whole society, recognizing the individual efforts in creating this knowledge is not important – group consensus outweighs individual understanding (Sowden, 2005). An awareness of cultural differences can help instructors to prevent situations in which international students might inadvertently plagiarize.

Technology is blamed by many for making it easier for students to plagiarize than ever before. It is so effortless to cut and paste material from one document into another. The many paper mills available on the web also make it easier for people to find a finished product they can call their own. And technology creates blurred boundaries. With physical books and articles, it is easier to recognize the concept of intellectual property. Electronic access, however, can create a sense of "one whole source" making it difficult to recognize the individual pieces that make up the whole. There is also an incorrect assumption held by many that anything on the web is part of the public domain and therefore does not need to be properly acknowledged (Gresham, 2002; Kaltenbaugh, 2005).

Whatever the reasons are, understanding why students plagiarize is the first step toward finding a solution. The second step is to teach students what plagiarism is and why it is important, and to help them learn to prevent it. The next part of this paper will discuss ways to prevent plagiarism so that less work – ideally none – is needed for detection.

Avoiding Plagiarism-prone Situations

Understanding why students plagiarize is essential to knowing how to prevent it. The instructor who understands the causes is well equipped to develop teaching practices that educate students about plagiarism, and that help them to avoid situations in which it typically occurs. The following four strategies help prevent student plagiarism in a variety of ways: these strategies include creating student awareness; encouraging students to be better time managers; designing plagiarism-resistant assignments; and enlisting the help of others at your institution.

Creating Student Awareness

Many students do not even hear the word plagiarism until they are in college or university. Simply pointing them to a written campus policy is not enough to educate them about this issue. Hughes & McCabe (in press) state that in their survey, only 11% of faculty and 17% of TAs felt that students have a solid understanding of campus policies regarding cheating. In addition, only 12% of faculty and 17% of TAs felt that these policies were highly effective. These are discouraging numbers, but even more discouraging, perhaps, is the fact that only 66% of faculty provides information on their outlines or syllabuses about cheating, or plagiarism, and only 52% discuss the important issue of honesty and integrity with their students! Instructors should make plagiarism awareness an integrated part of every undergraduate course they teach, using class time to explore what plagiarism is and where it fits within the whole process of academic integrity. Students should be engaged in defining what they believe plagiarism is and why they see it as being important, or not important, in their lives. They should learn not only how to cite papers properly, but also why this process is central in sharing ideas, giving due credit, and gathering support for their own ideas. Seeing that instructors take academic integrity seriously will help students realize that they also need to take it seriously.

Encouraging Time Management

Although it is a key part of plagiarism prevention, education is only the first step. Realistically speaking, there are students who, fully aware of the academic standards, plagiarize anyway. It is therefore essential to understand why they make that choice – and without a doubt, students plagiarize due to lack of time.

Szabo and Underwood (2004) identify time pressure as a “situational factor” that can encourage students to cheat (p. 184). Nicole Auer and Ellen Krupar (2001) report that in one year, over half the undergraduate plagiarism cases at their institution took place during exam time (p. 416). When faced with the competing demands of life and work, along with rapidly closing deadlines, normally honest students may be tempted to cheat. By integrating some time management “checks” into the structure of a course, instructors can help students avoid this situation.

For example, one approach is to divide large assignments into smaller, task-oriented components, with due dates distributed throughout the term. To begin, students might be asked to produce a topic proposal, due early in the semester, giving them plenty of time to seek advice and feedback. This might be followed by an outline of the final paper; an annotated bibliography showing research done and how it will be incorporated; and early written drafts.

Distributed due dates can help students avoid the end-of-term panic brought on because they can’t find a topic, or are unsure of the research process, or didn’t realize how time consuming the assignment would be. It also shows student ownership of the final product, by allowing the professor to observe and influence the planning and development of the work.

As an alternative, the instructor might ask students to complete a series of smaller assignments, due at intervals throughout the semester. Again, this helps to avoid the last-minute pressures of a large end-of-term assignment.

It is interesting to note that student maturity is a factor associated with time management. For example, Trueman and Hartley (1996) found that students over the age of 25 reported significantly better time management skills than did younger students (pp. 204-7). Christensen Hughes and McCabe (in press) found that maturity is a "characteristic associated with high rates of student cheating". When considered together, these findings suggest that time management is especially important for plagiarism prevention among undergraduates.

Designing "Plagiarism-resistant" Assignments

Although no assignment is plagiarism "proof", certain strategies can be applied to create assignments that are meaningful, effective, and resistant to some of the common forms of plagiarism. We have already examined one approach in the above discussion of time-managed assignments. To follow are some other strategies instructors might consider.

i. Give clear, written instructions

We recommend, no matter what the subject or course level, that instructors provide written guidelines when giving assignments to students. This may seem like simple advice, but as reference librarians we frequently meet students seeking help with research assignments that they do not fully understand, and for which they have little documentation. We also meet students who, despite attempts to note in-class instructions, find they have missed key elements. By providing clearly written guidelines, the professor can help students avoid confusing or stressful situations that may motivate them to plagiarize – and also better equip them to receive research help when they need it.

Inclusion of specific expectations, such as citation style and/or the length and format of the final product, can be simple but effective plagiarism preventors. Also, a written reminder of course or institutional policies regarding plagiarism will reinforce in-class discussion. By creating clear, written expectations for an assignment, students have specific, custom criteria that must be incorporated into the end result – and instructors should be wary of student work that deviates from those guidelines.

ii. Make the assignment research-oriented

A research-oriented assignment takes the "less visible" part of student work – the independent research process – and brings it forward, showing what research has been done by the student, and how. For example, students may document this process by keeping a journal of their research efforts; they may be asked to indicate what library resources they have used or submit printouts of their index search strategies. Some instructors require students to submit copies of the first page of sources used, or to annotate items in their bibliography, describing why they were selected.

By placing emphasis on the research process, the instructor sees whether students are engaging their information literacy skills to carry out thorough, effective research, and also knows that the research component of an assignment was carried out by the student. Assignments that stress the research process resist plagiarism in the form of downloaded or purchased papers or falsified bibliographies, and encourage students to commit to the information-gathering process.

iii. Be creative with the design of the assignment

An assignment can be creatively designed in terms of format or topic. Non-traditional assignments will be less of a target for plagiarism, simply because they are less readily available for download or purchase than the traditional "term paper". Although the "classic" paper topics have that status for good reason, they are often the easiest targets for cheat sites. For example, a Google search for the classic English paper topic, "Gatsby and Pursuit of the American Dream" yields eight paper mill sites within the first ten results - all offering pre-written essays on this topic. The other two hits lead to an online study guide, and a journal article that has been reproduced online – both potential sources for cut-and-paste plagiarizers. For the student with little time and poor research skills, this provides a strong temptation.

The paper-mill pitfall can be avoided by asking students to write on topics that are in some way specific or unique. For example, topics with a current or a local focus are less likely to exist in the form of a ready-made paper (Iowa, 2005). While it is probably not difficult, for instance, to find a pre-written about urban recycling, it would be much harder to find essays about the effectiveness of such a programme in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland.

Non-traditional research assignments may also require students to format or present their work differently. Some of the approaches already explored, such as research-focused and time-managed assignments, require students to present their work in alternative formats not typically found on cheat sites. The Memorial Libraries webpage, "Ideas for Library/Information Assignments" (2006), offers a number of other suggestions for developing assignments that encourage students to find, evaluate and use information and prevent it in non-traditional formats.

Creatively designed assignments may be effective not just because they are harder to download, but also because they successfully engage students. Auer and Krupar (2001) note that students are more likely to cheat when they "have the least amount of themselves invested in the paper". Notably, they also point out that "while a student can still commission a paper written on a more inventive topic, it is usually much more expensive…creating a fiscal barrier to plagiarism" (p. 427).

iv. Specify that students use/integrate certain sources

The literature on plagiarism prevention often suggests that instructors place certain requirements on research assignments, for example by requiring students to integrate a particular source; find and use recent publications; or cite a variety of types of sources (Iowa 2004). While this model can work in the context of a traditional assignment topic or format, it is effective for the same reasons that a non-traditional assignment is effective: by creating these expectations, ready-made papers become less available. For example, of those eight paper-mill essays, it is unlikely that any would contain an article published within the last few months, or one that an instructor has specified as a key source.

Please note, however, that we do recommend caution when applying this approach. Well intentioned but overly-restrictive research requirements can have the opposite-of-intended effect, placing students in the stressful position of not being able to complete the task within the given parameters. For example, a bibliography that "must include at least five books" may be difficult to create, if several students are writing on the same topic and library resources are limited. In this case, the instructor could be inadvertently creating a situation where students feel tempted to falsify a bibliography. When applying parameters like these to an assignment, it may help to consult the library to ensure that resources are available to support the exercise.

v. Change assignments regularly

Finally, no matter how specific or creative, it is a good idea to regularly change the assignment in some way. Aside from the benefit of keeping the exercise fresh, interesting and current, this approach also prevents "paper recycling" – the resubmission of papers written by other students in previous semesters. Christensen Hughes and McCabe (in press) write, "faculty can minimize the opportunity or temptation for students to engage in these behaviors by ensuring that laboratory assignments and research projects are sufficiently different from term to term".

Even if the instructor is likely to recognize the recycled assignment, by taking steps to avoid that situation s/he also avoids the "angst", as Freeman puts it, of coming across a student who has plagiarized (2004, p. 546).

Enlist the Help of Others at Your Institution

The battle to prevent plagiarism is never one that should be fought alone. At any academic institution, support services exist to help instructors and students avoid the plagiarism pitfalls. When planning plagiarism-prevention strategies, the instructor should know what support is available, and consider (in the words of one faculty member at our campus) "bringing in the hired guns".

1. The library

There are a number of ways in which the academic library is a valuable resource for plagiarism prevention. As already discussed, students often plagiarize due to lack of awareness – of what constitutes plagiarism, but also of how to effectively find, use, and integrate information. Students may plagiarize simply because they lack confidence in their research skills and feel fearful of this process. By enlisting the help of the library to provide information literacy instruction, the instructor can reduce research-related anxiety and avoid this plagiarism pitfall. Professors should also promote student use of library reference services – a student who seeks help at the reference desk is less likely to be overwhelmed by the research and choose to plagiarize instead.

Plagiarism awareness is in itself another element of information literacy, and librarians can help to raise student consciousness of this issue. As Sharkey & Culp (2005) write, "as librarians we support not only information retrieval but the whole process of research and development of information literacy skills….[including] teaching students about plagiarism" (p. 109). Many libraries offer plagiarism-oriented sessions for students, designed to help them understand what it is and what the academic standards are, as well as how to effectively use and cite information.

Finally, instructors should consider consulting the library on research assignments they have developed. A reference or instruction librarian can provide advice on how "workable" an assignment is from a library research perspective, and help the instructor "test" the assignment by working through the research process. This will help to ensure that students can complete the assignment effectively using available library resources.

2. Other on-campus groups

In addition to the library, most universities have other support services available to help with plagiarism prevention. Where they exist, instructors may be able to call on the campus writing centre or academic integrity office for support.

Tutoring services offered by a university writing centre can rescue students who are tempted to plagiarize due to writing-related anxieties. Like the library, campus writing centers may also help to prevent plagiarism and raise student awareness through in-class instruction. The Writing Centre at Memorial University offers in-class sessions on topics such as finding and developing a research topic; quoting and paraphrasing information; and effective citation methods. Recently the Writing Centre and the library have been working together to create sessions designed to give students a broader picture of the research and writing process, and help them develop the skills necessary to carry research assignments from start to finish.

Finally, at institutions that include an academic integrity office, it may be possible to enlist the help of experts there who will give classroom sessions on academic honesty, plagiarism, and the institutional standards surrounding these issues. This office may also be a resource to which the instructor can turn for further advice on how to prevent and manage plagiarism.

Conclusion

It is a labour-intensive process to develop strategies for preventing plagiarism. It involves truly knowing one's students and developing new and creative teaching strategies. But the results of helping students realize that they are members of an academic community that maintains standards of academic integrity will help them not only as undergraduates, but throughout their academic careers. By taking the time to understand why plagiarism can arise and taking steps to prevent it, either by implementing some or all of the methods suggested here or by developing new strategies for plagiarism prevention, an instructor can seriously reduce the chances of plagiarism happening. In doing so, the pitfalls are avoided and a better learning environment is created for the students, the instructor, and the institution of which they are all a part.

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Getting our Attention in First-year Courses: Students with Talent or Those with Motivation?

Abstract

This paper draws from my experience in teaching introductory political science courses for the last fifteen years. Although I am not a faculty developer or an expert in instructional development, I am, in the words of Stephen Brookfield (1995), a "critically reflective teacher" and in that spirit I share my experience in teaching first-year courses in order to accomplish three goals. First, I want to introduce the 2x2 matrix that I have developed in categorizing first-year students based on what I consider to be two predicators for academic success: talent and motivation. I developed this matrix in recognition of the multiple demands placed on even the most committed and dedicated teachers in the professoriate. Second, I want to discuss the sorts of evaluative mechanisms in my introductory political science courses that I use in order to nurture talent or foster motivation in my students. These may be instructive for others teaching at the first-year level because I have met with some success through the years. Finally, I want to bring out the limitations of my matrix that, in reflecting further, are underpinned by some unstated, if not problematic, assumptions about students and the necessity to find a new or different paradigm to deal with the challenges of teaching first-year courses. In the end, it was the privilege of being at a retreat with award-winning teachers from throughout Atlantic Canada that helped me to understand the importance of carefully choosing my words and how it is that I "categorize" my students.

Introduction

Teaching first-year courses is a recognizable challenge for the newly-hired to the most seasoned university professors, leading many faculty members to prefer not to teach at the first-year level as part of their course offerings for any given year. In departments like mine, there is an unwritten understanding that every full-time faculty member must teach an introductory level course at least once in a three-year cycle. Although departments can likely hire part-time faculty to teach first-year courses, many do not primarily because these courses are oftentimes not only a student's first exposure to the discipline, but also a source for future majors. Indeed, the importance of teaching first-year courses is arguably acknowledged by the *Maclean's* annual ranking of universities which uses the number of first-year courses taught by tenured faculty as one of its measures for the best post-secondary education in Canada.

This paper draws from my experience in teaching introductory political science courses for the last fifteen years where classes have ranged around 60 students on average. The political science program at my university is strictly at the undergraduate level so I do not have teaching assistants to aid me in marking the work of my students. Although I am not a faculty developer or an expert in instructional development, I am, in the words of Stephen Brookfield (1995), a "critically reflective teacher" and in that spirit I share my experience in teaching first-year courses in order to accomplish three goals. First, I want to introduce the 2x2 matrix that I have developed in categorizing first-year students based on what I consider to be two predicators for academic success: talent and motivation. I developed this matrix in recognition of the multiple demands placed on even the most committed and dedicated teachers in the professoriate. Second, I want to discuss the sorts of evaluative mechanisms in my introductory political science courses that I use in order to nurture talent or foster motivation in my students. These may be instructive for others teaching at the first-year level because I have met with some success through the years. Finally, I want to bring out the limitations of my matrix that, in reflecting further, are underpinned by some unstated, if not problematic, assumptions about students and the necessity to find a new or different paradigm to deal with the challenges of teaching first-year courses. In the end, it was the privilege of being at a retreat with award-winning teachers from throughout Atlantic Canada that helped me to understand the importance of carefully choosing my words and how it is that I "categorize" my students (Keeble, 2006).

The Necessity of a Matrix

The privileges of academic life are arguably offset by the stresses experienced by faculty members not only as they strive for tenure and promotion, but also as they attempt to balance their research, teaching and service responsibilities throughout their career (Gmelch 1993). The two reasons are intricately linked because the three pillars of academia are not equally weighted in terms of assessing academic success. Research productivity generally remains the prime measure of scholarship and, thus, merit in ensuring tenure and promotion in most universities although there are continuing encouraging signs that such a myopic view may be changing (Schmidt 2006). Although conventional university reward systems have not discouraged committed teachers from persisting in making students their priority, professors also remain active in both research and service. Balancing this troika of responsibilities is one of the fundamental challenges of academic life.

In addition, professors need to balance their professional and personal lives. The challenges of modern life have been characterized by the rise of two-career households, the increasing dual (and at times concurrent) demands of child and elderly care, and the absence or lack of family or community support as individuals move for paid work. Most employers recognize that worker productivity has a direct correlation to a stable family or personal life, and that maintaining a balance between work and family eliminates a key stressor in the workplace. Thus, the life of a teacher who is dedicated to her students must be placed in perspective: not only must she fulfill her research and service responsibilities, but she must also balance the demands of her academic and personal life.

That need for balance has certainly governed my life as an academic, and the very real constraints on my time have led me to articulate clearly the goals that I want to achieve in my classroom and apportion my time accordingly. I am a professor in the social sciences and humanities, and there is a very telling bumper sticker that recently brought home to me the undervaluing of a Bachelor of Arts degree. The sticker states the following: “B.Sc.: Why does it work?; B.Eng.: How does it work?; B.Comm.: How much will it cost?; BA: You want fries with that?” (see Appendix A). What amazes me is not simply that the society at large gets the joke, but also that for our students who graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree, this is a commentary about their job prospects after graduation. Moreover, for us as professors in the social sciences and humanities, this is a commentary that we have been unable or unsuccessful in transmitting even minimal skills to our students (after all, at least those with a B.Sc., B.Eng. or B.Comm. know how to ask a question without dropping the interrogative word). That is why one of my principal goals in teaching, particularly at the first-year level, is to ensure that my students develop critical writing and verbal skills as opposed to simply memorizing definitions and repeating them back by rote. An Arts degree is indeed a “how to” degree, and if we succeed in what we do as teachers, our students will graduate knowing how to think critically and how to express such thoughts reasonably well both in written form and verbally. However, to meet this goal at the first-year level, professors need to devote extra attention to students, above and beyond the delivery of the course.

I developed my 2x2 matrix not only to make sense of the different types of students in my introductory courses, but also to develop specific evaluative strategies according to the type of student. Two factors underpinned the development of my matrix: first, as much as I want to give extra attention to all of my students, there are real constraints on my time, given the need to balance not only my teaching, research and service responsibilities, but also my academic and personal life; and second, there are arguably two predictors for academic success – talent and motivation – which, for example, I highlight when I write reference letters for students vying for scholarships or admission to graduate programs. Talented students are those who are reasonably capable and bright, and who often enter university with sound writing and verbal skills nurtured at the secondary school level. Motivated students are those who are diligent, industrious and determined and who often enter university with sound study and time management skills.

The matrix that I have developed stems from how these two traits intersect and this is how, generally speaking, I have categorized my students at the first-year level (see Appendix B). Arguably, my four groups of students are: (1) talented and motivated; (2) talented but unmotivated; (3) untalented but motivated; and (4) untalented and unmotivated. The first group of students – the talented and motivated – are such a pleasure to teach. They are the ones for whom we compete at the introductory level to major in our program, we encourage to go on to graduate school, and we feel thankful when they show up in our upper-level courses to take another course from us. This is a cohort that will naturally get our extra attention, if they need it, because these are the sorts of students who would flourish and succeed in any setting or course.

The second group of students – the talented but unmotivated – are the ones who demonstrate that they are reasonably bright and capable, but they do not hand in all of the assignments or take all of the exams. They also do not attend class regularly. We can tell from the assignments that they do hand in that they can be top-notch students but they do not seem to care about the course; they appear distracted; and they do not take responsibility for their own learning. They are unmotivated. In contrast, the third group of students – the untalented but motivated – are the ones who are hard-working and determined, attending classes faithfully, struggling through the course material and asking questions outside of the classroom. They pass in all of the assignments and take all of the exams, but their work is average at best. Both of these groups end up with our extra attention because their potential is obvious, either because they are reasonably capable or because they are reasonably hard-working.

Finally, the fourth group of students – the untalented and unmotivated – are those who rarely attend class. They do not do the readings; they do not hand in all of the assignments or take all of the exams; and if they do hand in work, they end up with a failing mark. These students often end up withdrawing, barely passing or failing the course. We can easily reason that these students do not want to be in university, and until they are ready to take their work seriously, they do not end up with any of our additional attention. In other words, this is a group of students whom, as teachers, we accept that we cannot reach because they appear not to have any potential to succeed in university.

Examples of Evaluative Mechanisms

Fostering skills in critical thinking is central to an undergraduate degree, particularly in the liberal arts. Critical thinking can only prosper in an atmosphere of active learning, and as documented in the instructional development literature, active learning is fostered through interactive lectures, structured discussions, small group discussions, “think, pair, share,” debates and other pedagogical tools to engage students, divided into small groups, in a classroom setting. Indeed, most presentations in teaching conferences is about how to improve our teaching by better engaging students in various, often group-based activities because such activities typically result in both the acquisition of critical skills and the creation of a dynamic, motivating environment for students. In other words, fostering active learning is a minimum requirement for ensuring talented, motivated students, and providing this kind of atmosphere is what I consider to be the normal delivery of a course. Active learning is crucial at the first-year level, and it is a class-by-class commitment that I offer to all of my students.

My grouping of students is to aid me in apportioning additional time to focus on improving their skills (talent) or their motivation. Accordingly, I have developed evaluative mechanisms focusing on two groups of students: the talented but unmotivated, and the untalented but motivated. The talented and motivated will always capture my attention and they will prosper with or without extra effort from me. I will provide two examples of evaluative mechanisms which I have used in my introductory political science courses.

First, it has become a common complaint on many university campuses that students do not have minimum writing skills to succeed in university and I have found this to be the case with my untalented but motivated group of students. Accordingly, I have developed a series of four writing assignments in my introductory political science course, based on formative evaluation, which has allowed me to improve the writing skills of my students. These writing assignments are about 350-500 words dealing with topical issues and they must be properly referenced, usually from newspaper or newsmagazine articles. I assign two in the first semester and two in the second semester, and the grade that the student receives is the grade for the fourth writing assignment. I provide detailed feedback and I expect that students will learn from, and address, my comments in subsequent assignments. For example, in the 2005-06 academic year, my introductory political science students wrote on issues of globalization, differing perspectives on prostitution, the results of the 2006 federal election, and the extension of the deployment of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. I have provided an example of the sort of feedback that I provide to students (see Appendix C), and in the example provided, the student received an “A-” for all of the writing assignments.

Second, it is commonly understood that students tend to be more motivated to learn if they see the relevance of course material to their lives. As I state outright in my syllabus, I empower my students to define the relevance to them of course material by requiring them to make an 8-10 minute, structured, rehearsed, verbal presentation to the class. I expect them to have read the course material for the topic for which they have signed up and then to have spent some time reflecting on the ideas, concepts or issues found in the material, defining for themselves the relevance of the material. I tell them that they cannot be wrong in what they have defined as the relevance of the course material, only ill-prepared. I have found that this motivates students to become engaged because it provides them a platform to talk about issues or topics that they consider important, or to share experiences that they have found worthwhile. I have provided an example of the kind of feedback that I give to presentations (see Appendix D). In this case, the student presented on his experience in a Model Commonwealth forum where his point of departure from the course was the topic of international organizations, principally the sorts in which Canada has been involved.

These two sorts of evaluative mechanisms that I have instituted in my introductory political science course are undertaken on an individual basis to improve skills (talent) or address motivation. They may appear to be time-intensive in terms of the provision of written feedback, but in reality because they are targeted to specific groups of students, I provide more or less detailed feedback depending on the needs of the students. For example, the group of talented and motivated students do not need detailed written feedback and the extra time that I allot to them is often spent advising or counseling, or engaging in higher-order intellectual discussions in my office. These students already have sound written (and verbal) skills and they are highly motivated.

The Fourth Group and being a Critically Reflective Teacher

The fourth group of students in my matrix – the untalented and unmotivated – receive little, if any, extra attention from me. Because I am a believer in individual responsibility, these are the sorts of students whom I see as not taking responsibility for their own learning. If talk around the water cooler or in the faculty lounge is any indication, many professors have encountered, and continue to encounter, this group of students in their classroom. This group is a source of frustration, if not outright hostility, by my colleagues. Like me, they have asked: “Why are they here?” Compound that frustration with the kinds of time constraints that faculty members face, as I described earlier, and it is no surprise that professors feel that their time is being wasted by this group of students. However, this kind of thinking is highly problematic. We begin to question admission standards of our institutions and lament the passing of exclusivity in post-secondary education. In so doing, we undermine in some crucial ways the centrality of students – and thus of teaching – in our institutions because we see some students as more deserving of our time than others.

This is exactly what happened to me after I attended the Association of Atlantic Universities' (AAU) retreat for teaching award winners on Friday, October 27, 2006 at Memorial University in St. John's which had immediately preceded the AAU Teaching Showcase on Saturday, October 28. I realized that my 2x2 matrix was about me as a teacher, and thus about "getting our attention in first-year courses," as opposed to being about my students. Since then I have done more research on the first-year experience as opposed to teaching first-year courses, and it has helped me to appreciate not only the substantive challenges faced by the millennial generation, but also the necessity to address those challenges in a holistic way and from an institutional viewpoint. If universities are indeed serious about the retention of students, then first-year success is not, and cannot be, the sole responsibility of teachers in the classroom. The fourth group which I categorized as untalented and unmotivated may likely be neither, or simply one or the other, which means that they belong to one of the first three groups that I outlined in my matrix. The challenge is to ensure that these students are engaged, if not in a specific classroom like mine, then in someone else's, but this requires an environment that values *all* students. It is clear to me that my matrix in categorizing some students as less deserving than others only serves to undermine that most fundamental value.

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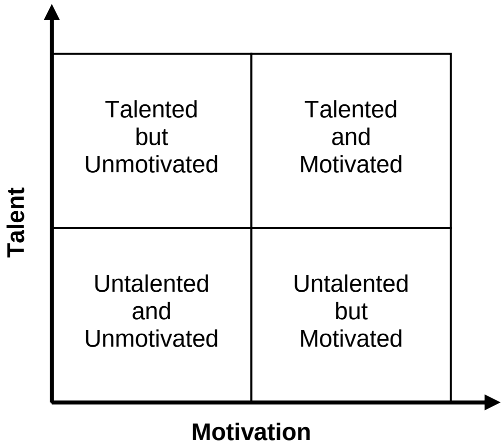
Appendix A
Bumper Sticker

B.Sc.: Why does it work?
B.Eng.: How does it work?
B.Comm.: How much will it cost?
BA: You want fries with that?

Appendix B

Matrix of Student Categories



Appendix C
Feedback on Writing Assignments

POLI 1200: WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (Keeble) – FEEDBACK

Name:

	Feedback	**Grade**
#1 Globalization	Good. You have good writing skills, but watch your use of punctuation. Proofread; several small obvious errors. Watch singular/plural agreement. Avoid colloquialisms like “the states” for the United States. Your use of parenthetical notes is almost correct; get the correct format. Your understanding of economic globalization needs refinement. Make the link in your argument to globalization more explicit: local companies are vulnerable to the ups and downs of economies abroad, particularly that of the United States.	C+/B-
#2 Prostitution	Very good. You articulate some of the points in terms of whether prostitution is a matter of choice or one of exploitation. However, I think you mean “ideologies” rather than “idealists.” Watch for sentence fragments – you wrote two, both beginning with “Although.” Also, watch paragraph structure. Avoid contractions in academic writing. You have notes, but you did not include any references. Was this an oversight? Still, an improvement over your first assignment. Keep it up.	B
#3 Election	Nice work. Good analysis. You have addressed past feedback points. Well done. Now work on capitalization rules (why do you capitalize “government”?) and especially the possessive form (you absolutely must understand the difference between voter, voters, voter’s and voters’!) Take this one word as an example and learn the differences.	B+
#4 Afghanistan	Wonderful. You nicely bring out the major points of controversy on the Afghanistan issue. You continue to show improvement in your writing – just a few relatively minor observations as marked. You had the possessive form totally correct until “ears,” which I assume was a typo? A real improvement from your first writing assignment to this one. I am very proud of your work as it demonstrated your careful attention to improving your writing, thus leading to clarity in your arguments. Great job.	A-

Appendix D
E-mail Response to Student's Presentation

What a delightful presentation on the Commonwealth, a descriptive venture that then encapsulated a personal aspect. I am a real believer in forums that directly engage students, and your participation in the exercise in Ottawa clearly aided your learning (and, it seems to me, your support) of the Commonwealth.

If your interest in the Commonwealth continues, you ought to explore more deeply the Canadian connection and how this became a principal forum for the anti-apartheid actions, statements, etc (even to the point of breaking with the UK) of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

In addition, there is never any need to be apologetic when you make a presentation, particularly one that is required in the university classroom. Part of your job is to demonstrate the relevance of your topic to your audience, and you organized your pictures well to bring out how this was both educational and a lot of fun – which leads to a love of learning.

Wonderful job. Grade: 8/8

EK

Merging Authorship: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

La convergence dans la paternité d’une œuvre : la mission professorale en enseignement et en apprentissage

Rosemary Clews
St. Thomas University

Dolores Furlong
University of New Brunswick

Family Caring for Older Adults: Teaching and Learning from our Own Stories

Abstract

In this paper, we propose that autoethnographic research methods can inform teaching and learning in university classrooms. We illustrate how this research method might be used for pedagogical purposes by describing how we taught from our own stories of caring for our mothers during the final years of their lives. We conclude by outlining some of the payoffs and the pitfalls of using autoethnographical approaches in the university classroom

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Autoethnography in Qualitative Research

Autoethnography is becoming an accepted qualitative research method. The term "autoethnography" was first used by Karl Heider in 1975, but it is thanks to the pioneering work of Carolyn Ellis (1999, 2004), that the promise of this research method for exploring and communicating culture is becoming recognized in the social sciences. In 2005 Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner described the method in a pre-conference workshop at the First International Conference of Qualitative Inquiry held at the University of Illinois. Interestingly, this workshop was over-subscribed, which raises the question, What is this method and why is it becoming so popular?

Carolyn Ellis describes autoethnography as "part *auto* or self and part *ethno* or culture" (2004, p. 31). In other words, it is a method of communicating a culture to people who are unfamiliar with this culture. She emphasizes that both the ethnographic process and what is produced from the process are important.

> Back and forth autoethnographers gaze: first they look through an autoethnographic wide angle lens, focusing on social and cultural

> aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward. exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and the cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond recognition. (pp. 37-38)

Autoethnography is based on stories, and stories are constructs that allow people to make sense of their worlds and their lives, she states. Stories are essential to human understanding, she proposes. "Stories are the focus of Homeric literature, oral traditions, narrative analysis, and fairy tales" (p. 32). Quick to acknowledge that stories are not unique to autoethnography, their importance to herself and her research are emphasized, "I love to tell and write stories. It is in my soul" (p. 32).

Carolyn Ellis distinguishes between the private personal story that might be contained in a private journal or stored in a file cabinet to be shared with a special few (if any), and the story that should be made public. She argues that some stories insist on being told. Reflecting on her own stories, she states that some of the most profound and unsettling experiences of her life assisted her to gain more understanding about sociological concepts as well as more understanding about herself. "Something spiritual, emotional or from my 'gut' compelled me to write down what had happened, and the form this writing took was stories... I tend to write about experiences that knock me for a loop and challenge the construction of meaning I have put together for myself" (p. 33).

Sometimes the stories of more than one person combine in an autoethnography. In "The Autoethnographic I", Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis write about "How we Met" (pp. 54-57). Also, Carolyn Ellis writes about her children as her children and also as her "co-collaborators in writing about interactive interviewing" (p. 57). Other couples also write about their relationships. For example, Laurel Richardson and Ernest Lockridge, in "Travels with Ernest", describe how their relationship developed during their world-travels (2004).

Autoethnography in the Classroom

Rosemary became a social work educator in Canada after more than two decades of practice as a social worker in England. During the first few busy months as a social work educator, Rosemary tried to update herself on developments in social work theory that had occurred since she qualified in the 1970s. But it was the stories she told that students identified as most memorable – stories about her work with families and communities**.** As she became more confident about her work**,** the story of how she herself felt when she removed a child from abusive parents, or the story about how she helped teenage girls to escape from a burning building and then told parents that their daughter had died in the blaze. As the years passed, Rosemary became bored with her own stories of practice and began to draw upon her personal life in her teaching. During her classes she spoke about the dilemmas that she faced as a mother of teenagers or her experiences as a daughter of a woman who was reaching the end of her life. Like Kim Zapf (1997), she realized that teaching from her own story rather than from second-hand narration of other's stories was most effective in assisting students to learn about social work. Vignettes that had previously been briefly mentioned to illustrate ideas, were explored more fully. She encouraged students to tell their own stories. Students and teacher felt that the curriculum was enriched. At this time, narrative was gaining prominence in academic research and teaching, so when Rosemary learned about narrative research, particularly autoethnographic research, she was excited at the opportunity to develop more teaching techniques and ideas about how autoethnography could be a valuable pedagogic tool.

Dolores had grown up in Newfoundland where story-telling was a rich part of the heritage. As a child she read autobiographies and loved learning about prominent individuals from history, arts, current events, and different cultures. Without realizing it at the time, her childhood culture and interests had shaped a later career direction using autobiographical inquiry in teaching nursing. From the beginning of her teaching career Dolores had developed a focus on curriculum development and until her doctoral studies had been on a quest to understand how to create curriculums in nursing using the personal knowledge of practitioner's and educator's experiences. In her doctoral work, she studied with Dr. Michael Connelly, a pioneer in narrative inquiry, and felt like she had come "home" in many ways. Narrative inquiry, and in particular autobiographical inquiry, Dolores learned, provided means to understand and express the tacit knowledge from human experience that shaped professional practices (i.e., curriculum). Since her doctoral studies, she has taught autobiographical inquiry to nursing students in an attempt to guide them in understanding the curriculum they live and practice by. During this time, Dolores' mother, who is a senior in age but young at heart and spirit, came from Newfoundland to keep her daughter company. Over the years, Dolores has learned the richness of aging through this experience, and has come to understand from discussions with Rosemary, the role autoethnography plays for seniors reliving and retelling their stories. In particular, the shifts in time and place, the zooming in and out, the blurring of distinctions among memories, and the emerging of the vulnerable self that occur in stories sift into the present, reveal a hidden curriculum of aging that is often dismissed rather than examined.

A Personal and Professional Relationship and Autoethnography in a Social Work and Aging Course

In the fall of 2006, Rosemary was pleased when she was assigned to teach an undergraduate course in Social Work and Aging. Having taught the course on a previous occasion it provided an opportunity for her to reflect on her own aging processes. During the previous course she had told stories about her relationship with her mother and with professional helpers. Encouraged by the work of Ellis/Bochner and Richardson/Lockridge, Rosemary invited her friend and colleague Dolores to join one of her classes. Both had been conducting qualitative research together, had organized conferences together, and were personal friends. Since they had talked often about their experiences of caring for their mothers in their own homes, they decided to share some of these significant stories about family caring in this social work course.

In the course session Rosemary had devoted to "family caring for older adults", Dolores joined the discussion. As the session began, Rosemary invited students to share their experiences (if any) of family caring. This small class of 12 students had worked together for several weeks and generally knew each other well from several courses taken together previously. While Rosemary values narrative work in the classroom, she is cautious with the methodology at the same time, believing that students should be encouraged to tell stories but never coerced, that they should choose whether to talk about personal experiences or not. Via the use of a “circle round”, choice was provided. Each student in turn was free to tell the group if they had experienced family care. They could disclose, or “pass”, or answer “no” to sharing their personal experiences to classmates, instructor and guest, Rosemary advised. Unexpectedly, all students participated, with about half describing relevant experiences, and with almost all of these with family care of a grandmother.

The class and professors then watched a short Canadian film (National Film Board, 1998) which featured five family caregivers who spoke about their experiences of caring for an aging family member. Several different issues were alluded to and several different family situations were portrayed. Dependent adults were of different ages and had different degrees of physical and mental challenge. The carers and the dependent adults were of both genders, they lived in different parts of the Canada, and the film suggested that the families had different income levels. In one narrative a son spoke about the stress he experienced when he attempted to communicate with his mother. An older woman expressed her sadness that her physical strength restricted her ability to tend to the physical needs of her husband and her fears for the future when his needs would increase and her strength would decline further. Many students thought that the film very moving, to the point that a box of tissues was passed from one student to another who was weeping. Following the film, Rosemary and Dolores held a “fishbowl” discussion about their personal experiences with family caregiving in front of the class, and invited students to contribute their insights afterward.

Beginning with a discussion of their mothers’ needs and strategies they had developed to meet those needs in ways that were akin to their mothers’ life stories, Rosemary and Dolores covered health problems, services, challenges, social needs, and surprises that arose from their caring. Both mothers had been frail with chronic health problems**,** and in accessing needed health services, a series of challenges arose as a result of cuts to these services. Challenges had also arisen in providing ways to meet their mothers’ social needs, in particular arranging access to day-care or community lunches. Spiritual needs , though often important, became significant when Rosemary's mother was near death and needed to meet with a spiritual advisor so that she died in peace. Finally, Rosemary and Dolores shared stories about their mothers' emotional needs, particularly fear and anxiety when the women had experiences they could not understand.

Focusing on themselves as family carers, Rosemary and Dolores recalled their challenges in addressing their own needs. Combining university teaching and home care for a frail mother left little time for self-care. Disturbed sleep, constant fatigue, and stress resulted from anxiety about the unexpected - such as an acute illness of mother or daughter or a difficulty in finding a home care worker to cover during their work schedules. While both daughters tried to support each other by "stealing" time for occasional lunches, they also shared "mother" stories and prompted one another with humourous stories from their situations. For Rosemary, the contrast between her life before and after the death of her mother brought much reflection.

Following their personal stories of family caregiving, Rosemary and Dolores invited students to raise questions or contribute from their personal experiences. A rich, frank, and insightful discussion ensued in which students drew from the film, from Rosemary and Dolores' discussion, and from their colleagues' experiences. A broad terrain was covered that revealed a wealth of knowledge and experiential wisdom from students' and teachers' lives and from the lives of their mothers and grandmothers. Such skills as communicating with people who have sensory impairments to burnout experienced by carers, from strategies to promote anti-oppressive practice and senior abuse (for family carers as well as for older adults) to social policies needed for the rapidly growing aging population in New Brunswick, from the strengths and limitations of gerontological social work theory to the challenges that arose during inter-professional communications. While the focus of family caregiving ended with this class, for the remainder of the term students drew upon these discussions to highlight other topics and referred to it in their written assignments.

Payoffs and Pitfalls of Autoethnography in the University Classroom

This classroom experiment in autoethnography was largely successful. Students identified that the emotion evident in our voices gave permission to them to empathize with our experiences. These stories, like all stories, engaged the students' interest more than the dry "case studies" drawn from professional textbooks. In realizing the importance of these stories to their professors' lives, students came to realize the importance of stories in their own lives. They came to realize that stories go beyond a narration of events; they carry with them a glimpse of the human condition and a sense of the other as a person rather than a stranger. Like Carolyn Ellis, we endeavoured to share the culture of ourselves, in our instance as family carers. And in so doing, created a new culture within the classroom – a culture of legitimacy for sharing stories of family caregiving. This method revealed a hidden knowledge base that might not have been tapped otherwise, and a culture of examining the everyday theories family members develop when facing the challenges elder care presents. Students and faculty left the classroom that day with a collection of stories from the film, the fish-bowl discussion, and the session where students openly expressed their stories. This culture went on as a living curriculum in so many other forums – it continued to emerge in other classes during the term, and it was shared by Rosemary and Dolores at the Atlantic Teaching Showcase where several other professors also talked about their caregiving experiences. Autoethnography has a way of regenerating itself; once the process begins it goes on indefinitely, expanding its reach into many different forums and lives. Stories told in class are often memorable and timeless. Students report that sometimes they remember a story long after it has been told, and find that they retell it in new situations, but when recalled the story often brings new meaning at a new time in their lives.

Narrative methods including autoethnographic teaching and learning, we recognize, are not a panacea for all situations; they have their limitations. When we try to tell a difficult experience too close to the event, the emotion may still be quite "raw" and the narration of it may be too painful. For teachers, telling our personal stories in the classroom can leave us open to criticisms from others (and to self-criticism) about how we lead our lives (Ellis, 2004, p. 34). There are pitfalls for students too. As educators, we can never know the depth of meaning in aspects of our students' lives. Since autoethnography is an emotional method, we might unintentionally open up painful wounds that students are not ready to deal with. However conscientiously and carefully instructors try to reassure students that it is acceptable to tell stories, and equally acceptable to remain silent, students may fall victim to internal pressure or external peer-pressure to speak. Yet, once the story is told, they might regret having exposed themselves to public awareness. At times students get caught up in the story as passive consumers and do not move beyond the story to analyze its meaning or implications. In this case, they can get frozen in a story that limits the growth of self-knowledge and awareness. Finally, in a valuable encounter with participants at this Teaching Showcase, in a different presentation from the caregiving one, we were reminded that storytelling and story-listening may have cultural limitations and not be acceptable in all cultures.

As educators of students who plan to enter health or human service occupations, this experience affirmed for us the power and the benefit of real-life stories in the education of our students. Discussions after our presentation at the Teaching Showcase showed the value of this method in the social sciences too. Narrative methods, such as autoethnography, are not a panacea but they are very valuable. We intend to continue to use these methods in our teaching as well as in our research, and to examine their benefits and limitations in different situations and with different groups.

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Ah, I see! Metaphorical Thinking and the Pleasure of Re-cognition

Abstract

Despite the explosion of research into metaphor for the past half century, many educators at academic institutions seem resistant to the idea of metaphoric thinking as a mode of sustained scholarly inquiry, as an educative responsibility, or as a form of student assessment. This simple piece takes a lightly metaphoric approach to reviewing recent ideas in philosophy, poetics, cognitive psychology, and fMRI brain imaging results that support the teaching of metaphor. From historic resistance to more recent acceptance, looking at the dangers of misuse and neglect, this paper considers the gestalt-shift of metaphor and discusses how to teach this form of thinking as a serious form of thinking in the classroom. The paper and its appendices list sample assignments to increase student facility in this style of irrational thinking.

What too are all poets and teachers but a species of Metaphorical Tailors?
– Carlyle

A Single Stone

A few Octobers ago I sat in a field above the town of Windsor, Nova Scotia, with eight junior-high students, for a poetry workshop. As no one had told me this was the wild class (too hyper, a staff member said later, to work outside), we sat for half an hour and passed around a palm-sized hunk of granite, making metaphors: the salt-and-pepper granite lump becoming iceberg, broken dish, tired face, crumpled-up newspaper. ‘What animal is this’? I asked on one round. ‘What if it was a day of the week?’ said another girl. ‘A noise?’ ‘A kind of silence?’—all of us racing to keep up with the orbiting stone, the children sharp, energized, focused, engaged, their quick communal ‘yeahs’ or grunts affirming the apt metaphors with no need to explain: they got it.

Jan Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*:
Art, as most of us have experienced, can give us access to complex possibilities of understanding and perception, remote from our own. (L45)

Passing around that same stone at university—in the context of the Dalhousie Integrated Science Program or English Department courses at the Mount—elicited similar responses: bursts of thought, quick physical affirmation in involuntary nods and grunts, sudden intakes of breath, faces bursting open in a grin, the same laughter, the same hard focus. But most metaphors created by the undergrads seemed no more original or complex than those of the 12- and 13-year-olds in Windsor. And the adults had more trouble letting go of literal language ('the stone is rough', they'd say) or obvious connection ('the rock is like a mountain'). Exceptions came mainly from students with self-taught metaphoric practice outside the university (songwriters, poets, dancers, photographers); first-timers found the exercise fun but silly; 'you can't be *serious*' said one woman, rolling her eyes in the tradition of Thomas Hobbes and Locke.

Jan Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*:
What is most peculiar…is not how art does this, but *why*, given that it does do it, art has become divorced from what we recognize as thinking. (L45)

One possible adaptive advantage to human evolution[1] and to many (some say all) significant leaps in human thought, metaphoric thinking is limited, often deliberately, in many university environments—certainly in traditional undergraduate core curriculum, where most students receive only accidental exposure to this style of thinking. We want them to be "original" (English 1), to offer new perspectives and surprising, apt connection, yet "A" papers are too often treated as if they fell from the heavens, gifted to us, as if we have no responsibility to teach that kind of thinking: the one we value most.

Programs that provoke metaphor's far-flung apt connection are increasing, true: a handful of students choose double-majors in diverse areas or attempt self-created, mixed-discipline directed studies; a few students will win a spot in an interdisciplinary program such as the King's Foundation Year. But for the rest, few or no courses devoted wholly to metaphor exist (compare that to reason and

[1] See for example White and Geshwind qtd. in Bowdle and Gentner.

logic), with occasional study possible in creative-writing courses (if available), or fine arts electives (ditto), or film, *if* students make the effort. Even the abundant metaphors encountered in English Lit classes tend to be treated non-metaphorically, that is, via analytic assessment, explained in mainly literal, expository prose as part of the dissection of a text.[2] Some academics are openly hostile to metaphoric modes of study: in 2005, while a photocopier spat out sheets, a senior member of another department, waiting, asked what the pages were for. “Poetry portfolio, creative-writing class.” He told me such a course “shouldn’t be taught at university,” while my assignment slid off the rollers: a 30-page midterm requiring a dozen responses to essays in poetics, followed by a speculative essay of the student’s and an extended series of poems (after weeks of drafts) circling a central focus in classical structures, free verse, phenomenological approaches, and translation/transposition. I took my sheets and left, wishing I’d thrown him Ted Cohen’s question: “Is a [metaphor] less important than a theorem even if it’s a good [metaphor] and a trivial theorem?”[3]

> *Linné [Linnaeus…designated lichens as “*rustici pauperrimi*,” which might well be translated as “the poor trash” of vegetation.* (Schneider 6)

If 'getting it'—that is, genuine understanding—is what we're after at university,[4] if we speak in metaphorical phrases (‘I see what you mean’) and analogy (‘a parenthetical phrase is a thought-pocket,’ ‘a benzene molecule looks like a closed ring’) as we try to impart crucial ideas that *others* have discovered via metaphor (Kekule’s famous snake-eating-its-tail daydream which gave him that structure of benzene)—why is it that we rarely teach university students how to think clearly and with precision in metaphor *themselves*?

> *They are found from the poles to the tropics, from the intertidal zones to the peaks of mountains, and on every kind of surface from soil, rocks, and tree bark to the back of living insects*! (Brodo, Sharnoff, and Sharnoff 3)

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[2] What Susan Sontag once called “the revenge of the intellect upon art” (7).

[3] “Is a joke less important than a theorem, even if it’s a good joke and a trivial theorem?” (Cohen, “Cultivation” 6).

[4] “It is an extremely important result that metaphorical teaching strategies often lead to better and more memorable learning than do explicit strategies” (Petrie & Oshlag 581).

This paper braids three strands, which may be read separately or concurrently. Thread 1 makes a case for teaching metaphoric thinking by offering ideas from philosophy, poetics, cognitive psychology, and brain imaging studies. Thread 2 (right-justified) drops pieces of Jan Zwicky's *Wisdom & Metaphor* and *Lyric Philosophy* into the discussion, two central texts. Thread 3 (centred, italic) links lichen fragments drawn from botanical texts: this thread serves as a kind of metaphoric counterpoint to the other voices. After all, a metaphor, like lichen—that crusty, vomit-coloured growth you see on rocks and trees and old roofs—describes a relationship between two once-disparate things that, for a moment, share a space.

A lichen is not a single entity, but a composite of a fungus and an organism capable of producing food by photosynthesis [usually green algae]. (Brodo, Sharnoff, and Sharnoff 3)

(Don't sweat the lichen stuff; you can read it to see what, if any, connections arise, or pay closer attention, or skip it; same with the Zwicky bits: each thread works independently and collaboratively, reader's choice. The lichen pieces make this paper itself a (rough) example of the kind of thinking it describes, offering a metaphoric reading experience, if you choose.) Notes provide marginal murmur and heckling from the back of the class; appendices hold ideas for course and class approaches. Here's one: what does the lichen-metaphor link illuminate? Fail to? Where is the congruity meaningful and where does it break down? If the analogy, like Kekule's coiled-snake-for-benzene, fails to fit *all* areas, does that render any ideas the analogy provoked *false*?

I do find it curious that studies of both metaphor and lichen shared unprecedented resurgence in the mid-20th century, with key conferences in the 1970s assembling fragments from an explosion of scholarly debate; and not until 1981 did members of the International Association of Lichenology accept, finally, that lichen is "an association of a fungus and a photosynthetic symbiont resulting in a stable vegetative body having a specific structure" (qtd. in Brodo, Sharnoff, and Sharnoff 8). The metaphor crew has not yet agreed on definition, and increasing evidence of metaphor's peculiar kind of thinking continues to be resisted.

This resistance has a long history.

> *Throughout most of the last century the botanical establishment treated with contemptuous disbelief de Bary's notion (1866) that lichens were dual organisms. Indeed, many refused to accept it right into the present century. Leading contemporary lichenologists…bitterly opposed the hypothesis. Crombie characterised it as 'this sensational "Romance of Lichenology", or the unnatural union between captive algal damsel and tyrant fungal master' (Crombie 1874), while M.C. Cooke in 1879 asserted of the dual hypothesis that 'even if endorsed by the nineteenth century it will certainly be forgotten in the twentieth.' It was not forgotten and gradually became universally accepted. (Gilbert 16)*

Irrational Thinking

> Jan Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*:
> We are like the black-frocked guardians in a 19th-century English novel: certain assertions strike us as vaguely disreputable—we hear passion lurking in the wings, ready to rush in and wreak havoc with our heroine's hitherto faultless comportment. (L21)

> *Theophrastus (371-286 B. C.), a pupil of Aristotle, was perhaps the first writer who left any record of lichens.* (Schneider 3)

"If there is a villain in the Western philosophical tradition, it is the Literal Meaning Theory. That theory has, for two millennia, defined meaningfulness, reason, and truth so as to exclude metaphor" (Lakoff and Turner 215). Aristotle has been held responsible for a range of conflicting opinion on the subject: that similarity between different things can assist understanding, and that metaphor is ornamentation inappropriate to argument. The latter idea has dominated our own era, reinforced by philosophers such as Hobbes who, in 1660, declares in Leviathan "Chapter V: Of Reason and Science" that metaphors are not to be used in the "seeking of truth" (115), being "senseless and ambiguous words…and reasoning upon them is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention and sedition, or contempt" (116-17). In the so-called Age of Reason, Locke goes further:

> …all the artificial and figurative application of words…are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment, and so indeed are perfect cheats, and, therefore…they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or person that makes use of them. (qtd. in Cohen, "Cultivation" 2-3)

During this entire period, which extended over two thousand years, scarcely anything more was done…Scarcely a ray of scientific light had as yet penetrated the Stygean darkness in which these highly interesting plants were enwrapped. (Schneider 8)

Meta Pherein—'To Carry Across'

Jan Zwicky:
Metaphor is a species of understanding, a form of seeing-as: it has, we might say, flex. We see, simultaneously, similarities and dissimilarities. (*Wisdom* L4)

A quarter-century after the 1978 Chicago symposium on metaphor gathered key fragments from an explosion of cross-disciplinary discussion, my friend and colleague Dr. David Wilson still insists that metaphors are ornamental, effective in persuasion, a colourful figure of speech, and nothing more. Off to class he goes, under his arm Diana Hacker's latest edition of *A Canadian Writer's Reference*, university-issued bible of first-year students who'll find therein that metaphor is "a figure of speech that compares two seemingly unlike things to reveal surprising similarities," that in a simile the writer uses 'like' or 'as' to make the comparison while a metaphor does not, as "the comparison is implied" (143-144). In this 465-page book, students get this scant half page on metaphor and learn two guidelines: to keep figures of speech logically consistent (vs. 'Let's push this hot potato down the road') and to avoid clichés, those too-familiar comparisons that lack surprise ('We need to think outside the box'). [5] No mention here that metaphor might be a figure of *thought*, nor that some consider human language inherently metaphorical ('I feel down'), nor of its dangers. Nothing on how to evaluate and construct metaphor, nothing on what makes a good metaphor work.

Perhaps Hacker was avoiding a mess of debate in linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and neuropsychiatry, whose literature tells us that a metaphor's idea *can* be paraphrased in literal language (Davidson 43)—and that it *cannot* be paraphrased in literal language (Black 22, 33). That all ordinary language is rooted in metaphor (Lakoff and Turner xi)—and that ordinary language is *not* metaphorical because a dead comparison is not a functioning metaphor (Black

[5] The same reference book has two chapters (sixteen pages) on constructing and evaluating "reasonable arguments" (2).

25). That metaphor ruins character, as we've heard from Locke—and that a capacity for metaphor is vital for the health of character and culture (Booth, "Ten" 174). [6] That metaphor is strictly a linguistic feature (Dreistadt cited in Seitz; Davidson 31)—and that metaphor is conceptual, with language just the delivery vehicle (Lakoff and Turner 55, 138; Seitz). That a metaphor means only "what the words, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more" (Davidson 30)—and that literal modes are "insufficient to express our sense of the rich correspondences, interrelationships, and analogies of domains conventionally separated" (Black 33).…

At first there was a tendency to classify lichens as a distinct group of plants, later to consider them as mosses or as fungi. This doubt and uncertainty continued to grow until the close of the seventeenth century, when the confusion reached its height. They were not only classed a mosses and fungi, but also as algae, sponges, liverworts, etc.…Sprengel and others were convinced that, under favourable circumstances, lichens were evolved from decaying substances, or the decomposition of water. (Schneider 7)

Here, today, I ask you to consider that metaphor

- is the result of thinking of something as something else, "a claim of the form 'x is y' where 'x is not y' is true" (Zwicky, *Wisdom* L5)—the stone is *and is not* a tired face—an association that includes simile and analogy[7]
- can occur in word, image, gesture, sound
- refers only to an active, novel comparison (dead comparisons and clichés, absorbed into ordinary language, are no longer fully metaphoric)

(many lichen fungi have been grown in culture in the laboratory where they are characterized by a slow growth rate, have little organised structure and do not produce fruit bodies; in other words, they fail to resemble a lichen. [Gilbert 29]*)*

I believe that such a metaphor

- surprises or astonishes in the moment of making sense

[6] "A good measure of our culture would be our capacity…to produce metaphoric visions" (Booth, "Ten" 174).

[7] For (i) see, among others, Booth, "Rhetoric" 50-53; Bowdle and Gentner; Zwicky *Wisdom* L1; (ii) Seitz; Bowdle and Gentner; (iii) Black 25; Bowdle and Gentner; Mashal et al.

- is apt (strong, good) depending on both distance + congruity of the things compared (a wide distance and a close fit) [8]—which is what gives, I think, that sense of surprise *and* making sense[9]
- like a good joke, cannot be explained and its full meaning dissolves in literal explanation
- can "present in a distinctive and irreplaceable way, insight into 'how things are'" (Black 21) or (not quite the same) "attempts to get at the shape of what-is" (Zwicky, *Wisdom* L9).

Intimate Collaboration

Jan Zwicky:
The metaphor tells two truths at once: "not two," it says, while remembering "not one." (L16)

Of particular relevance to university teaching is the way in which two parts of a metaphorical phrase work together (without fusion, without one being absorbed or destroyed by the other)

The special biological relationship found in lichens is called symbiosis.
(Brodo, Sharnoff, and Sharnoff 3)

in a collaboration that admits its own failure to describe the world: something is *and is not* like something else; 'like'—but *not exactly* the same; true *and not* true, thus it always invites other ways of seeing, the metaphor throwing out its metaphoric hands, pulling students out of their desks.[10] Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" doesn't, for example, attempt to be

[8] Where strong fit occurs, "metaphorical language is processed as quickly and easily as literal language" (Ortony, "metaphor" 479; Blasko and Connine in Bowdle and Gentner); other studies have reported both slower and faster times.
[9] According to Mednick, 'the more mutually remote the elements of new combination, the more creative the process or solution'" (qtd. in Mashall et al).
[10] Separate studies a decade apart both showed that "students become interested in learning difficult concepts that are presented through metaphor and analogy" (Petrie and Oshlag 602). Halifax student Eleanor Queripel, remarking on work for a first-year class, noted that the readings that most interested her, regardless of author or subject or difficulty, were those that chose a metaphorical approach.

the final word on blackbirds; instead the poem opens up ways of looking and the idea of perception itself, provoking students into producing 13 *more* ways of looking at blackbirds or tumour growth or granite: "Like an hourglass / sifting bits / of clay, and quartz, glitzy / sparks and specks on the seafloor, changing / still" (Drisdelle 33-37).

That metaphor, already a conversation between two or more things, invites further collaboration has tremendous practical implication for educators; those in other fields have been paying more direct attention. Henry Seiden uses metaphor in his clinical practice to provoke change in patient thinking and behaviour: "My patient and I are collaborators, having moved into the metaphorical space together." In his practice, Seiden makes various metaphors for the patient to consider (perhaps as a prof might offer students an analogy), but this is spun around by cognitive therapists Richard Kopp and Michael Craw, who describe "constructive change [not previously seen] in ideas, behaviours, and relationships" *in those cases where metaphors were created and developed solely by the patient*, without therapist comment or interpretation. The authors of this study suggest that therapists "attend to their clients' metaphoric speech and select a metaphor to explore" by asking open-ended questions—something we might try in the classroom: listen for any metaphors the students speak or gesture as they try to explain a concept, then pick one to explore, in class discussion or in a paper, to see if and where and how the metaphor fits. "Together," says Seiden, "we've created a meaning we can point to."

> *When the two partners come together, they form a lichen thallus [plant body.]* (Gilbert 33)

> *Contributions to Geometry: Lichen*
> *Think of yourself as an agreement:*
> *arms and legs in step,*
> *each cell holding up the walls of another.* (A. Dickinson 12-14)

At Chicago's 1978 symposium, Ted Cohen famously described this "achievement of intimacy" in the metaphoric act, where "maker and appreciator of a metaphor are drawn closer to one another," arising from a desire "to initiate explicitly the cooperative act of comprehension" ("Cultivation" 6-7). Twenty years later he goes further, saying that metaphors "*aim* to induce intimacy" ("Feeling" 239; italics mine). In my own experience, in a Children's Literature class the act of making and receiving metaphors transformed a gaggle of strangers into a single, alert organism for a class poem "In Which the Student Studies Lewis Carroll's Alice," where "the moral of the story / shrinks alongside her. / Nonsense" (Zinck 5-7); any decent shared metaphor—even the chalk-as-Hitler-moustache experienced in the crude object-game played at the AAU conference—can result in "a sense of close community" (Cohen, "Cultivation" 7). Of course, metaphors can play dirty. Wayne Booth tells the story of a southern US court case where a lawyer, defending a large corporation against a small local firm, hears the smaller business present itself to the jury as a dangling catfish squirming in the grasp of the bigger company and about to be gutted. "At that moment, my friend reports, he knew he had lost the case" ("Rhetoric" 50): "The speaker has performed a task by yoking what the hearer had not yoked before, and the hearer simply cannot resist joining him; they thus perform an identical dance step, and the metaphor accomplishes at least part of its work even if the hearer then draws back and says, 'I shouldn't have allowed that'!" ("Rhetoric" 52).

Dangerous Liaisons

> Simone Weil:
> The mind is enslaved whenever it accepts connections *which it has not itself established.*
> (qtd. in Zwicky, *Wisdom* R109).

This sudden, seductive intimacy, like that of jokes, has consequences and we don't have to look far: Bush's Axis of Evil, the idea of 'mixed blood', the Great Chain of Being (affecting everything from what languages are taught in schools to insecticide to slavery to who gets the corner office), and the university as business corporation (one consequence of which was a letter informing me in 1999 that I was no longer teaching students but "servicing learners"—and what will be the consequence of *that*?)

Metaphors also fall into the hands of people who fail (or refuse) to recognize what they're holding, who fail to see that x is *and is not* y and attempt fixed literal interpretation, as the 2005 Kansas City School Board did with a poetic creation story. As for ourselves, our own conventional metaphors—this supposed need to move forward, to explore our options, to accept the bottom line—"can be used so automatically and effortlessly, we find it hard to question them, if we can even notice them" (Lakoff and Turner 65). What is the cultural consequence of a widespread failure to teach the difference between literal and metaphorical styles of thinking? Or of neglecting to discuss with students some criteria for evaluating metaphor (just as we routinely address logical fallacies) or failing to discuss the way in which unquestioned dead metaphorical concepts shape their thinking and their lives? Where do we teach students the intellectual value in making their own connections?

Surprise! Transgression and Recognition

"Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—/ Success in Circuit lies" (E. Dickinson 1-2)—A black umbrella popped open is a bat-flower, is a surprise on a stick. A metaphor is born of distance and unexpected fit: we experience this as surprise, an idea-image bursting through walls previously thought solid (in the first, domestic object = animal+plant; in the second, an abstract emotion perches atop a concrete object). [11] Dali's languid timepiece draped over a branch. You could say that, as we drive down our habitual thought-road, metaphor pushes the button on the James-Bond-ejector seat and from our rather shocked chairs in the sky we have—for a moment, before we fall back to earth—a startling and much expanded view.

> Ludwig Wittgenstein:
> 565. I think it could also be put this way: *Astonishment* is essential to a change of aspect. And astonishment is thinking.
> (qtd. in Zwicky, *Wisdom* 1R)

One way that metaphor might elicit the new understanding so vital to academic work is that it disregards conventional boundaries, breaking implicit and discipline-specific rules. When Rosemary Drisdelle, a laboratory technician in microbiology, wrote a sonnet on the life cycle of the intestinal roundworm *Ascaris lumbricoides*, she told me she felt as if she was doing something forbidden in representing the creature as an "infant in a bassinet / …curled in an alveolar eddy" ("Life Story" 4,14). Metaphor's friends and foes concur: the act has been variously described as seditious (Hobbes again), "deviant" (Lakoff and Turner 124), "rule-violating," (Black 23) "a category-mistake" (Seitz), a

[11] Metaphors on loan from Dr. Graham Fraser.

“deformation of human categories” (McKay, *Vis* 31), “smuggler or trickster” (*Vis* 69-70), and a “linguistic short-circuit” (Zwicky, *Wisdom* L68).

The still explosions on the rocks, the lichens, grow
by spreading, grey, concentric shocks. (Bishop 1-3)

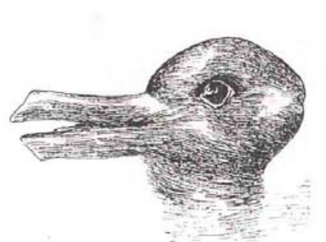
lichen: 2. “skin disease with reddish eruption… L. f. Gk. leikhēn [eruption, disruption]

Charles Simic:
The ambition of each image and metaphor is to redescribe the world, or, more accurately, to blaspheme. Stevens knew that and Dickinson suspected it. That’s why they kept a low profile.
(qtd. in Zwicky, *Wisdom* 46R)

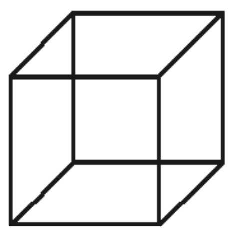
But how is this transgression a gestalt shift?

Because to deal with anomaly you have to change: you must let go—however momentarily—of one way of looking in order to see the other.[12]

We can see this in Jastrow’s duck-rabbit, in the Necker cube, and in the linguistic equivalent of these images: H.D.’s “Oread”:



Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines,
Splash your great pines
On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us,
Cover us with your pools of fir.(1-6)



This unfinished business, this restless flickering-back-and-forth (forest imagined as sea? sea as forest?) occurs not only between the two things being compared in a metaphor, and between possible schemas (duck *or* rabbit) but also in disturbing

[12] “Literal language requires only assimilation to existing frameworks of understanding.…Accommodation of anomaly requires changes in the framework of understanding” which “secures the importance of metaphor in considering how radically new knowledge is acquired” (Petrie and Oshlag 587).

reverberations between ourselves and a supposedly passive or inferior subject: a metaphor looks *back*.

> How the slash looks: not
> ruin, abattoir, atrocity; not
> harvest, regen, working
> forest. How it looks. The way it
> keeps on looking when we look away,
> embarrassed. How it gawks,
> with no nuance or subterfuge
> or shadow. How it seems to see us now
> as we see it. Not quick.
> Not dead. (McKay, "Stumpage" 1-10)

In this mutual gaze, metaphoric thought brings ecological perspective to our teaching: "A style of knowing shapes the world technology has wrought," speculates philosphy professor and poet Tim Lilburn; "the ghost of Descartes hovers over the waste dump, the clear cut. Is there another way to look at things, something more benign?" (8). What if we share our joke with the subject rather than at its expense, or take up Don McKay's suggestion that we read the field guide *to* the creature? At Dalhousie and Mount Saint Vincent, I've seen the latter approach foster deep and long-term appreciation by the student for any subject—an appreciation where none, prior to the exercise, existed—from laboratory technician Drisdelle's formal address to a parasitic worm to a four-woman interpretative dance of *Alice's Adventures* to 25 students crammed in a campus bathroom as Dominique read her poem *to* the toilet-paper dispenser (a study in approaching what is other).

Finally: what does it mean for university teaching if metaphors not only *help* reveal a known concept to others in swift, participatory, gestalt-inducing ways but are perhaps *essential*? "Whether abstract concepts can be understood only metaphorically is…[a] highly controversial issue" (Bowdle and Gentner), with researchers "seriously investigating the claim that radically new knowledge requires the operation of metaphor" (Petrie and Oshlag 582).

Lichens have been nicknamed "nature's pioneers" because they have the ability to colonize bare rock and are often the first plant-like forms to become established on newly exposed surfaces. We know that certain lichen substances can chemically combine with rock

> *minerals, creating metal complexes that make the rock slightly more soluble, thus speeding the weathering process….the first stage of soil formation.* (Brodo, Sharnoff, and Sharnoff 54)

In the past two years, one piece of that idea has amassed strong supporting evidence: some of the metaphoric phrases you've just read, the ones you 'got,' provoked distinct and visible change in your brain, including heightened collaboration of your right and left hemispheres.

Re-cognition

> Jan Zwicky:
> Non-metaphorical ways of speaking conduct meaning, in insulated carriers, to certain ends and purposes. Metaphors shave off the insulation and meaning arcs across the gap. (L68)

You may have noticed that your own experience of 'getting' a metaphor, like getting a joke, is physical; in groups, recall the small involuntary sounds that happened for the more surprising metaphors in the object-game we played here, or the small noises routine at public poetry readings when a good metaphor happens; in class, people gasp, grunt, shift, "mmmm", "ohhh," heads re-angle—playing a metaphoric game in a composition course, "I realized, after, that I'd been leaning forward," said one student, "the whole time."[13]

A few years ago I wondered if something measurably different was going on in our brains at such moments, but fMRI imaging studies at that time showed minimal or no distinction between literal and figurative language processing—though I saw, to my *horror*, that the 'metaphoric' pairings tested in those studies were tired clichés (e.g. 'cold–unfriendly').[14] I wasn't the only one: in October 2005, four researchers in psychology, medicine, and cognitive brain mapping used fMRI to test novel metaphors—drawn mainly from poems—separately from what they termed "conventional metaphors" (clichés), literal language, and unrelated jumbles (Mashal et al.). Results confirmed increased brain activity unique to metaphor: when grasping novel metaphorical word-pairs (e.g.

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[13] Elizabeth Edgett, in ENGL 1120.12 at Mount Saint Vincent U, March 2007.
[14] 'functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging' (fMRI) shows parts of the brain activated by certain stimuli (language, sensations, etc.) by using an MRI machine to reveal areas of increased blood flow during that particular activity.

'imagination caves'), your brain's *right* hemisphere (RH) shows "significantly stronger activity" [15] than it does for ordinary literal language ('walking shoes') or for familiar clichés ('iron fist') (Mashal et al.). Results pointed to "selective RH involvement in the processing (and perhaps the generation of) novel… metaphoric mappings," the "cooperation" of right and left hemispheres, and a special role for specific areas of the right hemisphere "in generating novel, unfamiliar connections between words" (Mashal et al; see also Sotillo et al. and Bottini et al. qtd. in Mashal et al.)

> *In most lichens, the fungus envelops the algal or cyanobacterial cells with tiny branches of its hyphae, the tips slightly expanded and tightly pressed against the photobiont's cell walls. The fungus apparently "recognizes" the right alga by virtue of certain proteins (lectin) on the cell wall.* (Brodo, Sharnoff, and Sharnoff 6-7)

What does this mean for educators? Even before that 2005 study, research already suggested "the RH may be particularly adept at using mutually remote elements of new linguistic combinations, a process that may lead to the more creative process or solution (Dorfman, Shames, and Kilstrom in Mashal et al.) But the 2005 study tells us that the *newness* of a metaphor *affects the kind of neurological activity that takes place*: in other words, a good metaphor makes all the difference. And it means the late Max Black was right: dead metaphors are perhaps not metaphors at all, and the simple fact of comparing one thing to another is indeed an ill-fitting definition for metaphor, which may belong to another species of language altogether (jokes? irony?), leaving *The Canadian Writer's Reference* section W5-f about as inaccurate as a 19th-century text on lichen.

New Lamps for Old

> Jan Zwicky:
> There is, however, no simple recipe for communicating gestalts; or, rather, there is only the roughest and readiest: point and hope. (L92)

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[15] Specifically: in addition to usual left-hemisphere (language dominant) functions, fMRI results "revealed significantly stronger activity in right posterior superior temporal gyrus, right inferior frontal gyrus, and left middle frontal gyrus" (Mashal et al.)

Lichens have evolved several ingenious methods of vegetative reproduction…parts that break off are capable of growing into new plants. Rather than rely on chance fragmentation, many species produce special structures known as isidia.…Once dispersed, they attach themselves to the substratum by producing establishment hyphae, then growth proceeds. (Gilbert 34-35)

In my own teaching, metaphoric approaches have worked no matter what the cultural background, academic experience, diagnosed learning disability, attitude, or subject under study: in metaphoric tasks, students think faster, work harder, care more, and tell me so both during and after the course in written evaluation. I attempt in each course to present a few ideas on metaphor and to have students make metaphors (alongside analysis) for assessment and assignment; we discuss the danger of clichés, particularly political implications and effect on thinking; and in essays, obvious clichés are treated as significant error (students become ruthless readers of each other and of me). I drop poem-bombs: passing out—no explanation—a poem on the subject we're examining (e.g. excerpts from Stephanie Bolster's *White Stone: the Alice Poems* for a section on Lewis Carroll's *Alice*) and allow for at least one polyphonic project per course (multiple voices on the page, with arrangement, in place of explanation, carrying the idea). Interdisciplinary directed studies (one-on-one) have proved most fruitful as exercises in extended metaphoric thinking—a play on astronomer Henrietta Leavitt crossed with a 1970s suburban mother (Mathematics/Creative Writing; see Appendix C), for example, and a multi-voiced essay on the siege of Fallujah and the limits of reason (International Development Studies/Creative Writing). Still this seems flimsy, hardly enough.

Even commoner than the formation of isidia is the production of powdery granules.… mainly dispersed locally by rain water trickling over the thallus or by the action of invertebrates, or, more widely, by wind.… (Gilbert 35)

In sum, we can engage in metaphoric thinking to teach new ideas (help students grasp abstract concepts), to explore (discuss, debate, clarify) these concepts, and to assess student understanding (see Appendix A). We might question the aptness of a particular metaphor, or its consequences. Thinking back to your last class, how could you present that material via analogy (in words or image or music or gesture)? If you assessed student understanding by having them invent metaphors for a particular concept, would you require that they also explain their metaphors in literal language? Why?

Jan Zwicky, *Wisdom & Metaphor*:
…if the perception of such gestalts is the basis of human insight, there can be no rules or procedures whose application constitutes the practice of philosophy. (L117)

Albert Henderson has researched the meaning behind the Latin names of a number of our lichens….

Absconditella celata	*A tiny hidden secret*
Candelariella aurella	*A small candle holder, with minute yellow flame*
Haematomma ventosum	*With blood-red eyes and puffed up*
Parmelia sulcuta	*A small, round, furrowed shield*
Umbilicaria hyperborea	*Springing from a navel and found at the back of the north wind*
	(Gilbert 32; Henderson qtd. in Gilbert 32)

Lichenologist Trevor Goward has described lichens as 'fungi that have discovered agriculture,' and there is much truth to that. (Brodo, Sharnoff, and Sharnoff 4)

'Seeing-as': seeing lichen—a kind of food-for-protection collaboration—as fungi that have discovered agriculture: "I remember reading that phrase in the lichen section of *Plants of Coastal British Columbia*," writes poet Don McKay, "and being immediately engaged" (*Vis* 105-6). Engaging, surprising, active, intimate, connecting teacher and student and subject, facilitating understanding, sparking a particular kind of brain activity, demanding original thinking and (I speculate) rewarding us with pleasure in the process: metaphor is a student's best and built-in overhead projector[16], provoking genuine delight in the classroom, in the subject, and in the world beyond the self.

Jan Zwicky:
To 'get it,' to understand, is to experience meaning. It is to be able to go on. (L82)

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[16] Metaphor vs power point: "Arnheim (1969) argued that thinking may be largely imaginal and that visual, not verbal, thinking is perhaps the most important and central mode of thought" (Seitz 13); K. Pibram [in 1995] suggests "that metaphor functions as a transformer through which words are translated into images" (qtd. in Kopp and Craw).

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Appendix A
Thinking in Metaphor

i. within existing courses
• create more assignments and examination in metaphoric thinking e.g. 'Of the 3 analogies below, choose the one most apt for _______ and discuss'; 'Could we call Catullus a Romantic?'; 'Invent five metaphors for cell division'; 'Is *Frankenstein* a retelling of *Paradise Lost*'? 'Create a soundtrack for tumour growth.' • treat clichés as an academic offense (thinking that is not one's own); treat the thoughtless use of extinct metaphors (e.g. 'take it to the next level') as a serious intellectual problem. This would require students to translate unoriginal comparisons into clear, ordinary terms or to create their own metaphors. In doing so they'd begin to routinely attend to and question their metaphorical inheritance.
ii. as a course focus
• more course offerings in the formal study of metaphor, at both beginning and advanced levels e.g. Introduction to Metaphor, cross-listed for Phil/English/Education/Psychology • discipline-specific courses on metaphoric thinking in a particular field (use/effect of metaphor in physics, or biology, or computer studies or history, e.g. Andreas Mussolf's *Analogical Reasoning in Debates About Europe*) • classes or units within a course devoted to metaphoric study, either to discipline-specific metaphors or to metaphor as a way of thinking (or both). • as a means of organizing a course structure
iii. via credit-gathering programs at the undergraduate level
• inter-departmental approach for single units of study e.g. course-credit, directed study • metaphoric-thinking courses as undergrad requirements, e.g. music, creative writing in any genre, dance, visual arts, film studies, drama, lyric philosophy • instead of a dept.-bounded, major/minor approach, create individual programs from a wide range of credits in many departments but with a specific declared focus (e.g. translation, writing gender, early childhood, marine ecology • mandatory double majors in a traditional Arts and Science discipline (English/Biology; Music/Math)

iv. via interdisciplinary programs of study
• (undergrad) 1 year, e.g. FYP/King's; DISP/Dalhousie • (undergrad) 4 year CSP & EMS/King's; History of Science/King's; Cultural Studies/MSVU • (graduate) interdisciplinary Master's, PhD
v. via a movement within universities towards an inter- or non-departmental approach

Appendix B

Dalhousie ENGL1000: Introduction to Literature / Dr. G. Fraser 2005-06

Metaphoric Thinking Exercise [topics of study: the haiku, translation]

There are two parts to this assignment. Do both of them. Keep your answers brief and clear.

1. Provide a metaphor to describe a haiku. You can describe anything relevant about a haiku – its form, its subject matter, the way in which it communicates meaning, the reader's experience of it, or any other property of the form that we discussed in class. Then provide a *brief* explication (an analysis) of that metaphor.

2. Provide a metaphor to describe either the task of a translator or the nature of a translated poem itself. Again, provide a brief explication of that metaphor.

Dr. Graham Fraser comments on the above assignment: "Some responses just covered a haiku's structure or smallness: 'a haiku is a 17-syllable sandwich' was one that worked. Others managed to capture its compression—'a haiku poem is like a bouillon cube'—or the experience of reading a haiku—'a face hidden in leaves'—or how a haiku functions as a trigger, the way it requires the reader to *see* an image, and all of a sudden insight it provoked: 'it's like lifting the lid on a jack-in-the-box'. Because a haiku works much like metaphor, having students define haiku *in* metaphor makes sense: they have to *think like a haiku* in order to complete the assignment."

Fraser reported the task of reading and grading these assignments as being more pleasurable for him than previous non-metaphorical assignments, with more frequent occurrence of originality from a wider range of students, giving himself new ideas on the subject. Despite initial uncertainty, he found the metaphorical responses gave a clearer indication of student comprehension of the topic under study than any previous form of assessment, with the task of evaluation (a mark out of 5) no more difficult than usual.

Appendix C

English/Math Directed Study (playwriting): The Phenomena of Transmission / 2007

Student: [name omitted] Supervising instructor: Clare Goulet, Dept. of English

In this interdisciplinary Directed Study, fourth-year Mathematics Honours student [name omitted] will research, write, and present (via reading) a play, *The Phenomena of Transmission*, integrating the life and scientific work of Henrietta Leavitt (1868-1921), a theatre piece that will also integrate Leavitt's voice with that of an imagined 1970s female contemporary counterpart, the whole piece assembled from the few known facts and an imaginative revisioning, with attention to accuracy of scientific detail and to a lyric style in both presentation and language. As a project, this play will itself enact one of its own themes: "that ideas have a way extending their own lives, much to the surprise of us all":

> *"My goal is to write a theatre piece depicting the silent influence that social standing has on the creative output of an individual. There are two main characters: a little-known historical astronomer and an imagined suburbanite. Henrietta Leavitt made the significant astronomical discovery of the Cepheid variable-luminosity relationship. Ms. Leavitt was unable to publish her brilliant work because, at that time, Harvard University did not allow women to publish. Her work was published (and credit taken) by her employer. . . . I plan to juxtapose Ms. Leavitt's situation—a talented turn-of-the-century scientist, a woman, unmarried, university educated, and yet in no way in creative control of her discovery—with a pregnant, married woman in the early 1970s who is high-school educated, forced to leave her job due to pregnancy, alone at home, overwhelmed with the changes happening, for she has a growing realization that she has no control over this creative endeavour. . . . I will be using domestic activities such as knitting and cooking to illustrate the beliefs of the scientific method (specifically with regards to physics); I will consult with Dr. Tina Harriott to ensure that the play's physics is accurate and will draw on my own experience regarding emotional reactions and responses to being pregnant.*
>
> *The themes I plan to explore include intellectual and physical isolation, inner space/outer space disparity, the lure of insanity as a place to lay one's burdens down, and the perceived loss of creative control—that ideas have a way extending their own lives, much to the*

surprise of us all. I believe that Henrietta Leavitt's name deserves more recognition. I believe that weaving together an emotional tapestry of words through juxtaposed voices can inspire audiences to question their own creative future: to cover an ancient sky with modern stories."

[The Directed Study components require research and annotated bibliography of 20-25 readings in gender and science, plays of scientific biography and discovery, lyric writing by women on creative work/motherhood/mental health, and available text on Leavitt. Faculty readers/consultants: T. Harriott (Mathematics); R. Zuk (English)]

Teaching Technologies: From Science Fiction to Reality

Les technologies en enseignement : de la science-fiction à la réalité

Bev Bramble
University of New Brunswick

Student Response Systems ("Clickers") Pilot

Abstract

Engaging students in large class settings is always an instructional challenge. Student Response Systems, nicknamed "clickers," offer low risk ways for all students to participate in class, if used in pedagogically effective and inventive ways. Students use hand-held devices to select answers and then view aggregate results in a pictogram at the front of the room. Instructors can see whether students "get it" and refine their teaching presentation accordingly, as well as use the questions to initiate small and large group discussion. Students can see, without embarrassment or penalty, how well they understand key concepts, rather than finding out too late from test results.

UNB is piloting three different types of clickers during the 2006 fall term in order to test their potential and to select the clicker type best suited to UNB's needs. This paper outlines some ways in which clickers can be used effectively in class, describes the UNB pilot goals and process, and presents preliminary findings.

Introduction

The presentation had four purposes:

1. to demonstrate effective ways of using student response systems in class,
2. to explain the goals and procedures of the UNB pilot project for testing three different student response systems,
3. to present preliminary findings (as of the end of October 2006), and
4. to discuss strengths and drawbacks of using the clicker devices.

The Centre for Enhanced Teaching and learning at the University of New Brunswick applied for funding from the university's student technology fee to study the potential usefulness of a technology much in the news recently – student response systems, nicknamed "clickers." Clicker use has become more widespread in the last few years at universities in North America and Europe, with many institutions conducting research on student response system effectiveness and posting it online. See the references section for some examples.

The goal of using clickers is to actively engage learners in processing content presented in class, rather than passively listening and taking notes. Research shows that teaching methods that actively involve students result in substantially greater learning that pure lecturing does[1]. Clickers seem to show potential as possible tools to entice students in large classes who are reluctant to participate to become more engaged in the learning process. Clickers enable every student to participate in a no-risk way and compare their inputs with those of the class as a whole.

Typically, a multiple choice question is projected at the front of the class. Students select an answer option by pressing the appropriate button on a clicker, and when all students have answered, the instructor clicks a button and a colour-coded graph projected at the font shows the percentage or number of student responses by answer option.

This has several benefits. Instructors can tell whether students really understand the concepts being presented, much more accurately that with a show of hands, which is limited by lethargy and peer pressure. If a significant portion of students are not "getting it," then the instructor can try presenting the concept in a different way, or with additional examples. Also, students may think they understand something but find out as a result of answering a question with a clicker that they don't really understand it as well as they thought, and so should give the concept more attention. Better to find out before a test or exam.

When used in conjunction with effective teaching techniques, clickers can have more impact in engaging students actively.

Figure 1. The three types of clickers piloted at UNB: (from top left) eInstruction (http://www.einstruction.com), TurningPoint (http://www.turningtechnologies.com), and PRS Interwrite (http://www.gtcocalcomp.com)

A Few Effective Ways of Using Clickers

The presentation started with a focus question, and clickers were distributed to allow participants to register their answers. My strategy was to use the clickers to do for the presentation the kinds of things they could be used to do in the classroom.

The question was:

Which statement is closest to describing your experience with clickers?
A. Never heard of them.
B. Heard of them but don't know much about them.
C. Have seem them demonstrated but never used them.
D. Have used them as an instructor or participant.

Most participants had heard of clickers but didn't know much about them, so I could adjust the presentation to focus more on their effective use and less on explaining what they were.

The next question was from a subject content area:

During the day, your height…
A. Varies from being taller in the morning to shorter at night.
B. Varies from being shorter in the morning to taller at night.
C. Varies by being taller around mid-day.
D. Does not vary.

Most participants selected “D. Does not vary,” although there were a smattering of other responses. Participants were then asked to turn to the person on their right and explain why they picked the answer they picked, then reciprocate by listening to the other person’s reasoning, even if they picked the same answer, but especially if they had not. After two minutes, the question was asked again and the response displayed to see if the response pattern had changed. It had. There were fewer “does not vary” and more “A. Varies from being taller in the morning to shorter at night” with a smattering of others. The information on which the question was based was then presented, specifically that the 23 disks between the vertebrae that make up the spinal column account for one third of its length and that during the day, this disk material gets pressed down and a person’s height may reduce by one quarter to half and inch during the day. The disks reset to their original thickness overnight as we sleep, hence we are taller in the morning.

The foregoing is an example of using peer instruction to get students thinking about an intriguing question, so they have a stake in hearing the correct information, and will process it more deeply when they do.

The next clickers technique demonstrated was a jeopardy-style game in which each participant was asked to select a category and a point value, then try to answer the question first. The first person to answer each question in the 10-second time limit won the points. The question pool contained mostly true/false or multiple choice questions about effective use of clickers in the classroom, under the categories of Class Size, Learner Experience, Clicker Strategy and Research. Question values ranged from 10–50. Any question in any category could have been the basis of a lengthy discussion, but the goal at this stage was to scatter ideas for clicker use to set up participants for the next question which was the basis of a discussion about clicker use.

The discussion question was: Think about it…

> Why not have students just raise their hands and work in pairs to participate in class? What additional value does the technology bring?

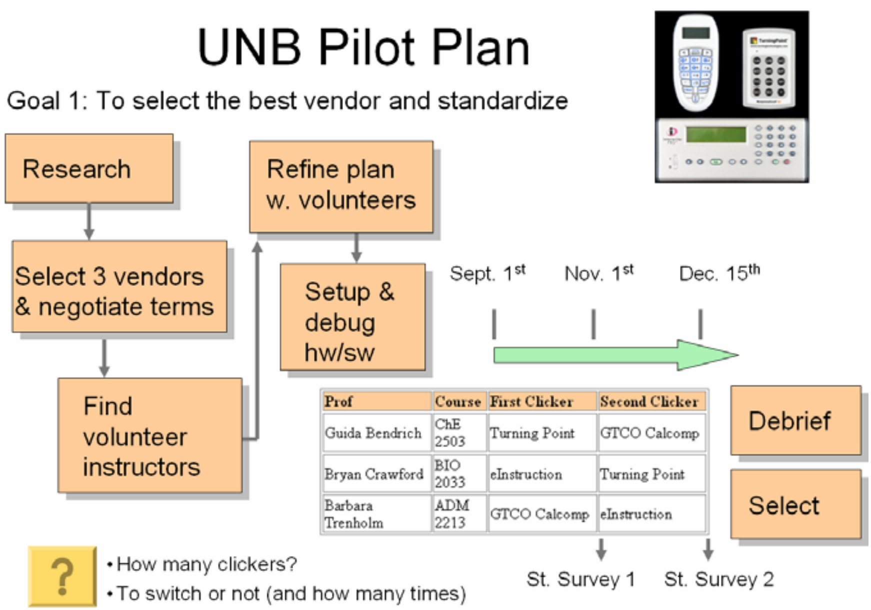
Three main points were made in response. Any instructor who asks questions in a large class at UNB knows that only a few verbal responses result. Most students are reluctant to speak out because they are not used to projecting their voices in a large room, and especially are afraid of being embarrassed by being wrong or saying things clumsily. If you ask for a show of hands, there is a slightly better participation result, but peer pressure is at play – students will generally tend to raise their hand with the majority. What are the non-participants doing? And, have students really engaged with the question or just "gone with the flow?" By contrast, with clickers, students each engage with the question to select a response, see that it has been received by the system, and then look with interest to see what everyone else selected, as depicted in the pictogram. They find out what they know and what they don't know before marks are involved. As one of the participating instructors remarked, "on a question where only a few students use clickers, more students participate in the resulting discussion than ever do so when clickers are not used."

What the UNB Clickers Pilot is Trying to Determine

One main goal of the UNB clickers pilot is to select the vendor best suited for our university and to standardize on that vendor. Standardization means that the selected vendor is the one and only one that we recommend and support in terms of setup, troubleshooting and training and coaching, although individual professors are not required to buy clickers from that vendor.

Our research led us to select the three vendors listed in the introduction: eInstruction, TurningPoint, and Interwrite PRS. They were the ones piloted or selected by universities most often. There was one unique aspect of UNB's pilot that we felt was particularly important but was missing from other pilot projects. Most clickers pilots we researched piloted only one clicker for a term or academic year. We felt that having the same students switch vendors partway through the term would yield more valuable user information. Having spent several weeks learning the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of one clicker vendor would give students a familiarity with clickers that would serve as a basis for comparison with another vendor, perhaps providing insights not otherwise attainable that would be valuable in our selection process.

Figure 2. The UNB pilot plan process flow



As can be seen in Figure 2, research led us to three vendors. All provided a free 30-day trial, but we felt a full term's use was required to obtain in-depth information about clicker use. Consequently, UNB bought 2 sets of 50 clickers and one vendor, TurningPoint, lent us 50 clickers and the receiver for free for the full term, plus loaned a laptop for the term for free. Cost constraints prevented the purchase of larger clicker sets.

Several factors were considered in selecting trial classes. Sets of 50 meant classes couldn't be too large, and we wanted to try a variety of subject areas. Also, would instructors keep the 50 and distribute and collect them each class, or would the clickers be distributed to students to keep for the length of each trial segment? After due consideration, a Chemical Engineering class of approximately 150, a Biochemistry class of approximately 100, and three sections of an Accounting class, each with 50 students, were selected. Luckily the professors involved were all advanced computer users and were open to using technology in the classroom, having integrated other aspects on technology into their content delivery.

The pilot plan was refined with input from the instructors. One major refinement was the reduction of the number of vendors each student would try from three to two, due to the increasingly apparent logistical issues connected with the distribution, collection, and redistribution involved in switching clicker vendors. The two larger classes would simply distribute 50 clickers to randomly selected students to keep for the duration of each vendor trial, and the Accounting class instructor would distribute and collect the clickers each class.

The pilot project coordinator (the author of this article) installed and learned how to use each of the vendors’ instructor software, so as to be able to set it up for the volunteer instructors and to coach them on its use.

Clickers were distributed at the beginning of the fall term (after classes had settled). To ensure the return of clickers distributed to students, the clickers were officially borrowed from the Audio Visual Equipment Pool. To expedite matters (and to compensate for the fact that the equipment pool is at a far end of the UNB campus), the coordinator did the paperwork and took the clickers to classes and signed them out there.

The clickers were collected at the end of October and redistributed to other classes according to the table in Figure 2. Online surveys were created for each instructor’s student participants. At the end of November, the clickers will be collected and a second round of online student surveys administered. A debriefing session will be held with the volunteer instructors to gather data about their experiences and ask for their recommendations. Key stakeholders will then review all information collected during the pilot and decide which clicker vendor, if any, will be selected for standardization.

Another pilot project goal was to test instructional strategies and research changes in students’ learning experience. Instructional strategies suggested by research, as well as others we have thought of are being tried and information about the experience is being gathered. In addition, two volunteer instructors are conducting research ethics approved studies comparing the attendance, performance and attitudes of students who use clickers compared with those who don't, both between sections of the same course (one section in which all students have clickers and one where none have them) and within a section where some students have clickers and some do not.

Figure 3. Clickers pilot support site

Of vital importance to the pilot's success is a central site for information dissemination, exchange, and data gathering. The pilot project coordinator created a WebCT support site with the volunteer instructors as co-developers, a status that allows them to add and edit content on the site. Information is disseminated through items such as Active Issues and News, Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs), and Important Account Information. All vendors' user guides are available there, as well as such online resources as research findings on clicker use, a question bank, pedagogical recommendations, and online resources such as the Vanderbilt Centre that offers examples of effective clicker use by subject area. Evaluation Criteria and Clicker Tips & Best Practices collect data from instructors about their clicker use experience.

What We’ve Learned So Far

All three vendors have limited question types. There are many variations on multiple choice question formats, and two vendors allow number entry, but none is well suited for math and engineering. None allow for answers with scientific notation or exponents, and there must always be only one correct answer, which eliminates asking the square root of something. One vendor allows text entry.

All three vendors have strong and weak points, but not perhaps to the same extent. The instructor software for one in particular is well integrated into PowerPoint but works *only* with PowerPoint, lacking the independent question templates of the other vendors. The other two work in conjunction with PowerPoint but instructors must manually coordinate the advancement of both the PowerPoint slide show and corresponding question templates in the software. Two of the three will not function if you do not have US-format date and time localization on your computer. Some are more ergonomically well designed than the others. Two clicker types use easily-available off-the-shelf batteries, but another uses a watch-type lithium cell that is hard to find. None work particularly well with Macs.

The time required for instructors to install the software, get it working reliably, and learn the basics of using it were much longer than expected, and all three instructors are advanced computer users.

Glitches happen from time to time (as with all software) but our experience to date is that the rate is not uncommonly high.

Using questions with clickers a few times per class to create a change of pace uses up significant class time, a fact to consider when strategizing over how much content to cover. If an instructor was already using a question-and-discussion format prior to using clickers, the use of clickers will add little time to the class. However, if clicker use requires a revamping of the teaching approach, some strategic consideration will have to be given to how much content can be covered in class and how to set up students to successfully cover some parts on their own.

Students' initial reactions to the clickers have been positive. This is the "Millennial Generation," after all, that has used technology everywhere and expects to see it used at university.

Since the October 28th 2006 presentation, students have completed the first set of online surveys about the first clicker vendor they evaluated. Students gave mostly high scores for design, reliability, and quality of learning experience. The following quotes were offered:

- I think the clickers are an excellent way of getting students to participate in class without feeling embarrassed or nervous about speaking aloud in class.
- I thought it was a very good learning tool as well as it made participation easier.
- I really enjoyed using the clicker because I could participate in class and not worry about getting the question wrong. When I did get the questions wrong I learned what I did wrong.
- I think the clicker would be useful in all large classes. Especially first year classes where there are over 300 students. I never asked a question in first year because I was forced to ask it in front of 300 or more other students. I think they are very helpful and work really well.

Not all uniformly approved. There were concerns about clicker size, durability, "clunky" integration with PowerPoint (for one or two brands in particular), glitches with clickers and software (relatively few, but significant). Students had concerns about how clickers were used (whether the best types of questions were being asked, whether content presentation was adjusted based on results, whether enough time was allotted for responding, etc.) and how effectively numerical entry was handled, for the two brands that offered this capability.

Approximately 5% of participants thought clickers were a bad idea and a waste of time.

The brand with the most limited question types and no LCD display scored lowest on design and reliability, and the corresponding attitude about clickers in general was lower in that class than for the other two, but still quite high. Most students using the non-LCD display clicker brand thought clickers were a good idea if they had a few additional features that will be addressed in that brand's next planned version release.

What Came to Light in the Discussion

The following table captures the gist of the question and answer part of the session.

Question	Answer
What to do about people who won’t use the clickers? (Some students want to be invisible, coast, and not participate-maybe work on other things during class.)	Douglas Duncan in “Clickers in the Classroom” strongly recommends that before using clickers, explain to students what clickers are, why they are being used, and what benefits students can expect. “…it is critical to explain during the first class meetings why clickers and being used and what the students will gain from their use.[2]” Clicker use generally increases class attendance. Some instructors give participation marks for using clickers. Some give 1 mark for participating and 2 marks if students get the correct answer when participating. Thought-provoking questions often do not have a single correct answer and can’t have “correct answer” marks, but add a lot to improving the student learning experience.
What do you do about students who bring non-attendees’ clickers and answer for them as well for participation marks or tests?	For those helping their absent classmates get false participation marks, it’s a matter of keeping a close eye on what’s happening in class if possible. Research has shown that such cheating is on average as high as 17%.[3] Tests can be set up so that there are several versions on paper, and the instructor software controls which clickers are assigned to which test so that students do not even realize that their neighbours have a different version. Cheating in this situation would be strongly detrimental to the cheaters.
What criteria are you using to evaluate the clickers?	Our online student surveys have questions on the subjects of clicker design, reliability, ease of use, and effect on the learner experience. Volunteer instructors are also being asked to evaluate ease of use and reliability of the instructor software and receiver, the value of the question types, and compatibility with software programs they already use.
What are some effective ways for using clickers in science? (Seems like they’re best suited for Arts.)	Actually, clickers were first pioneered by Eric Mazur of Harvard for use in Physics. They are used quite effectively in science to present thought-provoking questions that serve as the basis for discussion and peer instruction. The Vanderbilt Center for Teaching gives examples by subject area[4]. The book “Clickers in the Classroom” cited in the References section is about “How to Enhance Science Teaching Using Classroom Response Systems” based on experience at the University of Colorado.

How much do they cost?	The clickers are in the $50.00 range. eInstruction, the brand used in the presentation, cost approximately $15 but there is an online registration fee that gives prices for 1 term, all the way up to unlimited use. The latter fee in addition to the $15.00 adds up to about $50.00. Others just charge a flat purchase price in the $50.00 range. Often mail-in rebates reduce the cost, and standardization agreements may reduce prices slightly. The receivers are about $100 each. The instructor software is free.
Who pays for the clickers?	There are two basic models: students buy them at the bookstore (usually bundled with a textbook) and use them in all classes at the university where clickers are used (hence the importance of standardizing the campus to one vendor).

On a final note, clickers were used to gather feedback from participants about the presentation:

What part of the presentation was most helpful? (Answer results are in brackets.)

A. Demonstration of clicker use techniques (25%)
B. Details of the pilot plan process (37.5%)
C. Presentation of preliminary findings (12.5%)
D. Discussion (25%)

As a result of the feedback on this question, the section “What we’ve learned so far” was made the shortest in this paper.

Footnotes

1. Duncan, D. (2005). *Clickers in the Classroom: How to Enhance Science Teaching Using Classroom Response Systems.* San Francisco: Pearson Addison Wesley, p. 9.
2. Ibid, p. 21
3. Ibid, p. 50
4. Examples of clicker use by subject area – *Classroom Response Systems, Examples,* Retrieved from the Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University Web site: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/cft/resources/teaching_resources/ technology/crs.htm#examples (Scroll up to view the table of contents of the entire resource.)

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A compendium of Research on Learning, Questioning and Student Response Systems. CoolSchoolTools.com. Retrieved from http://www.coolschooltools.com/cps/research.html

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WWW.LEARNRUBRICS.CA: Learning Assessing through an Interactive Website

Abstract

This paper introduces an electronic learning environment (interactive website) through which experienced and prospective teachers, parents, K-12 students and others can learn about the rubrics (holistic and analytic scales) that are used for assessing students' progress in language arts. Also included will be a brief analysis of the data gathered by the beta version of the site, including the comparative scores of different user groups. The goal of the interactive website is to help raise the level of children's language arts achievement by familiarizing teachers, education students, and parents with assessments as applied in the provincially-developed analytic and holistic scoring rubrics. Because of the global nature of curricular frameworks, the rubrics and the educational goals defined in the research project are widely applicable.

Introduction

Assessment is an ever-present issue in education, whether it concerns accountability, teacher practices, improvement of student learning, or education students' acquisition of evaluation competencies. This paper introduces an electronic learning environment (interactive website) designed as an instrument for familiarizing prospective teachers with provincial curriculum and assessment practices, including the rubrics (both holistic and analytic scales) that are used for assessing students' progress in language arts.[1] The site is also intended as a professional development tool through which experienced teachers may confirm the accuracy of their in-classroom assessments. Until recently, the site has

[1] The website and research is a collaborative project between Department of Education personnel (Educational Statistics and Testing Branch), the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the Centre for Distance learning and Innovation (CDLI), and the local university (Faculty of Education), who view themselves as partners in accountability for educational quality.

displayed only assessments related to English Language Arts. The site is currently being expanded to include mathematics-related assessments, beginning with primary (grade 3).

The Department of Education of Newfoundland and Labrador (DoENL) since the 90s has introduced assessments to reflect changes in curriculum that include expanded literacies, outcomes-based learning, and Essential Graduation Learnings. More recently, the DoENL has added other literacies to the assessment package. Children still write demand and process pieces, but they also read narrative and informational texts with prose and illustrations, read poems, respond to mostly visual advertisements, and demonstrate listening skills. Responses to questions asked about these texts are primarily written, but the students are also required to fill in a chart or draw a picture. A provincial panel of teachers using rubrics developed for the purpose scores all these tasks.

The interactive learning site, www.learnrubrics.ca, includes samples of children's demand and process writing, and their responses to narratives, informational texts, poems, and visual texts. Eight samples of children's work in each category, at grade levels 3, 6, and 9 are provided for scoring using the departments' rubrics. See Appendix A for a list of texts for scoring. Site visitors read the work, consult the rubric, and submit their score for each piece. See appendices B, C, and D for examples of this process. Immediately their score is presented with the provincial panel's and other users' scores for comparison and the panel's assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the piece is provided for learning purposes (Appendix E). The site user can then go on to score other pieces.

Teacher Education and Professional Development

Teachers are encouraged to use the same kinds of tasks for classroom assessments, and to score them using the provincial rubrics. (Note that appendix D shows an holistic rubric; appendix F shows an analytic scoring rubric). This attempts to ensure that the yearly provincial assessments match both mandated curriculum and daily practice in schools. Linn, Baker and Dunbar (1991) indicate that "[p]roviding training and support for teachers… is essential. But validity teaching for success on these assessments is a challenge in itself and pushes the boundaries of what we know about teaching and learning. Because we have no ready technology to assist on the instructional side, performance gaps may persist" (p. 18). I suggest the website I am describing is "ready technology". The site also has great potential for training future provincial scoring panels, ensuring that as many teachers as possible are involved in the assessment process.

Education students have opportunity to familiarize themselves with children's writing, representing (in drawings), and reading responses and to compare their assessments of these answers with trained teachers' scores. As new assessments are introduced, like the mathematics assessments currently being added to the site, education students can learn about the tests and the kinds of responses children offer.

In any school system, where educational quality is always a concern, assessment issues, including fidelity to learning objectives and processes, efficiency, year-to-year comparability, year-to-year similarity in prompts and tasks, racial/ethnic fairness (Linn, Baker and Dunbar, 1991), are important. In addition to these validity factors, other considerations such as the "intended and unintended effects on the ways teachers and students spend their time and think about the goals of education" (Linn et al., p. 17) should be considered. The NL assessments (and the interactive learning site) encourage teachers and future teachers to read a variety of kinds of texts with students and to ask them to respond in a variety of ways, such as illustrating their understanding of a poem's meanings and charting information, rather than limiting testing to written questions and answers (see appendix G). Teachers and interns can draw on their experience with holistic and analytic rubrics on the interactive website, and their practice scoring children's texts, to confidently evaluate their students' work in their classrooms.

Assuring Reliability in Scoring Assessments

One of the issues related to performance assessments is reliability. Those responsible to such assessments need to assure that, irrespective of task, raters using the rubric will score consistently. Research indicates that elements to ensure such consistency include training, monitoring scoring, acceptable inter-rater reliability rates, and size of sample needed to establish reliable measurement (Crehan, 1997). The Department of Education of Newfoundland and Labrador, a partner in this research, regularly recruits and trains teachers to use rubrics for their large-scale assessments. This is an expensive and time consuming process, requiring the removal of teachers from their classrooms employment of substitute teachers (who are not always easily available in rural NL) and the expense of travel and accommodation whole they practice scoring writing samples. My supposition is that this process can be equally well handled through an interactive website that provides this same practice, in a closed web environment, to the selected teachers. Other web-based technologies like discussion boards can be utilized for the more social and qualitative aspects of the learning. The rubric and how to use it might be explored, questions about others' scoring discussed, examples of the strengths and weaknesses observed in the writing shared, disagreements worked out, and consistency and community built among the scoring panel before they assemble on site at the DoENL offices to score the actual assessments. The website can also be used by raters to assure themselves individually that their scores are consistent with those previously determined (intra-rater reliability).

Research Potential of the Site WWW.LEARNRUBRICS.CA

Research data, available only to the researchers, is collected on the interactive website in the form of statistics that describe users' scoring patterns. E-mail addresses provided by users will also permit researchers to ask users of the site to respond to a questionnaire that inquires about their opinions on the site, the use of rubrics in their classes, their changing practices, and their attitudes toward provincial assessments. (This research is yet to be conducted.) Thus various kinds of data can be analyzed to learn about the web learning environment, the use of analytic rating scales, and the effectiveness of instruction for prospective teachers and professional development for teachers when new kinds of assessments are implemented.

For the pilot study, two broad research questions were explored: Is the site a good learning tool? Is the site a good research tool? For this research, to be reported elsewhere, part of one set of data collected in the beta site was used – the scores for the eight pieces of writing in the primary category, as scored by in-service/experienced teachers and pre-service/prospective teachers. The scores for the selections were standardized, for ease of viewing, from a 1-to-5 scale to a 0-to-6 scale. This re-scaling creates a more accurate visual representation of difference (Appendix H).

Educational Importance of the Study

This project is important in a number of ways. First, it is important that we identify efficient, effective ways of expediting professional development for teachers. With the introduction of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) curriculum and the provincial assessments, on-going in Atlantic Canada since 1996, teachers have been required to learn different practices for teaching and assessing learning. Time, geography, and financial and human resources have mitigated against the efficient provision of the needed professional development experiences; thus innovative methods for the provision of in-service learning opportunities are important.

Also important are practical educational experiences for pre-service teachers. Opportunities for interacting with and evaluating students' actual texts are essential if the students are to be well prepared to assume their role as teachers in their own classrooms, responsible for assigning grades and thus influencing the futures of their students.

Thirdly, it is important for universities and departments of education to collaborate on projects of mutual interest that impact the quality of education in a region. It is also important that researchers in faculties of education critique and challenge the practices of departments of education, based on solid study.

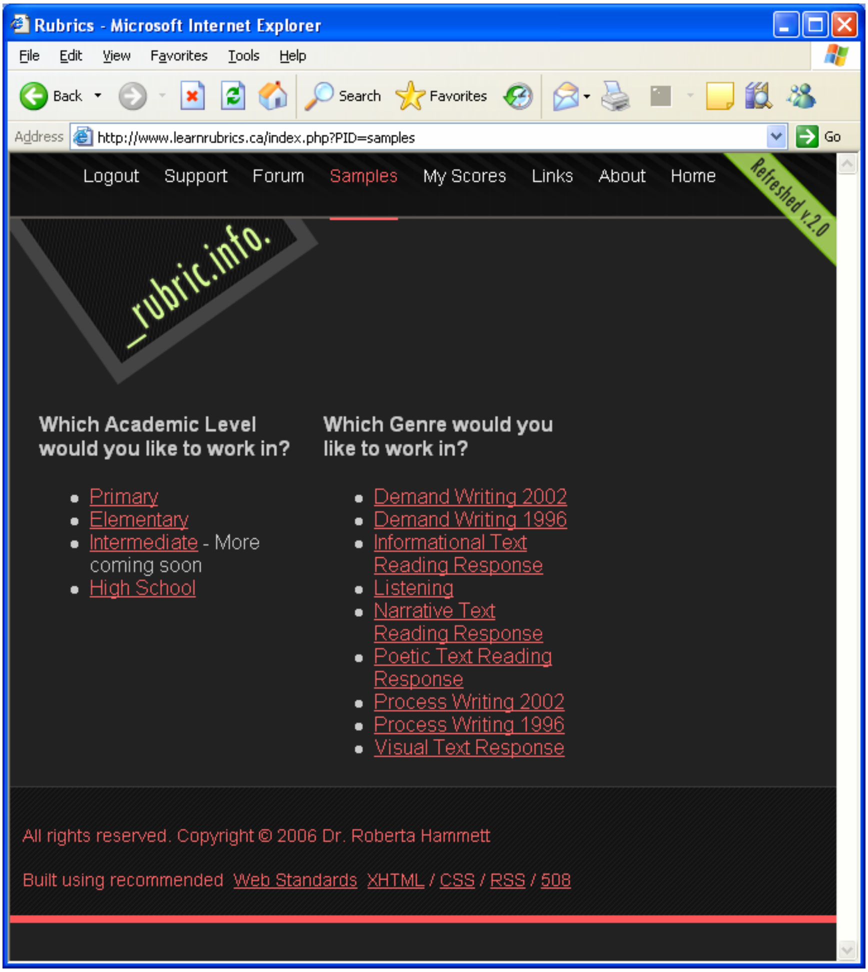
Finally, this research demonstrates an innovative use of technology in educational improvement. The specially-designed software has the potential for use by other educational institutions and school districts. Indeed, this website is being expanded to incorporate assessment of mathematics and other disciplines. The site design can be applied in other jurisdictions as well as expanded over time to accommodate changes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

References

Crehan, K. (1997). *A discussion of analytic scoring for writing performance assessments*. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Arizona Educational Research Association, Phoenix, AZ, October 1997. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 414 336.

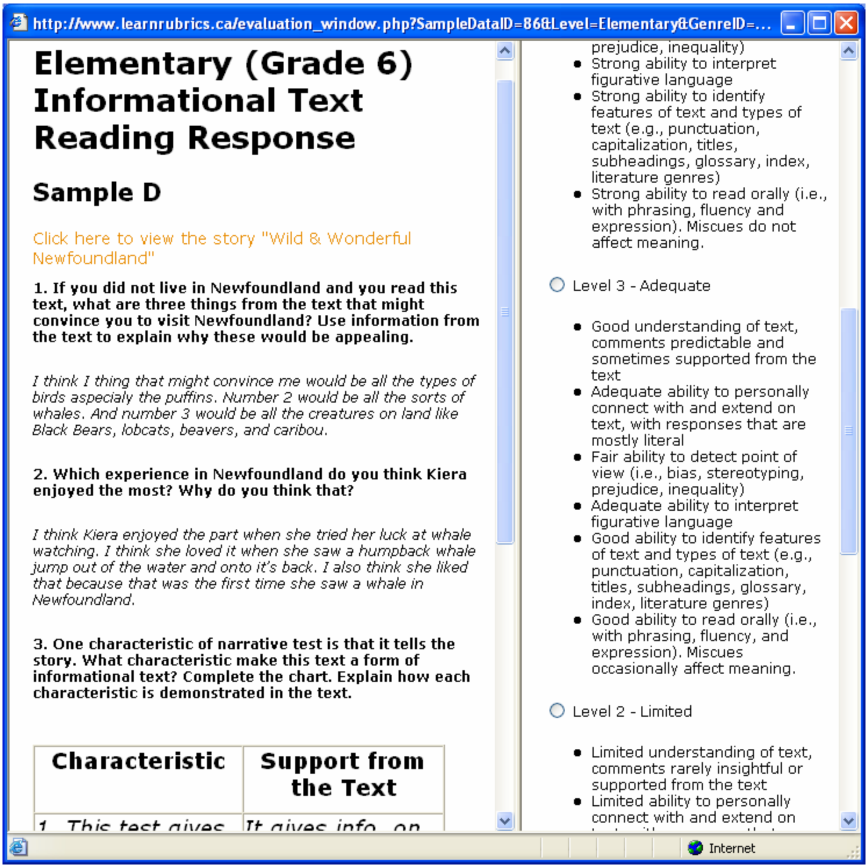
Linn, R. L., Baker, E. L. & Dunbar, S. B. (1991). Complex, performance-based assessment: Expectations and validation criteria, *Educational Researcher, 20*(8), 15-21.

Appendix A
List of Texts for Scoring



Appendix B

Informational Reading Assessment, Grade 6, with Display of Student Response and Holistic Scoring Rubric



http://www.learnrubrics.ca/evaluation_window.php?SampleDataID=86&Level=Elementary&GenreID=...

Elementary (Grade 6) Informational Text Reading Response

Sample D

Click here to view the story "Wild & Wonderful Newfoundland"

1. If you did not live in Newfoundland and you read this text, what are three things from the text that might convince you to visit Newfoundland? Use information from the text to explain why these would be appealing.

I think I thing that might convince me would be all the types of birds aspecialy the puffins. Number 2 would be all the sorts of whales. And number 3 would be all the creatures on land like Black Bears, lobcats, beavers, and caribou.

2. Which experience in Newfoundland do you think Kiera enjoyed the most? Why do you think that?

I think Kiera enjoyed the part when she tried her luck at whale watching. I think she loved it when she saw a humpback whale jump out of the water and onto it's back. I also think she liked that because that was the first time she saw a whale in Newfoundland.

3. One characteristic of narrative test is that it tells the story. What characteristic make this text a form of informational text? Complete the chart. Explain how each characteristic is demonstrated in the text.

Characteristic	Support from the Text
1. This test gives	It gives info. on

prejudice, inequality)
- Strong ability to interpret figurative language
- Strong ability to identify features of text and types of text (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, titles, subheadings, glossary, index, literature genres)
- Strong ability to read orally (i.e., with phrasing, fluency and expression). Miscues do not affect meaning.

Level 3 - Adequate

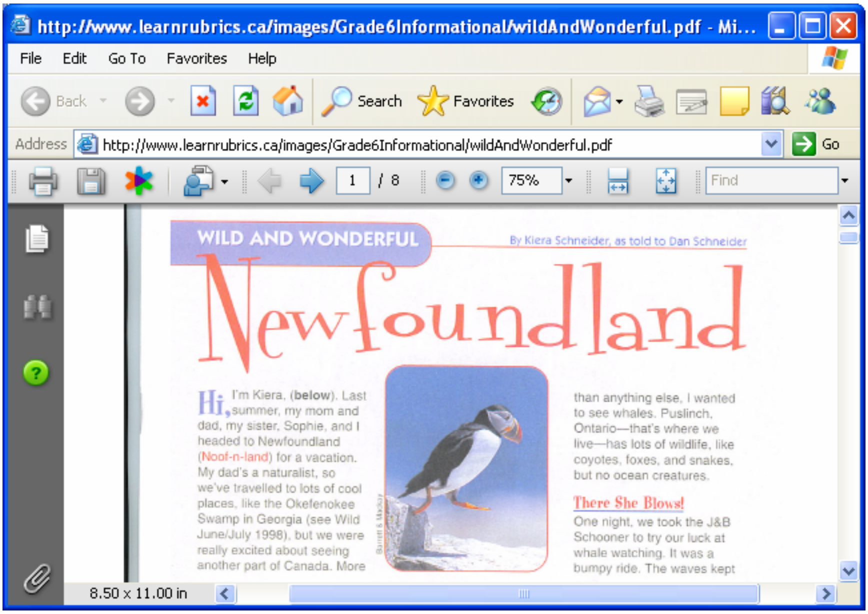
- Good understanding of text, comments predictable and sometimes supported from the text
- Adequate ability to personally connect with and extend on text, with responses that are mostly literal
- Fair ability to detect point of view (i.e., bias, stereotyping, prejudice, inequality)
- Adequate ability to interpret figurative language
- Good ability to identify features of text and types of text (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, titles, subheadings, glossary, index, literature genres)
- Good ability to read orally (i.e., with phrasing, fluency, and expression). Miscues occasionally affect meaning.

Level 2 - Limited

- Limited understanding of text, comments rarely insightful or supported from the text
- Limited ability to personally connect with and extend on

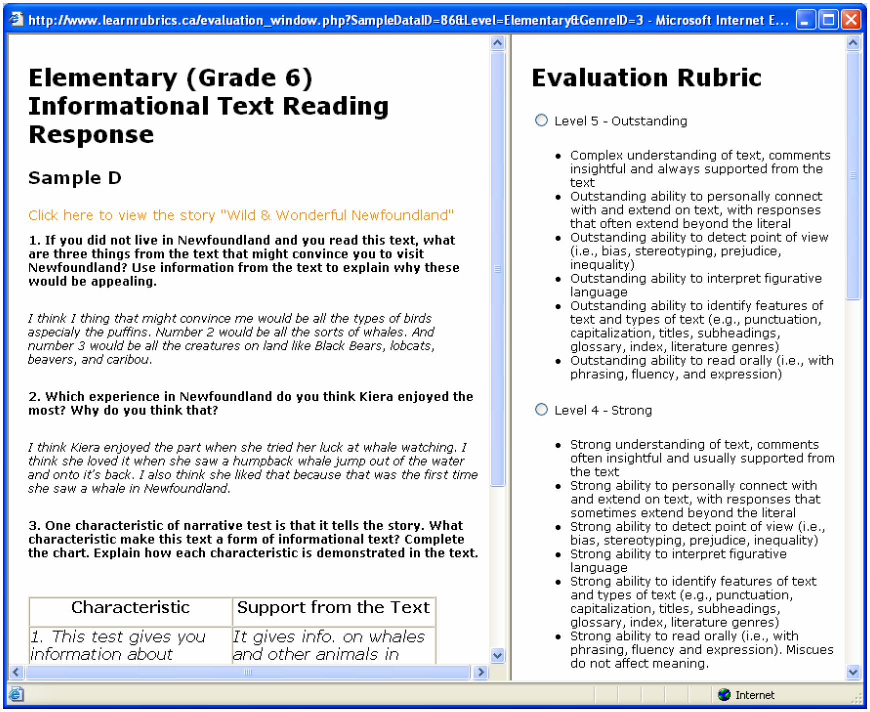
Internet

Appendix C
Informational Reading Assessment, Grade 6, with Display of Assessment Text for Site User to Consult



Appendix D

Informational Reading Assessment, Grade 6, with Display of Student Response, Holistic Scoring Rubric, and Site User's Selected Score (Ready to Submit)


http://www.learnrubrics.ca/evaluation_window.php?SampleDataID=86&Level=Elementary&GenreID=3 - Microsoft Internet E...

Elementary (Grade 6) Informational Text Reading Response

Sample D

Click here to view the story "Wild & Wonderful Newfoundland"

1. If you did not live in Newfoundland and you read this text, what are three things from the text that might convince you to visit Newfoundland? Use information from the text to explain why these would be appealing.

I think I thing that might convince me would be all the types of birds aspecialy the puffins. Number 2 would be all the sorts of whales. And number 3 would be all the creatures on land like Black Bears, lobcats, beavers, and caribou.

2. Which experience in Newfoundland do you think Kiera enjoyed the most? Why do you think that?

I think Kiera enjoyed the part when she tried her luck at whale watching. I think she loved it when she saw a humpback whale jump out of the water and onto it's back. I also think she liked that because that was the first time she saw a whale in Newfoundland.

3. One characteristic of narrative test is that it tells the story. What characteristic make this text a form of informational text? Complete the chart. Explain how each characteristic is demonstrated in the text.

Characteristic	Support from the Text
1. This test gives you information about	*It gives info. on whales and other animals in*

Evaluation Rubric

Level 5 - Outstanding

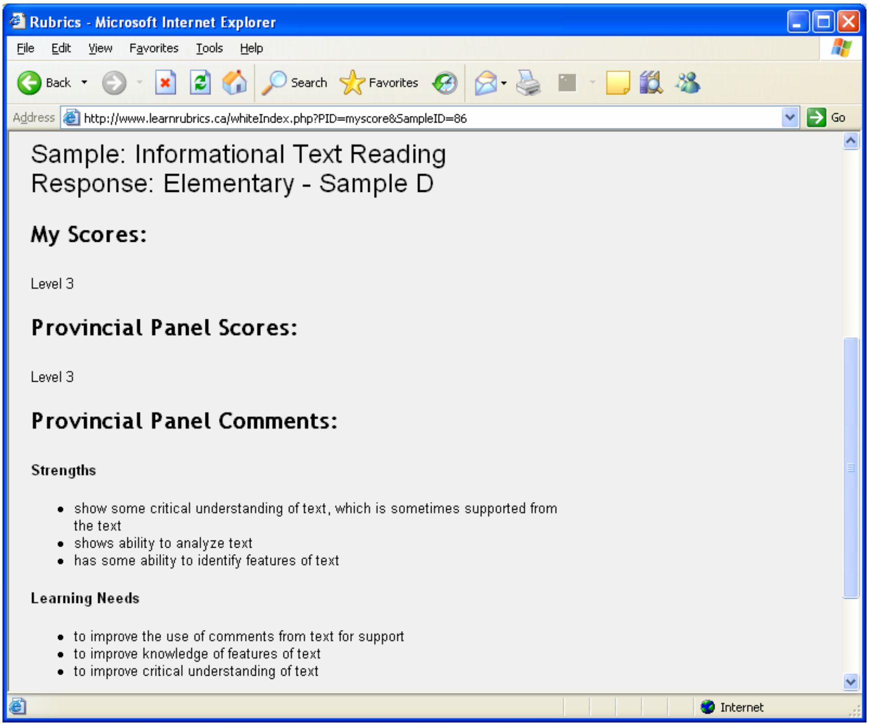
- Complex understanding of text, comments insightful and always supported from the text
- Outstanding ability to personally connect with and extend on text, with responses that often extend beyond the literal
- Outstanding ability to detect point of view (i.e., bias, stereotyping, prejudice, inequality)
- Outstanding ability to interpret figurative language
- Outstanding ability to identify features of text and types of text (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, titles, subheadings, glossary, index, literature genres)
- Outstanding ability to read orally (i.e., with phrasing, fluency, and expression)

Level 4 - Strong

- Strong understanding of text, comments often insightful and usually supported from the text
- Strong ability to personally connect with and extend on text, with responses that sometimes extend beyond the literal
- Strong ability to detect point of view (i.e., bias, stereotyping, prejudice, inequality)
- Strong ability to interpret figurative language
- Strong ability to identify features of text and types of text (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, titles, subheadings, glossary, index, literature genres)
- Strong ability to read orally (i.e., with phrasing, fluency and expression). Miscues do not affect meaning.

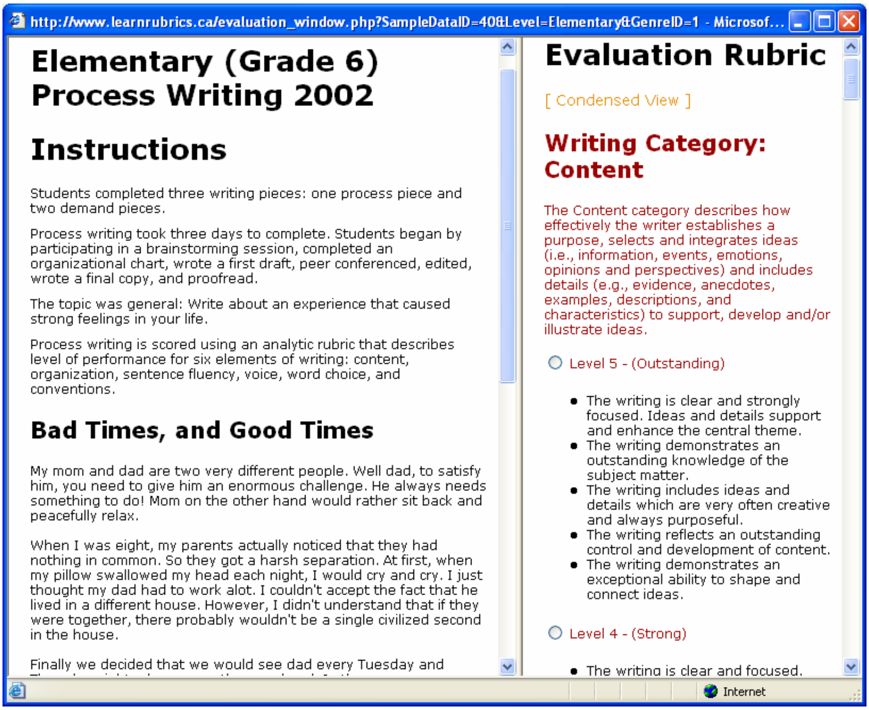
Internet

Appendix E
Informational Reading Assessment, Grade 6, with Display of Feedback for Web Scorer



Appendix F

Analytic Scoring Rubric



http://www.learnrubrics.ca/evaluation_window.php?SampleDataID=40&Level=Elementary&GenreID=1 - Microsof...

Elementary (Grade 6) Process Writing 2002

Instructions

Students completed three writing pieces: one process piece and two demand pieces.

Process writing took three days to complete. Students began by participating in a brainstorming session, completed an organizational chart, wrote a first draft, peer conferenced, edited, wrote a final copy, and proofread.

The topic was general: Write about an experience that caused strong feelings in your life.

Process writing is scored using an analytic rubric that describes level of performance for six elements of writing: content, organization, sentence fluency, voice, word choice, and conventions.

Bad Times, and Good Times

My mom and dad are two very different people. Well dad, to satisfy him, you need to give him an enormous challenge. He always needs something to do! Mom on the other hand would rather sit back and peacefully relax.

When I was eight, my parents actually noticed that they had nothing in common. So they got a harsh separation. At first, when my pillow swallowed my head each night, I would cry and cry. I just thought my dad had to work alot. I couldn't accept the fact that he lived in a different house. However, I didn't understand that if they were together, there probably wouldn't be a single civilized second in the house.

Finally we decided that we would see dad every Tuesday and

Evaluation Rubric

[Condensed View]

Writing Category: Content

The Content category describes how effectively the writer establishes a purpose, selects and integrates ideas (i.e., information, events, emotions, opinions and perspectives) and includes details (e.g., evidence, anecdotes, examples, descriptions, and characteristics) to support, develop and/or illustrate ideas.

Level 5 - (Outstanding)

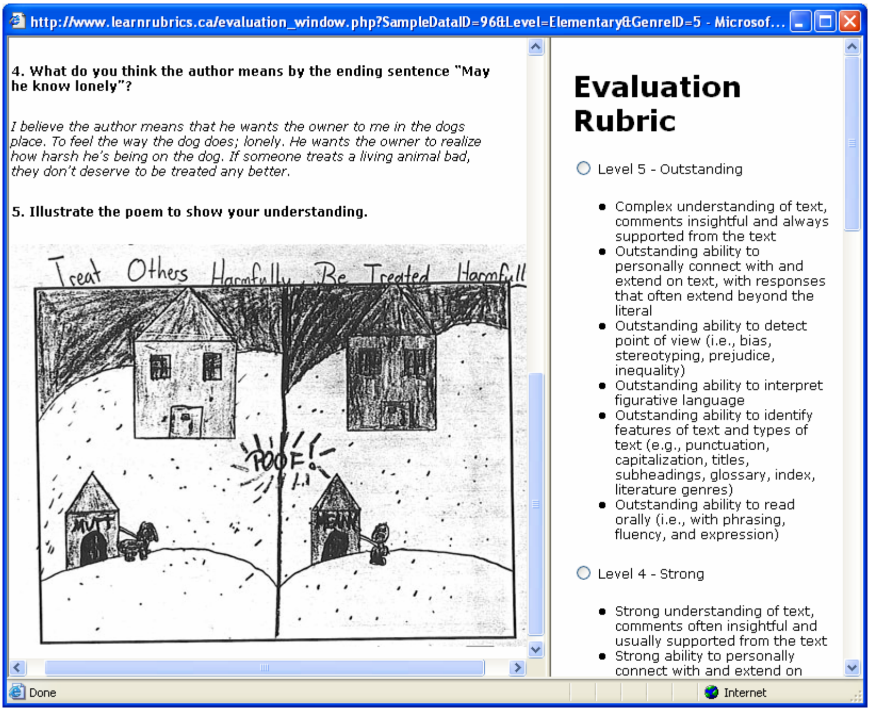
- The writing is clear and strongly focused. Ideas and details support and enhance the central theme.
- The writing demonstrates an outstanding knowledge of the subject matter.
- The writing includes ideas and details which are very often creative and always purposeful.
- The writing reflects an outstanding control and development of content.
- The writing demonstrates an exceptional ability to shape and connect ideas.

Level 4 - (Strong)

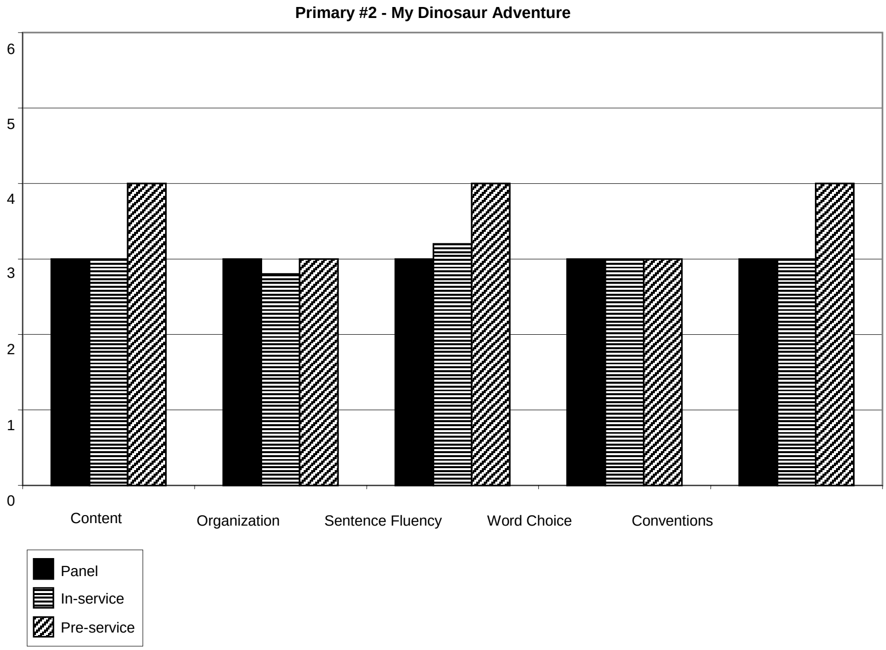
- The writing is clear and focused.

Internet

Appendix G
Children's Responses Include Visual Representations of the Text's Meaning



Appendix H
Comparison of Scores



Upcoming Editions of the Teaching Story: Professional Development of Graduate Teaching Assistants

Prochaines étapes en enseignement : le développement professionnel des titulaires de postes d’assistants à l’enseignement

Elizabeth Wells
Mount Allison University

Teaching, Learning, and Interning: One Professor's Perspective on an Experiential Teaching Intern Program

Abstract

Through Mount Allison's Undergraduate Teaching Internship Programme, professors pair with a student intern who performs a variety of teaching duties in a particular class. This paper will tell the story of the programme by a professor who has participated twice. It explores how the internships energized the professors who mentor the student interns, how it enriched learning for students in classes where interns worked, how interns themselves developed (and documented) skills, knowledge and values through their participation in the programme; and the substantial pros and occasional cons of the internship from an instructor's perspective. The time commitment, advance planning, and appropriate duties and responsibilities of the interns are discussed, and a case study of two interns for one introductory-level course provides a context from which internship in general can be viewed.

The publicity material supplied by General Electric for their innovations program begins with the single word "Imagine…" When GE awarded a substantial grant to Mount Allison University to fund their Teaching Internship Program in 2005, it was easy to fill in the blanks: imagine senior undergraduate students teaching classes, leading seminars, and conducting extra-help sessions; professors energized as they discuss teaching strategies and approaches with their interns; and first-year students sharing senior students' passion for learning. All these outcomes have been realities for those involved in Mount Allison University's Internship Program. This program, generously funded for two years by General Electric, has brought together 125 professor/intern partnerships, teaching everything from music to mathematics over the past two-year period. The goal of the program has been to foster an atmosphere of experiential learning and one-on-one mentorship between intern and professor. It also has meant, of course, to enhance the learning experience for the students in the courses in which each intern operates. By choosing duties and activities that create a learning environment for both interns and students, a professor can greatly increase the excitement and energy in those courses. Although the duties, responsibilities, and experiences of the many faculty who took part in this program differ from intern to intern, a case study of one professor with two interns will show the substantial pros and occasional cons of the program.

Implementation

General Electric funded, through the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, a pilot which began in the Fall of 2005. The donation, totaling $100,000, has been spread out over two years to allow the maximum number of faculty members to take advantage of this opportunity. Funding covers the stipends of the students (approximately $750 based on a 5-hour work week per semester), a small allowance for teaching materials for the professor, and the costs of administering the program. Although the funding for the program from GE ends with this academic year, Mount Allison is seeking other avenues of support to keep this very valuable program running. Eileen Herteis, Director of the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, has administered the program, with the help of an intern in some of the semesters the program has operated.

Recruitment of Faculty and Interns

The first concern that the program raises is how professors, so accustomed to a particular and often solitary method of instruction, will react to such an idea. Will the undergraduate students chosen be trained adequately and have significant background to assist with the course? Will they be privy to the grades and performance of some of their undergraduate colleagues? How will they interact with other undergraduates in a system which seems to establish them as authority figures? How much time, energy, and commitment will the program take? For professors carrying a heavy teaching and research load, the thought of adding another series of duties and responsibilities can be daunting. Although some of the obvious benefits of the program can certainly be imagined, how many faculty will be ready and willing to take on a new, experimental program that might not "work" for their course?

The second concern is recruitment of student interns. Although there are always students who excel in their coursework, they may not have the particular skills or interest in taking on a leadership role in the classroom. Like professors, students are usually fully committed to their existing courses and workload. Five hours per week is a substantial time commitment for full-time undergraduate students, no matter how talented and productive they might be. Although the stipend is a fairly attractive one (averaging $10 per hour for the semester), the intern will by necessity need to learn new skills and take on areas of responsibility that usually only the professor does. The skills of the prospective student may not match the intentions or plans of the professor for the particular course. And more importantly, how will an internship differ from a simple teaching assistantship? What documents and processes will ensure this contrast?

The Learning Contract

One of the elements that make this program different from a normal teaching assistantship is the development and implementation of a Learning Contract. Mentors and interns establish guidelines for their partnership, sharing individual and joint expectations and values. The contract addresses a number of questions: What goals do you each have for the Internship? What duties and responsibilities will the intern have in terms of teaching, grading, leading tutorials, finding materials, etc.? Duties aside, what goals do you have for acquiring knowledge, skills (or values)? How will you know when you have met these goals? What can you do to help each other achieve these goals? Meeting with the student to establish the guidelines for the internship is one of the first and most important steps in the internship process. The Learning Contract generally used at Mount Allison is one adapted from North Carolina Wesleyan College (see Appendix A) and involves a number of areas of development and contribution. The sample contract, by Matthew Andriessen[1] in Mount Allison's music department, gives an example of the kinds of activities agreed to in the Contract. Not so much a promise of productivity, the contract instead offers an opportunity for both professor and intern to creatively imagine ways that the student can learn skills and course material and how these objectives will be

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[1] Names have been changed

realized and documented. The development of the contract is one of the most important processes in the internship, focussed as it is on learning outcomes, not just duties assigned or agreed to.

Internship Duties and Activities

The duties and responsibilities of the intern are as various as the partnerships themselves. In a general sense, however, the internship activities tend to run along certain general guidelines: helping to plan the course and testing strategies, choosing text books or other supplementary materials; presenting or co-presenting classes; running extra-help sessions; providing review before tests; giving help in writing essays; marking assignments; and using WebCT, Mount Allison's online course delivery system. Most interns take on a variety of tasks, the less quotidian the better, in most cases. Attending each course lecture is often a component of the commitment, but for courses that the student has already taken, it is sometimes more profitable for interns to attend some class hours and to spend the rest of their time on formative or organizational work.

Professional Development and Networking

Teaching can seem like a very solitary activity, and so can being a teaching intern. Faced with different kinds of challenges and difficulties, interns sometimes need more support than simply the encouragement or guidance of their individual faculty mentors. At Mount Allison, the internship began with a meeting including all professor and intern teams. The participants introduced themselves and the courses they would be teaching, and the Director and administrator of the program covered the basics of the internship, including how the interns would be remunerated and basic information on their duties and rights. Over the course of the semester additional meetings were held to help the interns to develop a Learning Portfolio, another important aspect of the program which makes it different from a teaching assistantship. Put simply, a Learning Portfolio is a strategic collection of student work, representing an array of performance over time. It presents a complementary balance of narrative sections and evidence, and is an authentic approach that encourages students to reflect in and on learning. Typical elements of the Portfolio are lesson plans, rubrics, or assignments that the intern has created; letters from the faculty mentor or student evaluations; and reflection on how well the student has achieved the goals of the internship as well as future goals. Assembled over the course of the internship, the Learning Portfolio is both a product and a process. Portfolios help students to translate experience into learning through reflection, analysis, and documentation.[2] The student asks what he or she has learned, and how that learning has taken place. Helping to establish what kind of learner the intern is, the Portfolio is an important step in facilitating future learning. Along with what has been learned, the intern is prompted to imagine what more they want to learn, and how they will go about learning it. The Portfolio is not simply a document that the student puts away after the internship is over; many interns from Mount Allison's program have used the Portfolio as evidence of teaching experience when applying for teaching assistantships in graduate school.

At the end of the Internship, participants meet again for a discussion of the experience, sharing stories of teaching successes and failures, comparing notes on how particular duties were carried out, and giving advice to interns involved in the next cohort. This process allows the intern to feel part of a larger peer group that shares the intern's concerns and experiences. An evaluation of the program by both intern and professor rounds out the internship and allows both to reflect on what worked and what caveats they would give future partnerships.

Commitment and Advance Planning

Although certainly help with grading and class presentation would seem to lighten the professor's load, an internship in fact increases the time and energy commitment on the part of the instructor. From an institutional perspective, a director or administrator of the program is essential, as well as lead time to plan the meetings, documents, and processes that are required to make the program work. Although each student commits 70 hours for the semester, the time commitment for the faculty mentor varies from person to person. Certainly, each

[2] Herteis, Eileen. (2004). Experiential learning portfolios in professional programs: A Canadian perspective. In Zubizarreta, J. *The learning portfolio: Reflectiv practice for improving student learning*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

professor who is contemplating the program needs to spend some time looking at their courses and selecting one which would benefit most from the internship. Although at first glance, the larger-enrollment courses would seem the obvious ones, internship sometimes works better with smaller or elective courses. Although help with grading or class management may not be as urgent, these courses can benefit from interns who like to meet one-on-one with students and help with writing or essay skills. One good rule of thumb is to choose a course that the professor feels may have become "tired" or a new, experimental course where some assistance and added input would be of great value. Once a course has been selected, the professor needs to think carefully about how the intern will be integrated into the course, how the course will need to adjust to account for the intern's duties and identity. A semester's worth of advance planning, at least in this regard, is valuable, if not absolutely essential. Meeting with the intern for the development of the Learning Contract and discussion over the intern duties takes another several hours of consultation. Answering emails, attending meetings, and dealing with the more administrative of the internship tasks adds up to only a few hours over the semester, as does the completion of the internship evaluation at the end of the course. Meetings with the intern vary widely, from very little to a few hours per week. Writing up assessments of the student's lectures or work from the internship may take up to three hours throughout the semester. The internship certainly does not save time, but the time and energy committed to it enhances the professor's (and the students') experience of the course.

Case Study: Wells with Warner and Andriessen

I first became involved in the Internship program at its inception in Fall of 2005, and since then I have had two (and am currently on my third) intern. Andrea Warner and Matthew Andriessen assisted me as interns in a course entitled "Introduction to Music History and Literature" in Fall 2005 and 2006 respectively. This course was a foundation first-year course I had created in 2004 that was meant to ground entering music majors in the basic history of classical music while at the same time developing research, writing, and critical skills. It was a tough course for both students and professor, with a heavy workload of assignments and marking. I had taught it on my own in 2004, but due to illness could not see out the semester. I was eager to get at it again, this time with an intern. Of all my courses, this one seemed the most appropriate: it was experimental, it dealt with students new to university, and it attempted to do many things at once. The first task was to choose my intern. Although simply relying on a GPA or a high mark in the course would be an automatic criterion for most professors, I have learned that seeking out students with ideas was more important. In all cases, I have sought out interns who interact well with others, who are vocal about their ideas, and who are genuinely interested in broader aspects of education. My experience with each intern was quite different, leading me to new methods and approaches to the class. With Andrea I met a number of times over the summer, both of us getting used to the idea of the internship, and fleshing out what Andrea's needs were and how she saw the class. She was a fourth-year student who had never taken this particular course, and so she was able to react to the content and assignments newly (like a first year student might) but with the experience of already finishing our core music history sequence. She could tell me what was missing in the sequence and how she felt the course might remedy those areas. Matt was quite different: he had taken the first incarnation of the course, and had been a very vocal student in it. With him we reviewed what had gone well and badly the first and second times around, what he had wished he had done in the course as a student, and how other students reacted to the course in general. Both Andrea and Matt were excellent students, with different kinds of intelligence and skills that they brought to the table. These initial discussions were key to my rethinking of the course. Were there too many assignments? Should I change the listening lists? Should anything be added, or taken away?

After revamping and refining some areas of the syllabus, we went on to forge the Learning Contracts. Both Matt and Andrea, although very different in personality and career objectives, both wanted to do some very similar things: lecture, mark, and be a resource for the students. Their lecturing styles were quite different: Andrea was more artistic, creative, and whimsical in her lecture style, whereas Matt was a very PowerPoint-oriented person who was a stern taskmaster. Their marking styles were quite different as well: Andrea came up with a grading rubric, then refined it when it didn't seem to reflect the true character of submitted assignments, whereas Matt made up a very detailed and rigorous rubric that he stuck with throughout the semester, even in the face of some student criticism. Both took their approach to one-on-one guidance differently; Andrea was approached by students after and between classes for feedback and support; Matt set up specific meetings with groups of students to discuss research strategies at a certain point in the semester. Both saw themselves going on to grad school, and wanted experiences that would give them a good feel as to what teaching in a university is really like. By the end of the process, both seemed to feel that they had learned this. Andrea says, "My teaching internship has given me a tremendous advantage in securing assistantships and being successful at them in graduate school. The one-on-one experience working with Dr. Wells was invaluable; she taught me how to communicate more effectively with students through the example of her teaching and through her helpful critique of my own. The opportunity to grade regularly and to be solely accountable for those grades gave me a sense of the responsibility of a professor, and helped me to understand the significance of a professor's dedication to providing detailed comments. Being a teaching intern was among the most beneficial learning experiences of my undergraduate career." Matt adds, "The internship gave me valuable experience in many aspects of university teaching, including lecture preparation, lecture skills, marking and course planning. Dr. Wells gave me pertinent feedback on improving lecture skills,and dealing with students one-on-one. Through the internship at Mount Allison University, I also had a chance to exercise these skills with a small class of first-year students, but always with firm guidance from Dr. Wells, who was very forgiving of errors and encouraging in new ideas."

The benefits of having both interns were tremendous to me. The process of revisiting the syllabus was something I could not experience from simply reading end-of-term student evaluations and implementing their suggestions. The interns really took on the role of course designers and thought through every aspect of the course. I have always belaboured marking, wondering if I am always objective and clear in my assessments and expectations. The creation of a rubric which was designed by a student helped greatly with this, and allowed the interns to be comfortably accountable to the students. I had very few, if any, complaints that the interns were marking too hard, or that the feedback was not understood. The course itself involved eight listening logs, fairly lengthy journals that students completed after listening to musical examples. I split the marking with the interns so that each of us would take one week's journals. By comparing my own marking with that of the interns, I was able to reflect on my own approaches to student work, and it helped me to clarify what my objectives were with the assignments. Watching my interns lecture was a good reflection to me of myself in front of the classroom. Small habits or styles that infect my own teaching were made more obvious to me by seeing my interns do the same things. The content of the modules they taught gave me insight into how I would teach the same material. Both interns lectured, not on music history per se, but on study skills, citation styles, how to approach listening journals, etc. By watching their presentations, I was able to see what an undergraduate needs to be told about these areas.

One of the greatest advantages of the internship for me was that the intern could take the intellectual and emotional temperature of the class and relay that back to me. Any issues of boredom, frustration, confusion, or excitement were easily perceived by the interns, and they could give me guidance on my approach or technique. I was simply too far away from the students because of my age and experience to always be able to determine these things accurately for myself. The interns helped me to see the class in a fresh way.

Not every aspect of the internship was easy or positive. With both interns, inexperience in public speaking or classroom teaching was something I had not adequately anticipated. Although their sessions were well received by the class, sometimes small errors or confusing methods of instruction left me in a tough position. I did not want to correct the interns in front of the class, but I also didn't want the students to become confused. Although I had discussed the content of the modules with the interns in advance, I still did not know exactly what was going to happen in each lecture, and I had to be very alert to guiding in a positive and discreet way. Matt led a discussion when I was out of town, and decided to give the students a new, interesting listening assignment. I did not know this was going to happen in advance, and so had to communicate to the students that this was not required, since I had no place for an extra assignment in my syllabus. The problem was fairly easily solved, but happened as the result of an inexperienced intern trying to do something interesting without thinking of all the ramifications.

I also had not anticipated in advance how much energy and time the internship would require. Although I met with interns for shorter periods of time and more infrequently than some of my colleagues, I felt at the end of the process that I should have given them more formal feedback on their work on the course. They were so able and helpful in the course that I forgot they were still students, not colleagues, and that my responsibility was to teach them as much as I could, not simply rely on them for support. Although I talked to my interns frequently throughout the course, a regular weekly meeting time that is not interrupted by other tasks would seem a good resolution for the future.

Conclusions

Although expensive to administer and time consuming to take on, internship seems to offer many benefits to both students and professors. A liaison between the class and the instructor, the intern can help both contingents operate much better with increased communication and understanding. Everyone wins in this situation, including the students in the course who have an extra resource they can turn to. Funding of such a program remains the most challenging task, but it could be managed in other ways: by offering some kind of course credit for the intern or by integrating the internship into a more general mentorship program. For small universities like Mount Allison, where student development is emphasized but without graduate students to fulfill teaching duties, internship bridges the gap between the needs of the institution and the enrichment of the student.

Appendix A
Matthew Andriessen's Learning Contract

Learning Contract
(To be completed by Student Intern and Mentor prior to the Internship)

Student: Matthew Andriessen
Student Number: 24601 E-mail: mcndrssn@mta
Faculty: Elizabeth Wells Dept.: Music
Faculty phone: 364-2598 E-mail: ewells@mta.ca
Course in which Intern will work: MUSC 1201

Learning Objectives (Describe at least three objectives)	**Fulfillment/Evaluation Methods** (What evidence could you provide in your portfolio that you have achieved these objectives)
1. Developing lecture planning and delivery skills, including tailoring the teaching methods to the specific group and what they have already studied.	Create 2-3 lecture plans for different (and spaced out) lectures that suit the student audience. An evaluation of the lectures by Dr. Wells and detailed notes for the presentations could be included in my portfolio, as well as a brief explanation for each lecture why I chose to approach certain issues in certain ways.
2. Learning how to properly develop and apply a rubric (for marking) and how to constructively evaluate and critique written work.	In conjunction with Dr. Wells, develop a rubric for evaluating listening journals, present it to the class and apply it to journals throughout the semester. The portfolio would include the rubric, some description of its planning and a few examples of marked student work.
3. Revisit and enhance my level of study on early music (pre-1700) and develop a fuller understanding of the sequence of musical, social and political events and how they interconnect.	Teach lectures on early music that effectively deliver the concepts and understanding of the period without going into to much detail. As part of my portfolio, Dr. Wells could write a critique of the lecture. Part of this goal could also include helping to develop a curriculum for introducing students to early music.

- Give 3-4 10-15 minute seminars on sections of the Wingell book in reaction to specific student writing to familiarize students with how to reference the book and direct them to important information in the book.
  - One lecture: basic essay structure – many students did not gain a good background of this in high school.
  - One lecture bibliographies and citations (as done in university).
- Meet with groups of 5-6 at non-school locations (house, Bridge Street Café) to discuss term papers in progress. Hopefully this will provide a non-threatening environment and a chance to relax, become less defensive and openly discuss how to improve all the projects. This is also an important opportunity to bond, as first year music history and literature is the primary connecting course for most music students.
- 2 full class lectures (one on Early Music and one on New Music)
  - Forty minutes in length each.
- Power and politics group discussion.
  - Dr. Wells will be absent for a couple days during the term. On the first, I will hold a group discussion talking about how music ties in with current events and politics; which will also reference the week's theme.
- Develop a rubric for listening journal marking. The rubric will be specific and clear so that students are aware of exactly what they need to do to obtain a specific mark.
- Mark every second week of listening logs.
- Help exam marking – short answer/multiple choice/etc.
- Intern marks family tree assignment.
- Both intern and professor both mark Conservatory Ethnography Assignment of each student.

Faculty Mentor Signature: ____

Print/Type Faculty Name: Dr. Elizabeth Wells

Date: ________________________

In signing this contract, the Intern agrees to work with integrity and to maintain confidentiality, especially with respect to students' grades and other privileged information.

Student Intern Signature ____

Print/Type Student Name ____

Date: ________________________

Authors

Auteures et auteurs

Authors

Barrington, Kay is a nurse educator. Kay received her Diploma in Nursing from the General Hospital School of Nursing in 1976. She completed a B.Voc.Ed in 1990 and a Masters in Education (Teaching) in 1995, both from Memorial University.

As an educator, Kay believes in working with students to form teaching and learning partnerships. It is in the post-secondary settings that Kay has encountered a wide spectrum of teaching and learning experiences. From these experiences, Kay has developed an interest in Journal Writing and MUDD Mapping, identifying them as strategies to enhance teaching and learning partnerships.

In her current position, Kay is a Program Coordinator at the Centre for Nursing Studies in St. John's. With just four years to retire, Kay is committed to sharing her work on journal writing and MUDD Mapping, so that learners and teachers can benefit. Through workshops, writing and other forms of networking, Kay hopes to make a meaningful contribution to the education system.

Bramble, Bev is an Instructional Designer at UNB's Centre for Enhanced Teaching and Learning. He has a B.Ed. from UNB, an MRE from Acadia and a History Honours Specialist Qualification from the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto. He taught high school in Toronto for 4 years and spent 14 years in e-learning design and consulting with private sector companies, working with commercial clients such as Air Canada, SkillSoft, McCain Foods, and Sunoco; international institutions such as the World Bank and United Nations organizations; government entities such as the Canadian Forces and the RCMP; and on public service projects for the Brewers Association of Canada and Web Wise Kids.

Buckle, Jennifer, PhD (York) is an Assistant Professor at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University of Newfoundland. She teaches in the Department of Psychology and specializes in clinical psychology. Jennifer was interested in the idea of developing a learning community because it allowed her to explore new approaches to teaching introductory-level courses. She was attracted to Sir Wilfred Grenfell College because of its small campus setting and its reputation for specialization in undergraduate teaching. Since her arrival there, she has been actively involved in the promotion of teaching excellence, including the organization of teaching workshops and fostering links between the university and the secondary school system. Together with Matthew Janes, she plans to offer a learning community once again in the fall semester of 2007.

Clews, Rosemary is Assistant Vice President (Research) and Professor of Social Work at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick. She was the primary carer for her mother who lived with Rosemary in England, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick for several years. Since the death of her mother in 2004, she has lived in Fredericton with the pet dog and cat owned by her children—animals that remained behind when the children left home. Her son visits his mother and the pet animals when he interrupts his world travels, and her daughter visits when she returns home from her university.

Collins, Ron teaches music and social studies at Mobile Central High School, and is the director of both the band and the choir. He graduated from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1987 with a Bachelor of Music/Music Education, and is currently working on his Masters of Education. He is actively involved in the local music scene as a bassist, a sax player, a director, and a composer.

Connell, Jane is an Assistant Professor of Community Studies at Cape Breton University (CBU), Sydney, Nova Scotia. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Community Studies from CBU, a Master of Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and is currently a doctoral candidate in Education (specialization in Adult Education) at the University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia. Her research interests are in process-based learning (group work, problem solving, critical thinking, reflective learning, and self-directed learning), collaborative learning through distance education, and adult learning in a university context. She has worked extensively with the Cape Breton Regional Police Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on various educational initiatives. She was recognized by the Eskasoni First Nation RCMP for leadership. She was the recipient of the inaugural Instructional Leadership Award for substantial contribution to the development of the teaching and learning community at CBU. She and the Community Studies department were awarded the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) Alan Blizzard Award (inaugural Honorable Mention) for collaboration in teaching.

Courage, Charlotte is a fourth-year social work student at Memorial University of Newfoundland. She is class president of the Association of Social Work Students and sits on numerous school committees. She is an active member of the Girl Guides of Canada and Big Brothers Big Sisters and finds great value in volunteering. Having completed a field placement at Choices for Youth in St. John's, Charlotte is passionate about the area of Youth homelessness and plans on working with youth in the future. Charlotte hopes to pursue a social work career internationally to better understand the diverse issues facing individuals from different cultures and nationalities.

Devereaux, Lorraine holds a BA Ed. and M.Ed. degree in Leadership from Memorial University of Newfoundland. In 2004, she completed an Ed. D. in Administration at OISE/University of Toronto, Canada. This work emphasized Principals' Leadership Practices that influence Teacher Learning, and Organizational Growth/Development. Her three decades of K-12 experience include teacher, assistant principal, and principal roles, and she is currently a sessional instructor at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Doyle, Judith teaches Sociology at Mount Allison University. Her primary research interest is identity and its intersections in nationalism and at work. Returning to academia after working at a think-tank in the UK, Judith is also interested in universities as a work place and thinking about how teaching is done. She teaches sociological methods, political sociology, and explores identity in courses on education, work, and cyberspace.

Duda, Danial is the Map Librarian in the Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland. He received his Master of Library and Information Studies from the University of Alberta in 1999 and has been with Memorial since 2001. Besides his interest in map librarianship, Dan has been involved with the Library Instruction program since he joined the Memorial community.

He currently sits on the Senate Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Integrity and has always had an interest in helping students learn research methods.

Eghan, Felicia is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology at Mount Saint Vincent University. Among her research interests are curriculum development, critical thinking, values reasoning, Black women's health issues, and learning styles. She was introduced to the values reasoning process while studying for her doctorate at the Pennsylvania State University. She currently uses this process with both graduate and undergraduate courses in program planning and peace and conflict studies. She has also introduced values reasoning in curriculum work with teachers in Africa. She has worked with this process in different settings for the past 16 years.

Farrell, Kirk has taught high school math and science and is currently an instructor with the College of the North Atlantic, St. John's. He is a graduate student in the Masters of Education programme (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Studies) at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Farrimond, Melanie is an instructor in the Transition Year Program at Dalhousie University College of Continuing Education. She is the creator and teacher of a course entitled *Strategies for University Learning* and serves as academic advisor to several students. In addition to this, Melanie created and teaches a course called *Gender and Diversity* in the Gender and Women's Studies Program, along with language courses in the French Department. She has a PhD in French Studies and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

Furey, Mary is a faculty member with the Faculty of Business Administration at Memorial University of Newfoundland and a PhD student at Aston University in Birmingham, UK.

Furlong, Dolores, a Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at UNB, teaches courses on health care to students in both urban and rural locations—Fredericton, Bathurst, and Moncton, New Brunswick. She has also taught in rural and urban settings in other Atlantic provinces and in Ontario. She has a background in curriculum development in health care and interdisciplinary programs. Her research focuses on narrative inquiry, and her teaching involves autobiographical examination of students' theories of practice. She has collaborated with Rosemary Clews and Bill Randall on three international and interdisciplinary conferences.

Goosney, Janet coordinates the Library Instruction Programme at the Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland. In this role she regularly collaborates with faculty and others at Memorial in order to teach students about research and information use. She believes that an understanding plagiarism and academic integrity is an essential part of information literacy, and that the library has a crucial role to play in educating students about these issues. Ms. Goosney received her Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) from the University of Western Ontario in 1998, and has been at Memorial since 2001.

Goulet, Clare teaches in the English Department at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS, served for ten years as poetry editor with Brick Books and (currently) Gaspereau Press, and works as editorial consultant on literary, scholarly, and trade publications in the sciences and humanities. Most recent work is as contributing co-editor for Lyric Ecology (Cormorant 2008), a series of original essays on the work of philosopher-poet-musician Jan Zwicky, whose ideas appear in Clare's contribution to this volume.

Guise, Janneka is an Information Services Librarian and Coordinator of Library Instruction at the Queen Elizabeth II Library at Memorial University of Newfoundland. In addition to teaching information literacy skills to students, her current research interests include program assessment and planning.

Hammett, Roberta, a professor with the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, teaches courses related to secondary English education, technology integration in schools, and new literacies. Her research interests include those fields, particularly new literacies. Her most recent edited book, Boys and Girls and the Myths of Literacies and Learning, will be released in fall 2007.

Hardy Cox, Donna is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work, and holds a cross-appointment to the Faculty of Education and a Scholar in the Centre for Collaborative Health Professional Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. She has had over fifteen years of experience in the development and administration of programs for undergraduate and graduate students in her roles of Director of Student Development and President, Canadian Association of College and University Student Services. She is also a lecturer in the Graduate Program in Teaching and has conducted workshops on student learning styles, academic integrity, student development, and student success. Her current research is focusing on the creation of two manuscripts "Achieving Student Success: Effective Student Services in Canadian Higher Education" and “Serving Diverse Students in Higher Education”.

Janes, Matthew, MA (Memorial) is an Assistant Professor at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Matthew teaches French within the Division of Arts and specializes in twenty-first century French literature. He was interested in the idea of developing a learning community because it allowed him to explore new approaches to teaching introductory-level courses. Matthew was attracted to Sir Wilfred Grenfell College because of its small campus setting and its reputation for specialization in undergraduate teaching. Since his arrival at SWGC, he has been actively involved in the promotion of teaching excellence, including the organization of teaching workshops and fostering links between the university and the secondary school system. Together with Jennifer Buckle, he plans to offer a learning community once again in the fall semester of 2007.

Keeble, Edna, PhD (Dalhousie University, 1994) is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Saint Mary’s University and a Research Fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University. She is the recipient of the 2006 Father Stewart Medal for Excellence in Teaching at Saint Mary’s University. Through the years she has been active as a member of the Quality of Teaching Committee and, more recently, on the Instructional Development Grants Sub-Committee. Her field of expertise is Canadian foreign policy, focusing on the redefinition of security, and she has received funding for various projects, including recently on immigration and security. Dr. Keeble was a member of the Advisory Board of Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy

(1997-2000), and is currently a member of the federal government's Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security which advises the Public Safety and Justice Ministers. She thoroughly enjoys teaching and has been committed to being a well-rounded scholar throughout her academic career.

MacCleave, Anne is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. Her research interests include research methodologies, ethics, values reasoning, cultural psychology, learning theories and innovative ways to address human development themes. She received her PhD from the Pennsylvania State University where she was introduced to the values reasoning process. At that time, she piloted curriculum modules based on this process with eleventh and twelfth grade classes. She currently uses the values reasoning process in both graduate and undergraduate courses in educational psychology. With adaptations and updating, she has used this process for over 20 years.

Mengel, Thomas, PMP, is an Associate Professor of Leadership Education, Renaissance College, University of New Brunswick. Before joining academia, Thomas had served in various leadership positions in different European business organizations. Subsequently, he has worked as a consultant and coach in Canadian and European settings. He also teaches at the University of Athabasca, Trinity Western University and he has taught at the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, and at Selkirk College.

In addition to his graduate degrees in computer science and adult education, Thomas has a PhD in theology and a MA in history. He is particularly interested in leadership and project management education in practice and theory as well as in their historical development and philosophical underpinnings. In his current research, he is exploring frameworks and approaches for leadership and project management education. His scholarly focus at Renaissance College is leadership education for youth and emerging leaders as well as the scholarship of teaching and learning leadership. Furthermore, he is part of a global research team that investigates the value that project leadership does contribute to various organizations across the globe.

Piercey, Jeff received a BA/B.Ed. in 1990 and a Master's in Education in 2006. He has fifteen years of teaching experience, and is currently the Assistant Principal at Discovery Collegiate in Bonavista, Newfoundland.

Powell, Tracey is a Senior Instructional Design Specialist with Distance Education and Learning Technologies (DELT) at Memorial University of Newfoundland. As an instructional designer, Tracey guides instructors in their transition to the online teaching environment and designs quality instructional materials for such an environment.

Randall, William, an Associate Professor of Gerontology at St. Thomas University, New Brunswick, teaches a range of undergraduate courses in gerontology, such as counseling older adults, older adults as learners, and narrative gerontology. A "preacher's kid", he grew up in rural New Brunswick and has served in the past as a minister with the United Church of Canada in rural parishes in Saskatchewan and Ontario. With Dolores Clews and Rosemary Furlong, he organized two international conferences (2002 & 2004) entitled "Narrative Matters".

Seville, Pam is an Assistant Professor of Community Studies at Cape Breton University (CBU), Sydney, Nova Scotia. She holds a Bachelor of Science from McGill University and a Master of Arts (Adult Education) from Central Michigan University, USA. She has taught courses in Business Administration and Community Studies for the past 20 years at CBU. Recently she taught internationally for two years at Jilin–Lambton University in China and Canadian International College in Egypt. Her research interests include student retention, process learning, and distance education. She serves on two community boards: Cape Breton Regional Hospice/Palliative Care Society and the Cape Breton Regional Mental Health Foundation. She is working with her colleagues on a research project about virtual teaming and collaborative learning through distance courses. In 2006, she won the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching at CBU. Also in 2006, she and the Community Studies department were awarded the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) Alan Blizzard Award (inaugural Honorable Mention) for collaboration in teaching.

Skipton, Michael is Professor, Management and Strategy, in the Faculty of Business Administration at Memorial University of Newfoundland. His current research interests include programming and pedagogy for more relevant business and management education.

Steuter, Erin is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Mount Allison University. She was recently awarded the Herbert and Leota Tucker Teaching Award at Mount Allison and the AAU Distinguished Teacher Award. She is a regular participant at the Atlantic Universities Teaching Showcase.

Wells, Elizabeth earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto with a concentration in History and Literature of Music. In 2004, she completed her doctorate in musicology at the Eastman School of Music. Her dissertation, entitled West Side Story(s): Perspectives on a Great American Musical, was supported by the Presser Foundation, the Elsa T. Johnson Dissertation Fellowship, Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender and Women's Studies, and the AMS-50 Dissertation Fellowship. She now teaches at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada, and has taught music history at Mansfield University in Pennsylvania, the State University of New York at Geneseo, and the Eastman School of Music. Her research interests include 20th-Century music, opera, musical theatre, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

White, Gerald graduated from the University of California in 2004 with a PhD in the area of Teacher Evaluation and Program Delivery. Besides being a sessional instructor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Gerald has been employed for the past 28 years as a Teacher/Administrator with the Eastern School District of Newfoundland.

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1997 – St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia
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