June 2014 Volume 2, Issue 4

Center for Academic Excellence
Dalton State College
A Division of the Office of Academic Affairs

Journal for Academic Excellence

Proceedings Edition 2014

A Word from the Editor

Greetings. It is my pleasure to present the Proceedings edition of the *Journal for Academic Excellence.* In this edition you can read the fine work of our presenters at the Fifth Annual Dalton State College Teaching and Learning Conference, held here March 14. The articles in this edition represent a range of topics from scholarship of teaching and learning to practical approaches to student engagement. I encourage you to partake of the rich information that you might have missed when it was presented at the conference.

At the risk of being a little self-serving, I am going to point especially to my article, on page 48. As many of you know, I have been doing research on faculty development for my dissertation. Many, many of you have participated, for which I am grateful. From October to March, I surveyed, interviewed and held focus groups with a number of faculty members in different disciplines and at different stages of their careers. Part of the requirement of the research methodology is to make it public to those involved in the research, so I am using this venue to do so.

However, I have too much to represent it appropriately in just one article, so I will be using this and the next two editions to present the three main topics that emerged from the research. Because these are the words of your colleagues, I think you will be interested in what they have to say. The theme of this issue's article is our faculty's learning to use technology: how, why, what, obstacles, and triumphs.

My second theme in this column is to encourage you to rest over the summer. Although I have a full agenda, like most of you, I also plan on using the less hectic schedule of summer to allow me some fun reading time (my "fun" tastes run more towards Agatha Christie than E. L. James—little pseudo-literary reference there).

Finally, I would like you to consider joining us for a faculty learning group in the fall. This will be a different type of learning group. No books, no research projects, no deliverables, no technology, no expert leader. This type is called a formation mentoring community, and is detailed in the book *Transformative Conversations* by Peter Felton and colleagues and Parker Palmer's work *The Courage to Teach.*

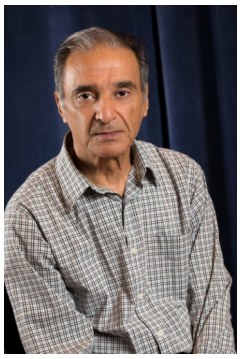
The goal is to discuss what it means to be a college professor with colleagues in your own and/or other disciplines and at different stages of their careers. That sounds sort of general, but that's the point; each group makes its own ground rules. In essence, if you want to talk with colleagues about living the life of a college teacher and all that entails, this might be something for you. While there are several things the formation mentoring community doesn't require, it does require a time commitment as the group defines it. More will be announced about this later.

In the meantime, take that trip, enjoy those children/grandchildren/relatives/friends, read that book, watch those shows on Netflix you have missed, work in your garden, takes those long walks or swims or runs or bike rides. Remember why you chose this profession and why it chose you.

Faculty and Staff Recognition

Four faculty members and one staff member were awarded prizes of excellence at the April 26 faculty meeting. **Dr. Raina Rutti**, Associate Professor of Business, was awarded the Barbara Schiffler '76 Award for Business Teaching. **Mr. Ronnie Jacobs,** Custodian in the Westcott Building**,** was awarded the Beth Burdick Service Excellence Award. **Dr. James Adams**, Professor of Biology, was given the Dalton State Foundation Faculty Award for Excellence in Scholarship. **Mr. Matt Hipps**, Assistant Professor of Political Science was given the Dalton State Foundation Faculty Award for Excellence in Service. **Dr. Marina Smitherman**, Associate Professor of Biology, was given the Dalton State College Foundation Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching. These winners are pictured above, in order.

Three faculty members presented at the University System of Georgia Conference on Teaching and Learning held April 17 and 18 at the UGA campus. **Dr. Katie Pridemore** co-presented with Robert Bledsoe and Brock Lamm of Georgia Regents University and Lauren DiPaula of Georgia Southwestern State University on the subject "Caught in the Act of Great Teaching: Rewarding and Promoting Excellence" **Dr. Jenny Crisp** and **Ms. Barbara Tucker** co-presented, "Transforming Developmental English for Long-term Success," based on Dalton State's successful Quality Enhancement Plan for SACS.



Dr. Javad Zadeh, Associate Professor of Mathematics, has published an article entitled, "Pyramidization of Polygonal Prisms and Frustums", in the *European International Journal of Science and Technology (EIJST*), Vol. 3, No. 3, April 2014. This journal is published by the Center for Enhancing Knowledge in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Sarah Mergel, Associate Professor of History, was given the Advisor of the Year Award at the Dalton State Student Leadership Awards Banquet on April 24 at the Farm. She is the faculty advisor for the History Club.

Dr. John Lughart, Associate Professor of Biology, was given the Unsung Hero Award at the Dalton State Student Leadership Awards Banquet on April 24 at the Farm.

Dr. Tom Mullen, Associate Professor of Political Science, recently chaired a panel on "Political Histories of Europe" and presented a paper, "From Protest to Resistance to Insurrection: If Not Us, Who?" at the April annual Popular Culture Conference in Chicago.

The book, *Fan CULTure: Essays on Participatory Fandom in the 21st Century* (2014, McFarland Press), edited by **Dr. Kris Barton**, Associate Professor of Communication, and **Dr. Jonathan Lampley**, Assistant Professor of English, has been reviewed as "highly recommended" in *Choice.* The review states, "The present volume honors the spirit of popular culture studies and ethnography with readable scholarly essays that emphasize what fans actually do."

Many faculty achieved promotion or tenure or promotion and tenure this year. Dr. Sandra Stone announced these achievements as the faculty meeting in April.

Here they are—Congratulations to all these hard-working folks.

Dr. Sharon Hixon is now the permanent Dean of the School of Education.

Dr. Gina Kertullis-Tartar is now the permanent Dean of the School of Health Professions

Ms. Sylvia King is the new Chair of the Department of ASN Nursing.

Dr. Lynda Ridley is now the permanent Chair of the Department of BSN Nursing.

Dr. Robin Cleeland is now the permanent Chair for the Department of Social Work.

Dr. Kris Barton is now the permanent Chair for the Department of Communication.

Mr. Tim Hawkins was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of Mathematics and achieved tenure.

Dr. Harold Jones was promoted from Associate to Professor of Business and achieved tenure.

Dr. Don-Gook Kim was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of Business and achieved tenure.

Dr. Raina Rutti was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of Business and achieved tenure.

Dr. Natalie Trice was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of English and achieved tenure.

Dr. Kerri Allen was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of English.

Dr. Robert Culp was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of Business.

Mr. Jerry Drye was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of Communication.

Dr. Christian Griggs was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of History.

Dr. Jason Schmurr was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor of Mathematics.

Dr. Sharon Beavers of the School of Education was awarded tenure.

Ms. Orenda Gregory of the School of Education was awarded tenure.

Dr. Robert Ford of the Department of Mathematics was awarded tenure.

Dr. Doyle Loughren of the Department of Social Sciences was awarded tenure.

Dr. Sung-Hee Park of the School of Business was awarded tenure.

Dr. Dean Turner of the Department of Chemistry was awarded tenure.

Integrating Soft Skills in the Curriculum without Sacrificing Content

Suzanne Anthony, University of North Georgia

Abstract: Skills such as dependability, responsibility, ethical values and integrity, elimination of listening barriers, and professionalism in working in groups can be developed in the classroom alongside teaching required curriculum. To develop students beyond the academics requires a different focus. This paper takes a closer look at the design of courses that contribute to students acquiring "soft skills" that will help them be more prepared for life after graduation and engage them in developing these skills. Helping students develop soft skills can also make your efforts more productive in the classroom.

Author Information: Mrs. Suzanne Anthony is an Assistant Professor at the University of North Georgia (UNG). A graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, she spent several years in the healthcare field, training employees. At the University of North Georgia, she teaches primarily Business Communication and Management/Supervisory continuing education classes. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Suzanne Anthony, Mike Cottrell College of Business, University of North Georgia, Gainesville, GA 30501. Contact: Suzanne.anthony@ung.edu

Introduction

Would you like to provide the missing piece that would provide the link for students between technical skills and the educational foundation to help them move toward career success? It is difficult to add another topic into an already bulging curriculum of study. Many assume that this missing piece, soft skills, is probably taught somewhere else and *by* someone else in another department. If soft skills are important to employers, how do we incorporate this missing piece into our own classrooms without sacrificing content?

In a town hall style meeting, Melvin Everson, Georgia's Governor's Office of Workforce Development Director, commented that "forty-five percent of the people who are terminated from their jobs in the probationary first ninety days are terminated due to the lack of soft skills. They can't report to work on time or can't get along with their co-workers, and they become a distraction and cause a loss of productivity, costing the company money" (Nelson, 2011).

Background

Although employers want graduates with technical skills that relate to their specific industry, employers also desire graduates who have soft skills. Duncan and Dunifon (1998) explained that soft skills are as useful a predictor of labor market success as is the level of formal education. Soft skills do not belong to a skill set required by a particular industry, but are required in all industries. Sutton (2002) pointed out that employers list soft skills as the number one differentiator for job applicants in all types of industries. James and James (2004) explained that as organizations change and become leaner, soft skills are becoming more important. Wellington (2005) emphasized the ability to work positively with everyone to achieve success. He commented that technical skills are often part of the curriculum, but soft skills need additional emphasis so that students learn the importance of these skills early to be ahead before beginning a business career and life (Wellington, 2005).

Procedure

The Business Advisory Board of the Mike Cottrell College of Business at the University of North Georgia hosted focus groups from the surrounding business community to garner an understanding of what employers want most in the graduates they hire. Two different thoughts emerged when comparing what should be taught in the classroom versus what businesses want.

College courses focus on specific discipline-based material while employers care about the "bottom line" and skills needed not only for the first job but also for the second, third and fourth jobs. For employers, the value of educating students in soft skills is that such skills are easily transferable to future jobs. Ideas emerging from the focus group are included throughout this paper.

Oral and written communication skills often are at the top of many lists and college courses seem to include curriculum that stress those skills more often. However, this paper will focus more on soft skills such as dependability/responsibility, ethical values and integrity, respect/self control, and the ability to get along with others working as a team.

Dependability/Responsibility

The soft skills of dependability and responsibility tend to be taught in college classes through class rules. Students are expected to follow the rules but often do not understand the impact of ignoring them. Many millennials grew up in a society that rewarded them for just showing up. In the business world, showing up late may cost them their jobs.

In my class, I have explained to students the disruption that it causes when someone is late, not only to my train of thought, but also to those of other students. It is almost impossible to ignore someone walking in late. As professors, we often log the tardies, and if excessive, count them as an absence, but professors may not speak to the student about why it is disruptive to others when arriving late. It is also disruptive to have students leave the classroom and return. I explain to students that this is just as disruptive because it happens twice.

Employers expect employees to come to meetings prepared. Professors who ask that assignments be stapled, with rubric attached or other special formats should be able to assume that students will have assignments ready. One way to teach this preparedness is to reduce points or not to accept assignments that are incomplete. This teaches the student that an employer would not accept incomplete work either.

I also help students understand the concept of professionalism by looking at complete documents in texts and assignments from an overall perspective, comparing them to how a hiring committee would look at resumes. I suggest that they wait to read any content in a document and evaluate it at first solely on the overall look of the paper, considering format, neatness, and if the document is of "ready to send" quality.

A member of our focus group commented that "There is a lowering of expectations. It has become a cultural thing of what's the minimum I need to do to 'get by' here. I am wowed by an employee who takes initiative and goes above and beyond." (Barnett, 2013) My students have come to realize that doing only the minimum in preparing assignments is not what the business world is looking for.

Ethical Values and Integrity

According to an online study conducted by Hart Research Associates (2013), more than nine in ten employers said it was important that job candidates "demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity." Many students have a difficult time making ethical judgments. These skills are not traditionally developed through lecture sessions, but can be through active learning. The Mike Cottrell College of Business utilizes a game in some business-related classes where students pose as "families" to buy and sell used cars to demonstrate good and bad ethics in writing advertisements. Once the students see the car that they have purchased from the unethical family, the impression is made that unethical advertisements can be costly.

Chuck Gallagher (2014), business ethics expert, gave a recipe for unethical decisions: one part need, one part opportunity, and one part rationalization. A good example of this can derive from a college setting. Students often make unethical decisions on tests, assignments, and group work. They need a good grade; an opportunity arises to plagiarize from a friend or source; and they rationalize that it is ethical. When students begin working, there will not be anyone to

submit their work to Turnitin or monitor them when they are working alone. As a professor, one can step in at the "rationalization" stage. Taking opportunities to counsel with students who have been caught cheating about the consequences of rationalizing unethical behavior helps them understand that every choice has a consequence and in business, they will be expected to make the best choice rather than rationalize the easiest.

Students should also perceive fairness and equity in our classrooms. The equity theory in management, developed by J. Stacy Adams (1963), proposes that "people are motivated to seek social equity in the rewards they expect for performance." When professors play favorites by calling on the same students repeatedly or accepting late work from one student but not another, a sense of equity and motivation is lost in the classroom. Although life is not always fair in the business world, many employers want their employees to treat customers and subordinates fairly. This skill, or lack of it, is observed by our students more often than most of us realize. Another aspect of integrity is doing what one says he/she will do. Holding students accountable for due dates on the syllabus as well as keeping our own appointments with students or following up on correspondence with students models this skill. Professionalism also relates to integrity in the business world. Organizing the syllabus in a way that gives a professional first impression helps students to realize the importance of this skill. Expecting assignments to be prepared professionally prior to submission also validates its importance.

Professors often grapple with the use of technology in the classroom. Technology is students to bring their textbooks to class on phone, iPad or computer is to talk about the importance of the soft skill of using technology without being offensive to the speaker. Multi-tasking with technology is becoming more common in the workplace in meetings. Students should learn that nonverbal communication of attentiveness, even while using technology, will help make them more successful in business meetings. As an example, while listening to a speaker, it is appropriate to maintain eye contact as much as possible to show interest.

I also speak privately to my students who make nonverbal mistakes in the classroom in the way they dress, sit or speak. Body language in business is important and some students do not realize that the impression they are making in class would not serve them well in business.

Respect

Faculty members comment on the lack of respect in oral and written communication by college students. I address communication at the beginning of the semester by helping students to understand that addressing faculty by proper title is a sign of respect. In the business world, there will be customers and other stakeholders who will not be pleased to be addressed by a first name or by "Hey." Being respectful of the position of a person in oral and written communication is a desirable soft skill that can easily be taught in the college classroom.

Tone and attitude are also important to any audience, and I emphasize to my students that some tones encourage discussion while others shut it down. We talk about the importance of not using a demanding or critical tone as well as eliminating words that convey the wrong attitude in oral and written communication. Role playing business scenarios between customer and employee or supervisor and employee often help students to see what it is like to be on the receiving end of the wrong attitude. A focus group member commented, "Today, the focus shifts from 'employment' to 'employability' in the working world. Today's graduates need to understand that attitude to work is as important as the work itself" (Barnett, 2013).

Members of the focus groups have also commented that students lack face-to-face communication skills, which prevent them from being able to carry on an intelligent and professional conversation. Giving students an opportunity to work with partners or in groups during class helps to hone these skills. Learning to look others in the eye while speaking can be gained through activities like these. As faculty, we need to

be conscious of our own style of facilitating classroom discussion as well as lecturing. Students notice when we make eye contact with them while in class.

Professionalism Working on Teams

It is common today to work on committees and on teams in the business world. When I divide students into groups, I elect a facilitator in each group. This student has the responsibility of keeping the discussion moving and being aware of the silence or dominance of various students. Students also are asked to complete a task as a team, and then we judge as a class who has worked most successfully as a team. One of our focus group members stated, "Students need to believe that the team wins and loses together. Too many students don't see the importance of the team concept" (Barnett, 2013).

Students in my classes analyze their potential listening barriers including psychological, language, nonverbal distractions, faking attention, and grandstanding. Each student is asked to complete a scenario at work where they see themselves creating a barrier to effective listening for other people. Then as they work in groups, they practice eliminating the barriers. Faculty should become aware of their own barriers, avoiding polarizing comments that keep students from listening to their own communication in class.

Conclusion

Companies today are sending workers to seminars and classes to learn the soft skills that were not learned as employees were growing up or in school. Putting more emphasis on soft skills in the college setting is a natural fit as students look toward getting a job and being prepared with the skills that will help them to be successful.

Soft skill training should not have to be a separate class or course for college students. It can be easily integrated through the curricula, with focus on how future career success will be impacted. Professors need only make the link between common class rules, procedures, and activities with the soft skills that can easily transfer into the job market. Providing the missing piece will benefit college students in furthering their careers and being successful in the job market.

References

Adams, J. S. (1963, November). Toward an Understanding of Inequity. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology,* 422-436.

Barnett, P. (2013). *Business executive feedback of desired graduate attributes and skills*. Presentation to the Mike Cottrell College of Business, University of North Georgia.

Duncan, G., & Dunifon, R. (1998). Soft skills and long-run labor market success. *Research in Labor Economics, 17,* 123-150.

Gallagher, C. (2013). *Ethics & eggs*. Symposium conducted at the University of North Georgia, Gainesville, GA.

Hart Research Online Study (2013). It takes more than a major: Employer priorities for college learning and student success. *Liberal Education*, 99 (2), 1.

James, R.F., & James, M.L. (2004). Teaching career and technical skills in a "mini" business world. *Business Education Forum*, 59 (2), 39-41.

Nelson, D. (2011, September 30). Town hall at Athens Tech explores job skills. *Online Athens*. Retrieved from http:// www.onlineathens.com

Sutton, N. (2002). Why can't we all just get along? *Computing Canada*, 28 (16), 20.

Wellington, J. (2005). The "soft skills" of success, be it high tech, low tech or no tech. *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 71(20), 628.

The Faculty Fellowship: Improving Student Engagement and Learning in Support of a QEP

Dawn Ford, Ralph Covino, Cheryl Robinson, and Priscilla Seaman, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Abstract: The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's QEP, called ThinkAchieve, comprises many component parts in its goal of promoting students' critical thinking skills. This paper will describe one of those components, the ThinkAchieve Faculty Fellowship, and its implementation in the first year, sharing both the underpinning mechanics of the program as well as the Fellows' topics for their respective cohort-based programs. It concludes with their impressions and recommendations concerning this form of faculty development.

Author Information: Dr. Dawn Ford is the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning at UTC. She has a broad background in the sciences and education with over fifteen years' experience as an educator and trainer through online, classroom, and field modalities. Dr. Ralph Covino is the Assistant Professor of the History of the Ancient Mediterranean World and a core faculty member of the Brock Scholars Program in the Honors College at UTC. He was the winner of the 2012 University of Tennessee National Alumni Association's Outstanding Teacher Award. Dr. Cheryl Robinson is the UC Foundation Professor in the School of Education at UTC. She serves as the sole professor in Early Childhood: Child and Family Studies, and her research focuses on family life education and service learning, with a special focus on children of divorce. Priscilla Seaman is an Associate Professor and Reference/Instruction Librarian at UTC. She is the library liaison to the Sociology, Anthropology, and Geography department as well as German Language and Literature. In addition to one-on-one research consultations and reference help, she teaches library instruction sessions for undergraduate and graduate classes.

Introduction

The provision of effective faculty development is critical to the success of any University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for SACS. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's QEP, called ThinkAchieve, focuses on the improvement of student critical thinking skills through active learning and student engagement. To this end, several initiatives have been launched to train and support faculty in their efforts to promote higher order critical thinking skills in students. This article outlines just one dimension of this training and faculty support, the ThinkAchieve Faculty Fellowship, which builds on other critical thinking skills-building ThinkAchieve programs, including freshman orientation sessions and in-the-classroom and beyond-the-classroom activities. This article shares three examples of cohort-based faculty development and offers insight as to the Fellows' experience of their time working on the project. It concludes by providing suggestions for others who might seek to implement a similar model in support of their institution's QEP programs.

Research demonstrates that while critical thinking can be improved by incorporating active-learning techniques that promote student engagement, the integration of these pedagogical approaches might be uncomfortable for both students and faculty (Duron, Limbach, & Waugh, 2006; Elder, 2004). Research also shows that the establishment of faculty cohorts can assist in the transition to new pedagogical techniques as they provide faculty with the support they need to implement the changes (Hutchings, Huber, & Ciccone, 2011). Given these research findings, at UTC a faculty cohort model was developed in the first year of the QEP and first implemented in its second year to complement existing faculty

development opportunities; the faculty-led cohorts focus specifically on ThinkAchieve's goal of increasing student critical thinking and problem-solving competencies. This model was chosen especially to support faculty by providing a peer-mentor as well as a community of engaged and interested colleagues as they design, implement, and ultimately integrate new pedagogical approaches and teaching techniques into their classrooms.

Faculty Fellows and Their Cohorts

UTC's ThinkAchieve Faculty Fellows program seeks to engage faculty as leaders who will collaborate with small cohorts of faculty on a teaching and learning topic in harmony with the goals of ThinkAchieve (Appendix A). It selects its Fellows in the fall semester and issues the call for participants in their respective cohorts during the early spring. Once selected, the Fellows then design a presentation to be delivered at a spring workshop integrated into the annual Instructional Excellence Retreat following the end of term. After the workshop, the faculty cohorts must meet with their respective Fellow at least six times during the following academic year and then present the results of their cohort's work to the campus at the following Instructional Excellence Retreat. Each Fellow is provided with a small budget ($250.00) to cover supplies and other expenses related to the work of the cohort.

The Faculty Fellows are selected through a competitive application process overseen by an interdisciplinary faculty committee. In their applications, they are asked to describe the teaching and learning strategy which they intend to work on with a cohort, how the ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes (Appendix A) can be met through the training and mentoring of faculty, their prior experience with the particular topic or strategy, faculty learning outcomes, an instructional plan, and a plan for assessment. A letter of support from their Department Head or Dean is also required. Their applications are appraised using a selection rubric (Appendix B).

Similarly, cohort participants are also selected through a competitive application process for each of the Fellows' topics. Applicants describe their interest in participating in a particular cohort, listing the courses in which they plan to incorporate the new teaching strategy. Their applications are assessed not by rubric but instead by potential 'fit'--taking into account the desire to form a cross-campus and interdisciplinary team of faculty who each have a specific interest in the topic, if not prior experience thereof. Thus, the Faculty Fellows program provides an opportunity for faculty to learn from both their leaders and colleagues in different disciplines through the workshop, the meetings through the academic year, and ultimately via the group campus presentation. Throughout this process, cohort leaders conduct formative and summative assessment of the cohort's work in order to both improve the program and to provide feedback to the participants.

Common incentives for motivating faculty members to participate in faculty development activities such as the Faculty Fellowship and cohort-based skills development include:

1. Recognition of the activity in the tenure and promotion process;
2. Additional financial remuneration;
3. Course releases or other time incentives;
4. Technology reward; and
5. Retention of intellectual property rights (Herman, 2013, p. 398).

At UTC, a record of annual cumulative participation in faculty development opportunities is regularly reported to individual faculty members for inclusion in their dossiers for retention, tenure, and promotion. Retention of intellectual property rights is included because of its value in online course development more than its connection to promoting critical thinking skills in the classroom. Therefore, owing to a limited budget which precludes offering release time or new equipment such as iPads for participants, each Fellow is compensated $1,000 after leading the half-day workshop and another $1,000 after having held six cohort sessions, the group campus presentation, and submission of the final report, including assessment. Cohort participants are compensated $100 for participating in the half-day workshop and an additional $400 following the six meetings and group campus presentation.

At the completion of the cohort experience, each participant submits an evaluation form (Appendix C); the same evaluation form is used for all faculty development opportunities on campus to allow for apt programmatic comparisons to be made. Fellows compile these survey data and incorporate them into their final reports. These reports comprise a project summary inclusive of any deliverables that have emerged from the experience and the results of their assessment plan in addition to budget and attendance records. Recommendations for future cohort topics and faculty development and suggestions for improvement to the cohort-model are solicited at this time so as to assist with the planning of the next year's offerings for both the Fellowship and the Center for Teaching and Learning. Some recommendations gleaned from the first year's Faculty Fellows are included below.

Description of the First Three ThinkAchieve Fellows' Learning Topics

Creating Meaningful Connections: Pop Culture in the Classroom Cohort – Ralph Covino

In ancient Greece and later in the world of Rome, one of the easiest ways to demonstrate one's erudition was through the demonstration of an intimate knowledge of certain foundational texts. A situation occurred and, having observed it, individuals would compete to be the one to come up with the most apt line of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* (or similar) which summed up the situation at hand. The most famous incident involving this phenomenon was the emperor Nero's ill-timed recitation of lines from Ἰλίου πέρσις, *The Sack of Ilium*, while Rome was ablaze during the great fire of Rome in A.D. 64.

A similar game is often played by those in the modern world who know Latin or Greek– *tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis*. Whether they know it or not, millennial students have throughout their lives been exposed to a variant of this phenomenon. Theirs is a culture which has always been replete with pithy quotable quotes, memorable catchphrases, and all manner of take-away sound bites. Indeed, a large part of the current wave of popular television programming plays to this aspect of their experience, such as the referential humor present in *The Simpsons* to current events or in *Family Guy* to aspects of American popular culture from the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

Much research has been done to attempt to understand millennials' resistance to "old school" lecture formats (Tagg, 2004; Shulman, 2005a; Shulman, 2005b; Bok, 2006), their technology dependence, and, of course, what happens when they get to college (Howe & Strauss, 2007). However, harnessing this key aspect of the way in which students process information in their out-of-class world, *i.e.* through references to film, television, and other media, so as to aid in-class work and material retention has yet to receive all that much attention. Alvermann, Hagood, and Moon's (1999) work instructs faculty how to teach critical media literacy, which is not strictly the same. Despite this lack, many faculty have noted in casual observation that students react positively to in-class references to, for example, *The Hunger Games*, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, or *Twilight*.

These sources form something of a referential lexicon and are prioritized and valued by students much more highly than course content. By training faculty to better integrate popular culture materials with which students are familiar and deem 'relevant' (Price, 2009), students will be better able to draw connections between the course materials and their own experience which will aid in their processes of evaluation and interpretation. Doing so in an effective manner will reduce dependence on and expectation for rote memorization and its kin. By training faculty how to develop exercises that have students communicate and articulate connections between pop culture and their subject matter, students will gain a fuller appreciation for the art of drawing apt comparisons and contrasts, leading to better and more fully developed language skills demonstrable in both written and oral expression.

Problem-Based Learning: A Tool for Critical Thinking Cohort – Cheryl Robinson

Although problem-based learning (PBL) is not a new instructional approach, it is one that is not often used in a variety of disciplines, tending to be

used primarily in the fields of medicine, education, and business. Additionally, because there is such variation in practice, analyzing effectiveness can sometimes be difficult (Prince, 2004). Constructivism, a philosophical perspective on how we come to understand or know, is the framework for problem-based learning. Savery and Duffy (2001) characterize this philosophical view using three primary propositions:

1. Understanding is in our interactions with the environment.
2. Cognitive conflict or puzzlement is the stimulus for learning and determines the organization and nature of what is learned.
3. Knowledge evolves through social negotiation and through the evaluation of the viability of individual understandings.

Research supports that by having students learn through the experience of problem-solving, both content and thinking strategies are learned (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). This instructional approach is a method in which student learning centers on a multi-layered problem that cannot be answered with a single correct answer. The processes employed in critical thinking are the underpinnings of problem-based learning. Students work collaboratively in small groups to identify the major points of the problem and what they need to learn so that the problem can be solved. Students are involved in self-directed learning and applying the knowledge gained to the problem. Rather than being a repository of knowledge, the teacher facilitates the learning process (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

A simple process and procedure can be used in most disciplines, and using the PBL approach will increase the critical thinking skills of all students participating and further ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes. Of course, faculty must understand the process and procedure and be willing to assume the role of facilitator. By implementing this critical thinking process and procedure in a somewhat similar manner, analysis of effectiveness may be less complex. This cohort will work based on the instructional principles suggested by Savery and Duffy (2001) and include eight primary points:

1. *Anchor all learning activities to a larger task or problem*. Problems should be clear to the student and the relevance of the specific learning activities. How they relate to the larger problem should be clear.
2. *Support the learner in developing ownership for the overall problem or task*.
3. *Design an authentic task*. An authentic learning environment is one in which the required critical thinking for solving the problem correlates with the required critical thinking in the environment for which we are preparing the student.
4. *Design the task and learning environment to reflect the complexity of the environment they should be able to function in at the end of learning*.
5. *Give the learner ownership of the process used to develop a solution. Allow students not only to have ownership of the problem, but allow them to formulate their own paths of discovery in solving the problem*.
6. *Design the learning environment to support and challenge the learner's thinking*. The teacher acts as a consultant and coach employing Vygotsky's learning scaffold and the zone of proximal development as the learning interaction between teacher and student.
7. *Encourage testing ideas against alternative views and alternative contexts*. Advocate for the exchange of ideas and the negotiation of accommodating different views.
8. *Provide opportunity for and support reflection on both the content learned and the learning process*. Support the students in reflecting on the strategies used in the PBL process as well as what was learned from the problem itself.

The Research Cycle Cohort – Priscilla Seaman

Examination and explanation of the research process, especially as it relates to library research, is both a creative and cyclical endeavor. Good research, like good education is a creative pursuit. People begin with a question, an inspiration, a hunger "to know" and as they wend their way through the research process and get "lost in discovery," they can end up in a wholly different

place from where they began. Howard Gardner, author of *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1993) said, "Creativity is fruitful asynchrony."

The seeming paradox of getting lost in discovery is also sometimes called "the flow state," an optimal state of creativity in which participants are so fully engaged in their activity that they lose track of time and place. If this joyful process of creative flow is an example of research at its best, why then do students so often approach research with a sense of dread? What are the obstacles that prevent the creative flow state? Why do students consistently score low on assessments when it comes to identifying, evaluating, and interpreting information? Students are not alone in their dread and confusion; all now face a vast information landscape which, although potentially rich, can overwhelm and drown the initial inspired research question.

Critical thinking and information literacy are skills that can be learned, but many students begin college with a background in research that is linear rather than conceptual and cyclical. They may have been taught the Thesis/Conclusion model of research, but few have had exposure to approaching a question from a critical thinking standpoint, in which they enter into a 'conversation' on their topic. They are most familiar with using Google as their primary research tool in which a mass of information of varying sources and quality is retrieved. Many students manage to get through their four-plus years of college without venturing far from their known ways of searching and without ever discovering the deep, creative potential of the research process.

This research process that often eludes them is akin to life cycle diagrams: it begins with the formulation of a researchable question, a back-and-forth process of using synonyms, keywords, and controlled vocabulary to formulate and reformulate their original question; the gathering of a variety of sources; evaluation of their sources: understanding the types, quality and intended audience; the culling of sources; reading, understanding and interpreting the content within sources; synthesizing information; weaving their own thoughts into known literature; and writing, revising, and finally, creating an original product, a new idea that then goes back to the beginning of the research life cycle, thus starting the cycle anew.

This cohort sought to promote understanding of the twelve stages of the Research Life Cycle (RLC). In digestible one-word descriptions, they are: "idea," "keywords," "explore," "refine," "gather," "evaluate," "cull," analyze," "add," "synthesize," "draft," and "final." To accomplish this, cohort participants will apply them to their own research questions and then discuss their experience of the RLC with the group before turning to application in the classroom and promotion of student knowledge and use of the RLC in their own lives.

The Fellows' Experience of Cohort-based Learning

Each of the first three cohorts' design provided opportunities for faculty to learn about, implement, and assess innovative classroom and experiential activities that promote active learning and student engagement. While each of the cohorts chosen for the first year of the Fellowship had a distinct focus, it was apparent very early on that the Fellows' topics complemented each other and that such would serve to strengthen teaching and learning on campus. The "Fellows learning from Fellows" dimension was a felicitous and unintended by-product of the program.

At the mid-point in each semester, the Fellows met with the director of the ThinkAchieve program in order to discuss their cohorts' progress as well as issues which had arisen during the cohorts' sessions. As the Fellows were drawn from the teaching faculty and not from the staff of the Center for Teaching and Learning, each came from a background of teaching students rather than training other teachers. The Fellows were understandably ill-prepared for some of the collegiality issues which emerged, for example, and to the resistance from faculty to the suggestion to teach and think about their material in new ways. Further, each was relatively surprised by the amount of push-back from their cohort members which occurred after such things as background readings or project assignments were distributed. Such proved to be a teachable moment in that in each of the cohorts, issues concerning ownership of both material and process became central to the

experience.

The overall utility of problem-based learning to not only the cohort experience but also to the promotion of critical thinking in the classroom became quickly apparent, as did the provision of authentic and relevant learning experiences. Each cohort sought to combat the resistance to reading about their topics via the provision of exercises which helped their cohort members to develop in-class materials which could then be deployed. Through the creation of these materials, be they lesson plans incorporating popular culture in a biology classroom or the application of the RLC to their own research questions, the cohort members were given hands-on opportunities to practice the techniques which could be then reviewed by both the Fellows and their fellow cohort members and improved prior to implementation. The goal of teachers teaching teachers about critical thinking was thus achieved, but not necessarily in the manner which was laid out in the initial Fellowship proposal. The need to remain not only ever vigilant but also ever flexible is clear.

Indeed, a common issue plagued each of the cohorts. At various points in both semesters, each Fellow complained that they felt that their role was always to keep their cohort members focused on the goal at hand, namely promoting student critical thinking. Various techniques were deployed in order to achieve this; two of the Fellows were able to keep their cohorts aiming towards and thinking about the ThinkAchieve goals by coming up with a group project which would bind their cohort groups together and produce an output for the experience of which they could be suitably proud. The RLC cohort, for example, explored various different formats and media for the dissemination of the twelve stages of research, ranging from coasters with a flower, clock, or sun design with each petal/ hour/flare being a stage of research to an interactive webpage. On consultation with students, it was discovered that they would prefer a one-sheet hole-punched handout which could be included in students' binders which outlined the RLC process. The cohort created a colorful cartoon of a student going through the RLC with a real research question and, on the opposite side of the page, a template with fillable fields in which a student could take a research question and work through the stages to create the end-product of an original research paper. Having each cohort produce a tangible outcome or deliverable as a part of the experience thus was recognized as a desideratum only after the mid-way point.

Some Recommendations for Future Fellows and Cohorts

Some recommendations from the first year's cadre of Fellows were implemented during the year on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, the largest cohort in the first year had one Fellow and six faculty; all agree that such was optimal and that any more or any fewer presented its own problems. To preserve the small-group model cohort size so as to maximize the experience and benefits for participants, not all faculty who applied to be in a cohort could participate in one; there were far more applicants than spaces owing to the incentives offered. Further, many faculty expressed interest in the cohort's topic but were unable to participate in the year-long faculty development opportunity offered by the Fellows due to time commitments, upcoming sabbaticals, and similar issues to participate. Therefore, two of the three Fellows opted to open their first Instructional Excellence Retreat workshops to the entire campus. Both were well attended and, as such, it is recommended that the first workshop be split into two parts, one session for the entire campus and another session immediately following it to introduce the cohort members to each other and to explain the timetable and overall plan for the coming year.

Timetabling is the subject of the Fellows' second recommendation. The cohorts were formed so as to be interdisciplinary in nature; however, while that has undoubted benefits as discussed, it also presented myriad issues in terms of scheduling times for the cohorts to meet with all members present. Faculty coming from disciplines which are heavily lab-dependent, such as the hard sciences, or who had off-campus commitments to, for example, field-work, presented a challenge to the Fellows in each of the three cohorts. This was discussed with the incoming Faculty Fellows,

around whose schedules meetings would be based; in the call for participants in the second year's cohorts, a question was added about their expected availability during the open times. This added question ought to cut down on the number of cohort sessions which run with less than total attendance.

A third recommendation concerns the number of sessions for the cohorts. All of the first three Fellows found that the six sessions were insufficient to achieve all the goals set out in their initial applications. When faculty members from disparate disciplines were placed into a room together, staying on task was often an issue. To combat this as well as the absentee issue noted, one Fellow doubled the number of sessions for the second semester in order to ensure that each cohort participant attended at least the three sessions required to gain the incentive, but also so that all outcomes could be met. If, going forward, the program requires Fellows to add additional sessions, it is recommended that they do so in the first semester as all current Fellows noted that enthusiasm for the project waned toward the end of the second semester.

Sundry further recommendations emerged as a part of the Fellows' *post-eventum* reflective process. More frequent meetings of the Fellows themselves with or without the director of the ThinkAchieve program were suggested; similarly, going forward, as the number of past Fellows grows, they ought to be integrated somehow into the on-going program so as to provide not only continuity but also advice and materials of which the incoming Fellows may not be aware. One Fellow's circulation of articles by Larmer (2012) and Whitson, St. Julien, and Matusov (undated) certainly helped to crystallize and concretize a number of topics which had been under discussion this year.

One Fellow noted that, owing to self-selection bias in terms of cohort-formation, the majority of the members of that cohort were interested less in being trained by the Fellow than in being among peers who were already actively using the pedagogical technique. Given this interest, the cohort experience had to be adapted so as still to provide the training for which some had signed up as well as activities for the more established practitioners. If the number of interested faculty so warrants, one suggestion for the future is to establish a parallel faculty learning community led by the Fellow for those already well-versed in the topic to complement the work of the cohort and to incentivize participation therein similarly to the cohort participants It should be noted that functioning in the latter way led the cohort in question to turn its efforts to the production of a survey of the faculty that would highlight the areas in which other faculty may need to be trained on campus in the technique – a survey which will also be utilized for contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Indeed, the final recommendation concerns the scholarship of teaching and learning. As faculty development is an important component of many SACS QEPs, and is best done using a model that encourages both knowledge of and participation in the scholarship of teaching and learning, the most successful faculty development programs focus on faculty members as teachers, scholars, professionals, and people. UTC's ThinkAchieve has sought to incorporate all of these facets into its program development. However, faculty members who are involved in this scholarship create innovative experiences for students that improve learning; they are not necessarily *au fait* with the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is recommended that in the future, each Fellow be given upon selection a reading list covering best practices for cohort-based learning prior to the start of the cohort experience.

Conclusion

Preliminary analysis of the assessment data and participant responses from the first three Faculty Fellows' cohorts suggests (with very few exceptions) that the model of teaching faculty-led faculty development opportunities was viewed as a positive step towards promotion of the overall goals of ThinkAchieve on campus. Each cohort experience challenged faculty participants to leave their existing teaching comfort zones and to view their classes' assignments and activities in new ways. This was accomplished in the main by forcing them to apply the principles of inverse curricular design

by putting the goal of the promotion of student critical thinking first and then working on ways to achieve that goal. As the Faculty Fellowship program continues, it will undoubtedly mature into a key part of on-campus faculty development training so as to ensure that faculty are best prepared to meet the challenges ahead and achieve the University's QEP targets.

References

Alvermann, D. E., Moon, J. S., & Hagood, M. C. (1999). *Popular culture in the classroom: Teaching and researching critical media literacy*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Bok, D. (2006). *Our underachieving colleges*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Duron, R., Limbach, B., & Waugh, W. (2006). Critical thinking framework for any discipline. *International Journal of Teaching and learning in Higher Education*, *17*(20), 160-166.

Elder, L. (2004). A professional development model for colleges and universities that fosters critical thinking. Retrieved from http:// www.criticalthinking.org

Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Herman, J.H. (2013). Faculty incentives for online course design, delivery, and professional development. *Innovative Higher Education, 38*, 397-410.

Hmelo-Silver, C. E. (2004). Problem-based learning: What and how do students learn? *Educational Psychology Review, 16*(3): 235-266.

Howe, N. & Strauss, W. (2007). *Millennials go to college: Strategies for a new generation on campus*. Great Falls, VA: LifeCourse Associates.

Hutchings, P. Huber, M.T. & Ciccone, A. (2011). *The scholarship of teaching and learning reconsidered: Institutional integration and impact*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Larmer, J. (2012, June 5). PBL: What does it take for a project to be "authentic"? Retrieved from http://www.edutopia.org/blog/authentic-project-based-learning-john-larmer

Price, C. (2009). Why don't my students think I'm groovy? The new 'R's' for engaging millennial learners. Retrieved from http://www.drtomlif vendahl.com/Millennial%20Characturistics.pdf

Prince, M. (2004). Does active learning work? A review of the research. *Journal of Engineering Education*, *93*(3), 223-231.

Savery, J. R. , & Duffy, T. M. (2001). Problem-based learning: An instructional model and its constructivist framework (CRLT Technical Report No. 16-01). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Center for Research on Learning and Technology.

Shulman, L.S. (2005a). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, *134*(3), 52-65.

Shulman, L.S. (2005b, Spring). Pedagogies of uncertainty. *Liberal Education*, 18-25. Retrieved from http://aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-sp05/ le-sp05feature2.cfm

Tagg, J. (2004). Why learn? What we may really be teaching students. *About Campus,* 9(1), 2-10.

Whitson, J.A., St. Julien, J., & Matusov, E. (undated). *The quest for "authenticity" in problem-based learning: Reflections on PBL in pre-service teacher education courses*. Retrieved from http://www.udel.edu/educ/whitson/files/PBL-Authenticity.htm

CAE LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION INNOVATION
CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
DALTON STATE

Appendix A:
ThinkAchieve Goal and Student Learning Outcomes

Over the course of their university experience, UTC students will increase their overall critical thinking skills, as exhibited by the ability to identify, evaluate, and interpret information; solve problems; create innovative solutions through creative thinking; and communicate ideas and information effectively.

UTC students will need to attain the following specific learning outcomes:

- Identify, evaluate, and interpret information, by raising pertinent questions and identifying uncertainties,
- Solve problems by determining limitations, making connections, and prioritizing the potential solutions,
- Create innovative solutions to problems through creative thinking,
- Communicate ideas and information effectively, and
- Seek ongoing improvement to integrate knowledge and skill through reflection on their thinking and learning processes.

Appendix B: Fellows Selection Rubric

	Level of Achievement 1	Level of Achievement 2	Level of Achievement 3
Criteria for Proposal Evaluation	Ideal 5 points	Acceptable but needs work 3 points	Not acceptable 0 points
Significance of the teaching and learning topic for meeting the student learning outcomes of ThinkAchieve through the training and mentoring of faculty.	Clearly articulates how the program will further ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes through the training and mentoring of faculty. Teach and learning topic is supported by current literature.	Notes how the program is related to ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes, but the topic is not clearly described and/or supported by the current literature.	Does not demonstrate how the program will further ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes and/or does not describe the topic or support it with current literature.
Program proposal identifies an instructional plan that will be implemented with specific learning outcomes for the cohort faculty.	Proposal provides an instructional plan that is feasible for the time frame of the program. There is clear congruence between the instructional plan and intended learning outcomes. In-depth earning outcomes for the faculty are clearly stated.	The instructional plan is good, but is either not feasible for the time frame of the program or does not provide learning outcomes that are fully congruent with the instructional plan.	Instructional plan does not include faculty learning outcomes, or is a mismatch with intended faculty learning outcomes.
The program proposal includes an assessment plan that will assess whether the program has achieved its desired outcomes.	Includes an in-depth assessment plan with process and outcomes assessment measures.	Includes an assessment plan, but not fully developed. May be lacking either a process evaluation or an outcome evaluation plan.	There is little or no plan for assessment or the plan is unclear.
The proposal demonstrates that the applicant has experience with the proposed topic/strategy, the applicant is motivated, and the applicant has departmental and/or college support.	Applicant demonstrates relevant and extensive experience with the proposed teaching and learning topic/ strategy. The applicant and the department/college are highly motivated and committed to the project's success.	Applicant demonstrates some experience with the proposed teaching and learning topic/ strategy. The applicant and department/college demonstrate some level of commitment to the project's success.	The applicant's experience with the proposed topic/ strategy is either not explained, or does not seem to be sufficient to lead a cohort. **And/Or** **The** applicant and department/college motivation and commitment to the project's success are unclear.

CAE LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION INNOVATION
CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
DALTON STATE

Appendix C: Assessment Questionnaire

Think & Achieve
CREATING CONNECTIONS

Workshop Evaluation

February 28, 2013

Please rate your level of agreement with these statements:	**Strongly DISAGREE**	**Disagree**	**Neither**	**Agree**	**Strongly AGREE**
1. I have learned something valuable from this workshop.					
2. This workshop was a good use of my time.					
3. I feel more informed as a result of this workshop.					
4. What I learned in this workshop is relevant to my job at UTC.					
5. I feel confident to use what I've learned in my job at UTC.					
6. I will continue to educate myself about today's topic in my job at UTC.					
7. I will use something I have learned in this workshop in my job at UTC.					
8. The instructional format of this workshop was effective.					

1. What do you feel were the *strengths* of this workshop?

2. In what ways could this workshop be *improved*?

3. What other areas of faculty development would you like to learn about? (*select all that apply*)

Personalized and Active Learning Experiences through Online Instruction

Christine Jonick and Jennifer Schneider, Department of Accounting and Law, Mike Cottrell College of Business, University of North Georgia

Abstract: Online courses have the potential to offer students learning opportunities that may be even more focused and individualized than their experiences in face-to-face classes. This paper discusses techniques for drawing students into the community of an online course and engaging them in active learning. It addresses three interrelated strategies: design, revision, and interaction. Several best practices in course design according to Quality Matters™ standards are featured to help optimize organization and delivery. The strategy of edit and revise is discussed as a tactic for students to become invested in their own work. Effective ways of incorporating student-instructor and student-student interaction and communication are explored. Specifically, the paper looks at ways the capabilities of both the Desire2Learn learning management system and a textbook publisher's homework management system can be leveraged to incorporate these three strategies in order to enhance student engagement and promote active learning.

Author Information: Dr. Christine Jonick is a Professor of Accounting at the University of North Georgia (UNG). She is a graduate of the University of Georgia and Adelphi University. She primarily teaches Principles of Accounting I and I and Intermediate Accounting I and II. Her research interests are focused on the use of technology for effectively teaching accounting online. She is a small business owner and previously worked in the airline and manufacturing industries. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Christine Jonick, Mike Cottrell College of Business, University of North Georgia, Gainesville, GA 30503. Contact: Christine.Jonick@ung.edu

Ms. Jennifer Schneider, CPA, is an Assistant Professor at the University of North Georgia (UNG). A graduate of the University of South Florida, she spent several years in Big Four Accounting before pursuing positions at Fortune 50 companies. At the University of North Georgia, she primarily teaches Principles of Accounting I and II. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jennifer Schneider, Mike Cottrell College of Business, University of North Georgia, Gainesville, GA 30503.

Contact: Jennifer.Schneider@ung.edu

Introduction

Online courses that enable students to participate and learn on an "anywhere, anytime" basis are mainstream in higher education. They offer opportunities for active learning and engagement, access to resources, and flexibility that extend far beyond the possibilities in a traditional on-campus classroom. At the same time, they present unique challenges within an ever-changing technological environment. In terms of quality, online education must address faculty-student communication, structure, access, and flexibility (Millson & Wilemon, 2008).

Research shows that online classes can be as effective as traditional classroom-based courses when appropriate technologies are used and sufficient interactivity is present (Durrington et al., 2006). Ongoing technological improvements, such as easier-to-use video cameras and screen capture software, are making online courses more rigorous and engaging (Clark, 2009). The wealth of experience, including successes and failures, from distance education in the past is being used constructively to guide current practice. The online instructional community also benefits from the guidance of peer and research-based quality assurance programs such as Quality Matters™ for enhancing online instruction.

Online courses that are properly designed

will have the same level of quality and rigor as face-to-face courses (Brown, 2012). Yet as accounting instructors who have taught online for several years, we posit that online courses can offer students learning opportunities that are even more effective and individualized than those they experience in face-to-face classes. Leveraging technology and capitalizing on the resources of the Internet have the potential to provide richer learning experiences than those found in a conventional classroom (Dykman & Davis, 2008)

Learning Management Systems (LMS) are widely used staging tools for offering courses over the Internet (Singh, Mangalaraj & Taneja, 2010). A LMS is delivery software that offers a range of tools that help support and administer courses in the online learning environment (Iqbal & Qureshi, 2011). The use of LMS such as Blackboard, WebCT, Desire2Learn, eCollege, and Moodle has facilitated increased student engagement (Werth & Werth, 2011) and enhanced learner experiences by providing (a) greater interactivity and connectivity between the instructor and students as well as among the students themselves, and (b) more opportunities for academic exchanges. An LMS provides the resources to encourage learners to view learning as an ongoing process that does not involuntarily start and stop as one enters and leaves the physical classroom. Research on LMS emphasizes the convenience, interactivity, and connectivity of learning tasks (Daniels, 2009).

The purpose of this paper is to describe how several specific functions and features of the Desire2Learn LMS and a publisher's homework management system (HMS) can be employed to promote personal and active learning experiences for students in online classes. The scope of the discussion is limited to the process and technology for course delivery; an analysis of effective content to place within this system will be left for a future article. As an analogy, we view the LMS and HMS as closets, each with an intricate system of racks, shelves, drawers, and hangers where clothes will be stored in an organized, useful way. But as such they are empty. In a subsequent paper we will bring the clothes and arrange them in the closets; those will be the course materials—spreadsheets, quizzes, assignments, working papers, financial statements, etc.—specific to the discipline of accounting.

Design

The first critical step in the process of teaching online is the detailed organization and planning of the online course (Coppola, Hiltz, & Rotter, 2002). This goes beyond what one would expect to do as a teacher in a conventional course (Chizmar & Walbert, 1999). It includes detailed planning for every individual part of a course, including developing specific overall goals and objectives for each instructional unit of the course, specifying reading and other assignments in detail, and describing specific deliverables. Exactly who does what and when, and how it is to be done must be concisely and clearly specified within the design constraints imposed by guidelines and systems limitations for given online teaching technologies (Dykman & Davis, 2008).

The site for this online accounting course is designed to be straightforward and easy to use. It adheres to Quality Matters™ standard 6.3, which recommends that "navigation throughout the online components of the course is logical, consistent, and efficient." By virtue of its innate organization as a software package, Desire2Learn imposes some basic structure (Dykman & Davis, 2008). Within its framework, however, instructors may customize the layout, look, and available features to make the site unique and appropriate for a specific course.

The LMS home screen for this accounting class has been streamlined to remove from the default setting all content, buttons, links, features, and clutter not directly applicable to this course. The home screen is divided neatly into two columns with a title bar over each: *Course Content* (modules) on the left and *Course Information* (news items) on the right. In addition, students see only the six feature buttons that they will use in the course across the top. Figure 1 (page 23) is a sample of the course home screen. This section on design discusses ways to leverage three of the tools this LMS offers to promote student engagement: modules, news items, and dropboxes.

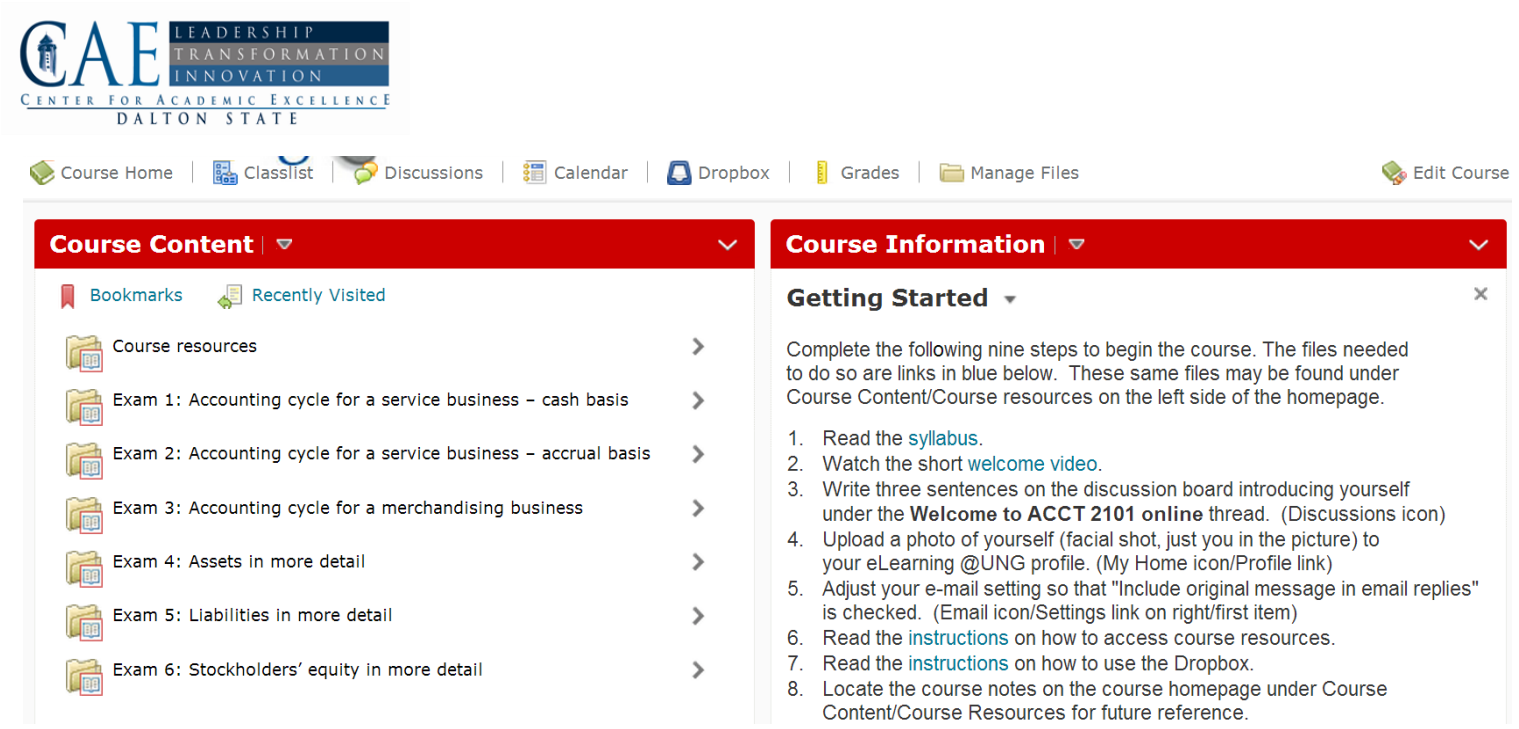


Figure 1. Accounting course home screen

Modules

Instructors provide students with access to course materials by building a table of contents composed of headings (called modules) and links (called topics). There are many ways to organize content, and any table of contents could include a combination of approaches. For example, instructors may organize content by units of time (e.g., week 1, week 2), chapters or subject areas (e.g., New York, New Jersey), or file type (e.g., handouts, links, videos).

Keeping learning objectives at the forefront of planning and designing an online course helps to ensure that course activities, assignments, and assessments are aligned (Farmakis & Kaulbach, 2013). The accounting course, whether online or otherwise, includes six overarching learning goals based on the topics as follows:

1. Accounting cycle for a service business – cash basis
2. Accounting cycle for a service business – accrual basis
3. Accounting cycle for a merchandising business
4. Assets in more detail
5. Liabilities in more detail
6. Stockholders' equity in more detail

There are six content exams in the class, each corresponding to one of the learning goals. Since students have a tendency to define blocks of material in terms of what will be covered on each exam, each module's title begins with the exam number followed by the appropriate learning goal. The organization of the modules is tightly aligned with the stated learning goals from the instructor's perspective; it is also presented with labels that students find useful.

Course resources

Exam 1: Accounting cycle for a service business – cash basis

Exam 2: Accounting cycle for a service business – accrual basis

Exam 3: Accounting cycle for a merchandising business

Exam 4: Assets in more detail

Exam 5: Liabilities in more detail

Exam 6: Stockholders' equity in more detail

Each of the six exam modules contains all of the content students need--text, videos, links, samples, and instructions--specific to the learning goal. These resources are strategically named and listed in the order in which students will require

them. However, the corresponding assignments and exams that students must complete in order to learn and assess their mastery of the subject matter do not appear in the modules; these reside elsewhere. The rationale for this is explained in a later section.

In addition, a seventh module called *Course Resources* appears before the others. This module contains links to instructions, materials, and utilities that provide an overview of the course or pertain to all of the learning objectives. These include the syllabus, guidelines for navigating the Desire2Learn site, instructions for accessing and submitting assignments, introduction and procedural videos, and location and hours of tutors.

These seven clearly labeled modules provide a succinct, straightforward structure in which to organize the course materials. The modules list appears prominently as the only item in the left column of the Desire2Learn home screen under the title bar heading *Course Content*. Since it is relatively brief, it is readily seen and accessed without the need to scroll.

News Items

While the modules provide an organizational structure for content that is primarily prepared in advance of course delivery, news items allow for spontaneous announcements to guide students through the learning process. This accounting class lists news items in the right column of the home screen, under the *Course Information* title bar, in reverse chronological order. The first item students see when they begin the course is the critically important "Getting Started" announcement that lists the first nine steps to take. This complies with Quality Matters™ standard 1.1 that states, "Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components."

Subsequent news items are listed above this initial one as the course progresses, providing students with time-sensitive information, prompts and reminders, and personalized messages from the instructor. News items may be removed from student view once they are no longer relevant. The strategy is to showcase on the home screen only what is important and timely, and part of this process involves removing all that is not at any given moment.

Dropboxes

The dropbox tool enables students to submit assignments to individualized storage folders within Desire2Learn. Instructors may then access and review these submissions. A dropbox may be set up for each assignment and customized with an appropriate title, optional narrative for instructions, and links to files and resources.

Dropboxes are the cornerstone of this online course. Assignments in accounting require specialized formats and problem types that are unique to the discipline. It is not a body of knowledge that can be readily or fully assessed with the multiple choice, fill-in, true/false, matching, and other short-answer type questions that the LMS offers as part of its quiz tool. Instead, the instructor has written a collection of pre-formatted Excel spreadsheets that represent how accounting data is presented in practice. Each assignment has its own unique spreadsheet that is designed to best present the problem at hand and to achieve unit learning objectives that are directly tied to course learning goals. The instructor attaches formatted spreadsheet assignments to their respective dropboxes; students download a copy from the dropbox instructions, complete their work, and upload their final version back to their dropbox.

The instructor may then review the assignments and has three options for providing feedback. Individualized input may be entered in a single student's dropbox in the comments area that ties directly to the particular assignment. As an alternative, the instructor can enter comments directly into the student's spreadsheet file and then upload a copy as an attachment to the student's dropbox for him/her to review. Finally, and most simply, the instructor may enter a grade for the assignment right in the dropbox area. This score is tied to the LMS gradebook and can then factor in to the overall course grade.

As mentioned previously, assignments and exams that students must complete in order to

learn and assess their mastery of the subject matter do not appear in the modules with other content relevant to the learning goals. Instead, the most effective and efficient organizational strategy for this course has proven to be a "one-stop shopping" approach: listing all assignments and assessments in chronological order, by due date, under the Dropbox link. The presentation of the assignments list to students appears as a five-column grid with rows that specify the assignment name, score, number of submissions, feedback, and due date. This one long list of approximately 50 items is a powerful visual summary for students in terms of all the expected deliverables and their progress on each.

A tangential feature of the dropbox tool is that it can be set to allow assignments to be submitted past the published due dates. In such cases the LMS tags the submission as late and specifies the length of time past the due date. Late assignments are accepted in this accounting course so as not to preclude students from having the opportunity to learn essential material. However, there is a 15% penalty on late submissions.

Revision

As may be evident in the discussion of the dropbox for this accounting class, students complete a significant number of spreadsheet assignments and exams to assess their performance in the course. Although the scope of this paper does not include a discussion of the assignments themselves, it is important to mention that these spreadsheets are programmed to provide students with valuable feedback as they work, including text comments, checkmarks indicating correct entries, and an overall grade that increases with each subsequent correct entry. In the best-case scenario, a student completes an assignment to a score of 100%, even if it takes multiple attempts until a green checkmark appears beside the input box(es) to indicate that answers are correct. In this case there is nothing for the instructor to do except enter the perfect score into the LMS gradebook.

However, accounting is a challenging discipline and quite often students are unable to determine a correct answer, in spite of making diligent efforts and using references such as textbooks or eNotes. In this case, students may submit their work with a score of less than 100% by the due date, but they must also include a question, math calculation, or other indication of how they are attempting to answer their question or solve their problem. This provides the instructor with valuable insight into what students are thinking and how to prompt them to move toward the correct answer. It also encourages students to articulate their logic and processes rather than just resign and wait for the instructor to do the work for them.

Students must submit each assignment by its respective due date. If at that point the work is not 100% correct, they have as many subsequent attempts as necessary to edit, revise, and perfect in order to complete the task to a score of 100%, without being considered late. Continuous, systematic feedback between the student and the instructor may involve several iterations of back and forth until all issues are ultimately resolved. Students are motivated to achieve the "prize" (and meet the requirement) of a perfect score and persist until they reach that goal. As such, unlike a normal group situation, the online course is essentially an organized framework for what becomes mostly individual tutorials involving the teacher and each student in the class (Littleton, Phil, & Whitelock, 2004). Communication is inherently and mostly one-on-one. Some students require less than others, but personal involvement is a hallmark of online education under this model (Dykman & Davis, 2008).

To reinforce the learning process, each problem is available in an algorithmic format. This offers students additional opportunities for practicing the same problems repeatedly with different data sets each time. The numbers vary among different takes within the shell of an identical problem. These algorithmic versions are particularly useful for preparing for exams or just taking a fresh look at a familiar assignment.

The strategy of "edit and revise" as discussed is a tactic for helping students to become invested in their own work. They are trained to realize that a "B" is not good enough. The require-

ment of a score of 100% prompts students to be diligent in their first attempts, to identify what they do not know and formulate that knowledge into questions, and to engage with their instructor and other students until they succeed. From a broader perspective, this process adopts the foundational principle of continuous improvement that is the cornerstone of both the Quality Matters™ online education certification and the AACSB business school accreditation processes. On a micro level, it challenges learners to persist and succeed over time. Consistent interaction, steady participation, and timely reinforcement are key to keeping students in an online course involved and active in the learning process (Dykman & Davis, 2008).

Interaction

The instructor's ability to provide timely and focused feedback and to understand students' strengths and weaknesses is critical. The LMS facilitates continuous interaction as well as prompt and individualized feedback (Aviles & Eastman, 2012). In the online accounting course, not only can students and faculty communicate through assignments via the dropbox comment box and within the spreadsheet files themselves, but they can also utilize tools such as e-mail, discussion forums, chats, workgroup collaboration software, audio and video conferencing, and intelligent agents. These are popular and effective ways of supporting student-instructor and student-student interaction within the class.

Although many of the standard tools for communication are used in the online accounting course, the focus here is on two more subtle ways of connecting student to instructor. These involve two additional tools this LMS offers to promote student engagement: surveys and the gradebook.

Surveys

The familiar connotation is that online surveys are designed to gather data that is often selected, ranked, or contributed by outside parties through an electronic form. In Desire2Learn, it is frequently used to for soliciting feedback about the course from students who have completed it. It may also be used to gather in-class feedback from students to eliminate the need for counting hands or for the use of additional feedback devices. Typically, the instructor compiles the collective results to detect trends, performance, or preferences and to analyze results either statistically or qualitatively.

The survey tool is used somewhat differently in the online accounting course for two additional purposes: for periodic student self-assessment reports and for peer evaluation. In both cases students are providing input into an online form, yet in neither is the primary goal to synthesize collective data about all members of the class.

For the self-assessment reports, students complete the instrument, yet the instructor uses it primarily to hear from individual students and not necessarily to use the data collectively. There are currently five self-assessment reports in the course, and each pertains to a topic that is typically challenging for students to grasp. The content of each is quite simple; it asks students (1) to rank how well they feel they understand the topic, (2) to briefly explain the topic in a text box, (3) to ask questions about the topic (optional), (4) to state how confident they are that they would earn a score of 90% or above on an exam about the topic, and (5) if they would like additional help on the topic. The second item listed sounds like a quiz question, but presented in this format in which the instructor is expressing concern without an intent to assign a grade has proven very effective in uncovering student misperceptions and correcting them prior to a graded assessment. Students are very forth-coming in expressing their concerns and confusion in this format and appreciate the instructor reaching out to assist them.

Secondly, surveys are used quite effectively in the course for peer evaluation purposes. Using the same five topics that are typically challenging, students each write a mock letter explaining one of these concepts to a client. The documents are evaluated not only on content, but on format and writing style as well. Each student's letter is evaluated by four of their peers using an electronic survey that is designed in a form similar to a grading rubric. Multiple choice items allow asses-

sors to select the degree to which their peers succeeded on a number of criteria. In addition, free -format entry boxes allow evaluators to enter constructive comments. The instructor uses the same instrument to evaluate student work. The input for each document is captured and reported back to only the student whose work is being evaluated. Our experience has found that students are eager to receive their feedback online and take the critique from their peers to heart.

Gradebook

Although the gradebook may typically be considered an informative rather than interactive tool, it has been designed in such a way in the online accounting course to communicate ongoing progress and therefore to retain students' interest.

Students are always concerned about grades. A fundamental issue in an online course is determining the basis for assessing student performance (Bowman, 2003). Learners deserve to know what is required, when it is due, and how it is to be graded. The instructor must plan and communicate this aspect of the course very carefully in order to be perceived by students as treating them objectively, fairly, and consistently (Dykman & Davis, 2008).

Quality Matters™ standard 3.2 addresses this, as follows: "The course grading policy is stated clearly." These statements regarding grading pertain to the criteria and scores assigned to various assessments in the course and may seem obvious to consider in any class.

Typically the separate grades for different assessments are posted in the LMS for online courses throughout the semester, and at the end these scores are synthesized into the final course grade based on a prescribed weighting protocol. Realizing the students are interested in knowing where they stand at any time during the semester, however, the online accounting course uses custom formulae written within Desire2Learn to maintain an ongoing running average for each student that includes a synthesis of any of the 50+ assignments, six exams, midterm, and final that should have been completed to date. Figure 2 below presents a sample custom formula.

Not only does each student see a numerical grade to two decimal places, but also the current letter grade based on performance to date. Figure 3 on page 28 is an example from the instructor's gradebook. Although a student should recognize, for example, that a 75.58 is a "C" average, seeing that letter on the screen leaves no room for denial and serves as a motivator to perform better on subsequent assignments.

Achievement-oriented students expect faculty to clearly spell course goals, requirements, and how to achieve them along with providing strong feedback so they can monitor their progress and accomplishments (Borges *et al*., 2010). The dynamic gradebook, in conjunction with self-grading assignments and instructor intervention, offers students the opportunities they desire.

Publisher's Homework Management System

The online course for distance learners requires a creative strategy from a course development stand point. This format has

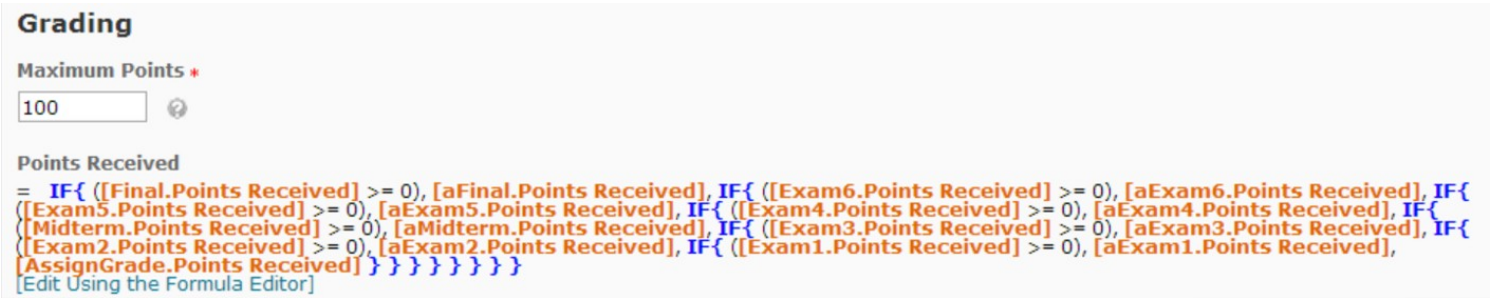
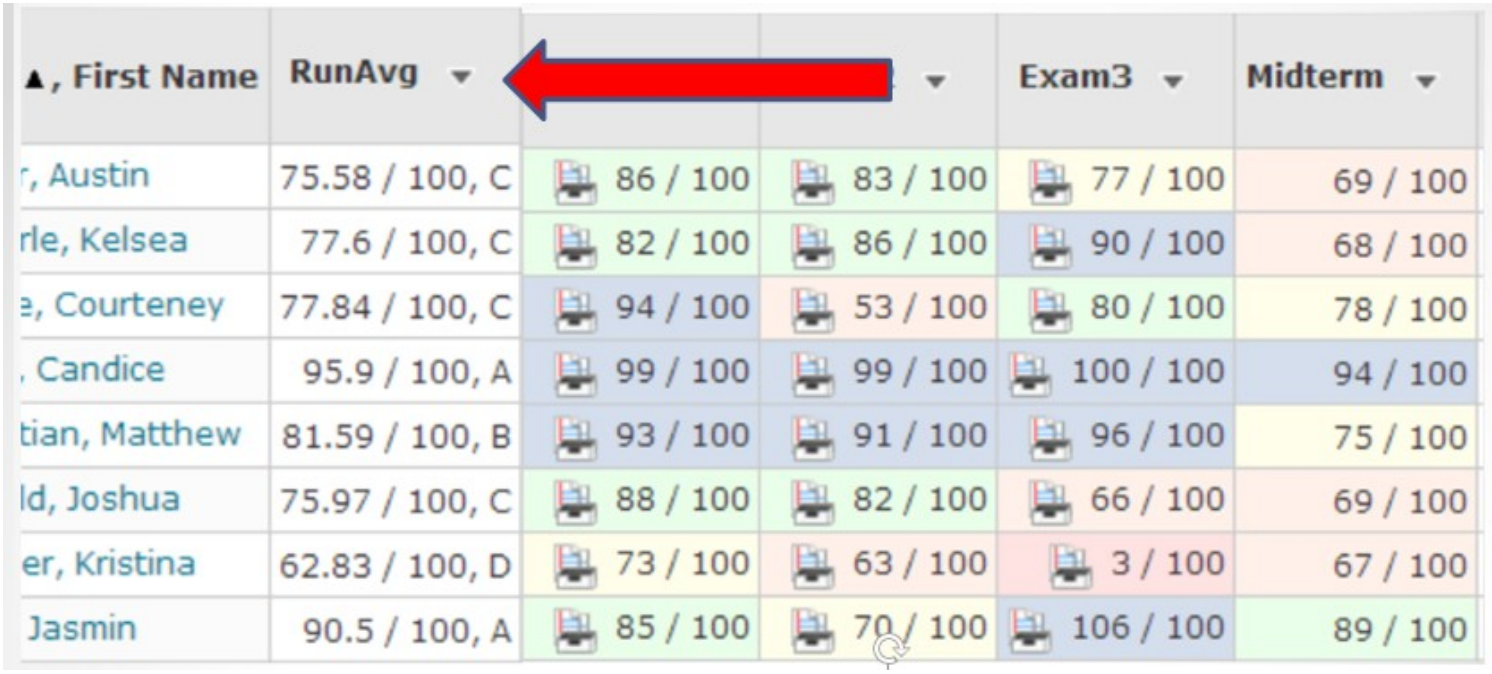


Figure 2. Custom running average formula



▲, First Name	RunAvg	[redacted]	[redacted]	Exam3	Midterm
r, Austin	75.58 / 100, C	86 / 100	83 / 100	77 / 100	69 / 100
rle, Kelsea	77.6 / 100, C	82 / 100	86 / 100	90 / 100	68 / 100
e, Courteney	77.84 / 100, C	94 / 100	53 / 100	80 / 100	78 / 100
, Candice	95.9 / 100, A	99 / 100	99 / 100	100 / 100	94 / 100
tian, Matthew	81.59 / 100, B	93 / 100	91 / 100	96 / 100	75 / 100
ld, Joshua	75.97 / 100, C	88 / 100	82 / 100	66 / 100	69 / 100
er, Kristina	62.83 / 100, D	73 / 100	63 / 100	3 / 100	67 / 100
Jasmin	90.5 / 100, A	85 / 100	70 / 100	106 / 100	89 / 100

Figure 3. Running course averages

challenges similar to those in the traditional classroom, such as repetition and dynamic variables, timely feedback on assignments, and teaching the students to self-correct errors. However, the additional requirement is that the instructor must provide review and assistance remotely. A discipline specific homework management system can offer critical features to motivate students. These include 24/7 access, eLectures, video examples, games, and flash cards.

The course assignment structure can promote active learning in a variety of ways. Specifically, multiple attempts on introductory assignments can elevate the foundational understanding of core concepts. The multiple attempts allow students to check the work for errors and revise the answers based on improved understanding. When these introductory assignments are used as a pre-requisite, challenging problems can be assigned with more rigid constraints to encourage mastery of concepts. In addition, the content can be delivered to students algorithmically. This allows continuous repetition to promote critical thinking skills.

Conclusion

This paper described how several specific functions and features of the Desire2Learn LMS and a publisher's homework management system (HMS) can be employed to promote personal and active learning experiences for students in online classes. Its intent has been not only to describe capabilities used in an online accounting course that may be useful to other faculty, but also to spur future research and discussion on how the features and capabilities of LMS and HMS may be used strategically to enhance the online learning experience.

References

Aviles, M. & Eastman, J. (2012). Utilizing technology effectively to improve millennials' educational performance. *Journal of International Education in Business. 5*(2), 96-113.

Borges, N.J., Manuel, R.S., Elam, C.L. and Jones, B.J. (2010). Differences in motives between millennial and Generation X medical students. *Medical Education*, *44*(6), 570-576.

Bowman, J. P. (2003). It's not easy being green: Evaluating student performance in online business communication courses. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *66*(1), 73-78.

Brown, J. L. M. (2012). Online learning: A comparison of web-based and land-based courses. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 13*(1), 39-42,49.

Chizmar, J. F., & Walbert, M. S. (1999). Web-based learning environments guided by principles of good teaching practice. *Journal of Economic Education*, *30*(3), 248-259.

Clark, K. (2009). E-learning clicks with students. *US News & World Report*, *146*(4), 48-50.

Coppola, N. W., Hiltz, S. R., & Rotter, N. G. (2002). Becoming a virtual professor: pedagogical roles and asynchronous learning networks. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *18*(4), 169-189.

Daniels, P. (2009). Course management systems and implications for practice. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society*, *7* (2), 97-108.

Durrington, V.A., Berryhill, A. & Swafford, J. (2006). Strategies for enhancing student interactivity in an online environment. *College Education, 54* (1), 190-193.

Dykman, C.A., Davis, C.K. (2008). Online education forum - Part Three: A quality online educational Experience. *Journal of Information Systems Education, 19*(3), 281-289.

Dykman, C.A., Davis, C.K. (2008). Online education forum - Part Two: Teaching online versus teaching conventionally. *Journal of Information Systems Education, 19*(2), 157-163.

Farmakis, H. & Kaulbach, M. (2013). Teaching online? A guide on how to get started. *International Journal of Organization Innovation*, *3*(2), 34-40.

Iqbal, S., & Qureshi, I. A. (2011). Learning management systems (LMS): Inside matters. *Information Management and Business Review, 3*(4), 206- 216.

Littleton, K., Phil, D., & Whitelock, D. (2004). Guiding the creation of knowledge and understanding in a virtual learning environment. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, *7*(2), 173-181.

Millson, M.R. & Wilemon, D. (2008). Technology enabling innovation in online graduate management education. *International Journal of Innovation and Technology Management*, *5*(4), 401-421.

MarylandOnline, Inc. (2013). Quality Matters™ rubric standards.

Singh, A., Mangalaraj, G., & Taneja, A. (2010). Bolstering teaching through online tools. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, *21* (3), 299-311.

Werth, E.P. & Werth, L. (2011), Effective training for millennial students. *Adult Learning*, *22*(3), 12-19.

Creative Engagement Through Extra Credit Options: Opportunities for Students & Faculty

Ray-Lynn Snowden, University of North Georgia

Abstract: "One approach to improve undergraduate education is involving more students in research and creative activities," writes Buckley and Kuh (2009) in their review of *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: Engaging College Students in Research and Creative Activities* by Shouping Hu, et al. This paper concentrates on "creative activities" which can engage students in active learning in and outside of the college classroom through the use of extra credit assignments. Offering students the option to earn extra credit points in an active learning environment can be a powerful motivating factor. This paper offers a brief literature review and then explores with examples three arenas of creative extra credit student opportunities which faculty can build into their courses. Benefits accruing to faculty for offering creative extra credit assignments are also addressed.

Author Information: Ray-Lynn Snowden, J.D., is an Associate Professor of Communication in the Communication, Media & Journalism Department, College of Arts and Letters, at the University of North Georgia, Gainesville Campus. She has a Juris Doctorate from Cumberland School of Law in Alabama, is ABD on her Ph.D. in Communication at the University of Southern Mississippi, and has her Masters in Communication from Memphis State University. She has taught a wide range of Communication courses including Introduction to Human Communication, Public Speaking, and Intercultural Communication referenced in this paper. As Advisor for the Mediation Club, she celebrated a National Championship Mediation Team win in 2011 and a National 4th place Team win in 2012 along with numerous other local and regional tournament wins by her Mediation Club students. She earned the Outstanding Student Organization Advisor Award in 2012 for her work with the Mediation Team.

Think back to your college years—oh come on now, that wasn't so long ago. So think back. . . Are you there now? Did you ever have the opportunity to earn extra credit points in your classes? If not, do you wish you had? Did you or would you have take advantage of banking those extra credit points and learning as a result of the decision to participate in extra credit? Fast forward not so many years to today. Many of you are now teaching classes. You plan and conduct class activities, and you chart your semesters in your syllabi. You determine the assignments. Do you offer any extra credit opportunities to your students?

I join those faculty members who offer extra credit assignments. Extra credit assignments can be an academic endeavor which I believe can engage students in active learning within and outside the classroom.

"One approach to improve undergraduate education is involving more students in research and creative activities," write Buckley and Kuh (2009) in their review of *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: Engaging College Students in Research and Creative Activity*. This paper will focus on "creative activities" which can engage students in active learning in and out of the college classroom through the use of extra credit assignments.

First, I look at some research in the area of extra credit as an assignment in the classroom. Second, I will explore three arenas of extra credit student opportunities that faculty can build into

their courses. Third, I will address some benefits to faculty for offering creative extra credit assignments.

I would like to begin by a brief look at some research in the area of extra credit as an assignment in the classroom. Which students complete extra-credit work? That is both a thought-provoking question and the title of Harrison, Meister, and LeFevre's 2011 *College Student Journal* article, "Which Students Complete Extra Credit Work?" This research examined course averages of 508 students in four different non-introductory psychology courses; results indicated most students in this sample did not take advantage of the extra-credit opportunities offered to them. Does it surprise you that students in this study who were doing well academically were the ones completing the extra credit assignments? In fact, students who "needed" extra credit most were the ones who were unlikely to take advantage of the opportunity.

Another finding was that students in large lecture classes took advantage of extra-credit opportunities more frequently than did students in smaller classes. Also, females in this research sample earned extra credit nearly twice as often as did the males in the sample, which seems in line with other research suggesting that females tend to be more scholastically motivated than males, as reported by Vicki Sheafer in a 2011 *Psychology Journal* article, "Enriching Multiple Psychology Courses with the Use of an Extra Credit Assignment."

Norcross, Horrocks, and Stephenson (1989) reported that students view extra credit offerings in a positive light and had more positive opinions about it than did the faculty! This research proposed some benefits to offering extra credit: 1) it may foster the mastery of material by promoting a deeper exploration of academic topics; 2) it may motivate students to work harder; and 3) it may also be used to compensate for a serious student illness or problem.

Research done by Norcross et al. (1989) found the three top reasons given by students for extra credit were to provide students with a second chance, demonstrate and reward effort, and explore a topic in greater depth. To me it was interesting that the Norcross (1989) study also found that the use of extra credit is especially pronounced in the social sciences and that the most frequently used assignments involve additional written work, which describes several of my extra credit assignments.

Sheafer (2011) writes about the Norcross et al. (1989) findings that showed faculty members were much more likely than students to view extra credit negatively. The three most frequently mentioned reasons for viewing extra credit negatively were that extra credit will encourage lax or irresponsible attitudes; that it is unfair to offer it to selected students; and that if the basics are not learned or understood, why should the students be given more work? Probably one of the more creative forms of extra credit research I encountered was Tietze's (2007) *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, "A Bingo Game Motivates Students to Interact with Course Material. "

Three Arenas of Extra Credit Work

Walsh (2009) wrote: "A 2004 report from the American Association of Colleges & Universities suggests that faculty share what they are doing in their classes with colleagues so that there is greater integration of learning, more curricular coherence, and a better sense of how students' learning accumulates throughout the college experience." I will share what I am doing in terms of extra credit in my own classes in this section as I address the three arenas which can be mined for extra credit student engagement learning activities. I call these arenas the three "Cs": the arenas of classes, campus, and community. These translate into 1) student voluntary engagement in the *classroom*, 2) student voluntary engagement in select relevant *campus* activities for extra credit assignments, and 3) student voluntary engagement in select *community* activities for extra credit assignments. I will be offering examples from my own classes and experience, primarily from the Fall semester of 2013 and this Spring 2014 semester to keep things current, but these examples are not exhaustive. I challenge the reader to master each concept by creating examples of extra credit ideas you could

use in your classes.

I teach COMM 1100, Introduction to Human Communication, and COMM 1110, Public Speaking, as well as some upper level communication courses. COMM 1100 and COMM 1110 are the "dreaded" public speaking classes. In each class, students perform three speeches. Each speech has its own assignment sheet and time parameters—the first personal narrative speech is 4-5 minutes long and the last two speeches are 5-6 minutes long. As each student delivers his or her speech, I listen and simultaneously mark a grading rubric to reflect strengths and areas needed for improvement. Traditionally, I also timed speeches to determine if speeches ran over or less than the assigned time frame. In one class I forgot my stopwatch and a student volunteered to time for me. I, in turn, offered the student extra credit for volunteering and serving their classmates and me by timing that day. Not having to watch the time was great! I could focus more on solely grading each student's speech.

That was several years ago. Now, as students deliver their speeches, a volunteer student from the class times the speeches for the whole class period for a whopping one point extra credit—and that is one point added to their 100 point speech assignment. For example, if they earned an 85 on their speech, now it is an 86 by virtue of their serving as Class Timer. Students use their cell phone stopwatch feature to time, which they seem to relish because otherwise, once class starts the classroom is a no-cell-phone zone.

Now we have innovated: the Class Timer has to stay focused because he or she helps the speaker know how much time is left through hand signals. The Timer raises one finger after one minute has elapsed, two fingers after two minutes, and so on. Once the speakers see four fingers, they know they have one more minute to wrap things up to stay within a four- to five-minute timeframe. This extra credit Timer assignment helps bring a great sense of community to the class. Students are helping other students in class and getting credit for it. Often I add the point right to the student's grade sheet itself, so I don't have to add a separate extra credit notation in my gradebook. That lets students instantly see their extra credit results on their speech grade sheets.

Another extra credit option I use for all classes is to add one bonus question to the mid-term exam and one to the final exam. Based on conversations with other faculty, I believe this is already a fairly common practice. My extra credit bonus questions are not like the extra credit question of one professor my students told me about, who used this extra credit question on one of his tests: "What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?" Inspiring, yes, but also pretty hard to get incorrect, which I guess was his point with a sense of humor.

My bonus extra credit test questions are regular substantive questions, such as asking the students to define a term or list or name parts of an important concept. I use essay, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions for my written exams. Usually the objective questions are three points each and that is the amount of the bonus. Again, students get to see the results added to their tests, so they see the results of the correct extra credit answers.

Another extra credit assignment I offer speech class students every spring semester is to listen to the President's State of the Union Address and then answer three to five take-home questions (for three or four points) that relate to class concepts. For example, one of the question was "You are the president's new speechwriter/speech delivery tutor. How would you evaluate his performance?" Another question involves choosing two types of media outlets such as Fox News and CNBC or CNN and PBS. "Study how the media outlets report on the State of the Union Speech. How accurate and similar are the messages from the different networks?" This question integrates technology and incorporates current national events into an extra credit assignment as students pick a media venue to listen to the speech and subsequently go to www.whitehouse.gov to access the transcript for the State of the Union speech.

So three classroom areas that can be used for extra credit are service to the class, such as my Class Timer role, or bonus questions on

examinations in the classroom, or incorporating technology and current events in the State of the Union Address assignment.

Campus

A second arena for extra credit, my second "C", is offering participation opportunities which take place around your school campus. Walsh's (2009) findings report that extra credit may benefit the general collegiate environment by increasing attendance at campus events. Walsh (2009) writes:

> While no one is guaranteed a stellar performance at an out-of-class event, many of them turn out to be invaluable, thought-provoking, and enriching. Campus speakers, discussion panels, brown bag lunch lectures, and academic conferences are some examples of academic events that cross disciplinary boundaries and take place outside of individual classrooms. Judging by those advertised on college and university web sites, there is no shortage of events.

Walsh (2009) also asserts:

> Extracurricular events are an important part of liberal learning and a way for students to gain exposure to a range of ideas, and to experience their own awareness of history and current events through face-to-face interaction. Reflecting on their experiences at events through a structured assignment is a way to build campus and community engagement.

At the University of North Georgia, we have the online Notice Board which announces events, as well as campus closed television monitors which scroll PowerPoint slide announcements for all types of campus events. There are institutional speakers and a wide variety of student clubs and departments that hold functions throughout the year. What events have been sponsored that could be creatively adapted into the framework of a course in the form of an extra credit assignment?

Think about colloquium speakers' messages which could be used in classrooms from multiple disciplines. Think about career fairs—what soon-to-graduate majors wouldn't be interested in those? Offering extra credit for student attendance with a subsequent reflection paper about an event such as a career fair presents learning opportunities, especially in light of the University System of Georgia Complete College Georgia Program and clear attempts to focus students on major degree programs.

Consider campus tournaments such as debate tournaments or speech tournaments. Students can earn extra credit for participation or attendance at a relevant campus event and then report about what they learned, either by oral report or paper, relative to what is being taught in class. Last fall I offered extra credit to those students who entered the University of North Georgia Intramural Debate and Forensics Tournament in the Personal Narrative Speech competitive category. This allowed them to use the same speech the students had prepared and delivered in my classroom. Six of my students entered and competed. My students won first through fourth places! These students demonstrated what they learned, earned extra credit, gained confidence, heard other great speeches, and took home co-curricular tranguide credit for participation. My four winning students also took home well-earned framed certificates to remember the event. To me and those students this was a creative and engaged learning opportunity most or all of them will remember long past graduation. Offering extra credit was the catalyst to encourage these students to challenge their comfort zones and to participate in the speech tournament. What dividends that assignment paid-- far beyond the extra credit points earned. That was a good example of active and engaged learning.

I also use extra credit assignments in my upper level Intercultural Communication (COMM 3050) class. Our Spanish Department holds a Spanish film series with three selections shown over the semester. The screenings are on campus in the evening and cost a dollar to attend. The extra credit assignment I offered is to attend up to two films and write a ¾- to one-page reflection paper relating the film or parts of it to any concept my Intercultural Communication class has studied so

far in the semester, which include identity, language, nonverbal communication, cultural histories, competent intercultural communication, ethnocentrism, labels and prejudice, etc. The goal is for the students to recognize and apply information they have learned in class to an experience outside of class at the extra credit assignment event. Students can earn up to five extra credit points depending on the quality of student work, which must be typed, in 11-point font, singled-spaced, and use one-inch margins.

Last week I just posted another extra credit assignment for that same Intercultural Communication class, which has six students. To learn more about French culture, one of my students attended a cheese tasting cultural event sponsored by the French Department. Students were to write a reflection paper on the event, once again relating it to any concept we have studied so far in our class. The resulting paper from my student was excellent and made my mouth water. I see this as an opportunity for students to learn outside the classroom.

Additionally, I am a member of the Cultural Events Committee , and am co-sponsoring a screening of the award-winning documentary film, *Submit the Documentary*: *The Virtual Reality of Cyberbullying* with the Education Club, the Film Club, and the Psychology Club. This documentary exposes the ugly and sometimes fatal consequences of cyberbullying and educates about the cyberbullying phenomenon. We have advertised the events on our UNG campus TV screens for several weeks before the screening date so students will know about it and faculty have plenty of time to assign extra credit if they so chose. What classes could take advantage of this event by offering extra credit to students? Education, film, psychology, sociology, or my own department's Mediated Communication Technology class would benefit from extra credit awarded attendance.

As another example, three events are scheduled on our campus for Women's History Month; history and gender studies students could benefit from these activities. Our School of Business has a perpetually award-winning ENACTUS TEAM, formerly SIFE (Students In Free Enterprise). The team holds educational presentations about proper uses of credit. Students might respond to extra credit from the business classes or economics classes being offered for attendance with resulting assignment. Is there a math tournament, a science fair, an undergraduate research conference in which your students can showcase their skills learned in your classroom?

Community

Let me build outward from offering extra credit for classroom service, bonus questions, or integrating technology and current events assignments, or even attendance at campus events, to our third and final creative extra credit "C," which represents community events.

Are there off-campus public performances, non-academic clubs, professional or service organizations or government meetings in the community that can connect your students to real-life applications of what they are learning in the classroom?

I offer my speech students the chance to attend a Toastmasters Club meeting for extra credit. Toastmasters is an international organization that teaches public speaking, group communication, and leadership. I recently heard that there are about 189 Toastmasters clubs with about 4000 members in the Atlanta and North Georgia region. I already show my speech classes a DVD entitled *How to Plan and Deliver Great Speeches* produced by Toastmasters. I also refer my students to the Toastmasters' website as a resource for managing speech anxiety. It is a natural extension to offer students extra credit for attending a Toastmaster's meeting.

Students who completed this extra credit assignment actually participated in the Toastmasters Table Talk event at a club meeting and won award ribbons at the meeting. Students invariably see they may have superior public speaking skills compared to the adults who usually make up Toastmasters Club membership. That can be an empowering discovery for college students! Students get to observe parliamentary procedure in

the club meetings, which directly relates to the group work we study in class. Student reaction could be, "What we learn in class *is* actually happening in the real world!" A student learning that is absolutely worth the extra credit points offered and earned. One student even told me that she had joined the Toastmasters club last semester. I could not have been more pleased.

Permit me one last example on the creative extra credit "C" of Community. Last fall, the Gainesville Theatre Alliance, of which my University of North Georgia is a member, produced the play, *Lombardi*, about the great football coach of the Super Bowl-winning Green Bay Packers. The play opened up all sorts of derivative benefits for students when offered as an extra credit option. UNG students could attend certain evenings and matinees for free. The production was in a lovely new theatre facility off campus in Buford. And Coach Lombardi was known for his inspiring speeches made to his teams. Why not offer extra credit for students to attend the play with professional actors as the leads about a protagonist who moved people with his words?

I created a class environment to encourage attendance for this extra credit assignment. I started class with Lombardi quotations every day for the two-week run of the play and showed YouTube videos of actual speech clips from Lombardi. My classes and I had fun learning about this historical coach and integrating his life, lessons, and words into my communication classes for the course of the play. It also gave me great pleasure to get feedback from more than one of my students who earned the extra credit for attending that this was the first play they had ever attended. It was engaging, creative, and inspiring.

Not all faculty members can be so fortunate as to have free student tickets to a play about a football icon who was known for his persuasive and passionate speeches. Still, I urge faculty to look with new eyes around at our classes, our campus, and our community and find equally promising opportunities for student extra credit to facilitate engaged student learning. Mark Carnes (2011) wrote, "Students need to attend classes that set their minds on fire." I am not asking you to start an academic forest fire in your classes, but I am recommending that faculty provide some sparks that can flair into engaged student learning through offering creative extra credit assignments that can warm student brains and light up their academic paths.

Benefits to the Faculty

I suggest that faculty showcase their creative extra credit assignments in their annual self-evaluations and even in promotion and tenure portfolios. At my institution, the University of North Georgia, our annual self-evaluation document has a whole section devoted to "Teaching and Advising." Two UNG questions that must be answered are to discuss: "Efforts that promote outstanding teaching" and "Involvement in teaching beyond the classroom." Many of the extra credit opportunities discussed in this paper would qualify for showcasing in those areas. I typically include my creative assignments plus any new extra credit assignments.

Another compelling faculty benefit is demonstrated by an informal survey I did in my Introduction to Human Communication classes at the end of the Fall 2013 semester. I asked my students in my three Communication 1100 classes to participate in a voluntary, informal survey about their perceptions of several aspects of the course. There were 89 students officially on roll in those 3 classes right before the end of the semester, but some of that number were officially withdrawn. One survey question was "Did you earn any extra credit points, Yes or No?" Sixty students responded to the question. Forty-five students responded "Yes" and fifteen responded "No." Roughly three-quarters of the students availed themselves of the opportunity to creatively engage in extra credit opportunities in those three Fall semester 2013 COMM 1100 classes.

Perhaps more important is the next question I asked. "Do you recommend future use of extra credit assignments in this class? Yes or No?" Please note that 59 of the 60 responding students said "yes." The one negative answer was actually

equivocal: "Yes, well, no it makes students to [sic] comfortable and likely to slack off." Some of the unsolicited but received comments supplementing their "Yes" answers from the other 59 of 60 responses included:

"I recommend the credit with the play again."

"I do because it gives students better incentive to get more involved with the learning curriculum"

"Yes, the use of extra credit assignments was very beneficial. It was a major advantage helping me earn an 'A'".

"Yes!!! 1,000 times yes!!!"

And my favorite,

"It can only help your grade. Duh!" And a smiley face was drawn. The comment continued, "Wish I had."

Therefore, in addition to the benefits to faculty of using creative extra credit assignments on their self-evaluation annual reports, my students almost unanimously endorsed the use of extra credit assignments, whether they took advantage of the extra credit opportunities or not. The last benefit of extra credit assignments in my classes is that the students like and support them!

Conclusion

Norcross et al. (1993) write:" Ultimately a faculty member's use of extra credit will be influenced most by their attitude toward extra credit." This concept is reflected in senior faculty member Judith Baker's report in Elizabeth Barkley's book, *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty:*

> My need to be actively involved in my own learning was the first major influence on my teaching philosophy; the second was the radically changed environment that shapes the learning experience for today's students. When I was growing up, access to information was a privilege. We'd go to school to learn information and supplement what we learned in class with information from books in the library. It was a real treat to go from the small branch libraries to the main library and be surrounded by even more books filled with information. Students today have the reverse situation: they are already surrounded by information. They don't need to go to school or to a library to get it. They can get information in a second. . . . What students need to learn today is how to sift through, evaluate, and apply information. In my courses it is important to me that students learn actively and that they do not just acquire information, but that they do something with that information.

That sums up my definition of what a good extra credit assignment should accomplish—students actively learning, not just acquiring information, but doing something with that information.

The date of this conference is March 14, which is Pi Day, the celebration of the math 3.14 calculation. Could math professors consider offering extra credit to students to learn about the history of pi? Could they have students report back on the amount of pi, how it was calculated, the significance of it, a sense of how long humans have used pi? And how about helping students remember to be creative and engaged in their learning if they are served P-I-E on Pi Day? Do you think that could encourage them to be creative about extra credit assignments? Be a *creative* teacher and consider offering extra credit assignments to your classes.

This paper has given a brief review of research on extra credit assignments and explored examples of extra credit assignments in three arenas inside and outside the classroom. Remember the three "C"s which are the arenas of classes, campus, and community. These translate into 1) student voluntary engagement in the *classroom*, 2) student voluntary engagement in select relevant *campus* activities for extra credit assignments, and 3) student voluntary engagement in select *community* activities for extra credit assignments. Then the paper explored benefits which can accrue to faculty for offering extra credit assignments.

If you are faculty and you offer extra credit assignments, I commend you. And most of your students probably support and appreciate that

pedagogical approach to learning. If you have not offered extra credit assignments, give them a try and assess the results. Like your students, you might be surprised and find out that creative extra credit assignments can be beneficial opportunities for both students and faculty!

References

Barkley, E.F. (2010). *Student engagement techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Buckley, J.A. & Kuh, G.D. (2009). Reinventing undergraduate education: Engaging college students in research and creative activities (review). *Review of Higher Education, 32*(3), 419-420.

Carnes, M.C. (2011). Setting student's minds on fire. *Chronicle of Higher Education, 57*(27), A72.

Harrison, M.A., Meister, D.G., & LeFevre. A.J. (2011). Which students complete extra- credit work? *College Student Journal, 45*(3), 550-555.

Norcross, J.C., Dooley, H.S., & Stevenson, J.F. (1993). Faculty use and justification of extra credit: No middle ground? *Teaching of Psychology, 20*, 240-242.

Norcross, J.C., Horrocks, L.J., & Stevenson, J.F. (1989). Of barfights and gadflies: Attitudes and practices concerning extra credit in college courses. *Teaching of Psychology, 16*, 199-203.

Sheafer, V. (2011). Enriching multiple psychology courses with the use of an extra credit assignment. *Psychology Journal, 8* (3), 118-122.

Tietze, K.J. (2007). A bingo game motivates students to interact with course material. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 71*(4), Article 79.

Walsh, M. (2009). Students shaping dialogue at college events: Ideas for academic engagement. *College Student Journal, 43*(1), 216-220.

Active learning through Leadership Skills While Still Maintaining Your Course Content!

Beth Stutzmann and Donna Colebeck, Southern Polytechnic State University

Abstract: Leadership skills provide practical experience desired by employers, aid with student engagement and retention, and benefit students preparing for careers. In this presentation, professors demonstrate how it is possible to integrate course content with active learning while also developing leadership skills. Also discussed are the concepts of leadership; individual and group leaders; on-campus programs and extracurricular organizations.

Author Information: Dr. Beth Stutzmann, is the Director of Bands at Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Georgia where she received the Outstanding Faculty Award in 2011. She is a graduate of The Boston Conservatory of Music (BMEd); earned a master's degree from Oklahoma City University in Horn performance and in 2010 was awarded her Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Education degree from Shenandoah Conservatory, Winchester, VA. Holding dual music educator certifications (PreK-12) in two states, Dr. Stutzmann is a member of the Research Learning Community (RLC) at her University and is actively involved in presenting and publishing multidisciplinary research studies. In 2012, Dr. Stutzmann received the Georgia Governor's Teaching Fellowship award. That same year, she also earned a mini-grant from the University System of Georgia to research information on non-traditional students. In 2013, Dr. Stutzmann earned mini-grants to complete research on Flipped Classroom Pedagogy and another grant to research and co-author a paper regarding student engagement and critical thinking. Dr. Stutzmann has presented locally and nationally at many conferences. She is also the lead adviser for the National Society of Leadership and Success at SPSU.

Donna Colebeck is Lecturer of New Media Arts at Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Georgia. Her degrees include a Master of Fine Arts from Rochester Institute of Technology and a BS in Art Education from Nazareth College. In 2013 she received the Georgia Governor's Teaching Fellowship award. Professor Colebeck is a member of the Research Learning Community (RLC) at SPSU and is actively involved in presenting and publishing multidisciplinary research studies. In 2013 she was awarded a mini-grant from the Center for Teaching Excellence with a focus on student engagement and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). She has co-authored and presented on the topics of critical thinking, interdisciplinary pedagogy in addition to 2D and 3D Printing. Professor Colebeck has served the University as an advisor to the Arts Society and co-advisor to the National Society of Leadership and Success, Merit Badge Counselor, and judge for art, architecture, engineering and science competitions at SPSU.

Introduction

Leadership skills are important to everyone. Developing these skills through class activities is possible and important for students. Creating an engaging classroom with selected activities (that can develop leadership skills) also aids student retention, progression, and graduation rates. Leadership skills also prepare students for future careers, but institutions of higher learning rarely offer leadership classes that address and teach leadership. Employers not only desire employees with content knowledge, but they also desire leadership and “soft” skills.

Southern Polytechnic State University students understand the mechanics of their occupation and put it into practice though the practical education of *Techne & Logos* (hands-on and applied knowledge) because our university focuses on the application of information. As professors at Southern Polytechnic State University, our interest in leadership stems from instructing courses in the humanities area of Music and Art

Appreciation. These "core" courses serve the entire student body of the university community, and the authors have designed active classes that engage students and encourage learning. Active classes assist with student retention and aid in the development of lifelong leadership skills desired by future employers. The authors' engagement to service at Southern Polytechnic State University also includes being advisers to the on-campus leadership society: *The National Society of Leadership and Success* (NSLS). This service has heightened our awareness of the students' needs and desires to have more leadership opportunities on campus which is evidenced by the large numbers of students who enroll and participate in Southern Polytechnic's NSLS program. As of 2014, there were over 900 members (out of a student body of 6,500 students) in our NSLS chapter, which has only been in effect since 2012.

As Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman (2010) state, "Students often focus on specific course content without recognizing how the skills and abilities they develop across courses will benefit them in their professional lives." For instance, quantitative reasoning, public speaking, persuasive writing, and teamwork skills are different life skills that should be combined. Students need to be aware that these skills are all valuable and have the capacity to be integrated. President John F. Kennedy stated, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to one another." How do we, as professors, assist our students with developing leadership skills while still maintaining our course content?

Reflection Questions:

- What are your thoughts about leadership skills?
- What do you think of, associate with, and/or define leadership? (What is it? Who has it? Who uses it? How is it acquired? Why is it desired?)
- What are leadership "soft skills"?
- Record your thoughts and share them with another attendee.

Research and Data

The Sparrow Group (2013) reports, "More than half (53 percent) of U.S. companies report a major challenge in recruiting non-managerial employees with the skills and knowledge needed" and that, "the most noticeable gaps were [in the following]: leadership and executive level skills; basic skills; emotional intelligence; creative/ innovative skills; communication/interpersonal skills."

When surveyed about the types of skills employers were "looking for when you hire?" The Sparrow Group displayed the following results: "98%, Communication Skills; 97%, Positive Attitude; 92%, Adaptable to Change; 92%, Teamwork Skills; 88%, Goal Oriented; when employers were asked "What skills are hardest to find, but most important to you?," The Sparrow Group displayed the following results: "91%, Communication Skills; 85%, Positive Attitude; 85%, Adaptable to Change; 82%, Teamwork Skills; 78%, Strategic Thinking and Analytics." These results exhibit what employers deem important in the work field. However, The Sparrow Group also reports that, "In a survey of more than 400 major employers [it was found that] 42% rated the overall preparation of high school grads for entry level jobs as deficient; 73% rated their leadership skills deficient; 70% rated graduates deficient in both professionalism (work ethic) and critical thinking (problem solving); and 54% rated graduates' creativity/innovation skills deficient."

These same results demonstrate how high school students have leadership skill deficiencies and attend college classes. Since students also question the value and relevance of humanities courses, it became important to the authors to identify specific leadership skills that are transferable across disciplines (and life) which would ultimately aid in successful student engagement and retention in our classes.

We evaluated and re-designed our courses to incorporate leadership skills into our teaching pedagogy. First, ideas regarding leadership were considered, such as individual and group leader behaviors, leadership skills, and ways in which leadership and life skills were taught in courses.

Also considered were programs that target these skills, including extracurricular, on-campus organizations. Secondly, the authors addressed how to prepare students with leadership skills by creating learning experiences within the classroom that would create desired employee leaders in the work force. It also became important for students to perceive the value of these lessons and be able to transfer these leadership lessons to other courses and within their lives. The following essential question was considered: What do we want our students to be able to do in our courses? The authors concluded that students should:

Explore principles of effective leadership

Learn life skills that are critical to success

Enhance leadership skills already possessed and learn how to apply those skills in the future

Apply through opportunities to practice: decision making, team building, goal setting, conflict resolution, project planning, active listening and public speaking.

For students to be able to experience leadership skills and understand the value of these skills, it became important in the classroom to provide students with the idea for *self-leadership*. The classroom should be a place where students develop a personal toolkit of leadership and communication strategies and have the opportunities to receive critiques and feedback; develop self-confidence; recognize potential to make a difference; and increase skills used for conflict resolution; decision making, and goal setting. It was also important to provide students with the idea for *group leadership*, where students have the opportunities to lead committees and projects, plan and facilitate events, design activities, do project planning, practice in a group dynamic setting, and embrace diversity.

Targeting student success, it was realized, was also based on the student's perception of self; self-confidence; commitment to course work; acknowledgement of the value of all courses; recognition of the need to transfer knowledge between courses and life; and ability to leverage content knowledge and leadership with other courses, life activities, and professional employment. Campus support may aid in targeting student success through career and counseling services (self-worth); health and wellness programs (body image); and academic support (tutoring, writing center, etc.).

By focusing on the essential question, a different approach to teaching in our courses began to take effect. It became important to readdress the role of the instructor to create an engaging classroom that would integrate content, learning experiences, and leadership skills. The professor's role was identified as a facilitator who provided structure, opportunities for leadership and lesson plan designer who included a variety of activities that integrated course content, learning experiences, and leadership skills.

Another essential question we asked ourselves was, "Which activities provide opportunities to practice decision making, team building, goal setting, conflict resolution, project planning, active listening, and public speaking?"

Examples of in-class music activities that also incorporate technology into the lesson plan while developing leadership skills are as follows:

Individual work: outside of class/homework. Example: Find videos of five favorite instruments. Why did you prefer these instruments and choose the videos? (decision making)

Group work: Example: During class, students, who are previously assigned to bring their laptops/tablets to class, are placed into groups and share their videos that were chosen for homework. Each group votes on one favorite video (emailing it to the professor). The professor shows the voted videos to the entire class through the projector. Students may rate each of the played favorite videos. (decision making; team building; conflict resolution)

Backchanneling, using www.todaysmeet.com (active listening)

Class Discussions: For example, How is your music of today relevant by past standards/ characteristics of music? How does music reflect society and how does society reflect music? (active listening; public speaking)

Review: Students write down two questions on colored Post-it-notes™ and hang them on the wall. Each student must take two different colored Post-it-notes™ and answer the questions (aloud) and discuss answer. (active listening; public speaking)

Final Fantasy: Using orchestrated music from "Xbox" games, students must chose musical selections that represent pieces of art from specific eras. (individual or group work- decision making, active listening; public speaking)

Ted.com: Find a music-based Ted talk (type in music in the search bar) that "speaks" to you or is related to your major. Write two paragraphs why you chose this talk and why? How did it inspire you? Discuss your choice video with group members.

Students create/mix own music: through web sites such as indabamusic.com and soundcloud.com (individual or group work - team building; goal setting; conflict resolution; project planning).

Examples of in-class art activities that develop leadership skills are as follows:

Art courses and leadership:

Class activities: group work; class discussions; class presentations

Opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving

Sequence: prioritize, analyze, evaluate

Small group projects; responsibility, commitment, team building

Research project utilizing project management structure with specific roles/jobs and accountability for all students

Public speaking to present research or view-points

Validating the importance of developing leadership skills, the English, Technical Communications, and Media Arts (ETCMA) department at Southern Polytechnic State University, has recently established a Leadership and Organizational Communication Minor.

Essential Question: What is Leadership?

Leadership is defined (Dictionary.com, 2014) as the ability "to lead; the ability to guide, direct or influence people." Other characteristics of leadership are to: conduct, escort, or direct; influence, induce; to be ahead or be at the head; to pursue, live; to tend toward a certain goal or result. As Yuki (2012) explains, "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives." Types of leadership and skills may be different as in personal; social; business; or community leaders but skills needed by all excellent leaders are similar as these leaders share characteristics of integrity; effective communication; support coach; visionary, analytical, and systematic thinking; effective problem solving; innovative stewardship; customer focus; results orientation; sound judgment; and the ability to inspire.

Part Two: Higher Education

Educators must identify course objectives. Goals are discipline specific and opportunities for students to practice for content-based objectives should be provided while also interweaving activities to develop leadership and life skills. Engagement is pertinent to developing leadership skills and critical thinking skills. Ideas follow to aid in creating an engaging classroom while developing leadership skills, life skills, and content knowledge:

1. List course objectives and goals: what should students learn about the subject?
2. List what students will be able to do after completing the course.
3. List skills or techniques students will develop, including tools or content, that enable a student to

engage in the course.

4. Integrate course content and activities which allow for a behavior, skill, or transference of knowledge, to be observed.

In an engaging classroom, while aiding students to develop leadership, life, and critical thinking skills, professors lead and model, guiding student behaviors, and facilitate within the class-room rather than lecture *at* students. Professors facilitate student communication skills, time management skills, teamwork skills, personal interaction skills, motivational skills, and goal-setting techniques while helping to build student self-confidence. To aid with developing these skills, professors can design student presentation opportunities, team project opportunities, and team leadership opportunities. These activities encourage student responsibility, risk-taking, creativity, and ownership within class, and they increase a commitment to the class community. Students should be encouraged to also volunteer outside of the classroom or campus because volunteering allows students to work on their leadership skills in a non-hierarchal environment and exercise untested skills without the burden of failure.

By creating an engaging classroom, with well -planned activities, professors help students explore challenges, recognize strengths, identify passions, and set up personal plans to achieve goals. Students need to recognize the importance of structured time, responsibility to self and others, and of being a leader to one's self and teammates. Through well-designed lesson plans, professors also help students gain self-confidence and self-reliance.

In a survey inquiring, "How do you incorpo-rate leadership skills in your classes?" conducted by Colebeck (2013) at the Georgia Governor's Teaching Fellowship, the following results were collected by various professors of different disciplines:

Engineering/Aerospace Design:

> All students learn how to take a leadership role in a certain aspect of the design e.g. Aerodynamics, propulsion, structure, stability, and control, etc.

Psychology:

> These same skills are used in the industry. Applied psychology teaches students how to interact with others in such areas as; personality, motivation, persuasion.

English:

> Leadership necessitates critical and conscious thinking. English courses develop both of these skills, as well as the ability to argue a position- persuade one's audience. Life demands conscious participation. Critical thinking engenders this ability.

Philosophy:

> Stress development of independent thought, by being able to identify arguments, create arguments, and critique arguments. I think the ability to critically think for oneself is a key to effective leadership. Students are asked to think through their beliefs and model beliefs with which they might not agree. This is a key leadership skill. . . putting oneself in the mindset of another, yet being able to do so is an important part of success in life and work.

Economics:

> Students participate in debates, analyze case studies, and develop independent research projects. Leadership skills components of my course: oral and written communication, initiative, analytical skills.

Geography:

> Courses all have a 'team' element. Students need to develop abilities to work together. Weekly team work! Knowing how to function and roll in the team. Team-functioning works in all venues.

First Year Experience:

> ...encouraging students to join school organizations, develop study groups, participate in service learning. Life skills are not specifically stated in course objectives but viewed as a 'by-product.' Sometimes students need to step-up to the leadership

roll and sometimes they just need to be a follower.

Teacher Education:

My goal is to help future teachers develop a vision for how in the short term, they will be leaders in their classroom and department and how, in the long term, they will become "architects of change" in the discipline. Teachers are advocates for learners, the school, the community, and the profession.

Reflection Questions:

What are your course objectives, goals, learning outcomes?

How do you address leadership either directly or indirectly?

How do you incorporate leadership skills into your courses?

Part Three: Expanding Opportunities

Professors can aid students to expand and develop leadership skills beyond the classroom through extracurricular opportunities, such as internships; through volunteering within the community either on- or off-campus; and by participating in leadership organizations. Professors should contact student services and career services to learn which organizations, programs, and support programs are available to students and encourage students to participate. Currently Southern Polytechnic State University offers internships, service programs and competitions, various campus organizations, and two organizations that specialize in leadership--The Leadership Endorsement Academic Program (LEAP) and The National Society of Leadership and Success. Other organizations are Student Life, Student Government, and Residence Life. The Honors program students volunteer as teaching assistants and earn service hours.

The National Society of Leadership and Success (2014) describes itself as "a leadership honor society with more than 200 college chapters, with the mission to build leaders who make a better world. Local chapters offer in-person leadership development and peer-to-peer networking for students around the world." The Leadership Endorsement Academic Program (LEAP) incorporates four sections into its program: Leadership, Development, Coursework, and Community Service. The Student Government Association provides students opportunities to lead meetings and develop skills relating to time management. organization development, inclusion and diversity, and interpersonal relationships. Resident Housing Assistants have leadership training as (unknown, 2013), "The resident assistant is more than just a friendly presence as s/he is the crucial link in creating an environment in which students develop independence and learn to live cooperatively with others."

Part Four: Life Skills

When one develops leadership skills, one develops life skills which are needed for employment and marketability in career fields. Employers desire employees who demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, the ability to work in teams, the ability to collaborate, and the ability to communicate.

Conclusion

Leadership in higher education combines many skills and assists with retention, progression, and graduation rates. These skills equate to a well-rounded graduate and desirable employee. It is not enough to teach only content and course subject material. Professors have the capability to design engaging classrooms with carefully selected activities to develop students' life and leadership skills to produce better critical thinkers and problem solvers and better employees for career and industry. As Rudolph Giuliani (2002) stated,

Leaders are made and have six qualities:

1. Strong sense of beliefs: what do you believe and where you are taking the organization; what are long term goals; what do you want to achieve and how are you going to complete it?

2. You have to be an optimist: be a problem solver

3. Willing to take risks

4. Preparation

5. Team work

6. Communication (teacher and motivator.

Lecturing *at* students is an old-fashioned method of teaching. It is imperative to engage students and have them actively learn. As Sloan and Nathan (2005) state

> Developed countries are moving away from the Information Age that required linear, logical and analytical skills. We have moved to a Conceptual Age… the abilities that matter most for this new economy are artistry, empathy, passion, seeing the big picture and the transcendent--right-brain skills that we have always associated with learning in the arts.

Professors are leaders and have the ability to model leadership and life skills for their students; as well as designing well-planned active lessons for their students. Remembering the words of John Quincy Adams, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

References

Ambrose, S., Bridges, M., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M., & Norman, K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series. Wiley Desktop Editions.

Colebeck, D. (2013). "*How do you incorporate leadership skills in your classes*?" Georgia Governor's Teaching Fellowship. Unpublished.

Cross, A., & Lanaghen, M. (2013). *Bridging the skills gap: It takes a village!* The Sparrow Group. Retrieved from http://www.slideshare.net/AnnCross012/2013-taics?from_search=5

Dictionary.com. (2014). Leadership. Retrieved from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/leadership?s=t

Giuliani, R. (2002). *Leadership*. Hyperion: New York.

Sloan, K., & Nathan, L. (2005). Art transforms education: A Boston pilot school puts student learning center stage. *New England Board of Higher Education*. Summer(18-20).

The National Society of Leadership and Success. (2014). *What is the National Society of Leadership and Success?* Retrieved from http://www.societyleadership.org/about/faq.php

Yuki, G. (2012). *Leadership in Organizations*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey.

What, Why, and How of Active Learning

Roben Taylor, Josh Pfiester and René Antrop-González, School of Education, Dalton State College

Abstract: This article describes the what, why, and how of active learning based on the undergraduate teaching experiences of three DSC School Of Education faculty members. Moreover, they explain how students are not simply passive listeners to lectures, but become engaged with ideas being communicated, process the information, integrate ideas with what they already know, and transfer their learning to new situations. The motivation for this paper came from a post-presentation discussion with faculty representing diverse disciplines. The authors discovered that notions of active learning strategies are common knowledge to the postsecondary education. Hence, strategies for actively engaging undergraduate students are shared in this article.

Authors' Information: Dr. Roben Taylor has over 20 years in K12 public schools and in higher education. Her research interests include behavior management and social media in higher education. Dr. René Antrop-González teaches courses in bilingual education and ESL. His research interests are African American and Latina/o sociology of education. Dr. Pfiester just completed his third year as an Assistant Professor at Dalton State College. His research interests include lesson study, elementary inquiry-based science, and active learning.

Introduction

Before discussing the "why" or even "how" of active learning, we need to explicate our definition because, like "critical thinking" (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999), "active learning" means different things to different people. Active learning has another moniker—"high structure" (Haak, HilleRisLambers, Pitre, & Freeman, 2011) and is overlapped with inquiry. It makes intellectual demands on students that are not seen in expository-based pedagogy, which is best illustrated by the traditional lecture. However, active learning does not necessarily lessen the intellectual demands on the teacher. This practice acknowledges and transforms the findings of cognitive science into classroom practices. These findings include the limited capacity of short term memory, the understanding that content must be paired with *context*, and the social aspects of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Active learning demands intellectual work from students because through such work learning occurs.

While there is some ideological debate by instructors about the "sage on the stage" versus the "guide on the side" model (Schwerdt & Wuppermann, 2011), the body of literature overwhelmingly supports the "guide on the side." Active learning is supported from preschool (Buchsbaum, Gopnik, Griffiths, & Shafto, 2011; Gopnik, 2011) to graduate school (Wieman, 2007). The democratization of higher education means that over half of all young people have had some experience with higher education. But the lack of rigorous preparation and active learning causes devastating failure rates, especially in the STEM fields where these rates can exceed 50% (Margulies & Ghent, 2005; Treisman, 1992). A number of authors such as Freeman, Haak, and Wenderoth (2011) have found that active learning can compensate for lack of rigorous high school preparation.

The lack of active learning and concomitant student disengagement and academic failure at the high school level constitute what has been termed a "silent epidemic," as documented in the landmark report *Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School*

Dropouts (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006). They surveyed hundreds of high school dropouts, and the authors' top suggestions to ameliorate the epidemic include 1) improve teaching and curricula to make school more relevant and engaging and enhance the connection between school and work; and 2) improve instruction, and access to supports, for struggling students.

Empowering students in ways that significantly increase their engagement and learning is challenging. Like most educators, we desire for our students be engaged, motivated, and successful in their studies; however, semester after semester we have noticed that some students appear to be disengaged in our classes. As a result, we are concerned and frustrated for our students and want to find ways to help then enhance their learning rather than stifle it. Of course, there are always many students who come to class motivated and eager to learn, and such students bring much joy to our classes and teaching. Nonetheless, we want *all* our students to be highly engaged in our classes and not just passive learners!

We believe that all our students are capable and that it is our primary responsibility as teachers to invest in our students' learning by empowering them with ways that increase their learning and engagement. While this may seem a daunting responsibility, we believe that in every curriculum and in every classroom we as teachers have the potential to empower our students in ways that increase their engagement in our classes and improve learning.

Here we offer fourteen strategies for creating empowering conditions that can significantly improve student engagement and learning.

1. Four Corners: Teachers can choose basically anything to label the four corners of the classroom. For example, the teacher may ask an question designed to elicit opinions and can label each corner with a different answer. The students go to the corner they agree with.

2. Exit Cards: Instructors can do anything with these exit cards, in reality. The instructor can ask a question before the students leave and have them write the answer, or the instructor can ask the students to reflect on what they learned in that class session. One of the authors' instructors asked the students to write one thing they had learned and one question they had.

3. Entrance Card/Warm-Up: Prior to the lesson, the students answer a question or set of question posed by the teacher.

4. Index Card Summaries: This is exactly what it sounds like. After a lesson, the students are asked to summarize what they have learned on an index card.

5. One-Minute Essay: After the teacher relays new information to the students, he/she gives them one minute to write a short essay about what they have learned. They are much more likely to remember the material if required to do this from time to time.

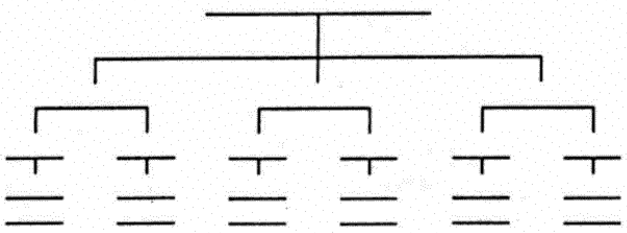
6. Jigsaw: Divide the students up into four groups and provide each group with some material to study. Allow the students to become experts on that particular topic. Then, by choosing one student from each group, develop four different groups and allow the "experts" to share what they studied with the rest of the group. This is a fast, effective way to cover new information; it decreases student work-load and encourages collaboration.

7. Three-Minute Pause: After the teacher presents a lot of new material, she asks the students to think for three minutes about what they have learned. They can jot down notes or sketches to show what they have learned.

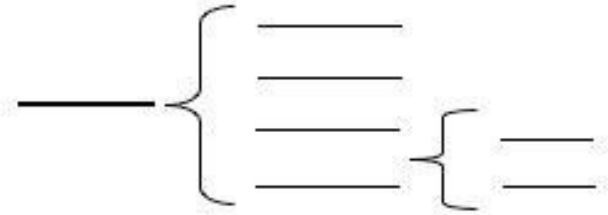
8. Inside-Outside Circle: Half the class makes a circle facing out. The other half makes a circle

facing the inside circle. They ask each other review questions, then rotate in the same direction. Great for test review!

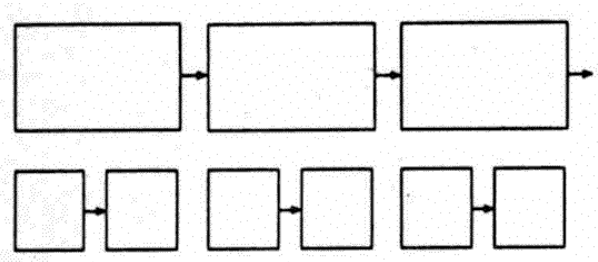
9. Tree Maps: Tree maps are ideal for inductive and deductive classification.



10. Brace Maps: these maps work well when showing parts of whole as well as physical relationships of an object. It helps tap into spatial reasoning.



11. Flow Maps: These maps show sequencing, orders, time lines, and cycles. They also help to see relationships between stages and sub-stages of events.



12. RSQC2: In two minutes, students recall and list in rank order the most important ideas from the previous day's class. In two more minutes, they summarize those pointes in a single sentence. Then they write one major question they want answered. They then identify a thread or theme to connect this material to the course's major goal.

13. Hot Seat: using Post-it notes™, write questions and stick them underneath the students' desks or chairs. Great for review or checking for understanding.

14. Response Papers. The class is divided into small groups (depending on total number of students in course) for response papers. Here is how this activity works: Depending on the total number of groups in the class, each individual in each group will do his or her own response paper, which is based on the weekly readings. Students should choose a reading that interests them—for example, what about the reading did the student find interesting, disturbing, shocking? What did the student agree and/or disagree about in the reading? The students are assigned to craft their response paper in ways that they think will stimulate vigorous class discussion. The response paper sessions should really be a conversation between everyone in class. In other words, students should not feel as though their response papers should be written only for the instructor—it should be written with everyone in mind in terms of stimulating class discussion. Each response paper is to be about two

pages long and double spaced, front and back. All student will make a copy of their response papers for their comrades. These papers are then to be distributed, read, and discussed during class time after a scheduled break for class dialogue.

Discussion

True professions are characterized by a specialized and evolving body of knowledge that is used to evaluate and improve the condition of its participants (clients, patients, students, etc.). As an example, physicians use their medical knowledge to improve the condition of patients, and they are rightly judged by the degree of improvement. The teaching profession is defined in part by a type of knowledge popularized by Lee Shulman (1986) almost three decades ago: pedagogical-content knowledge (PCK). It is our hope that this paper will contribute to the development of PCK of the reader by the employment of one of more of the active learning strategies described. Such employment may better student outcomes and the outcome of the profession, where silent epidemics are becoming not so silent.

References

Buchsbaum, D., Gopnik, A., Griffiths, T.L., & Shafto, P. (2011). Children's imitation of causal action sequences is influenced by statistical and pedagogical evidence. *Cognition, 120,* 331-40. doi:10.1016/ j.cognition.2010.12.001

Bridgeland, J.M, Dilulio,Jr., J.J., & Morison, K.B. (2006). *The silent epidemic: Perspectives of high school dropouts* A report by Civic Enterprises. Retrieved from http:// www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/ thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf

Freeman, S., Haak, D., & Wenderoth, M.P. (2011).*CBE Life Sciences Education, 10*, 175-186 doi: 10.1187/cbe.10-08-0105.

Gopnik, A. (2011, March). Why preschool shouldn't be like school. *Slate.* Retrieved from http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/ doublex/2011/03/ why_preschool_shouldnt_be_like_school.single.html

Haak, D.C., HilleRisLambers, J., Pitre, E., & Freeman, S. (2011). Increased structure and active learning reduce the achievement gap in introductory biology. *Science, 332*, 1213-1216. doi:10.1126/science.1204820

Margulies B.J., & Ghent C.A. (2005). Alternative assessment strategy and its impact on student comprehension in an undergraduate microbiology course. *Journal of Microbiology and Biology Education* 6, 3–7.

Schwerdt, G., & Wuppermann, A.C. (2011). Sage on the stage: Is lecturing really all that bad? *Education Next, 11*, (3) 63-67. Retrieved from http://educationnext.org/sage-on-the-stage/

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*, 4-14.

Stigler, J.W., & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap.* New York, New York: The Free Press.

Treisman, U. (1992). Studying students studying calculus: a look at the lives of minority mathematics students in college. *The College Mathematics Journal, 23*, 362–372.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

CAE LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION INNOVATION
CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE DALTON STATE

How College Faculty Use Self-Directed Learning, Part I: Technology

Barbara G. Tucker, Dalton State College

Abstract: As part of an action research case study for her dissertation in adult learning, the author conducted twenty hour-long interviews with diverse faculty in an open-access state college in the Southeast, along with conducting an extensive survey of the faculty (n=84) and two focus groups. Her research questions revolve around the self-directed learning practices of the faculty in their pursuit of improving instructional delivery. She found that faculty spent the bulk of their learning time in self-directed learning activities around instructional technology, adjusting to the role of college professor and its demands, learning material specifically needed for classes they teach, and adjusting to the needs of the types of students they encountered in an open-access environment.

Author Information: Barbara G. Tucker is an associate professor of communication. She has taught communication, theatre, English, developmental studies, and humanities for over three decades in private, technical, community, and four-year colleges. Her research interests are faculty development, political rhetoric, and research methodologies. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia.

Introduction

Although the field of faculty development for college instructors is a wide area of practice, according to Patricia Cranton (1994), there is a general lack of a theoretical framework for faculty development. In fact, although faculty developmental professionals and the college instructors they serve are deeply concerned about how students learn, and although there are some excellent books on the subject, the subject of how college faculty learn to do their work is not well researched. Neumann (2000, cited by O'Meara, 2008), stated that faculty development opportunities "rarely position individual professors as potential sources of their own professional development, assuming, instead, that development is best done to them" (p. 10).

The purpose of the research conducted for the author's doctoral dissertation, which serves as the basis of this paper, is to find out the self-directed learning practices of college faculty members in a four-year, open-access institution with a teaching mission. The research will be used to complete an action research case study and to help the institution define practices for future faculty development and recognition. This paper will begin by defining some of the terminology and parameters of the study, then discuss the data collection and analysis methods briefly, and then explain the findings of the research in terms of the first emergent area: how faculty use self-directed learning to adapt technology to their teaching. Future articles will discuss the findings in terms of the other three areas: class or disciplinary content, adjusting to the role of college professor, and understanding the students in this kind of higher education environment.

Terminology

A number of terms will need to be defined to set the context for this study. First, action research is a growing knowledge creation tool in business, education, and social sciences. It is an approach to research that uses both traditional quantitative and qualitative methods (although qualitative predominate) in service to a larger agenda. Action research seeks to work within an organization to create cycles of problem understanding, interventions, further research, and change. Action research's positive qualities include democratic respect for the participants in the research; in fact, the researcher-subject split is minimized, and the primary investigator is more of a facilitator of a small group of organizational insiders (the action research team) who work together to design,

conduct, evaluate, and make use of the research that is done in each cycle. The goal is organizational development, improvement, and learning. Action research's very contextual nature minimizes or eliminates the generalizability of the findings, especially from the results of the intervention, because each organization is seen as unique. Action research also emphasizes that the findings about the process, such as how the team learns together, are as important as the findings from the process.

A second important term is self-directed learning. There are may misunderstandings about this term. As Merriam and Bierema (2014) point out, some of the myths of self-directed learning are that it is an all-or-nothing concept, that self-direction learning exists only in isolation, that self-directed learning demands certain class or political prerequisites, that it is the best approach for all adults, and that it is just a theoretical fad. There has been a dearth of new research on self-directed learning in the past two decades, much less about how college faculty use it to learn.

Self-directed learning is theorized by Garrison (1997) to involve the motivational entry point and the internal processes (responsibility, personal self-regulation) and project management (control, self-management) used to accomplish self-directed learning. The element of control concerns the use of learning materials within a social context and the learner's taking control of and shaping what is available to reach his or her goals. "The next two dimensions of the model—self-monitoring and motivation—represent the cognitive dimensions of self-directed learning" (p. 5), that is, the learners' ability to utilize and monitor their cognitive processes and their reasons for starting and staying with the self-directed learning experience. Garrison's work exists within a constructivist framework and shows that self-directed learning can and does take place with others, not as an asocial act.

Candy (1991) referred to self-directed learning as a "versatile concept" (p. 6). He discussed whether it is an outcome of learning or a process of learning and the extent to which, as a process, it is a characteristic of people and whether self-directed learning exists only as a process in formal instructional settings or is in natural or everyday contexts. Therefore, theory on self-directed learning seems to hinge on two key elements: autonomy—choosing *what* one wants to "learn," study, or pursue; and control—choosing *how* to do so.

It has become a truism in adult education theory that all adults are self-directed learners; in fact, Knowles, an early researcher in adult learning, stated "That adults can and do engage in self-directed learning is now a foregone conclusion in adult learning research. Questions remain as to whether self-directed learning is a characteristic of adult learners, and whether it should be a goal of adult educators to help all adult learners become self-directed" (cited in Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, p. 135). At the same time, that truism is debated, especially from those sources that emphasize the emancipatory goals and nature of adult learning (Brookfield, 1984; Mezirow, 1984). One of the most quoted researchers in self-directed learning was Allen Tough (1979), who interviewed over 70 adults about their "self-directed learning projects" and accumulated a great deal of information about how they engaged in these projects. However, all of this learning was "instrumental," i.e., how to play the guitar, do word-working, etc. These adults did not challenge their assumptions and understandings about the world through their own self-directed learning, and some theorists debate that doing so is possible in self-directed learning processes

Self-directed learning theory often involves informal learning theory, which is less well-defined in the literature but a developing field. Informal learning is distinguished from learning in planned, mandated, institutional settings. Informal learning will be defined as learning that "may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner" (Marsick & Watkins, 2001, p. 25). A self-directed learner may use a formal setting to help him or her learn, but he or she takes the initiative to go beyond the

formal setting, seeing it as one possible resource. Self-directed learning is also not the same as self-regulated learning; a self-directed learner will use some self-regulation, but a self-regulated learner may not be self-directed. We desire our students to be self-regulated in the sense that they can monitor their processes, manage time, show discipline; while we wish them to be self-directed, we also know that they are often in our classes because of core requirements rather than an innate desire to learn the content.

Finally, some parameters about the context. The administration of the institution at which this action research case study is being conducted agreed to participate because the leadership believes in faculty development, because the faculty have heavy teaching loads and teaching is the college's mission, and because of an agreed sense that the self-directed learning of faculty was not being recognized and utilized to improve the college or to reward the faculty for their efforts. In the state in which the college is located, the term "open access" does not mean what it might in another state; the more widespread definition is an institution admitting 80% of more of applicants (Doyle, 2010). However, at this institution, "open access" means that the institution admits students who need learning support (remedial) coursework, still offers associate's and transfer degrees, and has lower entrance test requirements than the comprehensive and regional universities (Harris, A., personal communication, April 2, 2014).

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected first through an extensive survey administered to the total full-time faculty (tenure track and nontenure track) and completed by over 50% (84 of 162). The survey was available to faculty for the first three weeks of October 2013. It was co-constructed with the action research team, who also piloted it in its online version in order to critique it and find technical problems. The survey provided necessary data about the faculty's involvement in and response to faculty development efforts provided by the college as well as the faculty's attempts at self-education about better instructional methods. The survey also gathered demographic information about the participants; specifically, the general disciplines in which the faculty members teach, their number of years at the institution and in teaching, and their tenure status. Finally, the survey asked for volunteers to be interviewed. Fourteen faculty members volunteered through the survey. Eight more faculty were solicited through email to participate in order to have broader diversity of discipline, length of service, and gender. Although 14 volunteered through the survey, two of those were unable to participate.

Interviews with the faculty members who volunteered for them took place from late October until late January. These 20 interviews typically lasted a little over one hour; they were recorded, transcribed verbatim, then printed and coded using *in vivo*, values, and topic (descriptive) coding methods (Saldana, 2009), yielding close to 500 pages of data. These coding methods are discussed in the next section. The interviews took a semi-structured format following the protocol approved by the IRB in May 2013. Great care was taken to develop a roster of interviewees who were diverse in discipline, gender, rank, length of service to the institution, and nation of origin. Four were born outside the U.S.; seven are male; two are full professors, twelve were assistant professors at the time, two are instructors, and four are at the associate level. Seven work in STEM disciplines; three in health sciences; two in business; seven in liberal arts, and one in education. After the interviews were transcribed verbatim, a copy was sent to each respondent for verification. Other than typographical errors, the faculty requested no changes in the transcripts.

The interviews revealed much relevant data about faculty self-directed learning, informal learning processes, and faculty motivations that can be used to design interventions. They also yielded some emotional responses from the faculty about what they valued and what frustrated them in teaching and working at the institution. Several outstanding themes emerged about what the faculty chose as subjects of self-directed learning,

why those subjects were chosen, how they approached their learning, their use and understanding of reflective practice, and their personal and institutional obstacles to improving instructional practices.

The final stage of data collection took place in late January and early February, when two focus groups were held, composed of some previously interviewed faculty members and AR team members. These lively discussions were recorded, transcribed, and coded separately. Content revolved around clarification of interview responses. Also taking place during this s cycle were the meetings with the action research team, in which Appreciative Inquiry phases of Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny were used. Appreciative Inquiry is an action research methodology that focuses on positive strengths of the organization rather than a deficit model.

Interpretation and Analysis of Data

The *In vivo* coding method involves using the words of the participants; since the participants in this study are articulate and educated persons, retaining their exact words was seen as desirable. Saldana (2009) stated that *in vivo* coding is appropriate for action research and for qualitative research that wants to prioritize and honor the participants' voices. *In vivo* also allows specific words to come to the forefront. For example, one of the most common words that faculty used to describe their experiences was "frustrating" or a variant of that word.

Topic coding was also used in the coding methodology because of its simplicity. Topic coding is termed "descriptive" coding in many manuals on qualitative research (Saldana, 2009). As the name implies, topic coding refers to *what* is being talked about at that point in the interview, not the content of the message. For example, faculty talked about dealing with unprepared students or students who are nonnative English speakers; those are topics. What they said, positively or negatively, for instance, was the content. The topic coding formed the first division of the coding system, with faculty discussing topics such as self-directed learning, attitudes toward faculty development events, the tenure and promotion system, and past teachers who inspired them. Each topic was divided into subtopics and sub-subtopics.

Because the interviews were semi-structured, the faculty were encouraged to include personal narratives and to interpret the questions in their own way initially. I would follow up with probes, if necessary, to bring them back to the main question or to gain more details or specifics relevant to the research questions and interview protocol. Because of the sometimes wide-ranging conversations, I chose to use an inductive method when coding rather than a deductive one. Instead of going into the process with pre-conceived categories and themes, I read the transcripts carefully several times and made notations by hand on one side of the page. Then, using a chart, I began with the first interview transcript and coded as the themes emerged. I built the chart starting with Interview 1 and moving to Interview 20, adding subthemes and sub-subthemes as I went, including exact quotations and making notes in one column about specific values and emotions. Values coding was particularly useful in identifying the key motivations, emotions, and goals of the faculty. Saldana (2009) suggested that values coding is appropriate for qualitative studies that "explore cultural values and interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences and actions in case studies" (p. 90).

The primary findings of the survey, interviews, and focus groups centered on how the faculty *attempted* to improve their teaching, keeping in mind that these are self-reports about their learning processes, not actual enacted teaching behaviors in the classroom or changes in student learning outcomes

Findings of Data

Faculty's self-directed learning about instruction relates to many areas of their work, but the four most often mentioned were learning more content in their own field (and innovations in how it is taught), learning about instructional technology,

adjusting to the role of a professor in general and in this particular college, and adjusting to the needs, values, and abilities of the students in an access institution with a teaching mission. Doctoral work did not uniformly prepare them for teaching; some disciplines were particularly negligent in this regard. Many issues that an expert might take for granted were daunting for a novice; for example, choosing textbooks and dealing with the interpersonal dynamics of the classroom.

These four areas were "learned" by individual discussion with peers (informal learning) usually in proximity to their offices or in the same department; by just digging in until the faculty were satisfied that they knew enough to do their jobs—a type of just-in-time, need-to-know learning; by reading; and to some extent by formal training, but these were usually seen as general starting points rather than as fulfilling experiences.

Faculty were also asked extensively about their informal learning processes for improving their teaching. Much of what the faculty reported as informal learning had to do with dealing with the human resources department or understanding policies. In terms of improving teaching, help with technology was again a common topic; some faculty were seen as the local experts about various technology products. Informal learning was related to proximity of office and discipline as well; faculty in two departments mentioned going to lunch together frequently for "shop talk" but getting off campus to do so. Others reported discussing how to deal with various types of students, again relating to the theme of adjusting to "our type of student." The informal learning appeared to be intentional and self-directed in these cases, rather than incidental; as with other self-directed learning, it appeared to be on a need-to-know, just-in-time basis rather than learning that took a significant amount of planning.

The comments about faculty learning of instructional technology were often sparked by discussion around various products that are available. The one mentioned most prominently was PowerPoint, although some faculty understood its limitations:

> *I call it Snooze Point.*
>
> *I like PowerPoint, I think we have all created them. But what I don't like about it and that you can become so engrossed in your PowerPoint that you move through it too fast, and 2, I think it is lost on some of the kids because they have seen so many of them.*

Interestingly, several faculty mentioned using PowerPoint more as a classroom management tool than a content-delivery one. Prezi, a more dynamic, online version of PowerPoint was mentioned by two instructors. Backchannel discussion, such as Socrative™, was mentioned as a tool for classroom discussion that allowed the quiet students to participate. D2L, the learning management system, was not mentioned as widely as I would have assumed. Although it was not stated as such, the researcher concluded that faculty used targeted parts of D2L but not its totality. Many faculty mentioned difficulty with learning technology and needing much hands-on help from colleagues or tech experts, while others made statements like this,

> *Before I used the [homework system] from the publisher we got this one . . . there was no one to show me how to use it so I just got into it and got my hands dirty because I saw the immediate advantage of using it.*

Some other mentioned technology products were online homework systems (either open-source or those that accompany textbooks), iPads for clinical situations in the health sciences or creating videos, Wolfram-Alpha (for math classes), audio feedback tools and plagiarism detection through Turnitin.com, Skype, text messaging tools, Twitter, and website construction. However, after PowerPoint, the most popular technology tool is the student response systems, or "clickers." All but one who used the response systems were still enthusiastic about them after several semesters; this statement was typical.

But I think it reinforces their learning and they like it, they understand themselves; they see that they need to study more. I tend to use it as a review for tests, instead of, and I would like to use it through every lesson but I tend to use it as a review.

Additionally, the faculty frequently discussed their use of online videos, such as are available on YouTube. The wealth of material accessible on sites such as YouTube is a blessing but also a curse in that huge amounts of time can be expended looking for the "best" videos to show in class. There is also the temptation to use videos as an entertainment tool rather than as germane material. Even so, faculty were happy about the ability to pull up animations of cellular processes, documentaries, demonstrations of math problems, and humorous anecdotes.

No discussion of faculty using SDL to incorporate technology would be complete without social media. Out of twenty respondents, only one spoke enthusiastically about social media, in this case, Twitter, which she uses extensively to communicate with students about content as well as personal matters relevant to their classroom success. A few others said they might experiment with social media sites, such as Pinterest, for educational purposes, and one department uses LinkedIn to keep up with graduates.

Some of the discussion over learning to use instructional technology touched on the topic of distance learning. Most of the faculty in this study were not deeply involved in online learning:

The most important thing about teaching is the in-classroom experience, which I guess makes me old school because I'm not high on distance learning and all that kind of stuff.

That's one of the things I'm resistant to because one of the reasons I fell in love with teaching is the face-to-face contact and all the time in the classroom so it seemed that online would be less enjoyable.

The following quotations from faculty, with limited commentary, are provided to show the variety of their insights on their self-directed learning (SDL) about instructional technology.

Motivation to Use SDL to Learn Technology

We talked to each other, how did you do this? . . . You have the number you can call for support, but when you are trying to get it ready, it's more hands on. You just sit there and keep on until you figure it out. .. you just dig in and you talk to people and you get in it yourself and it just evolves.

. . . And figure out if it's something you want to use, and can use.

So it's something the students like and it is the way education is going, so I've sought that out as a necessary evil.

"I don't have to go through a thousand papers" [by using iClickers]

With the Internet and Google I have exactly what I want. . . I don't have to just show the three or four dinosaur pictures they have in the book.

Obstacles to Using SDL to Learn Technology

I have always felt that the computer is putting something between me and my students. Some people feel that it's another connection, but that's never worked for me."

Everybody's screaming about these interactive boards, but it's not like on television where you bring up these three dimensional things, I'm trying to get a movie to play. . . . If you want to do some kind of animation, you have to do all this behind the scenes blocking stuff, so why would I do that?

One of the frustrating things I feel about learning technology is that there are so many underlying assumptions by the technologically apt that when they are working with you, so many underlying assumptions that you know what's going

on, and I find it in the manuals and books, I find it so frustrating it might just be the definition of a word, but all the thing you don't know makes it hard to learn something new, and for me there's never enough detail, them trying to make me understand it.

So a lot of the technology I've had to learn on my own.

I wish we had received more smaller group education on the iClicker because I feel like there is still a lot of it I don't know, and as far as finding the time to dig into it myself and do it, it's next to impossible.

I feel sometimes like the baby boomers take technology and run with it when Gen Xers and millennials feel it's used in a stilted way . . . I feel like it's a buzzword and it needs to have a purpose and not just use it.

Methods for Using SDL to Learn Technology

Through an in-service here, but it was for a larger group and it was more of an overview of it, and when it came down to actually having it in your hand and actually implementing it, where is everybody. . . I just had to get a manual and read and dig, but I still feel that there's a lot that I don't know about it.

[I used] a lot of it (self-directed learning). I still feel like it would have been better, or what we need to do, that people who have purchased it and are actually using it, have instruction where they actually do it, not just talk about doing it, they actually set it up and do it while someone knowledgeable is there to show them that this will work better if you do it this way, you know.

I had ___'s number on speed dial for a while, he helped me with my clicker situation, and I called ____ and I'd plug away until I got stuck, but it was challenging to me.

I think [my SDL about technology started with] goals. I wanted to get on Georgia View. . .and last year I learned iClickers, and I was learning so much I wanted to do a paper, and when you do a paper you have to have our own PowerPoint, and when I saw how easy it was . . . I assumed there was going to be some huge learning curve in doing them . . . I think I am goal-directed in my learning technology, but then it multiplies.

I had to learn how to do a lot of online things with [specific skills-based discipline] . . . . I had to teach myself.

My educational background taught me to learn by myself, that's how you learn. If someone teaches you to drive you still learn to drive on your own after you passed the test.

Assessment of SDL to Learn Technology

I tried virtual hours [over Skype] and it didn't go great . . . [with Twitter] the veil is still up.

Technology should work seamlessly . . . and support whatever it is I'm teaching. I don't think it should be used exclusively because it gets old and students just sort of rely on it.

Really what I would do to begin with iClickers was [talk with a specific colleague]. . . that's where I started. And then I got more ideas at a conference . . . I bought [the presenter's] book and after that I would try different ideas. . . . I've given training on how to use them

What I'm looking for is cross platform, accessibility for the students; lack of extra steps for me is a major plus for me.

The area of assessment in the instructors' self-directed learning of technology was ill-defined; that is, although they often said something "did work" or "didn't work," it was not clear as to what that meant and how it was determined. What did seem relevant was a cost-benefit relationship (cost of time and effort versus whether a level of critical

mass was achieved in student use or improvement in learning outcomes) and a sense of diminishing returns: a technology might work well but lose some of its value. Additionally, faculty wanted technology that did not make more work for them in the long run, either by their use or the students'. The issue of assessment is complicated by the fact that technology is not static, and most tools are so robust that learning their use is never really over. Therefore, my conclusion from the interviews is that while faculty start to learn technology on their own with goals for their use, they may stop for other, less well-defined reasons.

Conclusion

In this cauldron of opinions, emotions, beliefs, and experiences, the Appreciative Inquiry approach did cause some core strengths to bubble to the top. The faculty's core strength is a deep commitment to good teaching, as they define it, and the good of the students, whom they often see as underprivileged, harried, and in need of guidance. When asked what their main contribution to the college was, some version of concern for students and their learning was stated. In only one case did a professor say that he was the only one in his department with expertise in a specific field, but that was after stating his desire to help students. This finding is the most important to the study and resounded above any negativity. At the same time, the faculty expressed a disinterest for educational theory and jargon; they want practical solutions and strategies for the classroom. The faculty also, in general, expressed a strong desire for more collaborative, cross-disciplinary meetings, and spaces for informal learning as well as community building.

References

Brookfield, S. (1985). Self-directed learning: A critical review of research. In Brookfield, S. (Ed.), *Self-directed learning: From theory to practice.* (pp. 5-16). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Candy, P. (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cranton, P. (1994). Self-directed and transformative instructional development. *Journal of Higher Education*, *65*(6), 726-744.

Doyle, W. R. (2010, February). Open-access colleges responsible for greatest gains in graduation rates. Retrieved April 2, 2014, from http://highereducation.org/pa_0210/index.shtml

Garrison, D. R. (1997). Self-directed learning: Toward a comprehensive model. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *48*(1), 18.

Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2005). *The adult learner* (6th ed). Burlington, MA: Elsevier.

Marsick, V. J., & Watkins, K. E. (2001). Informal and incidental learning. *New Directions For Adult & Continuing Education*, (89), 25.

Merriam, S. B. & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1985). A critical theory of self-directed learning. In Brookfield, S. (Ed.), *Self-directed learning: From theory to practice* (pp. 17-30). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

O'Meara, K. 2008). Motivation for faculty community engagement: Learning from exemplars. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 12*(1), 7-29.

Saldana, J. (2009). *Coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Tough, A. M. (1979). *The adult's learning projects. 2nd Ed.* Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

CAE LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION INNOVATION
CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
DALTON STATE

Journal Submission Guidelines and Editorial Policies

1. Faculty members (and professional staff) may submit the following:

   - Book reviews on scholarly works on higher education administration or issues, college teaching, or adult learning published within the last two calendar years.
   - Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research. This is defined as a study in which an activity, strategy, approach, or method that reflects best practices or evidence-based research is tried in the classroom. The faculty member sets up an intervention, executes it, and assesses the impact, employing quantitative or qualitative methods. Articles should indicate that IRB process was followed where applicable, with documentation.
   - Literature review that synthesizes, in a relevant and interesting way, the evidence, theory, and/or research on a particular aspect of higher education, college teaching, adult learning, brain research, etc. Professional staff could write about issues in student services or advising, for example.
   - Essay of personal reflection of a classroom incident or phenomenon with an evidence- or theory-based approach to interpreting the incident or phenomenon.
   - Articles should attempt to have c

2. Style Sheet

   - Submissions should be in APA VI format and Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Use APA guidelines in terms of margins. The writer should try to preserve his or her anonymity as much as possible. The editor will redact the name of the writer from the document's title page before sending to reviewers.

3. Review Process

   - The submissions will be peer reviewed by three faculty members, whose identity will be known only to editor and not to each other. One member of the review committee will be a faculty member in general discipline represented in the article, one will be a faculty member with an advanced degree in education, and one will be drawn from the advisory committee or other volunteer reviewers.
   - Articles will be returned to the writers in a timely manner with an indication of rejection; conditional acceptance (revise and re-submit, with suggestions for doing so), and accepted (possibly with request to edit or make minor changes). A rubric will be used for assessing the articles. It will be available to potential submitters upon request. If none of the members approves the article, it will be rejected. If one of the members approves the article, it will be considered a conditional acceptance. If two approve it, it will be returned for the necessary editions and published when finished. If three approve it, it will be published as is or with minor corrections.

4. Submissions should be sent as Word files to btucker@daltonstate.edu
5. Published articles will appear in the *Journal for Academic Excellence*, which will be available on the Center for Academic Excellence's website and thus accessible by Internet searches.