GAUISUS

SELECTED SCHOLARSHIP ON TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY 2004-2009

Kathleen McKinney and Patricia Jarvis *Editors*

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
Illinois' first public university

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Preface

This edited volume contains thirteen papers all dealing with the teaching and learning of students at Illinois State University. These papers represent but a sample of such work that has been conducted here during the last six years. At Illinois State we define the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) as the "systematic reflection/ study on teaching and learning made public." The purposes of this publication are the following: 1) to provide instructors writing about their teaching and learning a local but peer reviewed outlet to share what they and their students have done and learned and 2) to offer other instructors and students an accessible publication to read to obtain a sense of, and learn from, some of the scholarly teaching and SoTL projects conducted by their colleagues. It has been about seven years since a similar publication was created (at that time, by the Center for the Advancement of Teaching).

The office of the Cross Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University is the primary unit supporting such work and is the publisher of this volume. K. Patricia Cross endowed the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University in honor of her father, Clarence L. Cross, a beloved teacher of physics at Illinois State for more than 30 years. The office of the Cross Chair supports and enables the demonstration of Illinois State's commitment to the promotion of scholarship and research in teaching as a discipline. Dr. Cross has honored us by writing the Introduction to the volume. Some of the papers in the publication stem from SoTL work funded by the Cross Chair office. Papers were solicited by both hard copy and online "calls" distributed to

Illinois State instructors. Any current or former Illinois State faculty or staff member, or student who has engaged in SoTL work here at Illinois State and/or has the skills and experience to assist with reviews, was encouraged to submit a paper and/or serve as a peer reviewer for this publication. Each submission was reviewed by two colleagues with expertise in SoTL: one internal to Illinois State and one from another institution as well as by the editors.

The papers range from scholarly reflective essays about teaching and learning to reports of formal SoTL research using qualitative and/or quantitative data. The papers come from four of our six degree-granting colleges (College of Arts and Science, College of Applied Science and Technology, College of Fine Arts, and College of Education) and contributors come from many departments or units (Art, Criminal Justice Sciences, English, Educational Administration and Foundations, Language-Literature and Cultures, Music, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, Special Education, and University High School). Some contributors have a great deal of experience in conducting and writing about SoTL and scholarly teaching; others are new to the area. Many of the papers honor the notion of "student voices" in this work by involving students in their projects, beyond the role of a research participant, and in writing the paper. The final piece in the volume is a brief reflection from one of the three students that served as our copy editors and design consultant.

You may be wondering about the name of the volume, *Gauisus: Selected scholarship on teaching and learning at Illinois State University, 2004-2009.* We sponsored a "name the publication" contest last spring. Pete Juvinall's entry was chosen. Gauisus means glad, gladly, or joyful in Latin, as in the Illinois State motto/logo, "Gladly we learn and teach." Peter received a copy of the publication, recognition in the publication, and a $100 gift card.

We have produced the publication both in hard copy form (a limited number for contributors, reviewers, Chairs/Directors, Illinois State administrators, Carnegie Foundation staff, Dr. Cross, and others) as well as posted it on our Illinois State SoTL web site (http://www.sotl.ilstu.edu).

Finally, we thank Dr. K. Patricia Cross for writing the Introduction; our editorial board from Illinois State and outside Illinois State (see inside cover); Erin Frost and Sarah Fasen, our student copy editors from the English Department at Illinois State and their faculty supervisor, Gerald Savage; graphic design student, Eric Enlow, and his faculty supervisor, Julie Johnson; and the Administrative Assistant for the Cross Chair, Beth Welch, for budget assistance.

Enjoy.

Kathleen McKinney and Patricia Jarvis, Editors
Illinois State University
February, 2010

Introduction

PATRICIA K. CROSS

Remarkable changes have taken place in higher education since I began my lifelong career in education at Illinois State some 50 years ago. But two especially interesting changes have occurred within recent decades. This collection of studies by faculty at Illinois State University represents the leading edge of both of those changes.

The first big change across the entire spectrum of higher education, from community colleges to research universities, is the emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning. Several lively streams merge to form that flowing river of change. First, the Carnegie Foundation (CFAT), under the direction of Lee Shulman, provided worldwide leadership in making effective teaching a recognized form of scholarship. Second, the accrediting associations, under pressure from the public, are requiring *evidence* of student learning. Third, research on *how* students learn—and therefore what constitutes effective teaching—has made notable advances in fields as diverse as cognitive science, motivation, and lifelong learning.

The second major change that is reflected in the scholarship of these papers is increasing faculty collegiality and collaboration across academic disciplines and geographic boundaries. The electronic age makes it easy and natural to communicate classroom practices and experiences to widely dispersed faculty who share a scholarly interest in teaching. The professional organization, POD (www.podnetwork.org), has more than 1,800 members, primarily in the United States and Canada but including faculty from 25 countries who maintain a very active listserve for sharing experiences and resources around issues of college teaching. The list enables individual faculty to

post teaching problems online and receive information within days from colleagues about their experiences—or, with increasing frequency—relevant research related to the issue. Another collaborative professional effort in higher education is represented by the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (www.issotl. org). ISSoTL is an international organization, six years old, with a global membership of more than 1,000, plus a newsletter and annual meetings. ISSoTL's mission is to support and share scholarship on teaching and learning.

As important as these national and international collegial associations are, this publication, pioneered by faculty members at Illinois State, crosses the boundaries of academic disciplines at the *institutional* level. It has the potential to encourage communication among professors sharing a similar student population and common institutional resources.

This set of papers illustrates an exceptional range of motivation for undertaking scholarly studies of the intellectual lives of students at Illinois State. The study may start with a small nagging question occurring in an individual classroom, perhaps provoking a hypothesis and expanding to a systematic study involving colleagues, teamwork, and ultimately large-scale formal research. Or the question for study may arise from experience as a teacher over many years—provoking genuine curiosity about the impact of learning on the future careers/lives of students. Workshops and casual conversations with colleagues provided another source for stimulating reflection, collaboration and small-scale studies. Some contributions were the result of a noticed gap in the research literature or the need for improvement of a measure of learning. The availability of new technologies promoted creative exploration in several inquiries. Finally, it would be hard to describe a more creative and exciting learning experience for students than the story of the Pontiac Prison Project that turned a newspaper article into an incredible learning experience for students, and in its implementation, involved professionals throughout the state as teachers and learners.

The variety in these stories of the process of "reflection and study" in the pursuit of excellence in teaching seems endless, and the scholarship revealed is impressive. My father, who spent his entire career at Illinois State in joyful pursuit of teaching and learning, would have been delighted with the collegial and scholarly activities taking place at Illinois State today.

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Examining the Relationship between Teacher Immediacy and Academic Dishonesty on the Campus of Illinois State University

JEFFREY A. WALSH | JESSIE L. KRIENERT | KEVIN MATTHEWS

This research note describes a relatively large-scale SoTL-funded research project at Illinois State University conducted during the 2008-09 academic school year. As a prelude to discussion of the project, we begin with a few brief comments about how the idea for the study emerged. As with many research endeavors there is a serendipitous quality to this work. The casual exchange of seemingly unrelated ideas proved to be fertile ground for an exciting, important, and collaborative research endeavor. While one of the authors of this work was participating in a series of SoTL roundtable discussions during the spring 2008 semester, the concept of immediacy—the behavioral cues that foster rapport and closeness—was a frequent discussion topic. Illinois State University faculty members from the Department of Psychology had been working in the area of teacher immediacy, attachment, and achievement for several years and were concluding a SoTL-funded project in this area. It was on the heels of these informative roundtable sessions that we first began to consider the potential link/ relationship between teacher immediacy and academic dishonesty. If teacher immediacy could influence student attachment and achievement, it stood to reason that it might also influence students' decisions about whether to engage in academic dishonesty.

Shortly after the SoTL-facilitated roundtable sessions ended, two of the co-authors conducted a small pilot study of teacher immediacy and academic dishonesty as part of an undergraduate Research Methods in Criminal Justice (CJS300) class project. Using a convenience sample, students enrolled in four sections of the methods

course, including the third co-author, worked as research assistants to collect survey data from approximately 300 undergraduate students. Despite the limitations inherent in convenience sampling, preliminary findings were promising and suggested a need for additional larger-scale, systematic study with a more representative sample. We submitted, and received, a SoTL grant to conduct a more systematic and campus-wide descriptive study examining the theoretical connection between immediacy and academic dishonesty at Illinois State.

Our study shifts the emphasis from a traditional student-centric focus on academic dishonesty to academic dishonesty as a potential residual consequence of a poorly developed instructor/student relationship dynamic lacking rapport and a healthy sense of closeness. The following narrative provides the foundation for our research, explains the research project, and summarizes several of our findings. The narrative also identifies the roles students played as research assistants, subjects, and co-authors/presenters.

TEACHER IMMEDIACY

Teacher immediacy is a derivation of the more general concept of "immediacy" which was originally developed in the late 1960s by psychologist Albert Mehrabian, who was interested in how people could infer a communicator's attitudes from implicit cues, both verbal and nonverbal. Immediacy behavior cues were believed to foster closeness and a positive attitude toward others (Mehrabian, 1966, 1972). Research on the immediacy construct developed rapidly in the field of communications throughout the 1970s and 80s, with communications scholars identifying a variety of applications. Reasoning that the immediacy construct might "generalize to the classroom" (Andersen, 1979), a new era of teaching research hypothesized that teachers who used more immediate communication styles would stimulate positive student outcomes including learning gains, higher affect toward course content, and learner motivation (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004).

Early work linked immediacy to behavioral commitment among students (Andersen, 1979). In the following decades, immediacy scales and indices were developed to help identify immediacy behaviors. As part of this effort, immediacy behaviors were categorized into two groups: verbal immediacy (positive verbalization, prosocial messages) and nonverbal immediacy (gestures, eye contact, facial expressions). Two of the more frequently used and comprehensive scales are the 20-item Verbal Immediacy Scale created by Gorham (1988) and the 26-item Nonverbal Immediacy Scale created by Richmond, McCroskey, and Johnson (2003).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

One of the most important aspects of the pilot study leading up to the present descriptive work was the reading of students' literature reviews. One aspect of the literature on academic dishonesty suggests that student/teacher rapport might impact student cheating behaviors. While none of the literature we reviewed specifically addressed "teacher immediacy," the potential for linkage was evident.

Though there is consensus across the empirical literature that academic dishonesty is pervasive and problematic (Shon, 2006), it remains "perhaps the least openly discussed crisis in higher education" (Keith-Spiegel & Whitley, 2001, p. 217). In McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield's (2001) review of a decade of research on cheating in academic institutions, they found that many acts of cheating, including those on exams and quizzes, have increased dramatically and that both individual and contextual factors influence cheating. As Stearns (2001) notes, limited work has been

done examining the influence of teacher behavior on academic integrity. This is a unique realization given that the teacher controls the classroom environment where most cheating occurs and teachers are also creators of that environment (p. 275). Graham, Monday, O'Brien, and Steffens (1994) concluded that students were more likely to cheat if they felt the teacher was unfair. Genereux and Mcleod (1995) found that a construct labeled "instructor personality" impacted student participation in academic dishonesty, both negatively and positively. Similarly, Stearns (2001) has asserted that students' negative perceptions of the student/instructor relationship related to involvement in acts of academic dishonesty (p. 282). The present descriptive work bridges the gap between teacher immediacy and academic dishonesty by applying verbal and nonverbal teacher immediacy measures to the self-reported study of academic dishonesty in a large sample of university students.

METHODOLOGY

Our SoTL-funded project received IRB approval during the fall 2008 semester. Shortly thereafter we developed our research protocol including the sampling strategy, which was designed to promote college and course-level representativeness. We utilized a systematic random sampling strategy to identify five classes at each academic level (100, 200, and 300) for each of the five colleges on campus and Mennonite School of Nursing, for a total sample size of 90 classes. The Graduate Assistant (GA) working on the project made contact with the professors of each randomly selected class, requesting permission and scheduling a date and time when one of the student research teams could visit the classroom to distribute a self-administered 100-item self-report survey. A systematic recordkeeping process was established and in the event that a professor declined our request or was unresponsive, our GA continued through the randomly sampled course list. The research team, consisting of four prior undergraduate research methods students, our GA, and two faculty PIs, spent the spring 2009 semester visiting sampled classes across the University and collecting self-report survey data.

The 100-item self-report survey instrument consisted of closed-ended multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions with the initial 15 questions on the survey intended to capture the demographic profile of the participants. The next series of questions addressed participant's perceptions and attitudes about cheating on campus in general followed by a series of questions inquiring about their own personal cheating behavior. Next, a series of questions asked about classroom context and dynamics in classes most likely to experience cheating including such items as class size, seating arrangement, and course difficulty level. The final series of approximately 45 questions addressed the two immediacy scales used in the study. The survey is available from the first author to anyone interested in replicating or expanding the study or simply interested in examining the questions used in the present research. A select and limited number of survey items can be found in Tables 1 and 2.

FINDINGS

In the interest of brevity, we address only a few select findings in the following section. The final student sample consisted of 1,980 undergraduate students from 80[1] classes across campus. Respondents closely matched the Illinois State general population, with slightly more women (61% compared to 58%) and whites (91% compared to 83%) in our sample (Illinois State University, 2008). The majority of respondents (68%) had a GPA of 3.0 or above, with a fairly even split by academic class rank.

[1]Mennonite School of Nursing did not have five courses at each level 100, 200, 300 to meet our sampling goals.

Cheating: Perceptions vs. Reality

The majority (68%) of students believe that most college students cheat. Interestingly though, only 25% of respondents report that they would ever cheat, even if they knew for sure they could get away with it. So, while nearly two-thirds of the respondents perceive that most students cheat, in fact, only a quarter of respondents acknowledged they would ever do so. That said, results suggest that reality is likely located somewhere in the middle. For example, Table 1 includes self-reported cheating measures and reveals that in fact, nearly 40% of students admit to cheating in a class at ILLINOIS STATE. Alarmingly, only 2% of respondents indicate ever having been caught cheating which suggests cheating is an offense poorly identified, or at least infrequently pursued.

TABLE 1. SELF-REPORTED CHEATING.

Have you ever cheated on an exam or quiz at Illinois State?	Number(N= 1,980)	Percent
Never	1,170	59.2
Rarely	638	32.3
Sometimes	157	7.9
Often	11	0.6
Ever copied from another student without their knowledge during an exam		
Never	1,349	68.3
Rarely	503	25.5
Sometimes	119	6.0
Often	4	0.2
Ever used a secret or hidden cheat sheet on an exam at Illinois State?		
Never	1,621	81.9
Rarely	290	14.7
Sometimes	57	2.9
Often	9	0.5
Ever cheated in a college class at Illinois State?		
No	1222	62.2
Yes	743	37.8
Ever been caught cheating?		
No	1898	97.9
Yes	40	2.1

Verbal & Nonverbal Immediacy in a Cheating Classroom

For the immediacy portion of the survey, all student respondents were asked to reflect on the last class they cheated in and score that professor's verbal and nonverbal immediacy using adaptations of both the standard verbal and nonverbal immediacy scales. If students indicated not having cheated while at ILLINOIS STATE, they were asked to evaluate a class they had taken in which they thought/perceived people would have been most likely to cheat.

We began by first assessing student's basic perceptions of teacher immediacy and cheating. Results indicate that the majority (92%) of students believe large classes are the easiest courses in which to cheat. Interestingly, while the majority (58%) of students don't believe their opinion of their teacher has any impact on their

willingness to cheat, nearly 80% reported that they would feel bad cheating if they liked their instructor. So, while their initial decision to cheat might not be impacted by their opinion of their teacher, if they like the teacher they are more inclined to feel badly about doing so.

Results indicate that "cheating courses" were more likely (79%) to be general education or elective courses containing more than 100 students (52%) than academic major-specific courses (21%) containing fewer than 100 students. Additionally, students reported cheating classes were more likely to be "hard" (61%) than "easy" (39%). In sum, students were most likely to identify cheating classrooms as those courses in the general education program with large enrollments and difficult subject matter. Table 2 examines the verbal and nonverbal immediacy scales, as well as several select student scores on individual scale items in the respondent-identified cheating classrooms. These items are ones we felt exemplified the characteristics of the index. To include all individual scale items would have simply required a great deal of page length.

TABLE 2. SELECT VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL TEACHER IMMEDIACY MEASURES IN CLASSES IDENTIFIED BY STUDENTS AS ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED CHEATING CLASSROOMS*.

Verbal Immediacy Scale	Number(N= 1,980)	Percent
Low (0-27)	667	35.5
Average (28-54)	1172	62.3
High (55-80)	42	2.2
Nonverbal Immediacy Scale		
Low (0-35)	206	11.7
Average (36-70)	1235	69.9
High (71-104)	327	18.5
Addresses me by name		
Never	1094	56.4
Rarely	382	19.7
Occasionally	213	11.0
Often	132	6.8
Very Often	119	6.1
Has initiated conversations with me before, during, after, or outside of class		
Never	1129	58.3
Rarely	436	22.5
Occasionally	252	13.0
Often	78	4.0
Very Often	43	2.2
Asks how students feel about an assignment, due date or discussion topic.		
Never	728	37.6
Rarely	605	31.2
Occasionally	404	20.8
Often	159	8.2
Very Often	42	2.2

Instructor is addressed by his/her first name by students

Never	896	46.7
Rarely	446	23.3
Occasionally	324	16.9
Often	163	8.5
Very Often	89	4.6

Touches others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them

Never	1041	54.4
Rarely	547	28.6
Occasionally	247	12.9
Often	59	3.1
Very Often	20	1.0

*NOTE: Students were asked to reflect on the class they had most recently cheated in, or if they had not cheated to reflect on the most recent class taken that they thought people had likely cheated.

Both the verbal and nonverbal immediacy scales had high alpha (>.80) reliability. Instructors of classes deemed "cheating classes" tended to have more low scores (36%) on the verbal immediacy measures than on nonverbal immediacy measures (12%). It is interesting to note that when comparing verbal and nonverbal immediacy in cheating classes, verbal immediacy scored lower than nonverbal immediacy. While more research is necessary to thoroughly explain this finding, it might suggest that the absence of verbal immediacy behavior is a stronger predictor of cheating than nonverbal immediacy behavior.

In sum, results indicate that students' perceived sense of anonymity may increase the likelihood of cheating in the classroom. Verbal immediacy measures that acknowledge individual students (knowing names, initiating conversations) were consistently absent in cheating classrooms, reinforcing the earlier finding that nearly 80% of the sample reported they would feel bad cheating if they liked their professor. Further, the identification of large class sizes and courses outside of the academic major as more likely to be cheating classrooms supports this anonymity hypothesis as well. A general sense of student anonymity and a lack of student/teacher rapport appear to be risk factors for academic dishonesty.

It is important to note that there are several limitations present in this work. The work presented here is descriptive and summarizes survey data on student-reported cheating and perceived cheating classrooms but does not present comparative data from non-cheating classrooms. Future work will highlight these comparisons to better delineate cheating classrooms from non-cheating classrooms taking into account teacher immediacy behaviors. Further, as with most studies examining socially sensitive behaviors, we cannot be certain about truthfulness of student responses. Socially desirable responding is always a risk in sensitive subject research, though we are confident in our procedures to ensure anonymity. Another limitation worth noting pertains to one of the items in the normed non-verbal immediacy scale. The scale contains an item, "touching students on the arm or shoulder," that is no longer socially acceptable or appropriate in today's classroom environment. Despite a high alpha, students consistently scored this item low, likely having an adverse overall impact on the index score. This is no longer a favorable immediacy behavior and therefore the scale treats it in a counterintuitive way. Today a low score on this

item would be seen as advantageous. We have included the response to this question in Table 2 for illustrative purposes only. Notice that more than 75 percent of the student sample rates this as never or rarely, a finding that is not surprising in today's cautionary climate. Future work will develop a comparison group of non-cheating classrooms and contemporary immediacy behaviors to validate the verbal and non-verbal immediacy scales used here. We will continue to work to identify immediacy behaviors that moderate student participation in academic dishonesty.

We firmly believe teacher immediacy and academic dishonesty are important and highly relevant in today's dynamic educational environment where diverse learning/teaching options and opportunities are being presented to both students and instructors. While more research is necessary, and our specific action-oriented findings are preliminary at this point, we are intrigued by the broader implications. This research suggests, at least in a broad sense, that acceptance of academic dishonesty among students and student "anonymity" in classes resulting from contextual factors (such as class size, where one sits, and lower scores in verbal immediacy-oriented behaviors by instructors than non-verbal behaviors, such as not addressing students by name and not initiating conversation during, after, or outside of class with students) are key areas to examine as we try to minimize academic dishonesty. In an emerging education era when class sizes are typically getting larger, distance education through online instruction is becoming more popular and prevalent, and students are more easily becoming anonymous in their classes, overt conscious efforts at teacher immediacy, both non-verbal and especially verbal, may be ever more important.

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Dr. Jeffrey A. Walsh is an Associate Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice Sciences at Illinois State University. In addition to work in the area of SoTL, he has also conducted research on incarceration and public health implications, and family violence. His publications have appeared in *Journal of Research on Crime and Delinquency*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Homicide Studies, and Journal of Family Violence* and book chapters appearing in victimology and international criminal justice texts.

Jessie Krienert is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Illinois State University. Her areas of research include prison subculture, family violence, and gender issues in correctional and street settings. Her publications have appeared in *Homicide Studies, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Violence and Victims, Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma,* and *Journal of Family Violence.*

Kevin Matthews is a Graduate Student in the Department of Criminal Justice Sciences. He has presented scholarly research at several national and regional conferences and has co-authored research in the areas of SoTL and violence and victimization.

Acknowledgements

2

A Descriptive, Longitudinal Study of Sociology Majors at One Institution[1]

KATHLEEN MCKINNEY | NAGHME NASERI

Our focus for this exploratory scholarship of teaching and learning project is to describe the development of the following by one small group of sociology majors over the course of their career as a major: the ability to use the sociological imagination, an identity as a sociologist, self perceptions of being an autonomous or independent learner, and engagement in the discipline. The sociological imagination is the ability to see how individual behavior is, in part, the result of specific social and historical factors and contexts.

A focus on sociology majors and their development over time is rare in past empirical work. Empirical studies on teaching and learning in sociology have most often investigated the outcomes of a specific class assignment or teaching strategy within one class, usually not a majors-only course. Many of these studies, especially earlier work, rely on student satisfaction data or faculty reflections (see the many papers published in *Teaching Sociology*). Additional studies have focused on learning by mostly non-majors within introductory level sociology courses over one term or less (e.g., Dietz 2002; Eckstein, Schoenike, and Delaney 1995; Howard 2005; Keesler, Fermin, and Schneider 2008; Mitra and Sarabia 2005; Neuman 1989; Szafran 1986). A few cross-sectional studies have focused on various outcomes of the sociology major based primarily on student self-report. Staff members at the American Sociological Association studied students in a national sample of graduating sociology majors (American Sociological Association 2006). Seventy-five to 90%

of the students reported strongly agreeing that they have a variety of sociological conceptual abilities; 44 to 69% strongly agreed that they acquired various sociological skills (e.g., evaluate research methods, write a report). Jennings, Rienzi, and Lyda (2006) used class assignments in the senior seminar to assess student learning of majors. Rubrics were developed for two essay assignments. Some data on student learning by 29 majors was reported and implications at the program level offered. In a self-report questionnaire study conducted with majors at one public institution, correlates of success, learning, and engagement in the major, including age and some study behaviors, were found (McKinney 2008).

Our study, then, contributes to this existing literature in several ways. The focus is on sociology majors and their development as majors. The design is longitudinal and involves multiple methods. The study is classic SoTL: local, descriptive, exploratory, and focused on future action.

PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

Eighteen sociology majors at Illinois State University were the participants in the study. These 18 students were the members of one section of our first required majors course in the discipline in the fall of 2007. The participants were 72% female and 28% male with ages ranging from 19 to 37 (mean age of 22.7). Seventy-eight percent of respondents were white, 17% were black, and 5% indicated they were of mixed race. The majority of respondents indicated they were from a middle class background with 17% reporting they were first generation college students. The mean GPA of the group was 2.89 (on a 4 point scale). Thus, they constitute a purposive sample within one cohort of our majors. These students are representative, demographically, of our full population of new sociology majors.

We used multiple methods and measures over time (two years thus far) in this study. Time 1 was the second week of the students' first required majors-only course. Time 2 was near the end of that course. Time 3 was midway between finishing that first course and starting the final senior capstone course. Time 4 was near the end of the senior capstone course. A self-administered questionnaire was used at both Time 1 and Time 4; an open-ended question about learning was used at Time 2 (learning specific to their first majors-only course) and Time 4 (more general reflection about learning in the major); face-to-face interviews were used at Time 3.

Our questionnaire contained Likert-type scales and open-ended questions related to some demographics as well as self perceptions of engagement in the discipline, being an autonomous learner, and identifying as a sociologist. We also included an open-ended question on a simple and brief application of the sociological imagination. Semi-structured interviews at Time 3 used open-ended questions on the same topics. More details about the measures will be evident in the summary of the main results below. [3] In this brief research note, we will summarize and reflect on some of the results from Time 1 and Time 3 as well as other issues related to conducting SoTL work of this nature. We will not discuss the results from Time 2 as the focus there was on learning in one course only or for Time 4 as that data is still being analyzed at this time.

We took the quantitative data from the questionnaires and input that into SPSS for descriptive analysis (percentages, means). We created simple categories and counts from the responses to the brief open-ended survey questions (e.g., what was the most important factor in choosing sociology as your major?). For the interview

[3] Due to the space limitations of these essays and notes, we offer limited information on measures here. See more information in the Results section or feel free to contact me directly at: kmckinne@ilstu.edu.

data (digital audio files), we transcribed the files; my graduate research assistant and I both read all the transcripts sentence by sentence, coding common or recurring ideas into categories or themes. We then discussed and reconciled the themes we each noted in the data on a question by question level.

OVERVIEW OF PARTIAL RESULTS

Pre-Questionnaire, Sociological Imagination Question (Time 1- Early in first required majors only course; N=18)

Using Likert response scales (1=not at all and 5=very), we found that the participants at Time 1 reported fairly high levels of average motivation in sociology courses (mean = 4.1), overall level of engagement in the discipline of sociology (mean = 4.2), confidence in their ability to successfully learn sociology (4.2), and the extent to which they are an independent or autonomous learner in college (mean = 3.9). In addition, the group had a mean score of 3.4 on the item "to what extent do you see yourself as a sociologist" (1=not at all self identify, 5=strongly self identify) and 4.2 on "when I do well in sociology courses this is due to..." (1=things I do not control such as luck and fate, 5=things I control such as my own effort or ability).

The most common response to the question asking about the most important factor in choosing sociology as a major was 'interest in subject/content,' followed by 'want to help/work with people'. We found five sets of answers from the open-ended question on what helps them engage or feel passionate about sociology. These were, in order of frequency, (a) applicability of sociology and 'real world' examples, (b) learning about new ways of thinking and views of the world, (c) interesting subject matter, (d) learning about people, and (e) the passion of their teachers. In response to what has or could help them become more autonomous learners, students gave reasons that fit three categories:

1   Interpersonal factors (e.g., teacher, relationship with teacher, seeking help)
2   Behaviors by self (e.g., attending class, being responsible, working hard)
3   Environmental variables (e.g., autonomous supporting structure, few conflicts, few distractions).

The ideas that students had about why they did not identify as a sociologist included that they were still unsure about the discipline and were still learning, and that they were not yet or didn't plan to be a 'professional' sociologist (i.e., go to graduate school or be a faculty member). Those who indicated they did identify as a sociologist generally reported this was because of the types of questions they asked, or the sociological view they took toward and the world or the topics that interested them.

Finally, scores using the rubric to evaluate the brief responses to the sociological imagination application question could range from 1= no valid, plausible sociological level/type of explanation, to 5= excellent, multiple sociological level/type of explanations. At Time 1, the start of their first major course, we found the actual scores in this group to be the following: 1 (46% of the students), 2 (41%), and 3 (13%). None of the students received a score of 4 or 5 at this time. When asked what most helped them learn the sociological imagination and perspectives, the most common response was 'practice/repetition' followed by 'a teacher.'

Face-to-face Interviews (Time 3 – About mid-way through the major between the first and last required only majors courses; N=5)

We coded five categories of responses from the Time 3 interview question about why the students majored in sociology. Most of the five students indicated they did so because they liked the subject matter of the discipline and/or liked courses/teachers. In addition, two students mentioned lack of fit of previous major to self or interests or goals, and one student each mentioned the influence of an advisor and own personal history/status (e.g., sexual orientation). There were multiple responses to the question about what strategies help them to learn sociology but these fell into three general categories:

1   Good academic/study skills or strategies (e.g., read, review/repeat, work hard, go to class, prepare for class, proofread, don't cram)

2   Interpersonal strategies and connections (e.g., study groups, ask questions, talk about material with others, listen to others, role of teachers, interactive classes)

3   Opportunities for application and relevance (e.g., observe people and apply sociology, apply to movies, hear concrete examples, relate material to self).

We also asked students whether they were engaged in the discipline, what such engagement looks like, and what things increase their engagement. Generally the students reported they were engaged in sociology or in subfields of sociology. Second, they stated the following characteristics of engagement in the discipline: going beyond what was required in a class, wanting to do the work, high levels of participation, applying sociology on their own, asking questions, and being successful and doing good work. Third, strategies noted by the students to increase engagement included having challenging work, interested teachers and certain classes, and class discussion as well as joining sociology club and asking questions.

Most of the students thought that they were basically independent/autonomous learners but, for them, this meant balance—balance between trying to learn on their own and looking for resources then asking for help from peers or faculty when they needed it. Their responses were on a continuum from a student who was very cautious about believing he/she was an autonomous learner as an undergraduate, to a few who indicated they strike a balance between autonomy and relying on others, to a student who suggested he/she was clearly an independent learner. Students thought extra resources such as optional readings, study groups and sessions, and faculty members who are open to student questions can increase autonomous learning.

We found that students' definitions or examples of the sociological imagination at Time 3 included either offering parts of common definitions (e.g., everyday life in context, effects of history on my life, look at history/culture/structure on my views…) or inaccurately equating the sociological imagination with simply asking questions, analyzing things, and using multiple viewpoints. No one offered a concrete example of using the sociological imagination. In addition, all but one student indicated the sociological imagination was a "difficult" and "abstract" concept that was "hard to get my head around" and they "kept misunderstanding it" and some "still don't really get it." Finally, in terms of what helps them learn it or learn it better, they emphasized application (e.g., write and apply it, application to my life, use it in my papers, apply it in other classes, apply it to movies).

We also asked the students what it means to be a sociologist and whether they see themselves as a sociologist at this point in the major. In terms of what it means

to be a sociologist, the main ideas they expressed were that you think sociologically, are critical, ask questions, are open-minded about viewpoints, analyze society, and ask why. Thus the theme is that sociologists think and ask questions about social life and in particular ways. As to whether they are a sociologist or identify as one, one student said yes but the others felt they were not yet sociologists or they were "junior sociologists." They stated that this was because they still lacked something: the degree, significant contributions to the discipline, particular knowledge, or certain experiences (e.g., regularly conducting sociological research).

DISCUSSION

We found some evidence of both consistency and of small changes in the students' development in the major from Time 1 to Time 3. These comparisons, however, should be viewed with caution given the small number of students and the different methods used at Time 1 compared to Time 3. Students reported being engaged in the discipline at both time points. Interest in the subject matter of sociology remained the primary reason reported as to why they chose sociology as a major at both time points. However, helping others, a common reason given at Time 1, drops out at Time 3. Perhaps, by this time, students have a better understanding of what most sociologists do (teach and research). Students did not fully identify as sociologists at either time point but defined this a bit differently over time. At Time 1, the theme of not being a professional sociologist or not planning to practice sociology was important; at Time 3, there was more emphasis on the notion that they lacked expertise, a degree, or experiences. At both time points, students thought they were somewhat autonomous in their learning in terms of working on their own but knowing when and how to seek help.

The importance of both the role of others and of application was a consistent theme in the students' responses related to what is important for development and learning. These findings replicate student responses in past work in our program (McKinney 2007) as well as fit with key ideas related to the development of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda 2009). Self-authorship is the ability of individuals to become more independent and define for themselves their beliefs, their identity, and their relationships with others including as related to development and learning in college and beyond. According to the Learning Partnerships Model, the development of self-authorship is supported by the three principles: (a) "validating learners' ability to know, (b) situating learning in learners' experience, and (c) defining learning as mutually constructing meaning" and by learners working on three challenges from the learning environment: "knowledge is complex and socially constructed, self is central to knowledge construction, and authority and expertise are shared among knowledgeable peers" (Baxter Magolda 2009).

Student responses related to using their sociological imagination at Time 1 were expected. The students had just started the first required majors-only course and had only just begun to be exposed to this idea in any great detail or have the opportunity to use it. Responses at Time 3 may be more problematic. Students either did not remember this idea very well or did not have the motivation to respond to the open-ended interview question. One possibility is that students forget the name of this idea because though they have materials, ideas, and assignments in their course work involving the use of the sociological imagination, instructors may not be explicitly referring to this way of thinking by name.

The sociological imagination is a critical part of the ways of thinking and

practicing (WTP) (McCune and Hounsell 2005) in sociology. WTP refer to critical learning experiences and outcomes that have both some generic aspects but are also tied to the discipline or subject area.

> These ways of thinking and practicing were not confined to knowledge and understanding, but could also take in subject-specific skills and know-how, an evolving familiarity with the values and conventions governing scholarly communication within the relevant disciplinary and professional community, and even a nascent meta-understanding of how new knowledge within the field was generated" (Hounsell and Anderson 2009).

A possible implication of our results is that instructors, students, and student peers need to be doing more to help majors acquire deep and lasting learning about the sociological imagination.

Clearly there are some methodological issues to be considered in the interpretation of our preliminary results and in terms of future research. Accessing the students via key, required classes, while most practical for the study, was not always possible. Therefore, the N size was relatively small to begin with and became even smaller with attrition over time. This was a problem despite using many techniques to encourage and support participation while honoring students' right to refuse. Study participation was not very time consuming (and some data collection took place during class time; other participation had monetary compensation for their time) and made as convenient as possible (interviews were conducted at the time and location of the student's choice). In addition, the topic 'should' have been of interest to sociology majors as it was about their development as sociologists. The study was also an example of social research which they might have found interesting and a learning experience. Presumably some students might have participated for altruistic reasons in order to help our department and future students. Yet, we had a very difficult time obtaining participation for the Time points beyond Time 1.[4] One issue may have been that the students involved did not know me as I was not their instructor. Thus, we lacked a personal connection that might have increased participation. Though we can only speculate here, such apparent lack of intrinsic motivation to participate in the complete study raises interesting questions about our students' commitment to the department and the discipline—despite their self reports of engagement in the discipline—that should be studied further and discussed.

Finally, we suggest some other ideas for future research including that this study should be replicated at other or multiple institutions, larger N sizes need to be used and strategies to encourage (without coercion, of course) participation and lower attrition should be considered. Finally, better or additional measures including direct measures of learning and theoretical variables would be useful.

[4] We lost three of the eighteen students because they left the major or the university.

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Acknowledgments

3

"He's So Weird": Do Relationships with Instructors Affect Student Learning?

GARY CREASEY | PATRICIA JARVIS | DANIEL GADKE | DENISE FAIGAO

Research has documented that students across all educational levels who report close, nonthreatening relationships with instructors are confident, self-directed learners who realize considerable academic success (Eccles, 2004; Ryan, Gheen & Midgley, 1998). However, much of this research is either anecdotal or involves extensive observations of student-instructor behavior that rely on sophisticated coding systems to capture the quality of these interchanges. Thus, one of the first goals of our SoTL work focused on the development of a measure that could more efficiently capture these relationships from the perspective of the student.

In terms of establishing a conceptual foundation for this assessment, there is considerable theory that suggests that important relationships typically possess two major relationship provisions. For instance, feelings of closeness or connectedness and relationship anxiety are provisions that transcend affiliations with family members, friends, teachers, co-workers, and romantic partners (Collins & Read, 1990; Davis, 2003). In addition, questionnaires exist that tap these provisions in other types of relationships (e.g., romantic relationships; Simpson, Roles & Phillips, 1996) that could be easily adapted to capture similar characteristics in student-instructor relationships. Thus, via the extant theory and research, we developed the Student-Instructor Relationship Scale (SIRS).

This 36-item scale contains items that assess both instructor connectedness (e.g., "I could tell this instructor just about anything") and anxiety ("I am nervous around this instructor"). We have conducted several studies to assess the reliability

and validity of the scale. For instance, the Connectedness and Anxiety scales possess good internal consistency (Creasey, Jarvis, & Gadke, 2009a) and they possess good test-rest reliability over brief periods of time (Creasey, Jarvis, & Knapcik, 2009b). It should be noted that this short-term stability is good; however, the fact that it is not excellent indicates that some students report changes in these relationships over time. This could be due to the fact that students just get to know their instructors better over time, or it is possible that there are events that transpire over the course of a semester to cause relationships to get better or worse. In any case, the results of this research support the contention that the Student-Instructor Relationship Scale possesses adequate reliability.

In terms of validity, we have begun to address two important questions. The first concerns the predictive utility of the scale, that is, do positive student-instructor relationships forecast important learning outcomes? To answer this query, we ask students to provide us their course schedule and select for them a traditional class to evaluate. Next, students complete the SIRS and a battery of achievement orientation measures that assess learner autonomy, confidence, motivation, learning styles, and evaluation apprehension (e.g., test anxiety). We selected these measures because previous research has documented that students who possess positive achievement stances (e.g., possess high confidence) are likely to engage in high academic persistence, display positive learning outcomes, and realize more academic success than their counterparts who display less desirable orientations (e.g., high test anxiety; low learner autonomy) (Pintrich, 2003).

The results of several studies have largely confirmed our expectations. In one study, students who reported close, connected and non-threatening relationships with instructors were more likely to report more positive achievement stances in class than students who reported less optimal relationships (Creasey et al., 2009a). In addition, negative relationships with instructors also were related to more text anxiety; thus, the SIRS scales are related to both positive and negative achievement stances in predictable ways (Creasey et al., 2009b). Of course, because all of the instruments were completed at a single time point, it is difficult to determine the directionality of effects—it is possible that highly motivated students simply form good connections with their instructors (as opposed to the other way around).

To address this concern, we have also completed a longitudinal study in which students completed the SIRS and achievement orientation assessments several times across one semester (Creasey, Jarvis, Faigao & Gadke, 2008). Similar to previous studies, we asked students to provide us their course schedule and we randomly selected a course and instructor to evaluate during the semester—this precluded students from selecting a course or instructor they particularly liked or disliked. The longitudinal design also allowed us to control for incoming or baseline achievement orientations and determine if changes in student-instructor relationships predicted the emergence of positive or negative achievement orientations.

In this study, we largely confirmed our previous findings and documented that relationships between instructors and students generally improve over the course of the semester and that the development of close, connected, non-threatening relationships with instructors forecast the emergence of positive achievement orientations, such as learner autonomy, student confidence, and perceptions of control over the learning environment. It should be noted in all of the studies reported thus far, these findings are not dependent on whether the class is in the student's major area, the gender of the instructor or student, or the class size. The latter finding is intriguing because it

suggests that somehow students may develop more or less a mental representation of a relationship with the instructor without actually having any type of direct, face-to-face interaction with that person.

The forces that forecast close affiliations with instructors are elusive and drive another central research question that we have explored, that is, what characteristics of the student, instructor, or class context predict close, non-threatening relationships with instructors in the first place? In all of our studies we have assessed a myriad of variables concerning student impressions of the instructor (e.g., gender; rank; perceptions of physical attractiveness; personality), pedagogical strategies (e.g., types of assignments; use of extra credit), and class characteristics (e.g., size). These variables have played little predictive power in this research. Further, the student's relationship past, gender, and their generalized achievement orientations (e.g., are they generally confident in their classes) also have not consistently predicted the development of relationships with instructors. The former finding is intriguing because it suggests that students who have a poor relationship history can still forge good relationships with instructors.

Thus far, the variable that seems to predict the ontogeny of student relationships the best is teacher immediacy or the verbal and nonverbal communication cues emulated by instructors in the classroom setting (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2006). As an example, a verbal cue communicating high immediacy might consist of making comments to students that they are highly valued or praising a student who provides a good response to a query. Further, smiling at students or walking around the room (as opposed to stiffly standing behind a podium) would constitute behaviors that project high nonverbal immediacy. Theoretically, the association between teacher immediacy and student-instructor relationship quality should be high because such immediacy communicates to listeners that they are important and valued (Mehrabian, 1981).

Thus far, high teacher immediacy is a potent predictor of positive student-instructor relationships in our studies (e.g., Creasey et al., 2009a). Interestingly, different components of teacher immediacy are associated with different aspects of student-instructor relationships. For example, high rates of verbal immediacy are related to strong connectedness between students and instructors; whereas low nonverbal immediacy is related to student-instructor anxiety. It is quite possible that since nonverbal immediacy is associated with ambiguous communication cues that it provokes a sense of uncertainty on part of the student. For example, one of our students indicated to us that they had an instructor who simply stared at them when they made comments during class discussion—that is, the instructor did not comment one way or another to communicate to the student whether their point was relevant or not.

To conclude, our work and that of others has indicated that student-instructor relationships are important for student learning and achievement motivation, and we have developed an easy-to-use measure to capture these affiliations. Further, we have documented that the verbal and nonverbal cues that instructors emulate have a strong bearing on how well students form connections with them. Quite surprisingly, our work—which has involved large numbers of students across different majors—has documented that teacher immediacy is a stronger predictor of these affiliations than variables that have been widely speculated to influence student-instructor relationships, such as student or instructor gender, class size, and whether the course subject matter is in the student's major area or concentration.

It is easy to be dismissive of the importance of student-instructor relationships as some instructors may think of these affiliations as an attempt to become "friends" with your students. However, it is important that such a process is not captured via our survey that represents a mechanism to assess relationship dimensions (connectedness; anxiety) that have been deemed theoretically important in any relationship that *is important* to an adult. Further, establishing relationships and connections— whether it be at the community, institutional, peer, or instructor level—is a central message provided to students as they negotiate freshman orientation programs at most institutions of higher learning. Thus, because the establishment of relationships with instructors appears to have theoretical, practical, and institutional value, the pursuit of variables that predict positive affiliations between students and instructors will remain a key agenda in our emerging SoTL research program.

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4

LGBTQ[1] Students Experience Illinois State University as Benignly Heteronormative

PAULA RESSLER | DIANE ZOSKY

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses an exploratory study conducted with student focus groups at Illinois State University in the spring of 2008 about potential interest in a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)/Queer Studies curriculum. These students belonged to campus organizations known to be particularly sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ students. Focus group members responded to three general questions: What were their perceptions of the environment at the university in terms of being inclusive and safe for LGBTQ students and allies? What were they currently learning in their coursework related to LGBTQ issues and what they thought should be included in LGBT/Queer Studies curriculum content? and What would be the advantages and disadvantages of being enrolled in a LGBT/Queer Studies academic program?

This qualitative study followed an earlier quantitative survey study done in 2006-2007 (Zosky, 2007). The quantitative study of 718 participants found that students at Illinois State had very little exposure to LGBTQ issues in curricular and co-curricular experiences. Students had the least exposure to LGBTQ issues at the secondary level and slightly more exposure in community colleges prior to attendance at Illinois State. More than half (55%) of students in the study reported no LGBTQ content in their Illinois State coursework thus far.

Another important feature of this qualitative study is that it gave students an opportunity to express, in their own words, what they need to feel safe and supported on college campuses and what interferes with their social engagement in campus life

[1] The acronym LGBT, LGBTQ, or LGBTQA, used throughout this paper, is inclusive of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, questioning, queer, intersex, or as allies.

and success in their studies. What students said coincides with studies conducted at other institutions and points to solutions that are manageable and realistic given the context of Illinois State (Angeli, 2009). Students expressed that they were ready and willing to work with faculty, staff, and administration on transforming the environment at the university from what they described as benign heteronormativity to one that is helpful to and supportive of all students.

METHODOLOGY

During the spring 2008 semester, members of the LGBT organizing committee, with IRB approval, conducted a series of focus groups with key informant students to assess student need and interest in LGBT studies. Focus groups were conducted with the two registered student organizations of People Realizing Individuality and Diversity through Education (PRIDE), now ISU Pride, and Feminist Led Activist Movement to Empower (FLAME). These two registered student organizations were selected as key informants because they were identified by the LGBT/Queer Studies organizing committee as comprising a large number of LGBTQA-identified students or students who were generally sensitive to the needs of queer students. Each organization distributed information about the opportunity to attend the focus groups and all who attended were included in the study. Seventeen students from ISU Pride and fourteen students from FLAME participated. Students in each organization were divided into two groups, for a total of four focus groups. Students signed waivers giving the task force permission to quote them and summarize their comments for presentation and publication purposes while protecting their identities. Further demographic information—such as major, class level, or age—was not collected in order to allow key informants maximum anonymity.

Each focus group discussion had a facilitator and two note takers from the LGBT/Queer Studies organizing committee. Each focus group met one time for approximately two hours. The focus groups were held in the group's usual meeting place, which is room 375 of the Student Services Building for Pride and the Women and Gender Studies conference room for FLAME. Consistent with qualitative data collection methods, each focus group discussion was conducted in a semi-structured format with a few open-ended questions to begin facilitation of discussion. Facilitators allowed discussions to proceed with the prominent issues as identified by focus group respondents. Three general questions/topic areas were used across all focus groups to maximize student input in discussion and to elicit data that could be coded for analysis. The first question generally asked students about their perception of the environment at Illinois State in terms of being inclusive and safe for LGBT/Queer students and allies. Environment was generally operationalized as perceptions of the educational environment of campus life including: social interactions, perception of administration, perception of student resources, and student housing. The second discussion question inquired more specifically about students' experience with courses: inclusion of LGBT content in existing curriculum, faculty knowledge and attitudes, and their perceptions of what they would like to see included in LGBT/Queer Studies curriculum content. The third general question asked students what the advantages and disadvantages would be to enrolling in an LGBT/Queer Studies program such as a certificate, minor, or emphasis.

The data was analyzed inductively, using a constant comparative method to organize it into natural themes and categories. Responses to the first question regarding the overall environment at Illinois State seemed to naturally code around

three themes: positive experiences, experiences of benign heteronormativity, and hostile experiences. In a similar way, responses regarding experiences with faculty in the classroom and administration ranged across a similar range of categories

In regard to LGBT course content, researchers identified two themes. The first theme focused on examples students gave regarding the presence or absence of content in classes. The second theme revolved around students' suggestions of how to improve the representation of LGBT content in the curriculum.

Responses to the third question regarding the advantages and disadvantages of an LGBT certificate coded into a larger number of natural categories: to add to knowledge, to gain access to jobs where knowledge about LGBT issues would be important, to build better relationships with family, to counteract prejudice, to reduce isolation and provide legitimacy, to build relationships generally, and to help society.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Comments on the General Environment

The students in the focus groups did not characterize the Illinois State environment as particularly hostile to LGBT people. Nine respondents had positive perceptions of the environment and cited as examples seeing males on campus wearing feminist T-shirts and the popularity of the yearly *Vagina Monologues* productions. Students remarked that it was more common to find allies on campus than students who were openly hostile. However, they felt that the general Bloomington/Normal community was a less friendly environment than the Illinois State campus.

Ten students reported that while they perceived the general campus environment as not hostile, they did experience it as "benignly heteronormative." Students' comments included the perception that the campus is quite homogenous and described the feeling of being marginalized for being different, and not comfortable being "out." One student reported that although some people describe themselves as supportive, their actions do not reflect this. A study at Oberlin College (Norris, 1992) confirms similar inconsistencies, demonstrating that although many people on campus may express positive views of LGBT people, they do not follow through or act on those views by interrupting or discouraging negative behaviors of others.

Of the ten students who reported that the environment is characterized by benign heteronormativity, six students reported that they cope with the heteronormative culture by being selective with who and where they socialize. Students in the ISU Pride group, in particular, stated that their experiences might be biased by the fact that most of them socialize mainly within the group. Other students indicated that they monitored who and how they interacted and did not extend themselves to social situations that they did not perceive of as safe.

Eleven students referred to experiencing hostility or ignorance in the form of verbal comments. Some of the verbal comments seem to have been intentionally directed to the LGBT person but often respondents spoke of insults from students who are ignorant in their use of language or words that are popular but derogatory. Only one student spoke of a physical assault. Other examples of verbal hostility cited were: "A lot of times I get eye rolls when I tell people not to use 'gay' in a negative way. They don't even see that as homophobic." "The word "faggot" was pretty commonly used on our dorm floor last year." "'That's so gay' is too readily accepted." "Occasionally I get the cough, 'Gay' "

Comments on Student Experience at the University Outside Academics

The experience of student life outside of the classroom environment referenced administration, campus resources, and the campus living environment. Generally the few comments that were made about the administration reflect that the LGBTQ student community views administration as passive but not hostile to LGBT issues. Students in the ISU Pride focus group all shook their heads in affirmation when one student said that he wished that the administration would be more actively supportive. Comments regarding other campus resources were generally positive. A few students specifically described the counseling services at Illinois State as highly positive. Students also made positive comments about seeing Safe Zone signs on campus, but they remarked that the visibility and frequency of seeing these signs seems to have diminished in the past couple of years. Students remarked that they appreciated the Health services and the Leadership and Service programs coming to ISU Pride meetings to talk about programs. Students did note that there were no gay-friendly sororities or fraternities on campus and that, other than ISU Pride, there were few other resources on campus for the LGBT community.

Students had the most negative comments regarding the housing situation on campus. Student comments ranged from feeling as though the environment was heteronormative to some students feeling as though they were discriminated against in housing's treatment of issues or problems. Students described several examples of what they called heteronormativity, such as Resident Advisors saying to students: "bring your boyfriend over" in a women's dorm rather than using gender-neutral language. Additionally, two female respondents spoke of unescorted gay male friends who were reprimanded in a residence hall because all male visitors to female students needed to be registered. The respondent seemed to be saying that the rule against male visitors had heteronormative implications.

There were comments that indicated respondents believed that the commitment to diversity sensitivity was not a serious priority for the residence halls. Two responses from female respondents expressed annoyance at poster displays of partially clad men in the bathroom stalls and on RA posters. One comment stated that residence halls "take the easy way out" by simply putting up the anti-discrimination poster, but not doing much else to enforce non-discrimination. One respondent stated that RA posters that she interpreted as LGBTQ-supportive were torn down and that most people in the dorms were unaware of the Operation Respect diversity activities taking place in the dorms. One respondent stated that the word "faggot" was commonly used on the dorm floor and that racial slurs were also heard and apparently tolerated on the floor.

Beyond the annoyance of residence halls simply being ignorant of inclusivity, some students indicated that they were subject to unfair and uncomfortable treatment. One student reported that she was required to move because her roommate was apparently uncomfortable rooming with a gay person. This was never addressed as homophobic, but rather tolerated and supported by making the gay student move. Several other students concurred that the burden for lack of tolerance seems to frequently be shifted to the gay person "as if it is their problem." Students remarked that "you should feel safe at your home" yet their comments indicate that they do not feel supported and at times feel unsafe in their home in the residence halls. Indeed, one student likened the level of suspicion as "Cold War Era" in that she felt the message from the RA was "we are watching you." There were several comments from

students who used the word "stuck" in that they felt as though they had no recourse when they received unfair treatment from the RAs in the residence halls. Although students indicated that some RAs were very good, there was no consistency in regard to sensitivity toward LGBT students and issues, and that their well-being in housing was a question of luck regarding the particular RA to whom they were assigned.

In summary, students seem to indicate that other than their treatment in residence halls, they did not experience open hostility in the broader university environment, but did not experience a great deal of open support either, leading to their characterization of Illinois State as basically heteronormative.

Comments Regarding Faculty and Experience in the Classroom

Students' experiences in the classroom ranged from occasional experiences of homo-pejorative remarks, to passive heteronormativity, to very supportive experiences. Twelve students remarked that they heard comments from faculty that the student perceived as heteronormative. The faculty members seemed "ignorant of the LGBT student experience," and they simply "don't get it." Students had several examples of either the faculty member or the contents of the class being heteronormative with the LGBT experience as non-existent or hastily covered. Other comments referring to faculty ignorance or bias included: "Instructors 'stray away from' queerness topics"; "They'll mention it but there's little discussion." Students were surprised that in a class they took on American diversity, LGBT issues weren't even mentioned. Another student mentioned that there was only quick mention of LGBT themes in an adolescent literature class. And another expressed discomfort with the way in which LGBT themes were addressed. This lack of faculty awareness renders LGBT students as invisible.

Student remarks also indicated an acute sensitivity about safety in being a minority, based on whether or not pejorative comments about other minorities were tolerated in the classroom. If negative or ignorant remarks occurred about other minorities, LGBT students frequently evaluated the environment as potentially hostile or unsafe for them as well. For example, one student explained: "I had one teacher that spoke in a biased way about people with autism and I was resistant to his teaching for the rest of the semester. You have to be open to what your students feel."

In contrast to negative comments about how faculty addressed LGBT themes, sixteen students shared positive experiences in which faculty seemed comfortable discussing LGBT experiences. They picked up on how faculty presented the topic along with the fact that they were inclusive and appreciated the more "integrative" stance. Several students made appreciative comments about faculty who brought up the LGBT perspective in a natural way, as one of many valid experiences rather than it being introduced as a separate and specialized topic. One student explained: "I like it when teachers don't frame it, 'we're going to talk about the gay community' but instead talk about it as though it's just another community." In a similar vein, one student said: "My art history teacher talks about how gay men are big fashion leaders, right in there with the rest of them, instead of more emphasis put on it than needed." "It's not like: "Read a chapter on the gay people and we'll discuss it. My international relations class had a chapter on feminism and I was worried I'd have to defend myself, but she [the professor] went at it from a pure political theorist standpoint."

Students identified Women and Gender Studies and English as two areas of study that seemed to be more inclusive. These instances of positive inclusion had a strong impact on students. Several made comments about how important it was to their

sense of well-being to find inclusive and LGBT supportive teachers. One student said, "having an open-minded teacher opens the mind of the students." Renn (2000) gives a number of examples that show the importance of faculty support to LGBT students and the negative effects of "faculty passivity." The Massachusetts Governor's report (1993) on *Making Colleges and Universities Safe for Gay and Lesbian Students,* cited by Renn, also gives numerous examples of the importance of such support to sexual minority students.

Comments on Current Experience with LGBT Content in Curriculum

Generally there seemed to be minimal content regarding LGBT issues according to the study participants' curricular experiences. When students did experience LGBT discussions, they attributed it to the professor being comfortable. This parallels what was learned a year ago from the quantitative survey distributed in 2006-2007 (Zosky, 2007). Specific comments included that English classes seemed the most inclusive. Some students specifically mentioned positive experiences within the departments of Politics and Government, Women and Gender Studies, and Sociology. One student remarked that the syllabus in a business class had Safe Zone information in it, and one student identified an art history class as inclusive.

The general discussion from student experiences from this small sample indicated that professors were either uncomfortable with the topic, or went so far as telling students to not write on "sensitive" topics, rendering LGBT existence invisible. Two students in the FLAME group, with others concurring, commented about sections of multiple-sectioned courses in which they expected LGBT coverage that didn't happen, such as in courses on marriage and the family and on American diversity. One of the students explained how "instructors 'stray away from' the queerness topic; they'll mention it but there's little discussion." Appalled, another student commented, "American diversity class didn't even mention it."

When asked about content for an LGBT Studies curriculum, students identified specific courses or topics they would like to see covered. Suggestions included specific courses on LGBT issues within politics and government, sociology, psychology, human sexuality, gay history, queer humanities, literature, art, philosophy, biology, and education courses.

While having specifically targeted queer studies courses was important to students, their comments suggested that content on LGBT issues should also be infused throughout and across the curriculum. Students felt that content on LGBT issues should be more prominent in the required general education curriculum, acknowledging that most straight students would never take a queer studies course and would only get exposure to the issues in their general education courses. Renn (2000) also points out the importance of incorporating LGBT issues into the "mainstream" curriculum along with developing specific LGBT studies courses.

Comments on Advantages and Disadvantage of an LGBT Studies Curriculum

The ISU Pride students cited a large number of possible advantages to having an LGBT curriculum focus and a few potential disadvantages. The advantages they listed included: adding to knowledge, gaining access to jobs where knowledge about LGBT issues would be important, building better relationships with family, counteracting prejudice, reducing isolation and providing legitimacy, building relationships generally, and helping society. These categories or themes were not mutually exclusive. For example, comments about the importance of knowledge about LGBT issues

could also relate to comments about improving relationships with family and friends, counteracting prejudice, and helping society.

The theme addressed most frequently by the ISU Pride students was that of wanting more knowledge. The most common thread was that even students who were already familiar with LGBT issues would benefit from knowing more. These comments support Patricia Hill Collins's (1991) theory of the "outsider within." Her work analyzes the importance of having positive learning experiences related to their own identities as critical to students from marginalized groups. In the case of many LGBT students who are just discovering their outsider sexual orientation or gender identity status, such positive experiences have a profound impact on their success at school. The students felt that an LGBT/Queer Studies Program could promote knowledge and experience about such issues, which would be beneficial in general, and a good asset for helping them develop their communication skills.

The second-most-discussed theme was that of careers. Students felt confident that having an emphasis in LGBT Studies would indicate to employers or graduate schools that they had a "diverse view of life." Students noted that many companies are becoming much more aware of all aspects of diversity inclusion and believe that having this academic background would make them more valuable to employers. One student indicated that it would be very beneficial for him in the area of human rights work, which he was pursuing. When asked if having an emphasis in Queer Studies would be a liability in getting a job, one student remarked that he would not want to work for that type of company anyway.

A number of ISU Pride students talked most passionately about how an LGBT/Queer Studies curriculum could help improve or contribute to family relationships, enhancing family acceptance for LGBT students and all students who might have a relative or friend who is LGBT. One gay student who had a gay brother and a positive family dynamic felt that becoming better informed would enhance the family's already good relationships with one another. Another student, who identified as bisexual, said that even though her mom is gay, she doesn't understand bisexuality. "She's really big into 'it's a phase' and I'll 'go one way or the other." Another talked about wanting more knowledge to give to her parents who she said, "are very set in their ways." Still another spoke about his own biracial family in which one of his parents thinks that gay marriage "will be the downfall of society." All of these students, who had some knowledge of LGBT culture and history themselves, indicated that they believed that more education on these issues would enable them to better challenge people's biased comments and stereotyped views of LGBT people, which would help to improve their own lives.

Students' comments about helping society were also related to the question of people needing more knowledge and reducing prejudice. One student said that the future would be better if LGBT studies were included in college because LGBT concerns would eventually grow to be more included in the rest of the society. Another student's comments about such courses or programs creating more educated people was also closely related to the theme of ways in which knowledge about LGBT issues can help to improve society.

Several students stated that an LGBT/Queer Studies Program would have great benefit as support for queer students and would send the message to all constituencies that Queer Theory is a legitimate discipline of study. One student also made the point that having an LGBT/Queer Studies curriculum would help to recruit

more people to Illinois State who are interested in LGBT studies and supportive of LGBT issues.

Students were asked specifically if having LGBT Studies indicated on their transcript would be an advantage or disadvantage. Some students enthusiastically remarked that it would be very important for them and that they would be proud to have it indicated. They would see this as "a validation of them as a minority that exists and is recognized." Students remarked that it would complement other disciplines of study such as Women and Gender Studies, English, Art, and Theatre. One woman indicated that it would be a benefit because it would indicate to employers that she was inclusive of diversity like "having an additional language."

Other students identified disadvantages to having LGBT/Queer Studies identified on the transcript and would want to be more circumspect. There was thoughtful discussion that in some careers and with some potential employers, a notation of this on the transcript may impede the student's employability. This was particularly a concern for education majors and finding jobs in conservative school districts. Others questioned if business majors might also find a certain amount of discrimination in employment if this was on a transcript.

Students also had very thoughtful reflection and discussion on whether a notation on the transcript would be detrimental to family relationships. The students in the ISU Pride group, in particular, were very sensitive as to how this would impact family relationships. Some viewed the transcript issue as not a problem, but others thought it might exacerbate already tenuous relationships.

A few students from both the ISU Pride and FLAME groups discussed the potential disadvantage of an LGBT/Queer Studies program and worried that it might be a catalyst for further social stigma, isolation, and harm. For example, they were concerned that students enrolled in this program would be more visible for hate crimes, stigmatization, and further isolation from the general campus population. These students believed that exposure to LGBT issues in mandatory general education classes would do more to educate ignorant students than a separate LGBT Studies program and would not stigmatize sexual- and gender-minority students as an isolated group.

Although students expressed concerns about further marginalization of LGBT people in LGBT-focused courses, in reality, a large number of students who sign up for LGBT courses are heterosexual. Tristan Taormino explains in a 2003 *Village Voice* article that the cultural conditions of today differ from the 1970s-1990s in that "queer" culture is not an exclusive realm belonging to LGBT people, but has affected everyone's constructions of gender and relationships. In the *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity through Education*, the authors discuss how LGBT/Queer issues now pervade mainstream society and the Internet as well as the college campus. While San Francisco City College was the first college to offer a concentration in LGBT/Queer Studies, these programs now proliferate.

LIMITATIONS

The results from this study must be cautiously interpreted given several limitations. As a qualitative exploratory investigation, this study employed purposive sampling of key informant students from two particular student organizations. Consequently, the sample size was small and is not representative of the general student population. The usual tests for reliability, validity, and triangulation—important in positivist research

paradigms—do not factor into this limited qualitative study. Our purpose was not to measure or duplicate findings, but to gain some understanding of how a particular group of people responded to the possibility of participating in a new LGBT/Queer Studies curriculum, in this one particular context. Some of our findings, however, are corroborated through qualitative and quantitative research done in other settings.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Experiencing the campus as not overtly hostile, but benignly heteronormative, has resulted in LGBT students limiting their social engagement and campus activities to only what feels safe and supportive. Although students did experience support in their encounters with Counseling Services and Student Leadership, they felt that they would benefit significantly from more active support from the administration. Housing was the only area identified by LGBT students frequently as problematic and difficult because their experiences with housing depended upon arbitrary circumstances such as the Resident Advisor to whom they are assigned.

Courses in Women and Gender Studies and English were identified as the most inclusive of LGBT issues. Some courses in other disciplines, such as Politics and Government and Sociology, were sometimes inclusive, but not consistently so. Few faculty members that students encountered incorporated LGBT issues into their courses or were comfortable addressing these issues. However, when faculty were comfortable, knowledgeable, and supportive, LGBT students benefited greatly and were most successful in the academic environment.

Students in both organizations indicated that it would be beneficial to have an LGBT Studies program at Illinois State, while also feeling that it was important to infuse these issues through the general education curriculum. ISU Pride students remarked that the knowledge they would gain through such a program of study could help them improve their relationships with family members and ultimately make the world more accepting. Students interested in human service and human rights work commented that it could be very beneficial to have an LGBT Studies program or coursework on their transcripts. Those going into fields like teaching and business did not. Some students worried that an LGBT Studies certificate might further isolate LGBT students because they did not think that heterosexual students would enroll in such courses, although research indicates the contrary.

CONCLUSION

Talking with students in the Focus Groups was beneficial to the organizing committee since some of the original student data was not available from an earlier survey due to faults in the data-capturing program the university was using at the time. In addition, members of the organizing committee learned a great deal about how LGBT students and their allies feel about the current campus climate and how it supports or creates further stresses on their academic and social lives. This information is extremely helpful in working on ways to improve the environment for all students on campus. Also, knowing that students feel both a strong reason for developing an LGBT/Queer Studies program of study as well as incorporating LGBT/Queer issues into the general education curriculum gives the committee a clearer idea about how to proceed in developing an inclusive academic program with components in student affairs and community service to serve the whole student.

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5

Universal Design for Instruction: Understanding Faculty Practices and Needs

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Today's higher education student population is increasingly diverse along many dimensions including educational background, age, gender, culture, ability, disability, and primary language. Faculty members who are designing instructional experiences and supportive learning environments have an opportunity to enhance instructional accessibility by using Universal Design for Learning/Instruction (UDL/UDI) principles. Based on these principles, proactive strategies may be designed and implemented to ensure access to higher education experiences by college students both with and without disabilities. Applying UDL/UDI principles in college and university courses will not eliminate the need for specific accommodations for students with disabilities, but can support learning for *most* students and *minimize* the need for special accommodations (Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], 2008; Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2001, 2003).

The purposes of this short report are to describe key principles of UDL and UDI and to describe the findings of a pilot survey study that focused on faculty members practices and needs in the areas of UDL/UDI. Limited previous research is available related to faculty perceptions of UDI/UDL in higher education settings. One exception is a study conducted by Vreeburg-Izzo, Murray, and Novak (2008). Vreeburg-Izzo et al. conducted a survey, coupled with follow-up focus groups, with faculty and graduate teaching assistants that examined the (a) climate of instructional settings for students with disabilities, and (b) perceived needs for professional development among faculty and administrators related to providing educational

access for all students. Of the 1,150 survey instruments distributed, 271 were completed and returned. Results from the survey indicated that participants were primarily interested in training on UDL but also expressed interested in training on Web accessibility and distance education. Subsequent focus groups revealed that faculty (a) often felt uncertain about meeting the needs of diverse students in the classroom; (b) employed several strategies to enhance teaching and learning, but did not connect this to UDL; and (c) desired both training and technical assistance to help promote educational access for all students.

Key Principles of UDL

UDL is an extension of an architectural movement known as *universal design* (UD). Originally described by Ron Mace at North Carolina State University (Rose & Meyer, 2002), the idea behind UD in architecture is to create structures that are designed and constructed to accommodate a wide range of users—both with and without disabilities—thereby minimizing the need for later changes in the design. UDL extends UD in two key ways: it (a) applies the idea of built-in flexibility to the educational curriculum; and (b) extends UD by supporting *both* improved access to information within classrooms *and* improved access to learning (CAST, 2008; Pisha & Coyne, 2001; Sabia, 2008).

The UDL framework includes instructional approaches that provide students with choices and alternatives in the materials, content, tools, contexts, and supports they use. In addition to challenging teachers to be more flexible, UDL provides guidelines for creating flexibility that is both systematic and effective (CAST, 2008; Rose & Meyer, 2002). Three primary principles guide UDL, which provide multiple (a) means of representation, (b) means of action and expression, and (c) means of engagement (CAST).

Key Principles of UDI

Although the principles of UDL hold potential to enhance the effectiveness of educational strategies and settings, it is important to consider the unique context of higher education when applying UDL to postsecondary education. Given the increasing diversity seen in higher education settings, there is a need to increase both diversity of instruction and curricula used with all students. Building upon and extending the principles of UDL, Scott et al. (2001) developed a new set of UD principles for postsecondary education, i.e., UDI. UDI principles (see Table 1) are written in a way that could support faculty in integrating instructional features that could meet the needs of diverse learners. In addition, UDI principles could also help faculty to self-reflect on their own instruction and make adjustments as needed (Scott et al., 2003).

A UDL/UDI Pilot Study with Faculty Members

To explore how faculty members in the Department of Special Education at Illinois State University use UDL/UDI principles and identify their needs in this area, a pilot survey instrument was developed and placed in the mailbox of 27 instructors (the survey is available by request from the authors). The survey instrument included open-ended and closed-ended questions across four areas: (a) general information related to instructors' use of or inclusion of ideas from UDL/UDI (e.g., syllabus components, communication with students, learning community activities); (b) information related to whether and how instructors use multiple means of representation (i.e., strategies and/or tools use by faculty and students to represent the

knowledge/content deemed important for a course); (c) information related to instructors' use of multiple means of engagement (i.e., multiple ways of engaging students in the learning process); and (d) information related to instructors' use of multiple means of expression (i.e., multiple ways of engaging students in the learning process).

TABLE 1. PRINCIPLES AND INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES OF UDI

UDI Principle	Instructional Purpose
Equitable use	Designed to provide the same means of use for all students (i.e., identical whenever possible, equivalent when not).
Flexibility in use	Designed to accommodate a wide range of individuals by providing choice in methods of use.
Simple and intuitive	Designed in a straightforward and predictable manner (with unnecessary complexity eliminated), regardless of the student's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
Perceptible information	Designed so that necessary information is communicated effectively to the student, regardless of ambient conditions or the student's sensory abilities.
Tolerance for error	Anticipates variation in individual student learning pace and prerequisite skills.
Low physical effort	Designed to minimize nonessential physical effort in order to allow maximum attention to learning.
Size and space for approach and use	Designed with consideration for appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulations, and use regardless of a student's body size, posture, mobility, and communication needs.
A community of learners	Promotes interaction and communication among students and between students and faculty.
Instructional climate	Designed to be welcoming and inclusive, with high expectations espoused for all students.

Source: Adapted and presented, with permission, from Scott, S. S., McGuire, J. M., & Shaw, S. F. (2001). *Principles of universal design for instruction*. Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability.

Fifteen faculty members completed and returned the anonymous survey instrument (55% response rate). Faculty members who completed the survey had between one and 25 years of experience in higher education. All 15 participants reported that their syllabi included statements related to the Office of Disability Concerns, course requirements, and expectations. Faculty members (93%) reported that due dates were also integrated into course syllabi. Faculty indicated that they used a variety of ways and tools to communicate with students (e.g., e-mail, phone, office hours, Web site, social network, video phone) and encouraged the development of a 'learning community' within their respective classes using a cadre of activities (e.g., setting community goals, celebrating achievement, encouraging group work).

When asked about using multiple means of representation, faculty members reported using visual (100%), auditory (100%), verbal (100%), and graphic (67%) modes of representation. They indicated that they provided accessible course content and materials through the use of accessible Web sites (53%), captioned videos (47%), and other information and communication technologies. Faculty members stated that when they used multiple means of representation, they believed students were more engaged and their levels of critical thinking increased. As one faculty member

noted, when using different modes of representation "students see the content as 'real' and are more likely to learn and generalize." In addition, faculty reported that using multiple means of representation allowed them to address varying levels of understanding among students, resulting in what appeared to be greater comprehension of concepts discussed in the curricula.

Faculty used different methods to engage students including lectures (100%), demonstrations (80%), small group activities (87%), and classroom and online discussions (100%). Most of the faculty members believe that the use of different methods for engagement resulted in heightened student involvement and participation in course activities.

The final part of the survey focused on the third key principle of UDL/UDI— multiple means of expression. Faculty described different methods they allowed students to use to demonstrate their knowledge including written reports (93%), oral presentations (80%), discussions (73%), and videos (47%). Faculty also stated that they encouraged the use of various technologies to ensure that students could accurately express what they know. According to participating faculty members, the use of multiple means of expression generated a variety of viewpoints; encouraged diversity, flexibility and tolerance; and allowed them to meet the individual learning needs of students. One faculty member reported that "students' engagement and focus is always enhanced when using multiple, varied means of instruction and demonstration of knowledge. The variety allows different students to shine."

Faculty members were also asked about the challenges of using UDL/UDI principles. The most frequent challenges included limited time (93%) and knowledge of specific strategies (53%), and need for assistive technology (tools and support; 33%) that can enhance teaching. Faculty members identified several activities that could support teaching using UDL/UDI principles: (a) self- learned activities, such as online modules (67%) and resource books (47%); (b) group activities, such as small interest groups discussions (53%); and (c) direct teaching activities, including lectures and demonstrations (47%).

Summary

The result of this pilot study revealed the potential benefits of the use of UDL/ UDI principles and guidelines for both faculty members and students in a higher education setting. Faculty members commented on the benefits of using UDL/ UDI strategies and reported using a variety of strategies related to multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. Faculty members also reported particular needs to learn about additional strategies and receive support in the design and delivery of instruction using varying technology tools. These initial findings support the need for additional research regarding UDL/UDI needs and practices of higher education faculty members, while also providing direction for specific professional development activities that could benefit faculty members. Specifically, as this was a pilot study, large-scale research needs to be conducted to both identify current faculty instructional and assessment practices *and* the degree to which these practices adhere to principles of UDI/UDL. In addition, while the theory of UDI/ UDL generally seems to be viewed as important for practice (Vreeburg-Izzo et al., 2008) the efficacy of implementing UDI/UDL principles in higher education learning environments has yet to be validated. Finally, further research is needed to identify efficient means for faculty to develop knowledge and skills related to implementing UDI/UDL in the classroom.

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6

Student Engagement and Learning in Lecture Hall and Online Learning Settings

CARA RABE-HEMP | SUSAN WOOLLEN | GAIL HUMISTON

ABSTRACT

The current study is a comparison of students' learning outcomes, engagement with peers and faculty, and ability to learn autonomously in two commonly used learning settings: a large lecture hall and online. Results suggest that learning setting affected student learning, relating to the styles of interaction among students and between students and faculty, and the methods of learning utilized by students. Specifically, students in the online course were more reflective in their learning practices by spending more time independently preparing for the course, and were more involved in class discussions. By comparison, students from the traditional lecture hall were more collaborative in their learning with classmates.

INTRODUCTION

The rate of online educational course offerings in universities has skyrocketed in the past ten years. A recent report suggests that 12 million post-secondary students are currently taking courses online and that number is set to almost double in the next five years (Nagel, 2009). Despite the increased representation of distance education courses, many concerns remain regarding the quality and delivery of this learning mechanism. Most criticisms voiced about online courses are due to the concern that the interaction between students and faculty is inferior to the traditional classroom setting, making student engagement difficult (Meyer-Peyton, 2000; Purcell-Robertson & Purcell, 2000). Advocates of distance education argue that the online environment

encourages learning autonomous practices of engagement, student-centered learning, and reflection (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Little, 1996; Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 2009; Weimer, 2002) compared to the large lecture hall where learning is mostly teacher-centered (Edwards, Cordray, & Dorbolo, 2000; Danielson, & McGreal, 2000; Maeroff, 2003).

Current literature posits that despite the physical distance between teacher and students, interaction may be achieved, and may even exceed that found in traditional classrooms (Barron, 1987; Kazmer, 2003). Students' ability to interact is an essential component in building learning communities and engaging active learners (Schwitzer & Lovell, 1999), leading to personalization, higher self regard, and an opportunity to connect with other students (Maeroff, 2003). Students who perceive high levels of student interaction have reported greater general satisfaction with the course and a higher quality of learning (Schwitzer & Lovell, 1999). Despite these theoretical arguments, few studies exist which explore whether student engagement is achieved in distance education.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study explores the comparative forms of student learning associated with two commonly used learning settings: a large lecture hall and online. By comparing the two, conclusions can be made as to the ability of students to be engaged, to interact with their peers and faculty, and to learn autonomously. Past research has explored the differences between online and traditional learning techniques, but few studies have assessed student learning with a realistic comparison setting, the large lecture hall. The majority of introductory courses in public universities are taught in the large lecture hall modality (Bardwick, 2007) yet most comparison studies utilize small, liberal arts style courses which do not reflect the reality of the student experience (Rivera, McAlister, & Rice, 2002). To compare students' learning outcomes, engagement with peers and faculty, and ability to learn autonomously in these two distinct learning modalities, the following idea is explored: how does learning setting (i.e. online versus large lecture hall) relate to the autonomous learning measures, student gains, and student performance measures reported by students?

METHODS

A survey administered online in both classes captured students' self-reported measures of independent class preparation, students' propensity to discuss ideas outside of the classroom, student gains (general education, personal, practical and higher order thinking), student-to-student contact and student-to-faculty contact (see Table 1 for details). Relevant student demographic information was also collected to determine whether student engagement and subsequent student success were conditional upon these personal characteristics. Lastly, student final grade was accessed from the final grade roster to determine student performance in the course.

Participants

In 2007, 283 undergraduate students from Illinois State University (27 online students and 256 traditional students) who were enrolled in a general education introductory justice course participated in this study. In the online course, all 30 students agreed to participate in the study, but three students failed to complete the post survey, leaving 27 students. In the traditional classroom, 32 students declined participation, 10 students dropped the course during the semester, and 2 students failed to complete

the post survey, leaving 256 students. Of the students, 32.3% were male and 67.7% were female. Exploring race, 82.7% of students reported being white, 10.8% African-American, 2.5% Hispanic, 1.9% Asian-American and 1.2% reported "other" as their race and ethnicity. Students ranged in age from 17 to 36, with the mean age of 18.84 (SD= 1.67).

Students in the online class were an average of 2.5 years older than the traditional students and more likely to have had a culminating experience in their field of study. The rest of the student demographics, including race, gender, first generation college student, community service activities, and study abroad experiences were similar between the two learning settings (See Table 1).

Data

To go beyond measuring learning simply by student grade, the following self-reported gains were explored: (a) general education, (b) personal and social development, (c) practical competence, (d) higher order learning measured on a four point scale (measured as: a great deal = 4, some = 3, limited = 2, very little, = 1). Second, a set of self-reported measures related to engagement were selected from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) created by Kuh and associates (2001) to assess the extent to which students interacted with faculty and peers (student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction also measured on the four point scale). To capture practices associated with autonomous learning, three other measures were created with particular attention to learning that may occur outside of the traditional classroom (independent class preparation time [i.e. I typically spent ___ hours a week preparing for this class – studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to my coursework], in-class participation [a great deal, some, limited and very little], and student discussed course material outside of class [a great deal, some, limited and very little]).

RESULTS

By means of t-tests, the results revealed significant differences in the responses between students in the traditional and the online course settings. That is, as shown in Table 1, learning mechanism is significantly related to many learning outcomes, demographics, student gains, and autonomous learning measurements.

Student gains

Specific to learning outcomes, student grades for the courses were quite similar regardless of learning mechanism. Further, there were no significant differences in the reported levels of gains in general education (i.e., writing, speaking, thinking critically) or in personal and social skills (i.e., defining a code of values, understanding yourself and others, learning effectively independently and collaboratively). Students in the traditional class reported slightly higher gains in practical skills (i.e., analyzing problems, using computers, working effectively with others) and higher order thinking (i.e., analyzing theory, organizing ideas, making value judgments, the application of theory to new ideas) than the respondents in the online setting (Table 1).

Autonomous learning measures

As reported in Table 1, students in the online course reported three more hours of independent class preparation time than the traditional students reported but reported discussing ideas outside of class at lower levels than the traditional students.

Confirming an oft cited finding in online learning (Barker, 1987; Barker & Platten, 1988; Creswell, 1986), students in the online course reported much lower levels of interaction with their classmates compared to the traditional students. Surprisingly, they reported significantly higher levels of in class participation and more student-to-professor contact than traditional students.

TABLE 1. BIVARIATE STATISTICS: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AUTONOMOUS LEARNING MEASURES, STUDENT GAINS AND DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE ONLINE AND TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

	Online (n = 27)		Traditonal Class (n = 256)			
	M	SD	M	SD	*t-statistic*	*p-value*
Final course grade	2.54	1.07	2.64	1.06	-0.48	.63
Autonomous learning measures						
Independent class preparation	6.58	4.20	3.37	2.14	3.85	.00**
In-class participation	2.88	1.24	1.61	0.86	5.113	.00**
Student-to-student contact	1.48	.714	2.89	0.97	-7.10	.00**
Student-to-faculty contact	2.03	0.57	1.68	0.67	2.60	.01*
Discussed ideas outside of class	2.81	0.93	3.18	0.80	-2.02	.02*
Student Gains						
Gains in general education	2.22	0.68	2.36	0.87	-0.76	.41
Gains in personal	2.62	0.62	2.89	0.726	-1.82	.06
Gains in practical	1.93	0.49	2.26	0.76	-3.00	.00**
Higher order thinking	2.60	0.87	3.00	0.74	-2.53	.01*
Student Demographics						
Race	3.11	0.95	2.98	0.53	.69	.49
Age	21.23	3.25	18.57	1.15	4.13	.00**
Gender	0.61	0.49	0.68	0.46	-.72	.47
First generation	0.76	0.42	0.69	0.46	.75	.45
Culminating Experience	0.53	0.50	0.23	0.42	2.94	.00**
Community Service	0.96	0.19	0.79	0.40	1.61	.11
Study Abroad	0.07	0.27	0.04	0.20	.79	.43

DISCUSSION

In conclusion, the use of the Internet as a medium elicits epistemological changes for both learner and teacher. Namely, online learning is achieved by means of greater student-to-faculty contact, participation in class discussions, and more independent class preparation.

Students in the online course may be more autonomous in their learning process, indicated by the findings that online students spent more time preparing for the course and that they felt more connected to faculty. It is widely theorized that autonomous learning is linked to critical thinking, academic performance, and personal development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) and that students who explicitly take responsibility for their own learning are more likely to be motivated regarding their achievement goals and learning strategies (Eccles, 2004; Rabe-Hemp, Woollen & Humiston, 2009; Thanasoulas, 2000). However, more research is needed to determine the processes by which learner autonomy is shaped in the online learning environment beyond independent student work. Better measures of autonomous learning practices, such as student reflexivity and self-awareness, would improve knowledge in the field.

Current research argues that students who are more autonomous in the online medium may actually be more introverted in the traditional classroom (Downing & Chim, 2004). Online students may be encouraged toward more autonomous learning practices, simply by the greater reliance on student independence and responsibility for their own learning experiences. The actual process of asynchronous discussions may also impact learner autonomy as writing demands more reflection than speaking (Harasim, 1990; Rohfeld & Hiemstra, 1995). The asynchronous nature of the online course allows the student (and the professor) a more thoughtful process of communication.

Findings in this study regarding communication in online learning muddied the proverbial waters regarding the debate of the role of interaction in learning. Despite attempts to encourage student-to-student interactions through asynchronous discussion, online students reported fewer student-to-student interactions. This finding is puzzling considering students in the online course reported greater levels of classroom participation. One likely explanation is that while online students consider their discussion sessions as classroom participation, traditional students see them as interactions. Due to the social and emotional distance associated with the online discussions, students must not only express their ideas online but their identities as well (Haythornthwaite & Bregman, 2004). A result of the presentation of self is that personal disclosures build stronger interpersonal ties amongst participants, which generally increases satisfaction with group activities (Haythornthwaite & Bregman, 2004). These findings may also help explain the lower levels of satisfaction reported by online learners (Rabe-Hemp, Woollen, & Humiston, 2009).

As the system evolves, a major pedagogical concern emerging is how to maintain interaction when students and teachers are separated by distance but linked by technology. Creating intentional interaction is essential to student learning. Future practices must encourage students to present their personal identities in collaboration with other students, in addition to discussing course materials. As technology advances, students' collaboration may be improved in a variety of ways to allow participants to gather in a shared space. Synchronous chat sessions and virtual worlds such as *Second Life* are becoming increasingly mainstream. By means of these technologies, the social and emotional distances between participants are lessened as students share in a co-presence or sense of community. Further, visual cues utilized in *Skype* may be a means for improving the emotional connectedness students perceive in the online classroom.

Modern college students are the products of an educational system that has historically placed the responsibility for learning on the instructor (Jacob & Eleser, 1997). This pedagogy relies on the authoritative expertise of the instructor who provides knowledge and information to passive vessels by means of lecture and audiovisual aids. Consequences including unmotivated and passive students, irregular class attendance, learned helplessness, and a focus on grades rather than learning are the unintended consequences of the model (Beane, 1997; Stevens, 2000). By comparison, the role of the professor in distance education is more of a moderator rather than an owner and deliverer of knowledge (Beaudin, 1999; Hiltz, 1994; Kearsley, 2008). Discussed informally as the "guide by the side" rather than the "sage on the stage," this practice allows the students to have ownership over their learning process, encouraging active learning (Hardin, 2004).

The "guide by the side" model does present some potential problems for students and faculty. The lack of face-to-face persona seems to divest the professor of some authority which may be uncomfortable to professors who see their role as an

authoritarian. In addition, students may be uneasy about taking ownership for their learning process. Studies that have evaluated students' perceptions of their ability to learn autonomously have found that anxiety, frustration, confusion, and anger are common feelings for students in the beginning stages of autonomous learning (Taylor & Burgess, 1995; Lunyk-Child, Crooks, Ellis, et al., 2001; Hewitt-Taylor, 2001) Older students with little prior online experiences may be even more uncomfortable as they have become dependent on the "sage on the stage" as confirmed in this analysis..

Institutions and faculty may consider preparing students for their online course experiences with an aptitude test which would define student ability as well as preferred learning style. Utilizing a tool at the outset of the online learning experience will help students assess their current ability to learn autonomously and provide feedback regarding best practices to improve their abilities. By empowering students to assess their abilities, the test provides the students and faculty member with realistic expectations regarding their experiences as well as inundating students with the possible benefits of autonomous learning. Future research may explore the impact of these new technologies and tools on student engagement, collaboration, and most importantly, learning.

In conclusion, this study suggests that learning mechanism is related to student learning, the styles of interaction among students and between students and faculty, and the methods of learning utilized by students. Because learning mechanism plays a critical role in students' learning experiences, future research needs to continue to explore how the online and traditional lecture hall settings manifest autonomous learning practices.

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7

Reflections of Pre-service Teachers on Their Own Teaching Practices

DAVID SNYDER

Most university programs ask their pre-service music educators to do some form of small- or large-group instruction as part of their program before the student teaching semester(s). These experiences can vary widely from in-class microteaching in small groups to like-instrument sectionals at a local school to full-fledged ensemble instruction at a professional development site. Undergraduate students and music teacher educators alike find these experiences to be invaluable in preparation for teaching in the schools (Downey, 2008). One of the tools used to deepen these pre-service teaching experiences and consequently the pedagogical knowledge of these teachers is to have them reflect on their teaching episodes. This can be done in several different ways including reflection with peers or a cooperating teacher or self-reflection using video (Wu & Kao, 2008).

The ability of our pre-service teachers to reflect on their craft cannot be overstated. Research findings indicate the emergence of new understandings and conceptions regarding planning and organization, pedagogical strategies, delivery, content knowledge, and classroom management when teachers reflect (Downey, 2008; Yung, et. al., 2007). Reflection that involves other pre-service teaching colleagues is an important developmental tool as well in learning how to teach. Conkling (2007), in her article on situated learning, writes, "… it seems that collaborative reflection, whether face-to-face or mediated by technology, is one of the keys to learning to teach because it allows pre-service teachers to learn from each other."

The focus of this paper is self-reflection on teaching using video. The excerpts

that are used in this paper are taken from the emails of pre-service music teachers at Illinois State University completing their required clinical hours with instrumental students at both the middle school and high school level. Though these teaching episodes were eventually evaluated by the instructor in the areas of teacher presence, classroom management, lesson planning, teaching method, pacing, error detection, pedagogy and assessment, the pre-service teachers received no specific guidelines on how to focus their first reflective comments. The intent was to get a glimpse into the developing teacher psyche and see what teachers-in-training actually *do* notice about their own teaching.

The students involved in this study taught in pairs and fell equally into one of two groups. For one group, these were their first teaching experiences with actual school children and their first time to be videotaped. The other group had worked with school children either the previous semester or during their instrumental methods classes. Most of the students in the second group had also been videotaped teaching before, but were not asked to reflect on their video clips. It was hoped that there would be a difference in the level and content of the comments given by the more experienced group even though they had not received specific guidelines on how the comments should be focused.

The specific questions to be answered in this study were: What do pre-service teachers notice about their own teaching after watching their video clips? Does the focus of comments made by pre-service teachers change with more experience watching video clips and how does this impact their teaching?

ANALYSIS OF REFLECTIVE COMMENTS

The reflections of more than 70 music education students from six different semesters were analyzed for common themes. Each music education student was asked to watch a 10-minute videotaped segment of their own teaching at the beginning of the semester and another 10-minute segment at the end of the semester. These video segments were filmed by the researcher with the camera focused on the teacher. Video clips were then loaded onto a class website for easy access. After viewing the clip, students were asked to write a critique of their own teaching. No other instructions were given than this. The goal was to document what these pre-service teachers noticed about their own teaching with the hope that it would give insight to what is important for them. These comments were submitted to the researcher (who was also these students' university supervisor) to read. The comments were coded by this researcher and subjected to a content analysis, which is a descriptive research technique for the study of verbal, symbolic or communicative data (Casey, 1992). This involved a detailed review of the comments sent over email in order to search for statements that contained similar information. These similar statements were identified and given code labels.

Initial observations made from studying these reflections included three findings: a noted "lack of enthusiasm" from the student musicians being taught; high incidences of self-criticism, and very few comments concerning the student musicians' playing. A lack of enthusiasm from the classroom students was also noted by Fallin and Royce (2000) in their case studies of student teachers. Pre-service teachers often gauge their level of success in teaching by how enthusiastically the students react to their lesson. Past research also shows that when first viewing one's own teaching, comments tend to focus on self and not on the students being taught (Duke & Prickett, 1996, Berg & Smith, 1996). Comments from these pre-service

teachers confirmed that this was indeed the case. Both the experienced (those who had taught in clinical situations before) and inexperienced pre-service teachers alike dedicated part or all of their reflection to comments about themselves. The criticisms most often brought up in these self-focused comments were voice level, talking too much, pacing, lack of clarity in conducting, nervousness and/or lack of confidence. These types of comments are to be expected and seem appropriate for an individual standing in front of a group of students for the first time. A junior, first-time teacher wrote this:

> Another thing I noticed was I didn't seem confident. I felt more confident than I looked. If I stand with a good posture, this will help me look more confident. I also noticed that my pacing was really slow. This will come with time as I become more comfortable with teaching.

Another junior, first-time teacher wrote, "I thought my voice level was really good and that I was clearly communicating with the students. I did notice that I was lacking in enthusiasm and they were responding to that negatively."

Video is a wonderful tool for correcting some of these more often mentioned mannerisms such as voice level and posture. All but two students involved in the study reduced their comments on personal mannerisms and voice level or noted improvement in these areas on their second and consequent reflections. A senior, second-time teacher said, "I could hear my instructions clearly on tape and my stance conveyed confidence."

One of the goals of the teacher-educator is to move pre-service teachers from these fairly superficial comments focusing on self to deeper commentaries on the actual instruction that is taking place. This can be accomplished by shifting the pre-service teachers' focus away from self and toward the students in the classroom. After initial reflections were recorded, the pre-service teachers in this study received comments from the supervisor suggesting that they also comment on the student performance in the next video clip. Electronic reflections from the pre-service teachers support the findings of Campbell and Thompson (2007), which state that "it appears that there is a clear desire among pre-service music teachers to create a lasting impact on their students." Our pre-service teachers already posses a desire to have a "lasting impact" on their students; we simply need to remind them to direct their attention toward that goal. By suggesting that the pre-service teachers shift their focus to the students in the class, comments in reflections began to address how to improve instructional methods.

Some of the areas where self-reflection using video proved effective in improving instruction were: reducing the amount of teacher talking and increasing the amount of student playing, structuring of the lesson, and attention to student playing errors. Each of these areas will be addressed separately here.

TEACHER TALKING

Most of the students in the study noticed too much "teacher talking" after watching their first video or during peer reflection with their partner and made comments similar to this one by a senior instrumentalist: "I feel the biggest thing I need to improve on is my ability to state something without *over*stating it." Separate observations of live teaching episodes confirmed that video reflections brought about a reduction in the amount of verbal instruction from the pre-service teachers and increased the amount of time students were able to play. A senior instrumental

major had this to say on his second reflection: "I feel I have a pretty good economy of language and I don't stumble over my instructions anymore." This "economy of language" is an important step for beginning teachers to learn. All teachers desire to share what they have learned and experienced over the years with their students, but it takes a maturing teacher to realize that they do not need to share *everything* they know all at once. A few well-chosen words can be much more effective than a long, rambling explanation.

LESSON STRUCTURE

The structure of the lessons themselves was addressed as students continued to reflect. It was fairly common for the pre-service teachers in this study to progress from self-focused comments in their first reflection to those related to the design and flow of the lesson in the second reflection. After coding the reflections for lesson structure, the majority of the pre-service teachers (53 of the 70 students involved) came to recognize when the lesson was not ordered correctly or a key component was missing from the sequence of the lesson. After watching a rather lengthy clip of a brass warm up she did, a senior brass education major said, " I could have done a better job of reinforcing the meaning and purpose behind the breathing (and buzzing) exercises throughout the lesson to save time at the beginning while also applying the concepts to the rest of the music." Student teachers also realized that variety was necessary in the way basic concepts were addressed. A senior woodwind major said, "I also will strive to find more ways to vary the lesson and find other ways to work on tricky fingerings and other concepts other than just playing it again."

PLAYING ERRORS

Analysis of these 140 pre-service teacher reflections (two reflections for each of the 70 students) showed a marked lack of comments relating to student playing and specifically, student playing errors. Even after the university supervisor or cooperating teacher on site pointed out playing problems, future reflections still gave little if any attention to this issue. Further, the few teachers who did comment regularly on student playing issues tended to make superficial comments such as this one from a senior brass major: "For my next teaching, I need to know more fingerings and common techniques to help tone quality and intonation. I knew there were issues with the oboe's playing, but I wasn't sure how to address it."

Specific comments related to teaching instruments and the pedagogy that accompanies this knowledge appeared to be of lesser importance to the teachers-in-training in this study. It is expected that pedagogical knowledge on the different instruments will be learned during university programs, but what a student is taught and what is retained or deemed useful are two different things. Researchers have studied university method courses and what role they play in acquiring this knowledge (Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008). Music teacher educators have also studied the problem of skill acquisition by focusing on the effectiveness of university method courses (Conway, 2002) while others have noted a "disconnect" in the ability of pre-service teachers to identify what skills they really need to be effective (Campbell &Thompson, 2007). Many university instrument technique classes occur early on in the teacher candidate's sequence and lack a direct connection to teaching.

It is possible that both the lack of effective undergraduate method courses and the inability for pre-service teachers to "identify" what they need to know to be effective teachers indeed hinders our undergraduate music education population from

becoming fully prepared to teach upon exiting our programs. But the study of these student reflections may also indicate that pre-service teachers must *first* become comfortable with themselves in the role of teacher and then in the ordering and structuring of a lesson before they notice and reflect on the pedagogical knowledge specific to the instruments.

CONCLUSIONS

The music profession should continue to explore ways to make university method courses relevant and applicable to the real world. Ballantyne and Packer (2004) have found that recent graduates most often cite skills specific to teaching music in the classroom as the highest priority for music education programs. But is improving our method courses enough to prepare our pre-service teachers? Teacher educators should also look for more guided teaching opportunities for undergraduate students before student teaching takes place. These added opportunities to teach may help teachers-in-training to progress through the preliminary stages of self-focus and lesson structure to the more advanced stage of error identification and correction within the context of a lesson.

By continuing to allow our pre-service teachers to reflect on their craft, teacher educators can target their feedback to match what the pre-service teachers are noticing about themselves. This in turn will allow the teacher educator to guide the pre-service teacher to deeper levels of reflection. The profession needs to acknowledge what our pre-service teachers are seeing in their own teaching, whether it is the way they look and sound or how much they talk, before we can guide them to focus on other issues such as lesson structure, pedagogy or student learning.

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8

Advertising in the Art Education Classroom

JUDITH BRIGGS

We live in a world flooded with advertisements. They display our projected needs, wants, and desires. They reflect cultural values and are the stuff of ideologies. They are especially powerful when combined with words or sounds. Advertising ideology is seductive (Duncum, 2007, 2008). Like a painting of an alluring subject, an advertisement plays on visual and tactile senses (Berger, 1972). Retouched images represent ideal form; printed on glossy paper, they move us into a hyper-real world much preferable to our own. When we see them over and over again they almost become believable, and we want to acquire the things within them. Advertisements contain diverse elements linked together by association, implying messages that often cannot be legally verbalized (McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005). These images have direct connection to the subconscious creating a gestalt of emotional understanding tied to imagination rather than to logic (Marshall, 2007). By reading advertising metaphors we make instantaneous associations that often have little to do with the product being sold (McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005). Researchers argue that this pictorial ambiguity in advertising is what makes it so persuasive (McLuhan, 1967). Advertisers present claims pictorially, rather than verbally, to avoid consumer scrutiny (Marchand, 1985). In 2005 U.S. manufacturers spent $130 billion on advertising alone, much of it targeted towards young people (Morais, 2007). I wondered if the students within my art for elementary educators: visual art class could effectively use artistic formal elements, along with art historical theory, to read these images and critically analyze the metaphors within them. The following paper is a reflection on this inquiry.

ADVERTISING THEORY

Art historian John Berger (1972) argues that advertisers spend tremendous effort creating a demand. Advertising persuades us that a particular cereal or shirt has the potential to transform us in some way—at a cost. Once we are transformed we will be enviable which is the height of glamour. Publicity is not about the object that is advertised but is about the social relations that will ensue. According to Berger (1972), advertisements are like works of art. They suggest cultural authority, superiority, wealth, spirituality, and cultural value. Berger (1972) indicates that both paintings and advertisements convey visual signs. Characters are mythological. Nature suggests innocence. Water suggests rebirth. Women are seen as madonnas, hostesses, or seductresses. Special sexual emphasis is placed on women's legs. Lovers embrace frontally for the spectator's benefit. Distance suggests mystery, drinking suggests success, and the knight becomes a motorist. An oil painting in today's art market celebrates private property and signals "you are what you have" (p. 139). Berger (1972) argues that advertisements stimulate the imagination through memory or expectation; they never speak of the present but refer to the past and speak of the future. Advertising makes us dissatisfied with our present way of life. If we have nothing, we are nothing.

Advertising psychology research attests to this issue and divides consumers into two groups: high self-monitors or image-oriented consumers whose tastes change according to whom they want to impress, and low self-monitors or consumers who buy goods that fit with their inherent value systems. Low self-monitors rely upon the product's performance, and high self-monitors rely upon the product's image-enhancing capabilities. These variables change accordingly if the product is designated for public or private use (DeBono, 2006). Teenagers and many college-aged students, being a peer-driven population, tend to be high-self monitors (Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995)

ART EDUCATION STUDIES

Art educator Kerry Freedman (2003) argues that it is essential we address this phenomenon with our students if they are to become responsible citizens and not just consumers. If students want to understand the world in which they live, they will have to understand the impact of visual expression. Freedman's visual culture art education curriculum establishes a methodology by which students critique the power structures and innuendoes that lie behind images. Within their educational handbook, *Engaging Visual Culture*, art educators Karen Keifer-Boyd and Jane Maitland-Gholson (2007) encourage us to use the art education classroom to critically examine the knowledge and meaning that images create in order to foster social justice in a democratic society. Numerous case studies within the K-12 art education classroom have proven that children can decode stereotypes of power, gender, race, and class within television and print advertisements, packaging, television programs, and video games (Duncum, 2006).

When we rationally critique advertisements we begin to doubt their authenticity. Could pre-service elementary educators with little or no art training use artistic formal elements to decode and critique image content within print advertisements? Could they link advertising visual signs with those of art historical works? Could they link the patterns and colors within print advertisements with the messages that the ads were trying to convey? During fall 2007 and spring 2008 semesters I chose to explore and reflect upon these questions with my 97 predominantly junior and senior

Art 204: Art for Elementary Education students. Of 97 students, 88 were female and seven were male in their early to mid twenties; two females were older. I used their responses to the above three questions to reflect upon the effectiveness of advertising study within the field of art education.

STUDENT TASKS

The initial task in this three-part assignment asked students to read a chapter of Berger's (1972) *Ways of Seeing*, a critique of advertising culture. It asked them the following questions:

1   How does advertising create an emotional pull on its viewers?
2   How does advertising draw upon the tradition of fine art?
3   What are some of the cultural codes that advertising uses to make its argument?
4   How have you been influenced by advertising? Give an example.

The second task asked students to find a magazine advertisement and decode it using the reading as support. The third task asked students to use magazines and formal design principles to create a non-objective themed artwork. Students completed a questionnaire that asked them to describe their artwork, the thought process behind it, the types of magazines that they used, the magazines' advertisements and target audience, their emotional reactions to the ads, and their intentions to act upon these reactions. Subsequent class discussions revolved around consumerism, wealth, self-esteem, and values. We analyzed the *Nickelodeon* website and related it to the elementary classroom.

Task One: Response to Berger

Students responded in an insightful manner to Berger letting me know that they understood advertising's psychology. Although I welcomed opposition to Berger, only one student, an older female who was employed in the advertising trade, refuted Berger's capitalist critique. The following quotes are a random sampling of students' comments. This student reflected on the importance we place on competition:

> For example, when there is an advertisement for Air Jordan's, a shoe like Michael Jordan wore, boys would dream about how awesome it would be to be able to play basketball like Michael Jordan played. The advertisement played off the need for everyone to have shoes and then gave viewers a vision that if it came true it would transform their lives.

Another student wrote:

> I would be lying if I said I wasn't persuaded by some of the fears advertisers draw upon. When I look in a *Cosmopolitan* magazine, I see women in ads with beautiful jewelry, clothes, and make-up. They appear to be in a higher class of society and I want to be just like them because they are envied by me and other consumers. I buy the products they are advertising so I can be envied by others. Most people who are exposed to any kind of media are subjected to the tools of advertising even if they don't know it.

Task Two: Comparing Advertising and Art Historical Images

The students found examples illustrating Berger's argument. One student compared a *Desperate Housewives* ad, in which the actresses were slinking away from a fire, arms

by their sides and hair blowing in the wind, to Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, giving the meaning of beauty and goodness an ironic, contemporary twist. A male student who had been a student athlete commented upon the attraction of virility:

> The ad is a photograph of the NFL's most valuable player, LaDainian Tomlinson's, caves and feet in the NIKE ZOOM TR. The feet are placed in a position of the Greek God Hermes. Hermes, the God of travel's, famous winged sandals are recognized by everyone for their speed and agility...Nike is essentially saying if you wear these shoes you can be the MVP, wear them and you will feel God-like. There is no man that I know that would not want to feel like he had those attributes.

Task Three: Studio Project

While compiling shapes and colors into a non-objective themed composition, students recognized how color schemes, proportion, and space within advertisements created subliminal effects. They noted subject matter, audience, and their own emotional reaction to the advertisements. Students found men's magazines to have edgier graphics, and women's magazines to have more reds and pinks, images of sexual bodies, and an emphasis on hair and skin. A student compared a *Victoria's Secret* swimsuit catalog to her boyfriend's *Car Craft* magazine. Both publications emphasized enhanced shiny body parts, albeit one was for automobiles. Students noticed bridal magazines used floral and diamond color schemes. Magazines aimed towards younger women contained brighter, pinker, and more active colors and were also sexually oriented. Magazines geared towards older women emphasized landscaping, the home, and weight loss. Students who used women's fitness magazines felt the magazines contained positive body images of women. Many of the students, while being emotionally moved by the ads, wrote that they would not act on their emotions because they did not have the money, were happy with their self-image, or did not have a use for the product. However, one student, who likes to read fashion magazines, epitomized a general response:

> They make me want to look pale one minute and tan the next, skinnier one minute and curvy the next, blonde one minute, and brunette the next...and maybe even a redhead. *The ads make me question myself and who I really am*. Of course. I think everyone does [want to act on them] to an extent. I know that the silly thoughts about changing what I look like are exactly what the ads want to be invoking. My clothing style is based a lot on what I see in magazine ads, however, I would never go the extremes in changing myself. *I'm happy with who I am and these ads make it hard to stay positive.*

Students agreed that they could easily read magazine advertisements' direct and indirect implications. Students discovered that advertisements aimed at their demographic emphasized product appearance over usefulness. They recognized gender roles and stereotypes that ads promulgated and realized that corporate decisions determine what we think about ourselves from a young age. Most students admitted to being swayed by advertising's messages. By connecting advertising images to art history and western ideology in the art classroom, students thought critically about the choices they made and the nature of the images that they absorbed.

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9

Reflecting on Writing, Graphic Novels, and SoTL Collaboration

ANDREW DAVIS | MACKENZIE OLSON

Wir Mache nuns Bilder der Tatsachen.
Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 2.12

During the spring 2008 term I happened to pull a flier out of my mailbox that invited faculty interested in joining a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) writing group to an informal meeting. It was only my second year at Illinois State University and I had no idea what SoTL was all about. I shot off an email RSVP and a few weeks later I found myself sitting with a group of people just like me. People wanting to get something they had been working on out there … in print. This would prove to be one of the most meaningful professional development endeavors I have ever experienced.

The previous spring I had put together a project where students in my ninth grade World Studies course at University High School researched, illustrated, and wrote a graphic novel dealing with the Crusades. I was so impressed with the end result and how hard the students worked on the project overall that I decided to submit my unit plan to *Read, Write, Think,* the website maintained by the National Association for the Teachers of English. It was this unit plan and project description that I brought with me to share with the SoTL group.

I found that sharing a draft of this project was, at first, rather nerve-racking. Yet, when it came time for everyone to discuss my work, they were extremely helpful. By this point I had already read several of their papers and we were a tight-knit group.

I felt as though I could trust them. Some of their comments were difficult to hear but I realized that they were made out of an interest in seeing me succeed. I think the most important suggestion came when someone said that the project I had written up seemed like it could get some "mileage." I began thinking about ways to stretch it out and market it to different editors and conferences. Ironically, it was never picked up by *Read, Write, Think.* However, it was published in the *Illinois English Bulletin.* I also presented it at several conferences: Illinois State's Teaching and Learning Symposium, the Illinois Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference, the Illinois Association for the Teachers of English Annual Conference, the Illinois Association for the Teachers of English Day of Renewal, and at an In-Service session at Wheaton North High School's Regional Faculty Institute Day. I had the privilege to do many of these presentations with the University High School librarian, Anita Beaman.

There is a growing field of research that supports using graphic novels in education (perhaps the best example is James Bucky Carter's 2007 text *Building Literacy Connections with Graphic Novels*). I began to explore this literature after reflecting on Donald Grave's (1994) comment that "Children want to write in the genre they are reading" (p. 306). Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (2007) demonstrate quite clearly in their text *Exploring Our World in Graphic Novel* that there need not be controversy over the use of these types of texts in secondary instruction. They argue that critics should not worry that graphic novels will replace traditional books. Their point is that "Graphic novels are motivating and engaging for all students" (vii). And although they don't mention it specifically, research into brain-based learning models confirms their claims. Judy Willis (2006) summarizes brain-based research and shows that "Optimal brain activation occurs when subjects are in positive emotional states or when the material holds personal meaning, connects to their interests, is presented with elements of novelty, or evokes wonder" (p. 44). Using graphic novels does this for young adult learners.

My approach discussed here is also in line with a recent National Writing Project text *Because Writing Matters* by Carl Nagin (2006). He suggests that "Inquiry-driven writing instruction has helped refocus attention on developing content in writing" (p. 23). This project embraced this suggestion and gave students the opportunity to engage primary and secondary sources through which they then constructed the narrative of their own graphic novel. Finally, this project was an attempt to expose students to composing in a multimodal genre. As James Gee suggests in his 2007 book *What Video Games Have to Teach us About Learning and Literacy*, multimodal composition is a combination of text with images that helps students communicate things "that neither of the modes do separately" (p. 18; *cf.* Cynthia Selfe's 2007 work *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teacher* for further examples of the importance of this type of composition).

My overall objective for this activity was to give students an authentic writing experience where they explored the Crusades and produced a text that was a genuine creation of their new knowledge. Through this project they learned the process of historical inquiry and used their understanding of the historical documents to draw conclusions and construct new knowledge through text and image creation.

I asked Mackenzie Olson if she would mind reflecting on the assignment for this article. She is now a senior at University High School, but when I developed this graphic novel project, she was a ninth grader in my World Studies course. She discusses the project in a way that I could not. She takes us into the mind of a student asked to research an historical period and to use her new knowledge to construct a

graphic novel using images and text. Mackenzie discusses how she went about working on this project and what the final product meant to her. Remarkably, she echoes what Debora Brandt has called in her book *Literacy in American Lives* (2001) "self-sponsored writing." Toward the end of her reflection, Mackenzie talks about becoming a published author herself. She is referring to the fact that her graphic novel about the Crusades was published in *Brome and Beyond*, University High School's annual literary magazine. After her reflection I will provide a few concluding remarks.

MACKENZIE'S REFLECTION

The assignment was to write a short, illustrative story about any of the Crusades; I chose the Children's Crusade. I wrote the story as the sister of the Children's Crusade leader. I chose to do this because I didn't want the traditional perspective of the "big man" in charge. I felt it would give the story a twist, explaining how it affected her life being on the sideline, even though she was unimportant to the actual crusade. You got to see the story from outside eyes looking in. Just by using a different character's view, it completely changed the main theme of the story.

Social Science is something that I do not enjoy, nor am I good at; it is something I struggle with. But the assignment tied in the aspect of creative writing; which I do enjoy. I used that to my advantage and focused more on the creative writing component, rather than the historical one. As the author, I tried to make it as understandable as possible, hoping readers will be able to comprehend. Being able to write a creative story that focuses on something I find challenging made me understand the topic in my own way, rather than just writing a typical research paper. Having another aspect of the project (the artwork) that I was comfortable with gave me more confidence to write a good story, whether it was historically accurate or not. It gave me something to lean on as a backbone for the assignment.

Now, as a "published" author, reflecting on my piece of writing, I feel that I have come far. I was frustrated as I read it again for the first time in print; I felt like I was reading something that was written by a third grader. If I re-wrote it today, it would be a completely different story. I know I have advanced so much as a creative writer.

Overall, if this project hadn't been a combination of creative writing and illustrating a historical text, I *might* have been able to get by, but as far as understanding and even being able to explain it to someone else, there would be no chance. Trying to learn out of a history book or doing a research paper would have failed to help me learn about the topic, which, sadly, are the exact assignments that most teachers give to their students. Mr. Davis allowed me to show my creative side while writing about a historical topic. Because he did so, I can now teach others about what I learned through his assignment.

CONCLUSION

Through this project, students engaged both primary and secondary sources in a way that historians might and constructed a piece of creative non-fiction. Students felt a deep ownership of the text they produced and many indicated that, while they viewed traditional research papers as busy work that could be quickly cut and pasted from sites like Wikipedia, they felt that by writing a graphic novel they created something that was unique to them. One student told me that she was the only person who could have written the graphic novel that she wrote. Mackenzie's reflection illustrates this kind of ownership as well. Through this project students eagerly embraced their roles as historians and authors.

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Mackenzie Olson was born and raised in Blo-no, aka, Bloomington-Normal, Ill. Both sides of her family are from Oswego, Ill. She is 18 years old and a senior at University High School. She is a student athlete as well, playing soccer in the spring season. She will be going to Heartland Community College next year, playing soccer for a full ride scholarship.

10

Learning Together Through Service: A Collaborative Project for First Year Undergraduates and Graduate Students

PHYLLIS MCCLUSKEY-TITUS | JODI HALLSTEN | WENDY G. TROXEL | ERIN PEARCE

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

In response to the campus-based American Democracy Project initiatives (http://americandemocracy.illinoisstate.edu) and the university's strategic plan, *Educating Illinois* (http://www.educatingillinois.ilstu.edu/), a group of faculty and staff developed a collaborative, yearly service-learning project to create purposeful and educational interactions among first-year undergraduates and graduate students. Service learning was selected as the educational delivery method due to the opportunity for genuine interactions and learning that occurs when students work together toward a common purpose (Oates & Leavitt, 2003) and because concrete service experience allows students to more fully comprehend abstract concepts in their courses (Watts, 2007). In addition, service-learning projects can facilitate learning across a variety of learning styles, making the experience meaningful for everyone involved (Cress, Collier, Reitenauer & Associates, 2005). Each year the project involves 20-25 first-year undergraduates enrolled in a one-credit learning community course (LinC) and 20-30 first-year college student personnel administration graduate students enrolled in a college student cultures course. This project has been offered every fall semester since 2005. The intended program goals for students involved in the project included:

1   Exposing first-year students (undergraduate and graduate students) to community needs, and

2   Introducing first-year students to the benefits of campus and community involvement through volunteering.

Initially, students participated in a community-wide weekend of service organized by local churches and community agencies, which involved multiple service projects to "make a difference" in the Bloomington-Normal community. When this program was discontinued, the instructors coordinated the projects by working directly with selected community agencies. Students were given the option to participate in the half-day service project on one weekend, either Friday afternoon or Saturday morning, based on their personal interests or schedules. Over the years, students have painted, completed yard work, built with Habitat for Humanity, provided environmental education, and assisted with pet care.

Two of the abstract concepts that both courses seek to teach are responsibility and interdependence. To introduce the concept of civic and community responsibility to students in the classes, the course instructors presented a learning activity using a children's book, *Zoom (*Istvan Banyai, 1995*)*. Each student was given a page from the book and asked to describe it to the class without showing the picture to anyone. Students were then asked to find a relationship between the pictures. When students realized the connections among all the pictures, a discussion was facilitated on relationships between people in need within the community and students in the classes. This activity helped to establish the need for involved citizens and promoted the importance of personal responsibility by relating experiences of people in the community to those in the class.

On the day of the service project, students were assigned to work in teams of four: two graduate students and two undergraduate students. The teams were purposefully arranged to allow for diversity of race/ethnicity, religion, academic major, personal interests, and hometown. Graduate students acted as informal leaders by initiating conversation, providing directions, and facilitating group acquaintanceship activities within their small groups. The experience of "leading" the groups provided graduate students the opportunity to directly observe and analyze the materials they learned in class about millennial generation students. This past fall the graduate students also served as small group facilitators for the reflection activities that took place following the service experiences. By serving in this role, graduate students were able to continue their leadership and see the progress that undergraduate students made from the beginning of the project through its completion.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Following the collaborative service experiences, students submitted critical analysis papers reflecting on the service project and working with other students, what they learned from the experience, and their intention to participate in future service activities. For the first few years of the project, the first-year undergraduates wrote weekly journal entries where they discussed their experiences with the service project more in depth. During the past two years, the students also completed a "pre-service expectations" reflection activity that provided the instructors with pre- and post-event assessment data. After the papers and journals were submitted, class discussions were held to clarify ideas students shared in their writing and to obtain additional insights on their shared experiences. These writing activities and discussions provided students with reflective opportunities to make meaning of how their work as an individual and as a group affected the lives of people

within the community and their own learning experiences as a college student within the community.

Instructors have used the reflective papers, pre-service expectations, class discussions, and course evaluations as a source of data regarding what students learned from the service experiences. Learning, according to Jacobson & Freisem (2005) can include "… accumulation of knowledge … change of perspectives, acquisition of skills, or greater depth of understanding …" (p. 53). Students expressed the full range of learning experiences in their reflections.

Using basic interpretive data analysis, the instructors systematically review the written work that students submit each year. The journal entries and reflective papers represent self-reported, prompted perceptions of both expectations and experiences. Two phases of analysis on these five years' worth of documents have occurred. First, a review of the written assignments has been undertaken each year in accordance with the requirements and context of the respective sections of the courses by the instructor of record. Formative feedback was given on each assignment and summative evaluation was provided by the instructor. Then a meta-analysis was conducted on the five years of evidence. Each of the instructors reviewed the reflective papers from a specific year, followed by a discussion held among the instructors about resultant themes and initial coding schemes (Caudle, 2004). Conceptualizing the data is "giving each discrete incident, idea, or event" a name to represent the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 63). Then two instructors reviewed the full set of journal entries to confirm or clarify the coding structure, and to articulate the relevant patterns and themes. While there were many themes that emerged over the five years, the major findings (with representative student quote(s) for each theme), are included in the next section.

THEMES: STUDENT REFLECTIONS ON THE SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Over the years, many students have indicated that from their experience they have learned about the value of service to a community. One graduate student expressed her learning as follows:

> By integrating community service into the educational environment and including both graduate students and first year students, they (the students) are able to learn from each other and in the process, give back to the community in which they are living.

In addition, though a large number of students have had experience volunteering in their home communities or in their high schools, there are always a few undergraduate students who, as a result of their participation, have re-discovered how personally rewarding service activities can be or have entirely changed their attitudes towards volunteering. These quotes are representative of ideas expressed by undergraduates over the five years: "I'm always happy and willing to do community service because I feel like it is something that people should do … it feels good knowing that you made a difference in someone else's life, whether it be small or big," and "I never imagined myself doing community service or volunteer work … Now I realize the point is to make a difference in someone else's life that is a little less fortunate than you."

Thus, it logically follows that in many of their reflections, students have expressed interest in performing more service in their communities; in fact, some graduate students have even discovered that service was a "calling" for them: "I loved my work so much that I felt the need to search out other roles I could play in my community."

And another master's degree student commented, "I learned that some people are more than just 'volunteers.' Some people should be called 'dedicators' because they honestly dedicate their life to an organization that helps people, animals, or just the earth itself."

Other reflections identified outcomes that are more interpersonal in nature. For example, through their service, students have commonly noted that they learned more about themselves, and nearly all of them have expressed how the event helped them form valuable relationships with their peers. One graduate student offered, "I learned that I can do anything once I put my heart to it. I have a lot to offer people who need it and I could use my talent to help others." An undergraduate student expressed a different sort of benefit in working together:

> I never really got the opportunity to associate with any of my classmates and working with Sharefest gave me the opportunity to get to know them better. While we planted flowers, dug up dirt, and got dirty, I had the chance to bond and mingle with my fellow classmates.

Finally, students have routinely said that relationships between service and course work enhanced learning. One undergraduate student stated:

> I believe that if the service projects can somehow relate back to the class, then it would be a benefit for the students to get involved. If the project is not relevant to class, then you will lose some of the meaning behind doing the project in the first place.

Additionally, while the comments across years and themes have been overwhelmingly positive regarding the project activities, there were some students who expressed disappointment that their overall interactions with the students in the other class were minimal. One example of such feelings was expressed by a graduate student who wrote:

> If the first-year students and the graduate students could meet up before the project, then interaction between the groups might not be so limited. I know this would be difficult to plan but it could allow us to get to know the students better.

Since the undergraduate LinC class meets during the day, and the graduate class meets in the evening, scheduling time together was difficult. It became increasingly clear, however, that more intentional collaboration (especially before the service day) would enhance the experience. The instructors and students of the fall 2009 classes worked together to find a common class time early in the semester to be able to introduce themselves and the elements of the project and to have the students participate in team-building activities. As a result, both the pre- and post-reflections revealed a deeper understanding of the project learning objectives and engagement in the process.

REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

Just as the students reflected on their learning through writing papers and in class discussions, the instructors and facilitators reflected yearly on what they learned through a review of the student materials, discussions together, and through research and writing about these learning experiences. McKinney (2007) contends that

collaboration is beneficial to SoTL projects, and this project grew stronger through the addition of new instructors with different perspectives. Changes were also made to the projects each year based on what was learned from previous experiences (formative assessment) as well as the expertise each instructor brought to the project. The following are lessons learned and ideas about teaching and student learning gained from this experience with students involved in these two classes over the past five years.

Instructors learned to be intentional about planning and implementing every step of this learning activity.

The first time this learning experience was offered, the instructors wanted to understand what students learned from participation in a collaborative service project and hoped first-year students would benefit from interaction with graduate students and graduate students would learn something about first-year students in the process. As the project evolved, the instructors realized this was not a project where intended learning would just happen. Instructors had to write clear learning outcomes for the students and establish the best ways for students to gain the intended educational benefits from the service activities. This need for intentionality is reinforced by the work of Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, and Stephens (2003) who stated, "one of the important advantages of the holistic, intentional approach … is that it provides experiences that reinforce and build on each other and help students integrate what they learn across different contexts" (p. 195). As an example, after the community-based service weekend was discontinued, the instructors needed to carefully choose service projects that responded to the needs of the community as well as clearly provide the purpose of the project and the student learning outcomes with the community agencies. Students learned more from projects when they heard about or had a chance to meet the clients of the organization who would benefit from their work.

Instructors learned that even though it is a shared service experience, the difference between learning for first-year students and graduate students is pronounced.

There are obvious developmental and maturity differences between native first-year students and graduate students, but beyond this, first-year students appeared to be more interested in the tasks and people who benefited from the service while graduate students were more interested in the process. For instance, a first-year student offered, "I learned that I love to help others. I mean I always knew this but I didn't realize how much of a difference it can make in someone's day to show that you care about them." Graduate students were more focused on the larger experience as expressed in this way:

> Because we are not in a classroom, or even on campus, there is no distinct authority. This allows everyone's voice to be equal and provides for a more comfortable learning environment for each person involved. I am sure that not even the most experienced person there walked away from the project not having learned something.

Based on these differences, the instructors began to conceptualize the project and the reflection activities differently for each class. The focus of the first-year student reflections were on personal realizations and on what they learned from the experience,

while the graduate students were asked to reflect on what they observed about the first-year students and the role of service-learning in education, which included their role as on-site facilitators.

Instructors learned to determine appropriate learning assessment methods before planning the service activities.

Initially, post-activity assessments such as reflection papers, journal entries, individual class discussions, and comments from course evaluations were used to learn what students gained from the process of working together on a service activity. In subsequent years, written pre-service expectations, a joint pre-service meeting and activity between the two classes, and a reflective discussion led by graduate students immediately following the service experience were added to more fully capture aspects of what students were learning. Instructors found these additional assessment activities necessary based on the types of service performed and the level of responsibility for planning these activities students assumed. For instance, when students were involved in the planning and organization of the service activities, their pre-event expectations revealed deeper reflection about the purpose of the activity, more so than when they were given an assignment and just had to show up. This confirms that students are more engaged in activities and learn more when they provide input, take responsibility for a tasks or project, or have been involved in the process (Astin, 1984; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Instructors learned it takes time to develop meaningful relationships.

There is not much time after classes start to plan and organize these activities and instructors learned it was important to have most of the logistics in place prior the semester beginning. By the time the service project was offered, usually in mid-September, students in the classes did not know each other well, and instructors noticed a tendency for students to want to work with and interact with their own classmates rather than the other class of students. Some of this was healthy, as stronger communities were established within classes. On the other hand, learning outcomes for graduate students involved learning from their interactions with first-year students and vice versa. Instructors were able to "force" some of this through use of the four-person teams on the service site and directing graduate students to take responsibility for learning about the first-year students, but there were service activities (such as painting a wing of a high school) that did not lend themselves easily to working in small groups. Due to the short timeframe for the LinC class (eight weeks), it was not possible to bring the students back together at the end of the semester to further enhance the relationships established between students, although students have requested that another post-service meeting between the classes take place. This could be an addition to the project in the future.

Instructors learned different service projects affected what students learned.

Even though different projects were completed each year, different experiences and learning were not fully anticipated. However, the types of service and clients served did influence student learning in a variety of ways. For instance, one landscaping project was very hard and required students to shovel and move piles of clay dirt in 90-degree heat. Toward the end of the afternoon, students were not inclined to even speak to each other because they were exhausted. Another project involved

painting a group home intended to be used by evacuees from the Gulf coast after Hurricane Katrina. These reflections took on very different tones than those from the other project that year where the students painted a pre-school for low-income students. Even though both groups were painting facilities for people in need, the learning reported was different in both cases. Students painting the house for the hurricane victims reported greater rewards and sense of purpose in their project than did the students painting at the pre-school. The first-year students who worked on the Habitat for Humanity site commented on how they had never done direct service before and they appreciated literally being a part of something so large, meaningful, and beneficial. One of the first-year students wrote in her post-service reflection:

> I have never done anything like that before and I was so proud of myself for getting up on that second floor and installing installation! [sic] ... I know I made some difference in the success of the house and I really want to see what the finished project looks like! The service projects really got me thinking about doing more volunteer work and getting involved.

Each project resonated differently with each student, but that is the beauty of this project because everyone does not have the same passions or sense of responsibility that others do, which reinforced the idea that communities need diverse members with different interests and talents to thrive.

Instructors learned written reflection revealed different points than verbal discussion.

Having students reflect (in a private writing exercise) on the service projects allowed them to articulate their own learning and personal feelings related to the work as well as thoughts about the people who benefited from the service. Yet when students were asked to discuss the projects in a group setting, the comments typically involved students sharing their opinions of what tasks were done or the methods they used to accomplish the work. Discussions focused on the "what happened" during the service projects whereas written reflection focused on the "why" or "so what" aspects of the projects. This year the instructors challenged the graduate students to develop intentional reflection activities and questions to process the service experiences on the work sites within their small work teams. A number of work teams used an activity called "Roses and Thorns" which was, as explained by one graduate student, where "everyone had to either say a positive thing about their experience or a challenging thing, which had to be followed up with a positive thing" about the project. "There was also an option to share a rose bud which was something that motivated you to utilize something you had learned." Graduate student facilitators reported that student reflection in the small groups was deeper and more thoughtful. "Students were insightful and were able to make a connection between the jobs they were assigned to and the benefit to the community they were assisting." Reflection led to learning and development rather than just reporting or summarizing the experience. Another graduate student reflected on what undergraduates in her group shared:

> Both (students) talked about ways in which they had been challenged: [one] had felt that his skill with a hammer was put to the test, and [another] really felt like she would have a hard time helping because she had never done work like that before, but she found something to be successful at. I was surprised by their high level of self awareness, that they were both able to point out their own challenges and successes.

Reflection can and did happen in large group discussions, but instructors need to have a pre-set plan and challenge the group to move beyond opinions to share reactions and connections of the experience to the class or to the community.

CONCLUSION

The greatest lesson learned by the instructors involved in this project is that intentionality and dedication to student learning and development is the glue to sustaining a large collaborative project. Establishing initial commitment to this type of project is easy, but without dedicated organizers, continuing with it is not. The instructors of the two classes were different each year, the requirements of the freshman course changed, the service project sites were never the same, and the formative assessment and evaluation led to instructors altering aspects of the project each year. While there was some consistency in the service work assignment overall, it has been instructor commitment to making this a successful project that has sustained it over the years. Therefore, in considering the creation of a similar service learning project, facilitators should recognize that it will not be perfect the first year, or even a few years in, but should understand students will appreciate the effort as well as the opportunity to experience learning in this way.

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11

Freshman Education Majors as Documentary Filmmakers

JAMES R. THOMPSON

ED 101: The Exceptional Learner is an Illinois State University course that is focused on foundational knowledge in the field of special education. Like survey courses in many fields, the content covered in SED 101 could be described as a mile wide and an inch deep. Professional knowledge standards established by teacher certification boards require a large number of topics to be covered during a single semester (e.g., characteristics of children with different types of disabilities, legal responsibilities of schools, descriptions of widely adopted instructional interventions).

SED 101 instructors have a special responsibility to the future teachers who are their students. For students pursuing certification in areas other than special education, SED 101 is likely to be the only special education course they take as part of their teacher preparation program. Decades of research show that teachers with greater knowledge about children with disabilities have more positive attitudes toward including these children in their classrooms (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009). Moreover, SED 101 marks the beginning of professional development for the next generation of special educators. These students not only need a solid foundation on which to base their future studies, but the course should also foster their enthusiasm for the profession. Any instructor of an introductory course in special education would certainly be a failure if students preparing for careers in special education were less inspired to teach children with special needs at the conclusion of the course.

Eight sections of SED 101 are offered each year at Illinois State. Seven sections

are held in lecture halls that include anywhere from 100 to 150 students. The eighth section, the one I teach, is an honors section that is capped at 24 students. It is offered only during the fall semester, and it is the only College of Education course with an honors section reserved for entering freshman.

INSTRUCTING AN HONORS SECTION

Neither Illinois State University, nor any other university of which I am aware, has delineated specific instructional expectations for its honors sections. However, guidance can be gleaned from a cursory examination of the web pages of the honors program at Illinois State as well as honors programs at other institutions of higher education. The primary purpose of honors sections is to offer talented and motivated students enhanced learning opportunities, especially opportunities for meaningful intellectual exchanges with faculty members. Instructors should make special efforts to promote critical thinking by encouraging students to consider multiple perspectives on a topic, evaluate "knowledge claims" based on principles of logic as well as the quality of evidence (i.e., data), and produce academic work that requires active engagement with course content. Honors sections should not cover different content than other sections of the same course although covering selected topics in greater depth is appropriate. Additionally, honors sections should not be unreasonably time consuming or substantially more difficult than other course sections.

Therefore, my charge as an instructor of the SED 101 Honors section was to provide my students with an intellectually engaging learning experience where the mile wide course content was fully covered, opportunities for studying certain topics in greater depth were available, and critical thinking skills were developed. However, my course section could not be vastly different than other 3-credit hour courses in terms of grading criteria or time requirements. One way I attempted to meet this challenge was by assigning a documentary film project as part of the course. I initiated a research project to investigate this assignment's value in relationship to the learning outcomes that I had envisioned. In the following section a detailed description of this assignment is provided. After that I share selected findings from my research as well as a discussion of the findings. In the concluding section I suggest a series of questions that instructors may want to ask themselves when considering whether or not to include a film assignment in their courses.

ASSIGNING A MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION PROJECT

The film assignment spanned the entire semester and was approximately 25% of the total points awarded in the course. It is important to acknowledge the time and effort students invested in their films as well as the resources and support they received. Here is an abbreviated chronology of activities associated with the assignment:

1   A grading rubric for the final project was distributed the first day of class. It included categories and criteria related to content (introduction of information, depth of information, accuracy of information, clarity/presentation of information, conclusion, and credits) as well as production (professional use of language, economy of narration, flow of production, soundtrack, movie production, post-production). Throughout the semester students used the grading rubric to evaluate short videos relevant to content covered during a class session. After students independently rated a video, a class discussion followed where each element of the rubric was reviewed in order to clearly communicate expectations for the final product.

2   Early in the semester class time was used to brainstorm potential topics as well as the types of information one would hope to see in a documentary film. By the end of the third week, film groups of 3-4 students were formed based on common interests.

3   By the end of the fifth week, film groups were required to develop an initial storyboard and arrange a face-to-face meeting with me outside of class. At this meeting the storyboard was revised, potential contacts for specific scenes were identified, and a project time line was developed.

4   Prior to the semester's mid-term, portions of class sessions were devoted to filmmaking techniques and operating the iMovie video editing software application used to create the films. Additionally, students were assigned an essay question that required them to research background information on their film topic.

5   During weeks 8-13 students completed their filming. Potential subjects were contacted, filming appointments were set, travel arrangements were made, equipment was checked out, etc. In many instances I facilitated identifying and contacting subjects since most of the students did not know people within the special education community. Additionally, narration scripts were written.

6   By the 11th week of the semester, film groups were required to arrange another meeting with me where they presented an updated storyboard and reported on their progress. At this meeting the storyboard was tweaked, oftentimes to include descriptions of narration needed for scene transitions and voice-overs, as well as additional elements (e.g., title slides, still pictures) to add during post-production. I problem solved with students if their project was not on schedule.

7   Students were expected to have completed filming and uploaded their footage into a computer by the start of Thanksgiving break (at the latest). Once footage was uploaded, film groups scheduled a consultation with Dr. Ken Fansler (COE Technology Director). Ken provided "hands on" technical assistance using iMovie and shared his expertise on film editing and post-production.

8   Completed films were due at the start of the final exam period and were shown to the entire class.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Research findings related to the educational benefits of the assignment and trends in student experience with multimodal composition are discussed below. Data were collected from two sources. The first source was an online survey sent to former students after they completed the course. Seventy-seven of the 87 former students (88% response rate) responded anonymously to the survey; the mean number of months between the final day of class and the survey response was 6.10. The second source was the 27 films that students created during the four years that this assignment was included in the course. Scenes in each film were coded to generate data relevant to the educational goals of the assignment.

Making movies to learn

As discussed earlier, honors sections should provide students with opportunities to study select topics in greater depth. Although the film assignment was not the only means by which students were afforded this opportunity, I anticipated they would learn additional content due to the research, analysis, and synthesis of information that is inherent to creating a documentary film. The value of composition assignments to promote content learning has been acknowledged for many years (Zinsser, 1988).

One survey question asked former students to rate the value of the film assignment in regard to "increasing your awareness or understanding of a specific topic associated with the field of special education." Seventy-one percent (54 of 76) of former students who responded to this question selected the highest or second highest rating on a 5-Point Likert-type scale by indicating that the film assignment was either of "significant" or "very significant" value. In an open-ended response question former students were asked, "What did you find to be useful about the film project? (If you feel there was nothing useful, please indicate this as well.)". Thirty-three respondents specifically mentioned information associated with a topic featured in their film.

Even though the survey results were generally supportive of the value of film-making as a means to increase learning, I was initially surprised that almost 30% of former students reported that making the film was only of "some value" to them in terms of learning additional content. However, after recently viewing all 27 films, I observed that the content included in certain films was definitely more extensive than what was presented in others. Therefore, the variation in student reports regarding the value of the assignment in terms of their learning may accurately reflect the variation in the quality of information presented in different films.

Making Movies to Connect with the Field

A second anticipated benefit was the opportunities students would have to interact with people who receive, deliver, and/or study special education services. The relevance of course content in an applied field such as special education is often more apparent to students once they have had opportunities to meet people who are actively engaged in the field's work.

The 27 films were evaluated based on the presence of four types of scenes. In total, the films included 66 *expert interview* scenes, (e.g., an ISU professor was interviewed about a scale she developed to diagnose Asperger's syndrome), 11 *family* scenes (e.g., a sister was filmed reading to her brother with Down syndrome and answering questions about her experiences as a sibling), 42 scenes that profiled *the lives of people with disabilities* (e.g., a young adult was filmed working on his job), and 20 scenes where *educational or therapeutic practices* were demonstrated (e.g., a speech therapy session).

These data show that students were connected with a wide range of people involved in the field of special education as a result of creating their films. The film assignment provided a reason for SED 101 students to connect with the subjects of their documentaries in a purposeful manner. This contrasts with the passive roles (e.g., observing a K-12 classroom) that have traditionally characterized teacher candidates' initial exposure to the field of special education. As discussed earlier, a quality indicator of an honors course section is for students to be actively intellectually engaged with the content of the course. "Generating and asking interview questions" is one example of how creating a film compels engagement.

Making Movies to Communicate in the 21st Century

A third benefit I anticipated from the film assignment was for students to acquire multimodal composition skills. Although written text continues to be a critical tool for both learning and communication, it is not the only mode of communication for which today's generation of students need to develop skills. Selfe (2005) pointed out "other communication modalities—among them, images (moving and still),

animations, sound, and color—are in the process of becoming increasingly important, especially in a world increasingly global in its reach and increasingly dependent on digital communication networks" (p. 9). Today's college students, no matter what their future profession, will be asked to compose multimodal texts of various kinds. Future educators, in particular, who are not prepared to work in the "new literacies" run the risk of entering the classroom with a skill set that, at best, incompletely addresses the needs of their students.

Two survey questions provided relevant data. The first asked former students to rate the value of the assignment in terms of "increasing your awareness or understanding of how to plan and produce a film." On a five point Likert-type scale, 31 (40%) respondents reported that it was "of very significant value", 28 (36%) indicated it was "of significant value", 10 (13%) indicated that is was "of some value", and 8 (10%) reported it was "of a little value." Nobody said it was "of no value". The other question asked "to what extent are you confident that you could make a short film today that was similar in scope to the film you made in SED 101?" "Low confidence – I probably couldn't do it" was chosen by 9 (12%,) former students, "some confidence – I probably could do it" was selected by 37 (48%) respondents, and "high confidence – I'm sure I could do it" was chosen by the remaining 31 (40%). Nobody selected the option, "No confidence – I'm sure I couldn't do it." These data show that most former SED 101 students believed they acquired multimodal composition skills as the result of the assignment and were reasonably confident they could apply these skills in the future.

Making Movies Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

In response to a survey question asking students if they had ever made a film before taking SED 101 where they "created a storyboard, collected film footage, and edited it into a movie", the percentage of respondents replying "yes" from each of the 4 years were 6% in 2005, 23% in 2006, 42% in 2007, and 35% in 2008. Although the sample is small, the upward trend is not surprising. In future years more high school students will be graduating with some formal training in creating multimodal compositions (i.e., using images, video, and sound) and future instructors should structure assignments that provide opportunities for students to expand their skills regardless of their level of proficiency upon entering the course. The diversity in writing skills of today's Illinois State students may pale in comparison range of multimodal composition skills which tomorrow's Illinois State students bring to campus. Unfortunately, family affluence may have even a greater influence on competencies in multimodal composition skills than it has traditionally had on writing skills. Students from affluent families will be at a distinct advantage due growing up with greater access to computers, camcorders, consumer level movie making software, etc., and being more likely to have attended high schools with ample multimedia equipment, film clubs, etc.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

The SED 101 film assignment required students to combine film elements (video footage, sound associated with the footage, still pictures, narration, background music) in a creative way for the purpose of telling a video story. The intellectual labor required of students was significant, as was the time and effort required on my part as their instructor. But, it was all worth it. The educational benefits are supported by the research findings can be further verified by simply viewing the high quality of films that the students produced. I would encourage any of my faculty colleagues

to include a similar project in their courses; the educational benefits of multimodal composition are certainly not limited to students in the honors program. However, before taking the plunge, they should ask themselves three questions.

Question 1: Do you have access to support and are you willing to learn something new?

I would not have initiated the filmmaking assignment in 2005 without the support of the COE Technology Director, Ken Fansler. Although I understood the value of students acquiring skills in multimodal composition and could envision ways in which a filmmaking assignment would align with the goals of offering an honors section of an introductory course, I lacked the knowledge necessary to initiate such an ambitious assignment. Fortunately, Ken was quite knowledgeable and he sincerely wanted to support faculty members who were willing to take efforts to integrate technology into their instruction. He invested a tremendous amount of time with the class the first year, and by the second year I was competent to proceed without his support. The most important lesson to take forward from my experience is straightforward: Technology will be effectively integrated into Illinois State courses when faculty members are willing to take the time to learn new skills, and when they have access to people and resources that provide them with meaningful support.

Question 2: Are you able and willing to invest your time, energy, and resources?

The tools (e.g., equipment, software) needed to make a film need to be purchased and ready to use before initiating a film assignment. Consumer level software is not expensive and students have access to computer labs on campus with machines where iMovie or Moviemaker has been installed. If a public computer is going to be used, students will need access to an external hard drive ($90) to store their projects. A suitable camcorder can be purchased for $250 and a voice recorder will run around $125. There are also consumables (e.g., mini-DV tapes, DVDs) that need to be purchased. Between indirect cost funds generated from external grants, equipment originally purchased for external grants, support from the Department of Special Education's foundation account, and faculty colleagues who have been willing to share, obtaining sufficient resources to support SED 101 students in making their films has not been problematic. However, one must plan ahead and let students know from the outset that they will need to share some things.

The more significant cost of the film assignment lies in instructional time and effort. The uninitiated may think that creating a film is no more than collecting footage on a camcorder and burning it onto a DVD. However, this view is as misguided as believing that talking into a tape recorder and transcribing the contents onto paper is equivalent to creating a short story. Multimodal composition requires a range of skills and completion of multiple tasks. Faculty members who want their students to produce college level films will need to invest a considerable amount of time instructing (e.g., guiding students during the conceptualization, planning, and storyboarding phases, assisting students in arranging filming opportunities, guiding students in writing and editing scripts, troubleshooting with students when equipment and/or software does not work as expected, providing constructive feedback to students during editing).

Faculty members who are considering incorporating a film assignment into their courses should realistically evaluate the costs in terms of their own time and energy. The film assignment has been manageable for me because it has only involved 1 class (up to 24 students) making 6 to 8 short (10-minute) films. Also, my other

teaching assignments have been stable, and I've reached a stage of my career in which my research and service agendas are established.

Question 3: Are you ready to have fun?

This assignment has been a lot of fun for the students and for me. Some of the films included segments that were magical. For instance, a group creating a film on Autism Spectrum Disorders included a historical overview and reported that autism was once thought to be a result of poor parenting. Textbooks on this subject usually credit a researcher in the area of autism, Dr. Bernard Rimland, for debunking this myth in the early 1960s. The film group contacted Dr. Rimland in his office at the Autism Research Institute in San Diego, and he agreed to be interviewed. Using a speaker phone and a voice recorder, the audio quality was excellent as Dr. Rimland provided a beautiful summary of his early work as well as his reflections on several topics pertinent to the field of autism today. Unbeknownst to the students or myself, Dr. Rimland was battling cancer at the time, and he passed away approximately one year later. In the process of making their film, the freshmen filmmakers obtained a first person account of an historically significant contribution from a true pioneer in the field of special education.

Although the interview with Dr. Rimland was unique, all of the films had special moments. There were scenes that were highly informative (a therapist demonstrating how a cochlear implant works), poignant (a parent sharing her dreams for her child), and even funny (some groups went so far as to include blooper scenes following their credits). The film assignment provided an opportunity for myself, others involved in the class (e.g., Ken Fansler, graduate assistants), and the students to experience the joy that accompanies appreciating and celebrating one another's creative efforts and intellectual achievements. Put another way, the film assignment provided a means for us to *gladly learn and teach!*

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12

Podcast Usage in Spanish Phonetics Instruction

BENJAMIN SCHMEISER

Abt and Barry (2008, pg. 1) define a podcast as an "on-demand media file that can be automatically downloaded from the web to a computer or portable media player, such as an iPod, for listening offline." A podcast may include audio or video (called a 'vodcast'). Since the invention of 'podcasts' in 2004, educators have sought to learn more about them and their possible usage as an educational tool. Once a student downloads a podcast, s/he can listen to/view it wherever, whenever, and for as many times as the student likes. Additionally, the student can control the podcast by stopping, starting, rewinding, or fast-forwarding with ease. For a university class, podcasts may range from a recording of a lecture to a separate presentation to supplement the lecture.

The exact role of technology in the classroom is a debated one. In my own teaching, I view new technology as a supplement to the classroom experience and not as a replacement of it. Almost every semester, I teach an introductory, entry-level content course in Spanish that is relatively challenging to students and student motivation for taking the course is low. After teaching the course for some time, I detected one area of the course—phonetics, the study of sounds within a language—that was particularly challenging to students. Given that the students have to study the specific sounds of Spanish and their consequent phonetic symbols, it seemed only natural to me to offer an audio podcast homework assignment to supplement the textbook explanations of each sound to enhance student comprehension. In this reflective essay, I discuss my experience of podcast implementation.
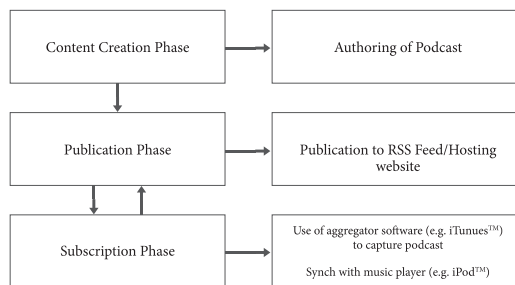
THE LITERATURE

Before using podcasts in the classroom, I researched the literature to determine both student interest and how to properly implement a podcast into the course. I first turned to the work of Bongey, Cizadlo, and Kalnbach (2006) and their research on podcasting. Their research suggests that students enjoy[1] the podcasts as a supplemental tool and view the podcasts as a great resource to aid them in their learning but do not view them as a replacement to traditional forms of instruction. In addition, the implementation of podcasts did not result in decreased student attendance; the students attended class but used the podcasts to increase their understanding of the material. Their article concludes with an excellent section containing very helpful ways to incorporate podcasting into a course.

Dale's (2007) study offers a very clear, detailed explanation of the podcasting process. That is, there is a content creation phase in which one records the presentation using a wide variety of software (e.g. Audacity or Garage Band for audio files). The instructor then authors the podcast, converts the audio file into an MP3 format and publishes it (usually to an RSS[2] Feed/Hosting website) which makes it available for download; an RSS feed can be found on blogs, web pages, social media sites (e.g. Twitter) and within course management systems (e.g. Blackboard). If the student subscribes to the RSS Feed/Hosting website, s/he is notified immediately that the podcast is available for download and the student then uses software such as iTunes to listen to/view the podcast. Once you subscribe to a feed, iTunes can update it each time there is a new podcast. The process is illustrated in the following figure:

[1] For student-created podcasts, see Frydenberg (2008).

[2] RSS is an acronym that stands for 'Really Simple Syndication' and allows one to easily distribute web content.

FIGURE 1 - THE PODCASTING PROCESS (ADAPTED FROM DALE (2007, PG. 50)

The researcher also suggests that podcasts are great for supporting learning, yet warns,

> However, podcasting should not be seen as a replacement for the contact between the tutor and student. Though enhanced podcasts can offer an interactive medium for enhancing the student learning experience, it is still only a one-way form of communication. Amongst the range of educational technologies that exist, podcasting, therefore, should be viewed as another supplementary channel for supporting student learning (8).

Clark, Westcott, and Taylor's (2007) work on using podcasts to reinforce lectures suggests that (a) students strongly feel that they obtain learning benefits from podcasts, (b) students wanted the instructor to keep implementing them, and (c) students do not only listen to them to review key themes; some students in their study were not native speakers of English and others did not optimally hear the classroom lecture

and thus the podcast offered another avenue for listening. Finally, Abt and Barry's (2007) study corroborates the previously cited studies with quantitative results. Their data suggest that the podcasts enhanced student learning in a qualitative sense (i.e. the students viewed them favorably as a resource), yet have little benefit compared to, in their study, the printed text. The researchers go on to suggest that future research might consider the use of summative assessment with podcast usage.

To consider student favorability of podcasts, determine the pedagogical implications of podcast usage at Illinois State University, and compare the previous studies' findings with data taken from Illinois State students, I implemented podcast usage[3] for the phonetics section of the course. In what follows, I discuss the course, how I carried out the task, and my observations of the experience.

THE COURSE AND STUDENTS

The course I teach offers an overview of core areas of linguistics. During the semester, I spend approximately two weeks on seven core areas that comprise Spanish linguistics. The first core area is phonetics and is challenging to the students in that it contains new terminology, symbols, and identification of Spanish sounds. A 'phone' is a sound that is possible in any of the world's languages. Phonetics, then, is the area of linguistics that studies the 'phone' inventory of a particular language (and its dialects).

The students are given a sheet of symbols which are used to describe each sound in Spanish. The students need to identify, memorize, and apply these symbols to homework and classroom exercises. With this in mind, I wanted to facilitate their learning and offer a more modern medium of learning for an area that is typically relegated to rote learning and memorization. The advantage of using technology is that the student could use his/her aural abilities in addition to exercises in the textbook to gain more practice using phonetic symbols. In theory, the added practice would help the students become more familiar with the symbols which would result in better comprehension, evidenced by better test performance.

PODCAST IMPLEMENTATION

With regard to my own experience with the technology required to make a podcast, I am an intermediate computer user with almost all of my knowledge coming from self-taught experiences; I was relatively familiar with many of the programs used for podcasting because they are used for speech analysis in my field. That said, I had no previous experience with podcasting. Additionally, I had no previous experience with the use of online activities within a course management system. Finally, I was relatively familiar with the file conversion involved, but I knew nothing about RSS feeds.

In light of my procedure, I recorded the assignment in Winamp, with an external microphone. All audio editing was done with the free software program, WavePad Sound Editor (www.nch.com.au/wavepad). To convert to MP3 format, I used the free software program Switch (www.nch.com.au/switch). Then I right-clicked on the file and clicked on 'Convert with Switch Sound File Converter'. Once converted, I downloaded the files onto WebCT (now called 'Blackboard') for students to download. I decided not to use an RSS feed because it was only a one-time assignment. Future attempts along an entire course might include such a feed. For the assignment, the students received an email, indicating that the file was ready for download. The students went to the course website on WebCT and downloaded the

file. The file consisted of directions, followed by a recording of several 'phones', or sounds, and followed by an example the particular sound in a recognizable word. The students had to write the correct phonetic symbol based on what s/he heard. In the classroom, once the assignment was due, I called on the students at random to ensure comprehension. As a group, we then went over any particular sounds that the students found difficult.

OBSERVATIONS

My observations are based on data taken from sections across three semesters, spring 2007, fall 2008, and spring 2008. Each of the three sections studied contained 18 to 22 students. While comparing data (i.e. test scores), I only considered scores from those students that finished the course. That is, given that it was the first exam, some students took the first exam, however dropped the course at a later date. I did not control for gender, standing (e.g. freshman), or intent in taking the course. For consistency, I compared only those sections which were non-major blocked, which means the sections were comprised mainly of students whose minor field of study was in Spanish.

The data were collected over three semesters in the form of exam score averages and informal feedback. I did not consider the homework score of the podcast exercise because I pick up homework at random and check for completion. Spring 2007 was the control group with no podcast usage; fall 2007 and spring 2008 both included the podcast. The same textbook was used for all three semesters. I was the only evaluator for all three semesters and all data are from my courses. Exams were slightly altered, but general format was the same.

The exam average for the control group (spring 2007) with no podcast usage was 68.5; the exam average for the first group with podcast use (fall 2007) was 72.61; and the exam average for the second group with podcast use (spring 2008) was 76.45; an interesting trend develops in that exam average slightly increases with podcast use. In short, if we assume average exam scores for the first exam, which tested phonetics, to be a direct measure of their learning, the data suggest that the use of the podcasts can enhance learning. Though not intended to be a formal study, my experiment with podcasting seems to suggest that supplemental podcasts are indeed beneficial.

During the week after the exam was returned to the students, I asked them for informal feedback in English before class started. Many students voiced their approval of the podcast, noting that it helped them review for the test. A few students noted to me that they were generally indifferent and only listened to the podcast because it was assigned as part of homework. Had this experience been a more formal study, I would have followed the studies of Clark, Westcott, and Taylor (2007) and Bongey, Cizadlo, and Kalnbach (2006) and requested more formal feedback in the form of either surveys or personal interviews. Future investigation will want to include these forms to fully ascertain the student's perspective.

With regard to the benefits of the experience, the students were able to distribute the file to their computer or iPod with problems. In terms of drawbacks, accessing the file can be confusing. In my case, I kept it very simple; however, if I had only given the MP3 option with RSS feed there would have been problems with transmission. For many audio files in a semester, I would probably need to have a workshop on RSS feeds. Finally, I recommend adding a policy in the syllabus regarding what happens when the students are unable to access the file.

In sum, my experience with podcast implementation in a Spanish classroom at Illinois State University was quite positive and well-received by the students. I found it to be an enjoyable project to create and I have plans to continue podcasting in my courses. However, educators will need to decide whether or not podcasting is appropriate for their particular area, as it is very tempting to use technology for technology's sake in today's classroom. My experience with podcasting relates to second-language learning, and thus supplemental audio materials make perfect sense to enhance learning; that withstanding, a podcast as a supplemental tool might not be best-suited for a particular field of study that emphasizes hands-on development. Abt and Barry's (2007, pg. 5) study on students of a totally unrelated field, namely exercise physiology, suggests that supplemental material either in written text or as a podcast will show evidence of improved exam grades; that is, their study seems to suggest the importance of supplemental materials, regardless of what type. The authors go on to note that the preparation time required for podcasts might not warrant their use, especially if another type, such as a written text, is readily available.

In the end, each one of us as educators has to make a decision; will we use technology simply to adapt our teaching to the "iPod generation" (Dale, 2007, pg. 56), shun technology as an educational tool all-together, or choose to carefully use technology as a tool that enhances the learning experience? My experience with podcasting suggests that when technology is used as a supplemental activity with a specific purpose, learning does increase and, perhaps more importantly, students feel more at ease with the topic and their learning environment.

CONCLUSIONS

I have several recommendations for other professors considering podcasting for online work. I suggest using the 'learning module' function in Blackboard to slowly offer the software programs they will need well in advance. I would also recommend including explicit instruction on how to use the software needed. Professors will also want to include a statement in their syllabus regarding the use of technology as a learning tool in the course. The good news for online podcasting is that a lot of the software needed to help you and the students is free. Be mindful that many of the free programs will often cause minor inconveniences (i.e. computer freezing), so include a student feedback section for each online podcast included in the course. I conclude by noting that an invaluable resource for implementing podcasts is Salmon and Edirisingha's (2008) text entitled, Podcasting for Learning in Universities.

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Acknowledgments

13

The Pontiac Prison Project: Interdisciplinary Student Research on a Contemporary Corrections Issue

MICHAEL C. GIZZI

Teaching a new course always has its challenges and this is doubly true when the new course is taught in the first semester at a new university. This was the scenario in which I found myself in the summer of 2008 when, after arriving at Illinois State University, I was assigned to teach a section of an undergraduate course on corrections. Within criminal justice, corrections are the study of prisons, jails, and community-based sanctions used for offenders convicted of crimes. It is one of the core criminal justice institutions and yet one with which students are either enthralled or left cold. It was my goal to find a way to engage the students in the course and provide them with a learning experience that would enable them to see the role that corrections play in the broader political system. To my surprise, I found the solution in the newspaper.

In May 2008, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich announced that he intended to close the maximum security prison in Pontiac, some thirty-five miles north of the Illinois State University campus. The decision was a surprise and generated instant controversy. The Illinois Department of Corrections was operating at more than 35% over capacity. The Governor claimed that by closing Pontiac he would save 4 billion dollars from the current year's deficit. In addition, this change would accommodate the prison population by opening the maximum security prison in Thompson, a prison that had been built 7 years earlier but never opened. I learned of the controversy in my first weeks living in Illinois and followed the ongoing controversy as it unfolded throughout the summer. Through it all, I kept thinking that there had to be a way to incorporate this important policy controversy into my corrections class. In

the weeks before the beginning of the new fall semester, I decided to take a chance and build a semester-long class project around the issue. What transpired became an extremely rewarding exercise in project-based group learning.

The idea that became the Pontiac Prison project was designed with several goals. First, I wanted students to be able to make a connection between the study of corrections and how it relates to communities and the political economic environment. The project would have the class immerse themselves into an issue that was not only topical but would enable them to see how academic content related to problems in the real world. It was my hope that the project would promote civic engagement and help the class see the larger consequences of criminal justice policy-making. The second goal of the project was related to the first in that I wanted the students to be able to recognize that correctional policy-making involved more than just "criminals" and "prisons." I wanted the project to clearly bring to the surface the interdisciplinary nature of policymaking. Closing the prison would have economic, social, and political consequences. The final goal for the project was to provide students with an opportunity to develop skills in group-work spread out over an entire semester. Being a criminal justice professional, I knew that these students would eventually have to develop skills in long-term group work, and I saw this project having value in this respect.

Student group work is a common pedagogical tool and can be used in numerous ways in a classroom. It is a strategy that is consistent with the 1998 Boyer Commission on reinventing undergraduate education and helps students learn in numerous ways, including through active construction of knowledge via active, interactive, and cooperative involvement among students. It can provide students with a sense of belonging and is particularly beneficial when it enables students to learn through direct learning and their own inquiry (Jones, 2006; Boyer, 1998). Yet not all group projects are the same. In short-term ad-hoc group projects, students are part of a group for a short period of time, and the primary goal is simply to learn course materials. Often the secondary goal of these types of group projects may be simply to provide students with a change of pace or a break from traditional lecturing (Occhipiniti, 2003). In a study of teaching comparative politics through cooperative team learning, Occhipinti (2003) presents a model of "cooperative learning," wherein a student group project is intended to be long-term (perhaps throughout the entire semester) and in which students have multiple roles; they divide tasks, have individual responsibilities, and accountability for the end product. There is close monitoring of the group project by the instructor as well as opportunities for feedback.

Monk-Thurner and Payne (2005) discuss the issues that are raised by group work in the criminal justice classroom although most of these concerns are universal and are true in any discipline. They see the appeal in group work as coming from immediate educational and social benefits such as improvements in critical thinking and long-term benefits in that students are better prepared for the workplace. Several obstacles are also acknowledged including limited classroom time to dedicate to the group project at the expense of the regular curriculum, students who are unprepared to work in groups, students who are unwilling to work with other students, and concerns over grading in a group context (169). They suggest several ways to overcome these problems including utilizing a combined individual and group component to grading and explicit policies to be put in place to overcome the problem of the "free rider," the student who does not contribute equally to the project.

These were all issues that I had to address in developing the Pontiac Prison

project, but I had the advantage of having spent three years teaching in a "project-based learning" curriculum for high school juniors and seniors and college under-classmen. In that curriculum, I used the Buck Institute of Education's "Project Based Learning" model (1999) to develop an interactive course on scientific modeling in the social and natural sciences and designed the entire course around a series of projects with both individual and group components. Moreover, I had adapted parts of this pedagogy in political science and criminal justice courses over the past several years. As a result, I was convinced that a group project could be effective. I also had the advantage of having never taught the corrections class before and, as a result, it was easy for me to find ways to fit the project into my intended curriculum.

IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

In the typical corrections class, topics include theories of punishment, sentencing, prisons, jails, inmate society, probation, parole, and community-corrections. In order to make the closing of the Pontiac Prison part of the course, I needed to broaden the scope of the course to consider the impact that corrections has on public policy and on communities. I wanted students to see that the study of corrections included more than what goes on behind the walls of prisons. To accomplish this, it would be important for the case study of the closing of the Pontiac Prison to be viewed as an interdisciplinary issue; one with multiple dimensions. In this instance, closing the Pontiac prison would have economic consequences for the city of Pontiac, the broader region, and the state correctional system. It would also have social conse-quences for those who would be displaced by the loss of jobs. The entire process of closing the prison was, at its core, a political process. To understand the role that the prison played in the life of Pontiac required a historical analysis of the prison. The interplay of these aspects could be examined through a comparative examination of other efforts to close prisons in Illinois and other states. Students would be divided into one of five groups and have the responsibility of developing a class presentation and a group paper. The organization of the project into groups served to advance the second goal of the project.

With this approach in mind, the success of the project required dedicating class time to initially exploring the issue, helping students to understand the issues that closing the prison raised, and generating buy-in from the students to understand what they were being asked to do. I created a basic website with links to various materials publicly available related to the project. In addition, I contacted Pontiac's state senator, Dan Rutherford, and invited him to visit class. He readily agreed and arranged to visit class in the second week of the semester. He also requested that I invite the media to the class. Although I did not want to make the class into a politi-cal circus event, I realized media attention might help the students see the political importance of the issues they would be studying. The classroom visit proved to be just the spark the project needed. The senator spent an hour describing the issues as he saw them, and he answered numerous questions from students. The next morning, the class event was reported in the newspaper, and within a few hours I received a phone call from Steve Karr, the Director of Research and Planning for the Illinois Department of Corrections. Karr wanted to visit the class as well and provide his department's perspective. We arranged for him to visit within the next week but agreed not to invite the media.

Finally, I encouraged as many students as possible to travel to Pontiac for the public hearings on the prison closing which were being held by the state legislature's

commission on government closures. Approximately 20 students drove up to Pontiac and took part in a hearing with more than 2,500 in attendance. The students packed into a crowded gymnasium and saw a political spectacle that few had ever experienced. Together these three events generated buy-in and built excitement for the class project. Perhaps more importantly, they served to promote the project's first goal of civic engagement. Students did more than just read newspaper articles about the issue; they spoke to and observed individuals who were directly involved or who would be impacted by the change, and they were able to make the civic engagement connections underlying the project.

While the students had engaged in group projects in other classes, many of them had never participated in a semester-long project. There was uncertainty about how group dynamics would work and the process of developing a group paper. Students were asked to provide their top three choices for group membership and an effort was made to honor their top choice, although it was not always possible. The class was given regular classroom time to work and encouraged to meet outside of class. They had to collect materials and synthesize everything they could learn about their particular aspect of the issue. Given that events were occurring in the real world as the project continued, students were encouraged to pay close attention to the local media, although I often would prompt class discussion with recent events related to Pontiac.

At the midpoint of the semester I tried to infuse the class with more enthusiasm for the project by having them organize a focus group with community leaders and citizens from Pontiac. This was also intended to advance the first two goals of the project. I contacted the city Mayor and we arranged for about 15 community members to participate in a forum. The students worked with me to develop a series of questions, and I completed the necessary human subjects review board approval so we could conduct the focus group. We decided that it would be best to hold the focus group in Pontiac to ensure optimal attendance by community members. Unfortunately, this resulted in lower than optimal student attendance at the event. Approximately 15 students drove to Pontiac for the forum and spent two hours with the Mayor and a group of individuals representing the public schools, the prison guard union, realtors, the chamber of commerce, the fire department, local ministers, and citizens at large. It was an extremely valuable event, I only wish more students had been able to attend.

As the semester came to a close, the class had to turn their attention to bringing their projects to a conclusion by developing a presentation and writing a group paper. I introduced them to the KEEP Toolkit's Web Snapshot software which enables students to create a webpage presentation. I chose this instead of traditional PowerPoint presentations because it enabled the class to create interactive presentations which I could stitch together into one overall website. While students were unfamiliar with Web Snapshot software, they did not have difficulties using them. The process of writing the group papers proved to be one of most challenging parts of the project. While I spent time talking about the difficulties of writing a group paper and the need to designate one student as an editor so that diverse writing styles would come together with one unique paper, this was very difficult. Most of the groups chose to assign specific parts of the paper to individuals and, as a result, the papers tended to be somewhat disjointed. In the future, I would provide even more guidance on writing group papers. In many ways the project taught me that accomplishing the third goal of the project (extended group-work) requires continued faculty intervention.

Anytime an instructor uses a group project it is critical to put mechanisms in place to deal with the "free-rider" problem of students who do not pull their weight in a group setting. From prior class projects, I have found that using student self-assessment and peer-assessment as part of the project grade effectively deals with the problem. I had each of the students write a paper explaining how they contributed to the project and reflecting on what they learned from the project. They also had to write a one paragraph assessment of each of the other members of their group. Self-assessments and peer evaluations were averaged together as a portion of the grade; this worked very well. Students were also told that if there was someone in the group who did not participate in the project, the group could convene a conference with me. These policies satisfied student concerns and generally were effective in that there were few complaints about "free-riders."

EVALUATING THE PONTIAC PRISON PROJECT

The last week of class was designated for class presentations. Each group was given 15 minutes to present their Web Snapshot presentations and their conclusions and we reserved time for questions and answers. The last day of the semester was used to come to conclusions and a final assessment of the project. I utilized a campus grant for student-faculty interactions and purchased bagels and pastries for the class. We used the last class as a party to celebrate the students' hard work. In general, the class presentations went very well and the Web Snapshots served to be a useful tool for creating them. Student evaluations indicated general satisfaction with the snapshots as a way of presenting material. In informal discussion with the students during the classroom party, the majority indicated that they were surprised by how much they enjoyed the project overall and how it enabled them to better understand the policy implications and political aspects of corrections.

Many students commented on the experience in their end of semester course evaluations. While a handful of students thought the project was too long, more than 80% of the students gave positive feedback. In the project evaluation I conducted, students rated the project 8 out of 10 on average comparing it with any of group/class projects they had previously done in college. No student ranked it lower than 6 out of 10. Two students had such a positive experience that they are doing an independent study on the closing of the prison with the goal of publishing a paper on the case study. Student comments also indicated that the goals of helping students see the larger connections between correctional policy-making and the broader political economic environment were successful. One student said:

> The project helped me understand that there is more to corrections than the actual running of a prison. That with each prison, there are countless economic, social, and political factors that have to be considered but aren't always.

This particular student rated the project a 9 (of 10), despite making the claim that "I hate group work." On that point, several students claimed that the worst part of the project was working with others. Students expressed frustration about group members who did not participate, and others found it difficult to coordinate time to work and bring together a group paper. Based on the student feedback, a similar project would benefit from more guidance on group work.

I consider the Pontiac Prison project to have been a successful group project. It provided a unique opportunity for students to examine corrections from a different

perspective, and enabled them to gain insights that a traditional lecture course would not offer. Students were able to make the linkage between correctional policy and the broader political system. The focus group, public hearing, and class speakers made the topic real for students and advanced the civic engagement goal of the project. While the group aspect of the project generated most of the student criticism, the overall project was a success. As a result of conducting this course project, I would rethink several things if I used a similar project in the future. I would provide more structure to the groups, more frequent milestones for them to submit progress reports, and perhaps consider some alternatives to the group project. Rather than having a web presentation and one group paper, it would probably be more successful if the web presentation was further developed, and each student was required to write a shorter individual paper.

While group projects are an option for almost any course, it is not always possible to have such an opportunity like what occurred with the proposed closing of the Pontiac Prison. The events were on-going as the semester progressed. Indeed, the day before the final examination, Governor Blagojevich was indicted by the U.S. Attorney, providing new hope for supporters of the Pontiac Prison. Ongoing events kept the issue in the news and kept the students' interest. This had a potential downfall as well; it was sometimes difficult for students to stay current with events, particularly as the semester came close to the end. There was also a risk for me as the instructor. At any point in time, particularly early in the semester, it was possible that the governor would withdraw his proposal to close the prison and it could easily unravel the entire project. I decided that this risk was worth taking, and if the governor backed down we would take what we could from the experience.

The Pontiac Prison project provided a unique opportunity for the students in my corrections class. Students learned that correctional policy-making impacts real people; decisions to open or close a prison have many unanticipated consequences. Students were able to see how prisons impact the communities in which they are located. Not every course will have the opportunity to draw on a contemporaneous issue in a way that is relevant to course objectives. Indeed, in the past two semesters since completing the Pontiac Prison project, I have not implemented a similar project in my corrections class. I simply have not found a similar issue that would serve to advance my teaching goals for the course. Yet, as a result of this project I am always on the lookout for identifying a new project that can tie a course together. The opportunity to reflect on that experience in this essay serves to strengthen the desire to identify a new group project for a future course. I hope this reflective case study can serve the same purpose for other instructors.

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Gladly We Reflect

ERIN FROST

The past semester has been a challenging and rewarding one for us, the student copy and design editors of *Gauisus*. We have learned much about the value of research and reflection on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and we have also learned of the difficulties faced by those who enter this field. We feel that in striving to achieve a "systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public," which is Illinois State's definition of SoTL, scholars from across the university have come together to create a collection as diverse as it is hopeful.

In "Learning Together Through Service: A Collaborative Project for First Year Undergraduates and Graduate Students," Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, Jodi Hallsten, Wendy G. Troxel, and Erin Pearce address service-learning as well as cooperative efforts to document academic and social advancement. We learned as we worked with the publication of this essay that, in doing so, they reinforce the ideals of what SoTL is about as well. Paula Ressler and Diane Zosky provide information helpful to changing the local environment to one more accepting of LGBTQ students. Their findings demonstrate that reflection is particularly vital in cases where students may be excluded based on normative ideas, and the work they've done has helped us to re-envision the space we occupy as students. From Andrew Davis and Mackenzie Olson we saw firsthand the rewards of involving students and teachers together in thinking about the processes that make a classroom function. Every research note or reflection in this collection taught us something new about SoTL.

We also learned the difficulties involved in publishing a book-length piece. Because of the cross-disciplinary nature of this publication, we faced challenges in making the style, formatting, and design consistent while maintaining the semantics of each piece. The complexity of this endeavor was far beyond what we initially expected, and this has proven an invaluable experience for us for this very reason. It also demonstrates one of the challenges involved in bringing together voices from across disciplines: Although every area of study has much to contribute to SoTL, it is important to frame those contributions in ways that other collaborators can understand, work within, and benefit from.

Finally, it is of utmost importance that we point out how SoTL leaders at Illinois State truly live their mission to promote reflection on teaching and learning. By giving us the opportunity, as students, to work on *Gauisus*, editors Kathleen McKinney and Patricia Jarvis demonstrated their total investment in models that not only reflect on teaching and learning but also value students and teachers working together in that reflection.

We hope you have enjoyed this collection and that you reap many benefits from the valuable work done in the SoTL field by the authors whose work is chronicled in these pages.