

Journal for Academic Excellence

Center for Academic Excellence Dalton State College

A Division of the Office of Academic Affairs

The mission of the CAE is to facilitate, support, and enhance the teaching and learning process at Dalton State College. The Center serves to ultimately improve student success and achievement of learning outcomes by promoting the creation of effective learning environments through the provision of resources and faculty development opportunities.



Center for Academic Excellence What's Ahead for 2017

The last issue of the *Journal for Academic Excellence* was published in June 2016. Since then, our College has a new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Pat Chute; an officially inaugurated President, Dr. Margaret Venable; a new logo and branding plan (thank you, Marketing and Communications!); and many new employees and faculty.

Our country has a new president. All of us have experienced births, death, loss, rewards. As we often are reminded, change is inevitable.

Likewise, the editor of the *Journal for Academic Excellence* has shifted from one role on campus to another. However, she still sees the *Journal* as having one purpose: to support faculty and staff development as the main publication of the Center for Academic

Excellence. The Journal does so in three ways: through acknowledging scholarly efforts and awards that faculty and staff earn; by sharing colleagues' scholarly efforts about teaching and learning in higher education in a written medium; and by advertising the events of the Center for Academic Excellence.

That is exactly what this issue, although a bit overdue, will be seeking to achieve. Your input is always welcome, as are your articles on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and your announcements about presentations, publications, and awards, including those involving undergraduate research.

Enjoy this issue, and the new year and semester.

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Eighth Annual Dalton State Teaching and Learning Conference

Friday, March 31 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Peeples Hall

Go to

www.daltonstatectlconference.com

for information

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments



Dr. Doug Smith, Endowed Professor of Accounting; Dr. Marilyn Helms, Sesquicentennial Chair and Professor of Management; and colleague Dr. Jim Byrd from the University of Alabama received a Lybrand Certificate of Merit for their article, “Can Traditional Procedures Used in Accounting and Purchasing Reduce Today’s Healthcare Costs?” published in the September 2015 issue of *Strategic Finance*.

Strategic Finance is a practitioner journal with a circulation of more than 50,000 and acceptance rate for articles of 15%. The award was presented at the IMA Conference on June 21 in Las Vegas.

In Dr. David Williams, Associate Professor of Marketing, published an article with a colleague titled “Why People Use Social Media: A Uses and Gratifications Approach” in *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(4), 362-369.

The article was the most downloaded article from *Qualitative Market Research* for 2014 & 2015 (more than 17,000 downloads to date). It has also received more than 100 citations, according to Google Scholar.

Due to the popularity of their article, the editor of *QMR* asked Dr. Williams and his co-author to guest edit a Special Issue on Social Media. If interested in submitting to this special issue, please contact Dr. Williams for the call for proposals.

The School of Education earned a “shout-out” in the 2016 edition of the *Innovation Fund Annual Report*. This report is published by the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. In regard to the SOE, the report states,

“During the planning process, WCS also piloted power lunches, which target summer reading loss for children in impoverished communities. Over summer 2016, Dalton State College teacher candidates met students outside of their local library and taught literacy lessons designed to help prepare children for school. These power lunches also coincided, intentionally, with Whitfield County’s existing summer feeding programs, so children got nutrition for both their bodies and brains.”

Congratulations to the School of Education for this work!

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments: Study Abroad



Dr. Lovey Mesco



Dr. Gene Mesco



Dr. Natalie Johnson



Dr. Brian Hibbs



Eric Hanson and Ellie Jenkins



Nick Carty

Study Abroad is alive and well at Dalton State. The colorful photograph above is just one of many that could be included of DSC faculty being involved in summer study abroad programs. Yes, that is the “happy emperor” Dr. Baogang Guo posing with students during their month at Zhengzhou University.

Also teaching abroad in Summer 2016 were Dr. Natalie Johnson, who taught a criminal justice course in Madrid, Spain, with the European Council of the USG, and Dr. Lovey Mesco and Dr. Sharon

Hixon of the School of Education. They accompanied students to Costa Rica. Dr. Gene Mesco led a trip to London in October for biology students.

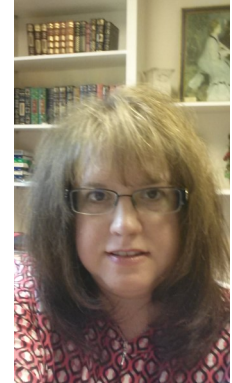
Dr. Ellie Jenkins, Mr. Eric Hanson, and Mr. Nick Carty of the Department of Communication will be leading a MayMester trip to Paris after spring graduation, allowing students to take music and French classes in the heart of a cultural capital.

Dr. Brian Hibbs is leading a group to Madrid, Spain, for the European Council of the USG. Both of these trips are soliciting students, and these professors are willing to come speak to your classes about the opportunities.

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments



Ms. Stephani Womack, DSC's new Director of Career Services, was awarded the Outstanding New Orientation, Transition and Retention Professional from NODA, the Association for Orientation, Transition and Retention in Higher Education. She received this award in November at the NODA Annual Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Ms. Heather Bisalski, Instructor, and Dr. Marilyn Helms, Professor, of the Wright School of Business and Ms. Melissa Whitesell, Director of Roberts Library (pictured above, in order) announce the soon publication of their article "Preparing Undergraduate Students for the Major Field Test in Business." It will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of Education for Business*.



Dr. Brian Hibbs, Assistant Professor in the School of Education, has been chosen to serve as one of the new Fellow Mentors for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Fellows program being instituted by the University System of Georgia. Dr. Hibbs is active in leadership of the SoTL group on campus and other CAE programs.



Dalton State Writing Lab Instructor Janie Watts Spataro (who writes under the name of Janie Watts Dempsey) has been awarded an Indie B.R.A.G. (Book Readers Appreciation Group) Medallion for her novel, *Return to Taylor's Crossing*. Winners are determined by a panel of readers from around the world. The book also was first place winner in the Knoxville Writers Guild 2015 novel contest and third place winner in the 2016 Frank Yerby Prize for Fiction.



Director's Column

Dr. Marina Smitherman

Director,

Center for Academic Excellence

Readers: In every issue of the *Journal for Academic Excellence*, Dr. Smitherman shares with us her plans for the upcoming months. Before we move into her article, we would like to congratulate her on a presentation she gave at the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network Conference in November in Louisville, Kentucky.

She was joined in this 3.5-hour, pre-conference workshop by Cher Hendricks, University of West Georgia; Laura Cruz, Tennessee Technological University; Michele Parker, University of North Carolina at Wilmington; and Brian Smentkowski, Queens University of Charlotte. Their subject was "Taking Flight: Opening (or Revitalizing) a New Center for Teaching and Learning." The POD Network is the national professional organization for those working in faculty development (referred to by the POD Network as educational development) in higher education.



Laura Cruz, Tennessee Technological University; Cher Hendricks, University of West Georgia; Brian Smentkowski, Queens University of Charlotte. Michele Parker, University of North Carolina at Wilmington; and Marina Smitherman, Dalton State College.

Happy New Year 2017! Welcome back to what will hopefully be a happy and productive Spring semester. It is my job here to highlight some of our Fall achievements and what Spring 2017 will open up for us this year.

One of our Fall 2016 activities was discussing the Ken Bain book *What the Best College Professors Do* in an energetic and enthusiastic dialogue, thanks to expert leadership from Natalie Johnson of the School of Social Sciences and Josh Pfiester of the School of Education. This group kept growing in numbers with every week, which is highly unusual as often people drop off as the semester gets busy. One of the testimonials from a group member said,

I really liked the multi-disciplinary group. I felt like I was not alone in my own bubble like I normally feel. It was great to network with people outside of my discipline to hear about new techniques that can apply to my discipline that I had never thought of before and I really enjoyed collaborating with colleagues I had never met before I joined the group.

This faculty comment really gets to the heart of why being involved with CAE can



positively impact both faculty and students, because we can collaborate to crowd-source things that work really well with our Dalton State students. One thing that everyone who is involved in CAE activities at Dalton State agrees on is this: we have fantastic faculty and we can learn so much from each other when given opportunities to get out of our bubbles and share what and why we do what we do.

This theme also underpinned our Teaching and Learning Workshops in Fall. We discussed ways we can encourage metacognition and critical thinking, examined different techniques for motivating students to do the coursework required to do well, and discussed how to identify and deal with faculty burnout. One faculty member said,

The most useful knowledge I acquired during this seminar was in the discussion of exactly what makes critical thinking so difficult: the presence of confirmation bias, the need for character development, the need for content knowledge, the need for intentional integration of information, and the need for reflection and meta-cognition. Although my years of experience in teaching a course that requires critical thinking has given me numerous insights into functional ways of facilitating the development of critical thinking skills, I had never before stopped to consider what the barriers to critical thinking might be in such a methodical way. By focusing on each of these barriers, I can more efficiently design learning activities that give students an opportunity to experience, and hopefully transcend each one. I was struck, however, by the realization that my “debate” classes tend to happen after the midpoint of the semester, long after the first major speech has happened, and it only occurs once. I realized that I should be implementing debates and structured

controversies much earlier in the semester, more frequently throughout the semester, and in more varied ways. In reaction to this, I have designed a new learning activity to add to my course for the week after Fall Break, and plan to implement it next semester as well.”

This is just the impact of this workshop on a single faculty member, but the repercussions for all of her students at Dalton State for the years that she teaches is exactly why I love this job.

This semester’s workshops cover “How Can I Capture Students Interest in the First 5 Minutes?”, “Transformative and Captivating Mini-lectures” (Christy Price), “How Can Grading Policy Options Influence Student Learning?”, “What Are the Three Worst Mistakes to Make in the Classroom?” and “What are the Secrets to Providing Highly Effective Feedback to Students?”

The High Impact Practices Action team continues to work on the best ways to help those of you that have shown interest in redesigning your classes to achieve a high impact educational experience. Our goal is to create and run a retreat in May to help our HIPS Champions pave the way for Dalton State. We will meet three times in Spring to work on redesign, so anyone who has shown interest by attending our fall sessions is welcome to come and begin work on incorporating HIPS into their courses. Each of our action team will serve as a mentor to a small group in each area such as Service-Learning and Undergraduate Research.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Group has been meeting twice monthly to set goals for research and scholarly writing thanks to the Leadership of Barbara Tucker and Brian Hibbs. This semester this group welcomes a few of our doctoral students to support their work on writing their dissertations.

We also were awarded a small grant from the Barnard Foundation to send a group of



faculty to the Winter “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy conference in support of the SUMMIT High Impact Practices initiative. Christian Griggs, Natalie Johnson, Matt Hipps and I spent two days playing subversive role-playing games that explored various critical time-points in history.

My role was playing the writer Charlotte Perkins Gilmer in 1913 during the Suffrage, Labor and Feminist movements in Greenwich Village. I was the ultimate poorly prepared student. I went having not had a chance to read the materials, I am totally out of comfort zone with acting or public speaking and I had to google my character a few minutes before introducing myself to the group.

Immediately as the game began, other (well-prepared) students came up to me saying they were huge fans of my work, and we began to explore the issues of the time in a competitive game. To say I got drawn into this is an understatement, and I left my game compelled to read several of her books and watch “Iron-jawed Angels” and truly appreciating the feminist movements from 26 different points of view. This scientist branched out and enjoyed it.

I took some time during the conference to visit each game. I saw the trial of Socrates and the threshold of demo-curacy, witnessed the mob in the revolution in New York in 1776, India debating what independence would look like in 1945, and Van Gogh giving a speech about the importance and value of modernism in art in Paris in 1888.

To put it briefly, I was excited by and compelled to truly appreciate and understand more history in two days than in years of lectures. The potential of this pedagogy for our students who routinely choose to put themselves into subversive role-play games like World of Warcraft or Grand Theft Auto is extremely exciting. We will open pilot games up to whomever is interested to see this in action and will run a workshop in Fall 2017 to anyone interested in seeing how this can work in a

classroom setting. This is truly Experiential Learning for the Liberal Arts curriculum as well as other disciplines, which directly supports the High Impact Practices work we are doing.

What do snow days, the CAE conference and the student scholarship Showcase all have in common? They all occur in Spring and all three will be bigger and better this year. . . . well hopefully not the snow! This year’s conference will be held on March 31 in Peeples Hall and is themed “Excellence through Experience: Leveraging our Experiences as Faculty to Guide Their Learning.”

Our keynote speaker is Dr. Claire Major from the University of Alabama, and she will be guiding us through a session focused on how the evidence-base can be used to inform the incorporation of active learning techniques in with lectures entitled “Teaching for Learning: Choosing and Using High Impact Pedagogical Methods.” New this year will be a speed-dating and speed-sharing session that will be open to anyone attending to present if they choose, to allow everyone to contribute their top teaching tips to the conversations of the day.

This year’s Student Scholarship Showcase is scheduled for April 21 in Peeples Hall. This event is broadening in support of our campus-wide efforts on High Impact Practices and will highlight not just undergraduate research and capstones as before, but all engaged learning, so we want to hear from all faculty who have worked with students on endeavors like study abroad, service-learning, and internships too. This serves to both showcase the work we have already done and encourage us all to consider these impactful methods in our courses for our students.

As professors, one of our responsibilities is to guide students in appreciating different points of view and broadening their horizons, which can often be challenging in a variety of ways or conflict with the belief-system in which they were raised. Classroom discussion is an excellent way to meet these learning outcomes

in different classes, but this can sometimes challenge students to their core, leading to emotions running high and fast.

Following the election, there has been a lot of debate nationally about how we as educators handle tense and emotional incidents in the classroom during emotionally and politically charged times. What do you do if students begin to shout at each other or at you? How can you prevent students from feeling alienated by the comments of one or two? How do you create and maintain a tolerance and positive learning environment that is inclusive of every student in the room? The reality is that the more prepared we are to handle these difficult dialogues situations when they arise, the better.

To give us all the opportunity to build our skill sets in this area, the CAE has put together four sessions this Spring centered around a set of materials entitled “Start Talking: A Handbook for Engaging Difficult Dialogues in Higher Education.” These materials will be provided, and they go through good ground rules in handling tense and emotionally charged topics in classroom discussions and addresses how to discuss specific sensitive topics in turn including religion, politics, science and social justice. If you routinely hold discussions in one of these areas and would like to help facilitate one of these sessions, do please let us know. The group will discuss the materials in this handbook as well as working through some online materials to assess and reflect on our own innate biases, followed by some experiential learning role-playing reinforcing rules within difficult classroom scenarios.

Our increasingly popular Teaching Tutors continue this semester. These one-hour workshops feature a short video produced by a well-known Teaching and Learning expert, followed by a group discussion of the teaching

techniques covered and sharing of tips afterwards. We maintain access to these Magna Commons Videos throughout the year and you can access these and other videos with supporting materials at any time. If you would like the access information, do please contact me.

One of the most frustrating parts of our job can be struggling with an aspect of class you want to change and trying several different approaches with no luck. The CAE is here to help. We work with a handful of faculty one-to-one on Personal Consultations each semester. These are completely confidential and only the number of sessions held and outcomes are kept, without the names of who took part. They usually involve a classroom observation or two and discussion of what changes you would like to make and materials on the aspect in question. Personal Consultations have been shown to dramatically increase faculty confidence and student evaluations, definitely a win-win.

We also have a couple of sessions including Safe Zone offered very kindly by Charity Muse of the Dalton State Counseling Center. This is limited to 25, so consider signing up for this if you have not taken attended this session previously, as it is extremely eye-opening.

Please enjoy this January 2017 issue of the journal which includes faculty achievements along with information on CAE activities for Spring and teaching and learning articles. Also, please do contact me if at any time there is a teaching technique that you hear or read about that you would like for us to explore on campus. I hope you have a wonderful Spring 2017 semester.

Kind Regards,

Marina

Teaching Matters

“Engaging Students, Empowering Educators”

15th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference
March 3-4, 2017

About the Conference

Teaching Matters is celebrating its fifteenth annual interdisciplinary conference in 2017 at Gordon State College on its main campus (Barnesville, Georgia). Presentations/discussions will focus on innovative and creative pedagogical methods, approaches to various texts and/or concepts, and theories. The conference is open to all of those who have a passion for pedagogy; conference presentations are designed so that educators can share ideas and strategies that promote student success, student engagement, and active learning.

About this year's theme

Dr. Maryellen Weimer recently discussed three interconnected aspects of student engagement - behavioral, emotional, and cognitive - in “[What Does Student Engagement Look Like?](#)” While she defines each of the parts of engagement, it is important for educators to continually work together to explore the various modes of promoting student engagement, whether it be application of pedagogical theories, implementing teaching techniques, or using educational technology. Collaboration, as offered through the Teaching Matters conference, is one way to empower educators across all disciplines to better engage their students. There are just as many ways to empower educators as there are to engage students. Therefore, “Engaging Students, Empowering Educators” is a broad theme that allows presenters to focus on either or both of the parts. Of course, we also encourage proposals not directly related to the theme.

Potential topics could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Measuring and assessing student engagement
- Incorporating engaging technology in the classroom
- Recognizing “nonverbal attentiveness”
- Translating course evaluation feedback into student engagement
- Empowering educators through work-life balance
- Combating professorial stereotypes to empower educators
- Effectively engaging students through specific concepts or texts in the classroom
- Engaging students in one-on-one research projects with educators

Direct any questions to Dr. Erica Johnson at ejohnson@gordonstate.edu.

Open Educational Resources on Dalton State College: A Report on Affordable Learning Georgia Grant Achievements

By Barbara G. Tucker

Campus Champion for Affordable Learning Georgia

Dalton State Rocks at Open Education Resources!

Do we have reason to say that? Yes—because Dalton State faculty have won nine Affordable Learning Georgia grants over the last three years, saving students hundreds of thousands of dollars in textbook costs. This article will highlight the who, what, how, and outcomes of each of these grant recipients.

Before we go further, a little background. Starting in 2014, the University System helped faculty get serious about adopting open educational resources by offering grants at three monetary levels for the creation of new open educational resources or the integration of existing ones into courses. “Open educational resources” is a generic term for open-sourced learning materials that are not traditionally copyrighted (or have gone into the public domain) and therefore low cost or free. Typically, these are digital resources accessed on the World Wide Web or in library databases.

Some of the driving forces and best helpers in this initiative have been the University System of Georgia librarians, OpenStax (open textbook publishers out of Rice University of Houston, TX), the MERLOT repository (a California State University program: the acronym means Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching), and the University of Minnesota system. However, the movement as

a whole probably would not be thriving without Creative Commons.

Anyone in higher education who does not know about Creative Commons should become informed about it, and quickly. It is changing how we think about usage of created material and copyright. Essentially, Creative Commons has developed an alternative system of licensing for scholarly and creative written or artistic materials to allow free flow across different platforms and other content creators.

The original creators can designate how they want their materials used and attributed if they do not want to use a traditional copyright and permission system. Anyone who created learning materials for the Affordable Learning Georgia was required to use a Creative Commons license and to forgo any financial benefit for the work beyond the funds of the grant.

So, back to the point. Who has been creating open educational resources, what have they created, and what have been the results? Our various grantees weigh in on the next few pages.

Molly Zhou and David Brown

Awarded 2014

Dr. Zhou and Mr. Brown were campus pioneers on the Affordable Learning Georgia initiative, as the first recipients of grants. They actually completed two separate OER projects:



creation of online open source materials for EDUC 2130 and for EDUC 3214. Dr. Zhou, who teaches these courses for School of Education majors, had two goals: to benefit the students and to ensure they had the materials on Day 1 of the course. In terms of benefiting the students, cost was a big factor, but also the weight of the formerly used textbook and the fact that much of it was not really used in the course (a common situation). She also believed that the publication of new editions was sometimes unnecessary and contributed to the high cost of the texts she was using.

In Dr. Zhou's case, she researched and obtained permission from other writers to compile a set of online readings, posted in GeorgiaView, for the students to use in place of a standard textbook. David Brown, who is currently the Instructional Technologist but was a librarian at the time, helped her with this process and the technology.

In regard to the outcomes of the project, Dr. Zhou states:

I loved the learning materials for my classes. Students also appreciated that they saved money on textbooks and they did not have to buy textbooks, and the fact that textbooks used for those classes were readily available in D2L on Day 1 of class. This saves them time and money. They liked that fact the textbooks did not have fillers, and I enjoyed teaching the learning materials with greater flexibility and satisfaction. Every semester I require student midterm reflections to let me know their thoughts on the course progress. Many of them commented on the helpfulness of the learning materials and their appreciation of the instructor going extra miles to make the textbook available for them.

Chuck Fink and Marina Smitherman

Awarded Fall 2014

The objective of this project was to switch from a conventionally published textbook (*Human Anatomy and Physiology*, Marieb and Hoehn) to a free online textbook (published by OpenStax College) for three sections of Human Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) taught at Dalton State College. This is a two-part course (consisting of A&P I, BIOL 2212K, and A&P II, BIOL 2213K) primarily taken by students planning on careers in the health professions (such as nursing and respiratory therapy). For this project, Dr. Smitherman taught A&P II and Dr. Fink taught A&P I in the Spring semester of 2015. The project would save students upwards of \$200 each.

However, there were several concerns they had when beginning this project. Would the students be receptive to the change in textbook format, switching from a physical book such as they've experienced most of their academic careers, to an electronic book? Would the OpenStax textbook adequately address the key material of the course? And most importantly, would the students' performance in the course be impacted?

While switching the assigned textbook, they also didn't want to drastically change the material and activities presented in class. The information presented across different anatomy and physiology textbooks tends to be extremely similar. The largest challenge from an instructional perspective was to redo syllabi and study guides to make sure students were reading the appropriate textbook material to supplement classroom activities.

Assessment of the students' response to the study was done through a series of four surveys, the results of which indicated a moderate preference for the existing textbook



over the OpenStax, particularly as the semester progressed (an opinion that the instructors generally shared). However, students seemed extremely open to the idea of using an online textbook for the sake of convenience. Some students prefer to have a hard copy of their textbook, and OpenStax College makes available a physical copy of the textbook that students can obtain through the bookstore. While this option was not free for students, its \$50 price tag still cost students much less money than the other textbook.

Drs. Smitherman and Fink were very pleased that classroom performance as indicated by midterm and final grade distributions did not seem to be affected when compared with previous semesters. In fact, student performance was slightly higher that semester (particularly in A&P II). Given the primary objective to lower student costs, having student performance remain unchanged was an extremely positive and encouraging result. Most of the students indicated that they would welcome the chance to use similar open resource textbooks in courses in the future.

This project showed the two biology faculty members how practically a change to a free online textbook can be implemented, especially when the book is established and maintained through OpenStax College. Before the announcement of the ALG grants, there was already a great deal of discussion at Dalton State about how to reduce the cost of course materials for students. This ALG grant was an excellent opportunity to proceed with such a transformation while collecting data required to properly assess the outcome.

David desRochers and Susan Burran

Awarded Fall 2014

Dr. desRochers and Professor Burran successfully offered our introductory biology students low-cost lab activities that were authored by them and colleagues in order to replace the more costly lab manual they had used previously. The lab manuals were used in Biology 1107 and 1108, which enrolled 640 students during the time of the grant pilot in Fall 2015. Challenges for Professors Burran and desRochers included reaching agreement between faculty members about the topics covered, the degree of depth and breadth for each topic, and the level of challenge of each lab.

Challenges also included communicating specific needs to the lab staff for each new lab activity. The first time that a new procedure is conducted can be difficult due to unforeseen events. Overall, the semester went well for both sets of courses. After analyzing evidence of which labs worked well and which ones did not run smoothly, they could begin to revise the problematic labs.

This project, like some others, required not just collaboration between the two grantees but with the whole set of faculty who teach Biology 1107 and 1108. That, of course, involves time, energy, and understanding. The feedback from faculty on their use of the lab manuals is as valuable as the students'. In this case, the students' feedback was helpful, although not uniformly positive for all of the lab activities. They liked the ones that had shorter instructions and involved group work. Professors desRochers and Burran were able to use the feedback from both sources to improve the manuals. The efforts of the biology faculty were rewarded, since the DFW rate dropped to 14.8% from a previous rate of 21.3% for Fall 2015.



Jenny Crisp, Lydia Postell, and Melissa Whitesell

Awarded July 2015

Dr. Crisp and Dr. Postell targeted English 0098, the current Learning Support English course, and ENGL 0999 and 0989, which are the integrated reading and writing courses we will be implementing in Fall 2017 as part of the USG's initiative to transform remediation. Dr. Postell and Dr. Crisp wrote much of the material but also integrated Creative Commons-licensed material, particularly from one writing textbook (*Rhetoric and Composition*) in MERLOT, and an open-access reading textbook from the higher education authority in British Columbia, Canada.

The two English faculty members chose to apply for the grant because of QEP assessment data showing students were not purchasing the textbook, which came with a technology resource. They had indirect and survey data in that the students did not use the technology. Cost was their biggest concern, and they wanted free rather than low-cost for this vulnerable population.

Since the implementation phase of the grant, they have continued to use the OER and are making some revisions. As QEP Director, Dr. Crisp leaves it to instructor's choice, but more than 50% of current ENGL 0098 courses are using the open textbook exclusively. All are using it in at least a supplemental capacity. They continue to administer student surveys about the resource, and some of the revisions are based on that feedback.

A word from Melissa Whitesell, Director of Roberts Library

As the ALG Library Coordinator for our campus, I make faculty aware of the Affordable Learning Georgia initiative and how the creation of an OER benefits students and

faculty across the USG system. I've provided support for several faculty members as they wrote their proposals for an ALG grant. Also, I was part of two grant recipient teams. I assisted Dr. Jenny Crisp and Dr. Lydia Postell in the creation of an OER for Learning Support English/Reading and the faculty of the Communication Department in the creation of an online textbook. More often, I work with faculty to identify, evaluate and provide access to open educational resources, including many materials found in GALILEO, a collection of databases available at USG libraries. The library can also provide an online platform for the OER through our LibGuides and Georgia Knowledge Repository.

Kris Barton and Barbara Tucker

Awarded July 2015

Dr. Kris Barton brought up the idea of creating an open source Communication 1110 textbook. The basics in public speaking course, which is required for all degree-seeking students at the College, involves material that has literally been around for 2400 years; unfortunately, the highly popular textbook that the faculty were using comes out in new editions every two years and costs well over \$100. Dealing with new editions and textbook representatives was also becoming a challenge.

Drs. Barton and Tucker learned about the Round 3 ALG grants becoming available only two weeks before the proposals were due, so we set to work. The short time frame was in their favor because there were fewer submissions in that round. The proposal was accepted, and they set to work in July 2015 to write a complete textbook. While Dr. Tucker focused mostly on writing, Dr. Barton focused on adapting chapters from another OER on public speaking, and administering the grant, guiding the other COMM 1110 faculty to read



the manuscript, and creating videos to go along with the book.

There is another open textbook online that is free to use but the author doesn't want attribution. They used parts of this book for about 25% of the final product, and the rest was original work. Their plan was to have a draft ready in December 2015 for the other faculty to review, which was successful. The second goal was to have the final draft ready for the Summer 2016 pilot, in which each student received a free printed copy (paid for by the grant).

When the manuscript was completed and approved, Dr. Tucker began to transfer the Word document into a Microsoft Publisher (desktop publishing) document, which was then saved as a pdf for posting to various websites. The file is quite large, since the book is over 300 pages long. They did as much as they could to create a book that looks like a textbook, with graphics, photographs, sample outlines, a glossary, definitions in blue boxes in the margins, references, and appendices.

The 100 students who used the textbook in Summer 2016 responded well to it. Students were offered Panera gift cards if they found serious typographical errors. Full implementation took place in Fall 2016. Students can download the book, read it online, or buy a printed copy through Auxiliary Services. Dr. Tucker is particularly happy that the faculty embraced the book and that they have been able to save the students so much money already. It is a testimony to Dr. Barton's professionalism and commitment to DSC students.

Natalie Johnson and Hassan El-Najjar

Awarded July 2015

Dr. Johnson and Dr. El-Najjar of the Department of Social Sciences sought an Affordable Learning Georgia Grant in order to adopt an OpenStax textbook and create supporting materials for the Introduction to Sociology classes. Along with the work needed to adopt a new textbook, they proposed to write and design PowerPoint presentations for each required chapter of the textbook; write chapter outlines for the required chapters; write chapter study guides in the form of essay questions and main topics; and write multiple-choice chapter tests and unit exams to assess student learning.

Dr. Johnson and Dr. El-Najjar also added to their proposal that they would make the created materials such as slides and chapter outlines (but of course, not tests) available to the students *and the public*. This latter commitment is part of all ALG grant applications, that is, stating how any created materials, which will be under Creative Commons license, will be housed in a way that anyone can access it. Most opt to use the libguides portion of Roberts Library's website, but the materials are also available to the public through the Georgia Knowledge Repository, at <http://www.gaknowledge.org/>.

Drs. El-Najjar and Johnson report that the outcomes of their project were all positive. Their major goal was to offer Dalton State students a free SOCI 1101 textbook and other no-cost learning materials. During 2015-2016, there were 215 students enrolled in 7 sections of SOCI 1101. These students benefited from this transformation in saving about \$39,345. The transformational impact on instruction was very positive, in that it allowed the instructors the opportunity to develop supplemental materials accompanying the textbook.



Relief from high textbook costs improved students' retention rates and increased students' success rates. Students made many positive comments on the end-of-semester survey, but this one summarizes them: "I loved it! The textbook was great and you could print and make notes everywhere. Plus it was very cost effective. It also relieved you from carrying a heavy textbook everywhere."

Saving students money is a fine goal, but the ultimate question has to be, "Do they learn as well from open resources?" Many of our faculty have sought to answer that question in various ways. The published research to date shows that the open resources are generally as good as the publishers' products, but there is still more work to be done in this area, as well as mitigating factors. It might be that faculty who are willing to go to the effort of using and creating open educational resources simply are better instructors, or are perceived as such, by students. However, in addressing this question for their project, Drs. Johnson and El-Najjar are able to point to the positive outcome that they saw a drop in DWF rates from 29.8 to 25% from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015.

Alicia Briganti and Jonathan Gulledge

Awarded Fall 2015

Dr. Briganti and Dr. Gulledge of the Psychology Department chose to pursue an Affordable Learning Georgia grant in order to develop appropriate no-cost-to-student materials for an Introduction to Psychology course without compromising the rigor of the current course format. Approximately 14 sections of PSYC 1101 are offered per semester with a total average of 500 students. PSYC 1101 fulfills a general education requirement in Area D, is a popular elective, and is required for many majors. When they applied for the grant, all PSYC 1101 instructors were using the same textbook (D. G. Meyers' *Exploring Psychology*,

Worth Publishers). Their plan was that if the adoption project, taking place in Fall 2016, was successful, all instructors going forward will have the option to use the same no-cost-to-student materials, potentially affecting upwards of 1000 students per year.

Dr. Briganti and Dr. Gulledge state: "Dalton State College prides itself on being one of the most affordable colleges in the United States, but this promise of affordability seems contradictory when students have to spend hundreds of dollars on textbooks each semester. We decided to apply for the grant with the intent to provide students relief from worrying about the cost of course materials and instead enable them to focus on their educational goals."

As with all the grantees, Drs. Briganti and Gulledge were required to assess various aspects of the use of the textbooks, such as student attitudes and their effectiveness in meeting learning outcomes. Also, performance in terms of actual student grades as well as DWF rates are examined. They also report that preliminary data indicate that more students are acquiring the no-cost course materials. Early analyses reveal that overall exam scores for courses utilizing no-cost materials are higher than those for courses requiring traditional textbooks taught by the same instructor. Anecdotal feedback from students has been uniformly positive for the no-cost materials.

It should be mentioned here that the Affordable Learning grants are essentially a major research and creative writing project. The faculty members must research what is available; compile, adapt, revise, and write new materials; make them available in digital formats and possibly print; then research student response in surveys and assess student performance in terms of grade. Faculty members who have won and administered these grants have presented at various

conferences in the state and region. The grants help defray some of the cost, but the monetary award of the grants is small in terms of the time and energy commitment. Still, they are appreciated. There is some debate still in the USG as a whole over the value of creating these materials in terms of tenure and promotion, especially at institutions that require publication.

Matt Hipps and Ken Ellinger

Awarded Fall 2015

Dr. Ellinger and Professor Hipps teach a large number of American Government students every year—probably the majority of them. They were awarded an ALG grant to revamp the curriculum of POLS 1101. The project involves replacing our currently required POLS 1101 textbook (*We The People* and its online course pack by Oxford University Press) with low cost/no-cost course materials. They selected the POLS 1101 course to revamp because it is a general education requirement and has the potential to impact thousands of students. During the course of the Fall 2016 semester, this revamping of the course is impacting more than 650 students.

However, the two professors are using two different open source textbooks. Matt Hipps adopted *American Government* by Timothy O. Lenz and Mirya Holman, which is published under a Creative Commons license by the University Press of Florida. A PDF version of the text was embedded in his course, and students were able to download the PDFs at their leisure. In addition, he created a student website that contained ancillary materials that would allow students to download materials related to the course including PowerPoints, video lectures, and embedded videos that help to further clarify material that we covered in class.

Although he had not (at the time of writing this article) administered the final

survey for the semester, Professor Hipps noticed that students appear to be more engaged in the material and overall examination grades have increased (on average) by about 4 percentage points this semester. Although he cannot necessarily attribute that increase directly to the change in course material, he believes there is some correlation between the use of the new textbook and increased student success.

Dr. Ellinger chose to adopt the OpenStax text *American Government* by Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewicz. His purpose in applying for the ALG grant was to find a free textbook for his students so they will save money and actually start using the book at the very beginning of the semester, thereby increasing their usage of the text. He states, “The outcome is that everyone seems to be using the book to some degree, and the students very much appreciate having a free book—especially since they are paying so much for their other books!”

Conclusion

In an article “OpenStax ranks the colleges that save the most with free textbooks” on its website dated August 1, 2016, Rice University lists the top ten states in using its resources. The University System of Georgia ranks #1, far above the next system on the list. (See article here: <http://news.rice.edu/2016/08/01/openstax-ranks-the-colleges-that-save-the-most-with-free-textbooks/#sthash.HSWBbTZI.dpuf>). This is a distinction we can be proud of, and Dalton State has been a large part of that honor. The University System has committed to continuing the Affordable Learning Grants, and more information can be found at <http://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/> Announcements for the next round of grants will be made public through campus emails this semester. ■



Jan 2017

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
9 <i>1st Day of Class A & B Session</i>	10	11	12	13
16 <i>MLK Holiday</i>	17 SOTL/Writing Club 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA310	18	19 Teaching Tutor "How Can I Capture Students Interest in the First 5 Minutes?" 3:30PM-4:30PM PH111	20
23	24 "Engaging in Difficult Dialogues" Session 1 - Ground Rules for Difficult Dialogues 3:30PM-4:30PM, PH202	25	26 	27
30	31 SOTL/Writing Club 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA310			

notes

8th Annual T&L Conference will be held Friday March 31st 2017, see www.daltonstatecaeconference.com.

5th Annual Student Scholarship Showcase will be held Friday April 21st 2017, 9-4pm in Peoples Hall. Register via the CAE Webpage - <https://www.daltonstate.edu/academics/cae-event-calendar.cms>

Graduation will be held on May 13th at the Trade Center

Any necessary changes will be sent via email and updated on the web. Event registration is via our website <https://www.daltonstate.edu/academics/cae-event-calendar.cms>.

The **Pedagogy Exploration Track** highlighted in blue is for anyone interested, the **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning/Writing track** is highlighted in yellow for those currently or wanting to work on scholarly projects, and the **High Impact Practices** track is highlighted in magenta for those actively working on or interested in redesign.

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
		1	2 Not Speech 101 3:15-4:00pm COMM Conference room	3
6	7 High Impact Practices Workshop 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA201	8	9 "Mindset" Book Discussion 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA206	10 Teaching Workshop "Captivating mini-lectures" Christy Price (DSC) 10:00AM-12:30PM PH111
13	14 SOTL/Writing Club 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA310	15	16 Teaching Tutor "How Can Grading Policy Options Influence Student Learning?" 3:30PM-4:30PM PH111	17
20	21 "Engaging in Difficult Dialogues" Book Discussion Session 2 - Race, Class, and Culture 3:30PM-4:30PM PH202	22	23 "Mindset" Book Discussion 3:30PM-4:30PM PH111	24 SOTL Workshop The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning as a Path to Academic Excellence Mary Carney & Denise Domizi (UNG/USG) 11:00AM-2:00PM PH111
27	28 SOTL/Writing Club 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA310			

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
		1 <i>Last Day of B Session Classes</i>	2 <i>"Self-Injury: What You Need to Know"</i> Training kindly provided by Charity Muse of Counselling Center 3:15-4:00, PH207. <i>B Session Final Exams</i>	3
6 <i>1st Day of C Session Classes</i>	7 High Impact Practices Workshop 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA201	8	9 "Mindset" Book Discussion 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA206	10 <i>"Safe Zone" Training</i> kindly provided by Charity Muse of Counselling Center 10:00-12:00 PH207.
13 <i>Spring Break</i>	14 <i>Spring Break</i>	15 <i>Spring Break</i>	16 <i>Spring Break</i>	17 <i>Spring Break</i>
20	21 SOTL/Writing Club 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA310	22	23 Teaching Tutor "What Are the 3 Worst Mistakes to Make in the Classroom?" 3:30PM-4:30PM PH111	24
27	28 "Talking Points: Engaging in Difficult Dialogues" Session 3 - Science and Religion 3:30PM-4:30PM PH202	29	30 Not Speech 101 3:15-4:00pm COMM Conference room	31 8 th Annual Dalton State Teaching & Learning Conference 8:00AM-5:00PM Peeples Hall

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
3	4 SOTL/Writing Group 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA310	5	6	7
10	11 High Impact Practices Workshop 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA201	12	13 Teaching Tutor "What are the secrets to providing highly effective feedback?" 3:30PM-4:30PM PH111	14
17	18 SOTL/Writing Group 3:30PM-4:30PM LIA310	19	20	21 5 th Annual Dalton State Student Scholarship Showcase 9:00AM-4:00PM Peeples Hall
24	25 "Talking Points: Engaging in Difficult Dialogues" Session 4 - Business, Politics, and Social Justice 3:30PM-4:30PM PH202	26	27	28

notes

8th Annual T&L Conference will be held Friday March 31st 2017, see www.daltonstatectconference.com

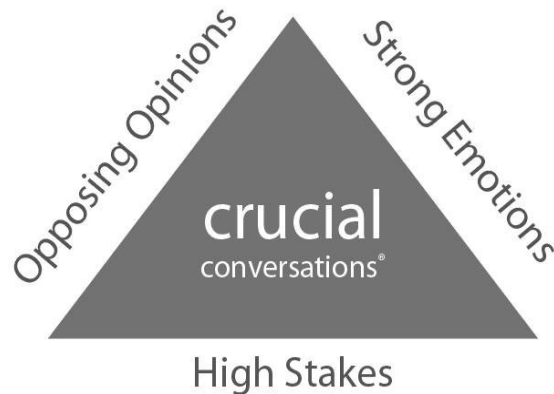
5th Annual Student Scholarship Showcase will be held Friday April 21st 2017 in Peeples Hall.

Graduation will be held on May 13th at the Trade Center

A & C Session Final Exams will be May 2nd- May 8th

Final Grades are due May 5th for Graduates, May 10th for all other students

“Engaging Students in Difficult Dialogues”



Part of our job as educators is to engage students in conversations that challenges their viewpoints whilst maintaining a tolerant and respectful classroom environment.

Join us for this opportunity to:

- Review materials with techniques for engaging students in difficult dialogues
- Test and discuss our own implicit biases
- Role-play challenging classroom scenarios to refine our skills

Session 1: Ground Rules (January 24th)

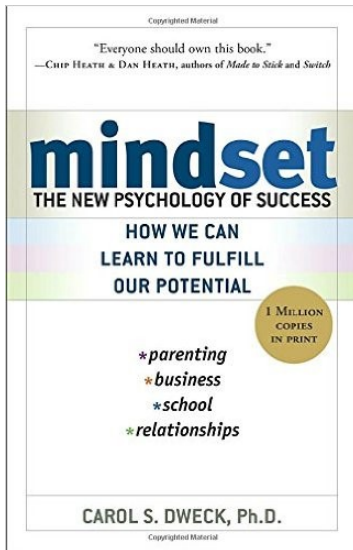
Session 2: Race, Class, and Culture (February 21st)

Session 3: Science and Religion (March 28th)

Session 4: Business, Politics, and Social Justice (April 25th)

3:30 PM-4:30 PM in PH202.

Each session is stand-alone. Faculty attending all four will receive a certificate of participation. To register, go to <https://www.daltonstate.edu/academics/cae-event-calendar.cms>



Book Group: *Mindset*, by Carol Dweck

Discussion led by Barbara Tucker

Book available used on Amazon for less than \$5.00.

An easy read that will be supplemented with other articles to facilitate discussion on helping ourselves and our students with learning self-efficacy and motivation.

February 9 (chapters 1 and 2)

February 23 (chapters 3 through 6)

March 9 (chapters 7 and 8)

Communication Conference Room (LIA 108)

First ten faculty or staff to register for this group on the [CAE website](#) get a free book!

IMPORTANT

The University System of Georgia plans to sustain its commitment to the development and adoption of Openly Licensed Educational Resources through continuing its Affordable Learning Georgia grant program. This plan was announced last week at the Symposium on the Future of Educational Resources at the Middle Georgia State University. Information on the next round of grants will be coming in April, if not sooner. Now would be a good time to be thinking of how you and possibly colleagues could develop or adapt open textbooks, courseware, and other materials.

The article on pages 11-17 will provide more information and give you names of colleagues who have been awarded grants.

The Overrepresentation of Minority Students in Special Education

Elizabeth N. Rhoades, Student, Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education

Dr. Roben Taylor, Associate Professor, School of Education

Abstract: This is an exploratory paper focusing on the disproportionate amount of minority students who are misplaced into special education. This paper will address three minority groups: African-Americans, Hispanics/Latino(a)s, and Native Americans/Alaskan Natives. This paper will cover statistics on each minority group, possible reasons for misplacement into special education, the outcomes these students face, and possible strategies to solve the issue.

Editor's Note: It is not usual editorial practice for *The Journal for Academic Excellence* to publish student work. However, this essay sent our way by Dr. Roben Taylor in the School of Education was deemed of value because of its insights into diversity in the U.S. and the potential needs of our student body as parents or family members of minority students in the public school system's special education programs.

The paper was originally submitted for Dr. Taylor's class in teaching diverse learners.

When provided appropriately, special education is extremely beneficial for students who require assistance in the day-to-day activities in a school setting. But what happens when a student is misplaced in special education? The disproportionate representation of ethnically and linguistically diverse students in high-incidence special education programs (mental retardation, learning disabilities, and emotional disturbance) has been a concern for over three decades (Artiles, Trent, & Palmer, 2004; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Dunn, 1968). According to the U.S. Department of Education, in the 2014-2015 school year, there were approximately six million students in special education. Of those nearly six million students, half are considered minorities.

With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004, states are required to have policies and procedures designed to prevent the inappropriate over-identification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities, including children with disabilities with a particular impairment [section 612 (a) (24)]. The National Association for Bilingual Education (2002) stated that, "Disproportionality occurs when the percentage of any particular ethnic or racial group that receives special education services is greater or less than the percentage of this group in the general school population" (p. 5).

Why is it such a great concern that children are being misplaced in special education? Not only is there a chance that they will receive inappropriate education, but there could also be long-lasting effects. Though states are now supposed to prevent the inappropriate placement of minority students in special education, this does not always occur, and there could be many causes of the misplacement. For the purpose of this paper, the minority groups on which I focus are Hispanics/Latino(a)s, African-Americans, and Native Americans/Alaskan Natives.

While the number of white students has declined, there have been large enrollment increases of Hispanics and Asians, two

groups that have seen overall population growth in the public school systems. Since 1997, the number of Hispanic students nearly doubled to 12.9 million, and the number of Asians jumped 46% to 2.6 million. The number of black students expected in schools this fall, 7.7 million, has been relatively steady during this time. Approximately, 12.9 million Hispanic /Latino(a) students represent the highest population of any minority in public education. The U.S. Department of Education reports there were 1,471,367, Hispanic/Latino(a) students of ages 6 to 21-year-old in special education in the 2014-2015 school year. That is almost 1.3 million Hispanic children who received early intervention and special education services. Sadly, 25% of Hispanic students with disabilities drop out of school.

The enrollment of Hispanic/Latino(a) students is followed closely by African-American students at 1,098,117. Author Ann S. Maydosz (2014) wrote in her article "Disproportional Representation of Minorities in Special Education Review" that "African-American children are identified as having mental retardation and emotional disturbances at rates greater than their white counterparts" (p. 1). Native Americans/Alaskan Natives follow with a slightly smaller number reported at 83,854 students.

Native Americans/Alaskan Natives are actually the fourth highest minority group behind Asians. I choose Native Americans/Alaskan Natives because they represent higher numbers labeled as Learning Disabled or emotionally disturbed. Most of the research I found shows that Asian students are listed in special education not only for Learning Disabilities but also due to being in gifted programs, which is not the focus of this paper. In the 2008 article "Achieving Equity in Special Education: History, Status, and Current Challenges," Skiba et al. wrote,

African American students are typically found to be overrepresented in overall

special education service and in the categories of intellectual disability and emotional disturbance, whereas American Indian/Alaska Native students have been overrepresented in the category of learning disabilities. (p. 268)

When looking at the number of minority students in special education, a question begins to form. Why are there so many students from minority groups in special education? There are a few reasons, one of the most obvious being that the minority population in America is growing every year. The United States Census Bureau website reports that from 2012 to 2014, the white population grew by 2,165,143, while the minority population grew by 2,777,873.

On the surface this might not seem like a significant difference, but the Census Bureau (2015) also projected that

[a]round the time the 2020 Census is conducted, more than half of the nation's children are expected to be part of a minority race or ethnic group. This proportion is expected to continue to grow so that by 2060, just 36 percent of all children (people under age 18) will be single-race non-Hispanic white, compared with 52 percent today.

While this does account for some of the higher rates of minority children in special education, it does not account for all the students who are misplaced in special education. Authors Echevarria, Powers, and Elliot (2004) noted that:

[d]isproportionate identification of students from certain ethnic and racial groups begins in general education when teachers view a child's poor academic performance and/or behavior as a problem inherent to the child. It is critical for general education teachers and administrators to understand the relationship between insufficient

academic and behavioral supports and interventions in the classroom and the overrepresentation of minorities in special education. (p. 19)

This means many students are referred to special education for what teachers perceive to be problems that actually are not.

If a child comes into a classroom with no prior knowledge or experience of how a classroom works, he or she will automatically be at a disadvantage. Many countries from which the Hispanic/Latino(a) population emigrates do not offer the same educational structure as the United States. These children are already behind and due to language barriers often have a hard time catching up to their peers.

If the teacher finds that he is unable to provide enough support for a child, the child is often referred to special education. The problems the child is having could be due to a number of factors, one of which could be poor previous instruction or none at all. Echevarria, Powers, and Elliott went on to say that

[m]uch of what students understand and are able to do in school is based on their background experiences, and most academic tasks and curricula reflect middle class values and experiences. Naturally, students who are culturally and linguistically diverse, especially those who are immigrants or from low socioeconomic status, may not have the requisite background to perform well academically. Their experiences and point of reference may differ significantly from those of the teacher and curriculum. (p. 22)

Hoover, Klingner, Baca, and Patton supported this stance in their book *Methods for Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners* (2008). The authors stated that

the proper interpretation of cultural and linguistic influences in the classroom requires educators to acquire an understanding of the differences between cultural/linguistic and disability behaviors, and use this knowledge to make informed instructional decisions. . . . This misinterpretation often occurs because teachers are not cognizant of the unique influences diversity brings to the classroom. (p. 39)

In a situation in which a student has difficulties focusing and talks out in class frequently, many teachers would lean toward concluding the child has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Due to differences in cultures, they might not realize the child is more used to a loud, active environment. Maydosz (2014) wrote that

[s]ome researchers propose that the overrepresentation of African American students in special education is a natural consequence of the poverty levels associated with minority status. Donovan and Cross, writing for the National Research Council (2002), argue that as minorities, African-American children have higher rates of exposure to lead, alcohol and tobacco, low-quality childcare and schooling and poor nutrition, all risk factors for disability. (p. 83)

Gentry (2009) stated that

[s]tudies have found that test bias, lower teacher expectations, lack of communication with parents, ineffective teaching strategies, mandated teacher accountability, and lack of experience in multiculturalism all contribute to the overrepresentation of minorities in special education. (p. 14)

Other possible causes for misplacement include student poverty, inequity in general education classrooms, issues in behavior management, external pressures in school (e.g. high stakes testing), the intrinsic nature of the children themselves, and teacher perceptions and attitudes.

So why is misplacement in special education considered a bad thing? When a student is appropriately placed in special education, they experience many positive outcomes. Special education is meant to provide the support and services children need in order to be successful in the academic life and beyond. When students are inappropriately placed in special education, the outcomes might not be as good. Gentry (2009) stated that “[t]he major concerns are that special education has stigmatizing effects on the children that negatively affect their self-esteem or self-worth and that they do not learn as much academically in special education as in general education” (p. 4).

The labels associated with special education are often hard to overcome in a general education setting, even if the child has been released from special education. Students who are in a special education program that uses “pull out” classes or segregates them from the general education classroom may often miss critical curriculum. These students can also miss out on opportunities to develop socially due to being separated from the rest of the school’s population. In the article “Improving Results for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students,” the author wrote that

[p]roblems associated with inappropriate classification and placement of minority include being denied access to the general education curriculum, being placed in separate programs with more limited curriculum that may affect the students access to postsecondary education and employment oppor-

tunities, and being stigmatized with a misclassification that may negatively affect the student self-perception as well as the perception of others. (As cited in Gentry, 2009, p. 8)

According to Oswald, Coutinho, and Best (2002),

[t]he arrest rate for students with disabilities is 27 percent for whites and 40 percent for blacks, and well over half of students with disabilities are unemployed two years after leaving school. Students diagnosed with disabilities who are able to find work after leaving school tend to achieve very low earnings and typically work in entry-level jobs that offer little potential for upward mobility. (p. 499)

Students who are misplaced in special education face a lifelong battle to be seen as regular people and not ones with special needs.

Since we can see that special education is not appropriate for all students, how can we reduce the number of students who are misplaced into it? Some strategies that could reduce the amount of inappropriate referrals may include revising teacher education. Authors Echevarria and Graves (2003) stated that

[p]reparing general education and special education teachers to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse students begins at the preservice level. Teacher preparation programs that address issues of diversity, second language acquisition, culturally relevant instruction methods and empirically supported interventions contribute to a teaching force that implements meaningful and appropriate instruction for students with differing abilities.

In order for students age 3 to 21 to be eligible for special education, they must have a disorder that affects their learning which includes but is not limited to Autism Spectrum Disorder, visual/auditory impairments, speech impairment, emotional and behavioral disorders, trauma, and intellectual disabilities. Upon further inspection and additional assessments, a group of professionals and the parents/guardians make up an eligibility team to determine the extent of special education the child in question needs.

If the eligibility determines that a child needs special education, then an Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be implemented for said student. While many teacher programs now teach to be culturally aware, it is not enough. Teachers need to put it into practice. Without knowing the culture of the students, teachers cannot properly assess many aspects of the students' education. Different factors of a students' cultures can contribute to how they learn, and without knowledge of these factors, a teacher cannot ensure appropriate education.

Other instructional staff should become knowledgeable about different cultures, underlying theories, and approaches to special education. Another strategy that could potentially help is to increase family involvement by educating them about their child's disability, provide support to the family as needed, and gain their trust and support in order to have them take a more active part in their child's education. Family input into their child's education can reveal new information about how the child learns. This could lead to the teacher being able to implement new educational strategies in order to give the child a greater chance of succeeding in his or her education.

The overrepresentation of Hispanic/Latino(a), African-American, and Native American/Alaskan Native children in special

education is an ongoing problem in the United States that will only worsen as their population grows in coming years. The misplacement of minority children not only affects their education in negative ways but also affects their lives in the work force. Many factors can contribute to the misplacement of minority students in special education, from a misunderstanding of their culture to test bias.

Teachers and students' families can help overcome the problem by educating themselves on different cultures and by becoming an active part of the child's education. Special education is meant to allow children with special needs to become successful in their education and lives, but special education may actually be a disservice to students who do not need it.

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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 have applicability across disciplines.

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 two reviewers approve it, it will be returned for the necessary editions and published when those issues are addressed. If three approve it, it will be published as is or with minor corrections.
4. Submissions should be sent as attached Word files to cae@daltonstate.edu; query should appear in the email text.
 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.