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Introduction

What can we say about this eighteenth volume of *Inquirer*? It is yet another testament to the commitment of BMCC's faculty, to the depth of our pedagogical and scholarly interests, and to the breadth of our capacities as teachers and learners. See for yourself.

Angie Beeman opens the volume with reflections on the dance of minds in her student sociologists' discussions and activities. Robin Brown reminds us to think about our students' learning as a lifelong pursuit, and Page Delano's tale of her sabbatical reminds us of the importance of our own lifelong learning. Brahmadeo Dewprashad's article helps us to take seriously our students' future professional success and excellence, and Jack Estes' sociological rap reminds us that we may teach such serious matters playfully. Alan Herman takes us back to the dreaded prerequisite and suggests ways to make students love it, and Jorge Arévalo Mateus picks up the beat with a historical, theoretical, and pedagogical reflection on *Cha-Cha-Chá*. Shane McConnell shows us that there is more than a hint of truth in the shortest of stories, and Kanu Nagra helps us to make use of the terabytes of information at our fingertips. Rosalie Russo-Gleicher engages a human services strategy to give students a chance to teach each other, and Rifat Salam provides a simple technique to get students to teach themselves. Vernon Smith helps us to think about psychological challenges for individuals living and learning in a wildly diverse world, and Mohammad Soleymani looks at what it means to learn about that same world's increasing political and economic homogeneity. Fittingly, Michelle Wang closes the volume with a poetics of questioning.

We hope you will enjoy this next installment in the story of what we do here at BMCC, and that you might like to add your chapter to the tale. *Bailemos*! Let's dance! *Cha-Cha-Chá*!

– The Editors
Matthew Ally
Elizabeth Wissinger (acting editor)

Functional Theories of Stratification and the End of the World: An Activity in Reading, Understanding, and Evaluating Social Theory in Introductory Courses

Angie Beeman
Social Science and Human Services

Activities and debates in introductory sociology courses can sometimes encourage students to cling strongly to their opinions rather than getting them to think more critically about the topics at hand. However, open debate and other activities are necessary to get students engaged with abstract concepts and theoretical scholarship, which can be quite intimidating, especially to community college populations. Many students in community colleges have greater limitations in analytical and communication skills than their peers in four-year colleges. The challenges they face in this area can also result in a lower confidence in reading and understanding the complex language of sociological theory. Students in general are under the mistaken impression that good readers and smart people can read an article quickly and understand it immediately (Bean 1996). When they have to read a theoretical piece more than once to understand it, they may feel that they simply are not intelligent enough or do not have the skills to understand it. Activities that put students in "real-world" situations where they have to solve a problem with other students can help them to start talking through theory in order to see how it can be applied, which, in turn, makes it less abstract. In teaching the Introduction to Sociology course at BMCC, I have developed an activity that accomplishes these very goals. I introduce the activity after a discussion of two core theoretical paradigms in sociology—functionalism and conflict theory—and a well-known debate about these two paradigms.

The Debate

The debate is between Melvin Tumin, Kingsley Davis, and Wilbert E. Moore. In 1945 Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore published an article entitled, "Some Principles of Stratification." In it, they argued that social stratification was natural and inevitable and fulfilled important societal needs. Without a system that rewarded certain positions over others, they argued, no one would be willing to undergo the necessary advanced training and sacrifice required to fill society's most demanding occupations. According to Davis and Moore (1945), to encourage people to undergo these challenges, such occupations must carry with them high salaries and prestige. In 1953, Melvin Tumin challenged Davis and Moore's theory, arguing that whatever positive functions stratification carried with it, there were also negative consequences. In Tumin's (1953) view, stratification prevented talented members of society from realizing their full potential and in that sense, society, as a whole, suffered losses. Tumin (1953) also questioned

one's ability to know which positions were more functionally important than others. He used the example of a factory. The engineer of that factory would receive higher pay and prestige than the factory worker, but was the latter any less important than the former? Could one exist without the other? Did they not depend on one another? Ultimately, Tumin (1953) argued, Davis and Moore's theory simply described and justified the current status quo.

The Activity

I introduce the activity early in the semester, when students are motivated. Before engaging in the activity, I expect students to read Melvin Tumin's summary and criticism of Davis and Moore's theory. I find that most students do come to class having read the article, but they are not at all confident that they have understood it. It is a difficult reading typically read in graduate school and has plenty of jargon. However, such a reading helps to set high expectations for the course and because we spend a number of classes on dissecting the article, students pick up valuable reading skills early on, which they can apply to other readings as the semester progresses.

In the activity, students must choose seven out of twelve people to survive in a bomb shelter. The only information students have to make this decision is the people's names, their gender, age, and occupation (See Appendix A). I adapted this activity from Woody Morris, a high school teacher in social studies/psychology. (In Morris' version of the activity, students also have other information, such as their health, IQ, and education.) Morris' objective for the activity is to get students to think about controversial ideas and to understand that sometimes there are no right or wrong answers. My purpose goes beyond that. I want students to gain the ability to step back from a controversial debate and evaluate it. I want them to learn how to assess competing explanations of a social phenomenon or problem and be able to critically evaluate which explanation is the more plausible one.

In the first step of the activity, students decide individually whom they would choose to survive in the shelter. Then I put the students into groups. In their groups, students present the explanations and rationales behind their decisions. After hearing each student's perspective, they must decide as a group which people to keep in the shelter. Students will debate for some time whether to keep the construction worker or the electrician or whether they should keep both children, but ultimately, their lists look very similar. None of the groups choose to keep the celebrity actress, media C.E.O., or NBA coach and very few choose the corporate lawyer. In other words, students do not choose the people who have the highest paid positions. Instead, they develop thoughtful and often passionate arguments for keeping the children, the teacher, the mental health case worker, construction worker, electrician, police officer, and so on.

After students have had sufficient time to debate, I ask them whether and how our results as a class support or contradict Davis and Moore's theory of stratification. There is usually a brief moment of silence as students slowly connect the activity they have just completed to what they read. Many of them argue right away that the results contradict Davis and Moore's theory because the

people they chose were not the highest paid. Some of them argue that the results support the theory because the people they chose were functionally important to the society they were building. Thus the activity immediately raises a range of interesting points about the debate. Did they support Davis and Moore's theory, because they chose the most functionally important people for their society? Or did they contradict Davis and Moore, because the people they saw as functionally important were not the highest paid? A brief discussion on these points ensues and students leave the class with instructions to review the articles, now in light of the class activity.

When students return to the next class, we continue our discussion of the debate, systematically examining each of Davis and Moore's premises as well as Tumin's critique of them. This portion of the activity helps students distinguish between Tumin's arguments and Davis and Moore's. First, I discuss the structure of Tumin's article. Tumin gives an overview of Davis and Moore's seven premises, and then he proceeds to debunk each of these. Although the structure of the article seems very straightforward, students often confuse Tumin's arguments with Davis and Moore's. Therefore, I place students in groups and each group focuses on one of Davis and Moore's premise as outlined by Tumin. As a group, they must explain the premise in their own words as well as Tumin's criticism of that premise. I check on each group's progress as they work. Then, the groups present their interpretation of the premises and criticisms and we discuss other relevant critiques of each premise.

We also discuss recent examples that can be applied to the debate. For instance, we examine stratification in pay within any given occupation. Celebrity actresses are often paid much more than those who work in communities, but students argue that those who work in communities are just as, if not more, functionally important than celebrities. This contradicts Davis and Moore's arguments. Also, students question whether the differences in pay for doctors and nurses correlate with their functional importance. Furthermore, we discuss differences in pay for plastic surgeons and emergency room doctors and debate whether or not salary correlates with their importance to society.

Finally, I ask students to write a paper on the debate, where they explain Davis and Moore's theory of stratification and Tumin's criticism of that theory. They must also describe the bomb shelter activity and how one might use the results of that activity to further critique Davis and Moore's theory (See Appendix B for instructions and rubric). Additionally, students must write on the debate as part of their first exam. Thus, the paper is not the end of the story. If they do not do well on the paper, they must go back and review the debate and improve their understanding of it by the first exam.

Data and Discussion

Overall, students do very well on the paper. I have conducted this activity with 325 students over the past three semesters. The average grade in the second semester on the papers was 85% and the average grade in the third semester was 86%. I did not ask students to write a paper in the first semester. I introduced the paper and expanded the activity by the second semester, due to students' poor

performance on the written portion on the exam, which included a question on the debate. By the third semester, fewer students missed the exam question on the debate. I attribute this improvement to the second activity. In the first and second semesters, after the bomb shelter activity, I did not engage students in a second activity, where they worked in groups to grapple with each premise in the theory. Instead, I used a PowerPoint to discuss each premise and the criticism of that premise. This seemed to increase confusion among students. It was clear to me after using the PowerPoint that students needed more time to discuss the arguments amongst themselves.

Overall, I find that this activity on Davis and Moore's theory of stratification accomplishes several learning goals. The activity is successful in getting students to connect abstract sociological theory with concrete ideas and examples. Students learn how to read through a complex article and distinguish between the author's arguments and their criticisms of other arguments. They also learn how to step back from a controversial debate and think critically about the arguments rather than merely reacting from their personal opinions. Furthermore, the activity improves their sociological and general vocabulary. Students learn the meaning of stratification, strata, status, tautology, dysfunctional, and functional importance, and they use these words more confidently in their writing. For example, in his critique of Davis and Moore, one student wrote:

> Tumin immediately points out that the "key term here is 'functionally important'" (Tumin 388). This term raises several more questions: functionally important for whom? Who decides? How do these jobs interrelate? Tumin would argue that the first flaw in Davis and Moore's theory is that the decision of what is "more functionally important" involves a "prior judgment" (Tumin 388)… Tumin lists several dysfunctional aspects of their theory and points out that stratification "limit[s] the possibility of discovery of talent" (Tumin 393).

Another student writes:

> "Two heads are better than one." It is a very well-known proverb within our language… Tumin criticizes Davis and Moore's theory by explaining this proverb. He states that the *Theory of Stratification* limits our society's intellectual power as a whole by dividing each person within their own societal importance. There is a status ladder in which only a limited amount of persons can climb and those who are unable to, are required to remain on the bottom; however by keeping those on the bottom we are limiting the strength in which our society or even world can develop.

Students not only use sociological vocabulary effectively in these examples, but they clearly and confidently communicate key issues in the debate.

The activity also allows students to learn how to read a complex piece of writing; that being a good reader is not the same as being a fast reader. They learn that to truly understand a difficult reading, they must read it more than once and

take notes as they read. Rather than simply explain this to the students, I share my own highlighting and the notes I have written all over Tumin's article.

The activity has an undeniably positive impact on students. In the middle of the semester and at the end, I ask students what they remember most about the course and what they might remember five years from now. The first topic students remember is the debate between Tumin and Davis and Moore. Specifically, they remember the bomb shelter activity and argue that it helped them to understand the article because it put them in a situation to which they could relate. In the third semester, one student stated that he had been applying the lessons he learned about reading sociological theory and evaluating arguments to more recent topics in the class, such as media analysis. Certainly, not every student will have such a positive reaction to the activity. However, I have yet to hear from a student who did not learn something valuable from it. In the future, I will consider an optional assignment, where students can research the debate further and write papers that they could present at a sociological conference.

Appendix A: Bomb Shelter Activity

Post-Nuclear War Survival[1]
Procedure:
Three days ago, nuclear war broke out around the world with massive attacks in all heavily populated areas. For the first 24 hours, radio broadcasts reported tremendous damage and loss of life in all areas, including the total annihilation of most of Earth's population. For the past 48 hours, there have been no broadcasts. Fortunately, the people listed on the back of this sheet were able to reach a fallout shelter in time to take cover and survive the initial devastation. You must assume that those in the shelter are, as far as you know, the only survivors of the war.

Here is the dilemma: There are twelve people in the fallout shelter, but there is not enough water or other supplies to keep them all alive until the atmosphere is safe. To survive, the people must stay inside the fallout shelter for at least three months. The problem is that if all of them stay in the shelter, all of them will starve to death or dehydrate. There are supplies enough to allow seven of the twelve people to survive.

Your task is to decide, based on the information given, which people will be allowed to remain (and live), and which people will be required to leave the shelter (and probably die). Carefully evaluate all information about each of the twelve persons. Consider age, sex, and occupation. **Then decide which seven will be allowed to stay in the shelter and which five must leave.**

List the seven people you would have survive and repopulate the Earth. Then list the five you would have leave the shelter.

After you have made your decisions, you will be placed with a group of other students. Each person in the group should present his or her decisions to the rest or the group. The task is to reach a consensus among the group as to who should stay and who should go.

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[1]Adapted from an activity by Woody Morris, Wewoka High School, Wewoka, OK. May 1994

People:

1. James Stanley
   Age: 43
   Sex: male
   Occupation: Police Officer

2. Janey Stanley
   Age: 5
   Sex: female
   Occupation: None

3. Wanda Brice
   Age: 25
   Sex: female
   Occupation: Mental Health case worker

4. Bill Waters
   Age: 47
   Sex: male
   Occupation: NBA coach

5. Michelle Patterson
   Age: 30
   Sex: female
   Occupation: Celebrity/Actress

6. Ray Wilson
   Age: 60
   Sex: male
   Occupation: Electrician

7. Gerald White
   Age: 25
   Sex: male
   Occupation: Construction Worker

8. Martha Gray
   Age: 35
   Sex: female
   Occupation: Medicine, Specialty in General Surgery

9. William Gray
   Age: 3
   Sex: male
   Occupation: None

10. John Davis
    Age: 33
    Sex: male
    Occupation: Elementary School Teacher

11. Marjorie Blaylock
    Age: 39
    Sex: female
    Occupation: Corporate Lawyer

12. Jeff Zucker
    Age: 44
    Sex: male
    Occupation: Media CEO

Appendix B: Instructions and Grading Rubric

Writing Assignment on Tumin vs. Davis & Moore

Sociology 100
Prof. Angie Beeman

Instructions:
What is Davis and Moore's theory of stratification? How does Tumin criticize that theory? How did our group activity challenge some of Davis and Moore's arguments and lend support to Tumin's criticism? In answering this last part of the question, it would be helpful to think about what happened in your groups. How

did you decide who got to stay in the shelter and who had to leave? Also draw on our discussion of the activity in the class that followed.
For further guidance, see the grading rubric in blackboard.

Grading rubric: Introduction to sociology

Assignment on Davis & Moore vs. Tumin

A-/A/A+--Excellent to Outstanding Performance
- Clearly summarizes Davis and Moore's theory in one's own words.
- Clearly summarizes Tumin's criticism of the theory in one's own words.
- Does not confuse Davis and Moore's theory with Tumin's criticism.
- Clearly summarizes class activity (bomb shelter) and discussion of the activity.
- Effectively shows how the results of the bomb shelter activity contradict Davis and Moore's theory of stratification.
- Does not rely on personal opinion but rather focuses on the arguments presented by the authors.
- Graceful style with no wordiness or repetitiveness, no grammatical or spelling errors.
- Summarizes key arguments in own words and does not plagiarize. Cites and quotes appropriately.
- Uses class material rather than outside sources (e.g., internet or other sources).

B-/B/B+--Good to Very Good Performance
- Clearly summarizes some of Davis and Moore's arguments but not all of them.
- Clearly summarizes some of Tumin's arguments but not all of them.
- Confuses some of Davis and Moore's statements with Tumin's and vice versa.
- Summarizes some of our class discussion and activity.
- Uses our class activity somewhat effectively to contradict Davis and Moore's theory, but misses key points in our discussion.
- Does not rely on personal opinion but rather focuses on the arguments presented by the authors.
- Little to no wordiness or repetitiveness, grammatical, or spelling errors.
- Summarizes key arguments in own words and does not plagiarize. Cites and quotes appropriately.
- Uses class material rather than outside sources (e.g., internet or other sources).

C-/C/C+--Satisfactory to Average Performance

- Summary of Davis and Moore's theory is not clear.
- Summary of Tumin's criticism is not clear.
- Confuses most of the statements Davis and Moore make with Tumin's criticism or vice versa.
- Does not effectively summarize our class discussion and activity.
- Does not effectively use our class activity to contradict Davis and Moore's theory.
- Some wordiness, repetitiveness, grammatical, and spelling errors.
- Does not always summarize key arguments in own words and/or cites/quotes inappropriately.
- Uses class material rather than outside sources (e.g., internet or other sources).

D-/D/D+

- Does not summarize one of the perspectives—either Davis and Moore or Tumin.
- Does not show a clear understanding of how Davis and Moore's arguments differ from Tumin's criticism and vice versa.
- Does not summarize class activity or discussion.
- Essay is poorly written with many spelling and grammatical errors. Essay is wordy and/or repetitive.
- Does not summarize key arguments in own words and/or cites/quotes inappropriately.
- Uses class material rather than outside sources (e.g., internet or other sources).

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- Student did not do the essay, was not present for activity, and/or essay contains plagiarized material.
- Does not use class material and relies on information gained from the internet

How to Graduate Lifelong Learners!

Robin Brown
Library

What is education? Is it about the delivery of certain facts? In part, surely, but education is not a finite process. In today's world, it is not a matter of delivering prescribed subject content, and then releasing the student into the world. We must give students the skills to succeed in a world that is caught up in an accelerated cycle of change. One such change is technological, stemming, as Candy (2002) points out, from "globalization… changing patterns of work... alterations in family and community relations, [and] the unprecedented explosion in available information" (3-4). Success in this environment requires the ability to continue to grow. An educated person is thus someone who has learned how to learn. "The evidence suggests that those people (and peoples) who fail to keep up with developments are likely to fall progressively further and further behind, and to become less employable and less competitive" (Candy, 2002:4). The essence of knowing how to learn is the ability to find, evaluate and use information according to accepted ethical standards. Essentially, these are classical library skills, broadened and reinterpreted to include information wherever it is found.

Although these skills are often taught with reference to a particular assignment, the ultimate goal is for the students to see them as skills that can be used whenever they are needed. So, "… the ultimate goal of information literacy is to impart the skill of life long learning or learning how to learn" (Grafstein, 2002:199). "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (Final report of the ALA 1989 Presidential Commission of Information Literacy, quoted in Candy 2002:6). If information literacy (rather than mere information itself) is the centerpiece of education, the "must have" when students graduate, whose responsibility is it to teach these skills? *It must be the responsibility of the entire faculty*. It is *our* responsibility.

Like any other skills, information literacy skills must be introduced, and then constantly reinforced. They must also be mandated in an environment where the students are held accountable. Since information is organized differently in different subject areas, teaching how to evaluate information and to use it effectively needs the attention of the subject specialist (Grafstein, 2002). Some aspects of information literacy are "domain-specific and inevitably entail collaboration between information specialists and subject matter experts" (Candy, 2002:10). This idea brings us to the core question: how is that to be accomplished? Many faculty teach aspects of information literacy without being explicit, without labeling them as such.

The core strategy is the use of assignments that require research, evaluation, and suitable use of information. Assignments that lead to independent manipulation of information come in many different forms.

- Annotated Bibliographies
- Finding a single article and writing a summary.

- Scaffolding—building to the research paper at the end of the term
- Traditional research papers

It gets more complicated, of course. The assignment is only a beginning. Are you sure they know how to do the assignment that you have just handed them? Should your grading rubrics change? What kind of information should we be requiring that they use? *This is where the library comes in*.

There is a great deal of help available. We offer standard library instruction, with two weeks' notice. We cannot, in one class period, teach your students everything they need to know about information literacy, but we can give some very practical tips about how to do the assignment that you have designed (particularly if we get to see if beforehand). We are also willing to meet with any faculty member individually, to provide support for integrating information literacy into your syllabi. Within this last year I have been developing an alternative model of instruction that is based on such collaboration. We are more than willing to work with any member on an extended basis, exploring how to more fully integrate information literacy themes into the curriculum.

Our doors are open to anyone who wants to explore this further. It is a lively debate, and the standards and opportunities are shifting constantly as the quantity and quality of available information increases. Still, three things are clear: We must require *independent research*; we must give our students *continuous support*; and we must maintain *high expectations* for the results.

References

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Resources

Information Literacy for Faculty and Administrators (ACRL) (2011). Available at: http://www.lita.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/issues/infolit/overview/faculty/faculty.cfm

Middle States Commission and Information Literacy (from John Jay College) (2011). Available at: http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/infolit/infolit4.html

BMCC Library, available at: http://lib1.bmcc.cuny.edu/

BMCC Library Instruction Request form, available at: http://lib1.bmcc.cuny.edu/services/classrequest.html

Sabbatical Matters: Working in New Territory

Page Delano
English

From October through December, 2010, I lived in the 14th arrondissement in Paris, in a lovely one bedroom apartment I rented from an academic who taught at the War College in London, a fitting if accidental connection for someone interested in women and war. My first project, alas, was to revise an article I had brought with me, and then to begin research (and writing) about American women in France during World War II—those who were interned by the Germans, those who took part in the Resistance, and those who escaped across the border into Spain, then to Portugal, and freedom. My 80-percent-of-full-pay paycheck landed in my checking account every two weeks, I scraped by on lentils, endives, a lemon compote I'd discovered in the New York Times, baguettes traditionelles, cheap red wine and a lot of walking. Sadly, the Paris velibs—nearly free bikes—remained unavailable as my credit card did not work in their system. I stayed off the English Department listserve as much as possible, deleted large swathes of BMCC email, and enjoyed the blessings of Skype and free calls to U.S. landlines on my landlord's home phone. I was in Paris during the big demonstrations (manifestations) about the change in retirement, and I dutifully watched the talking heads and news of the blockaded oil depots on TV until I did something to the TV that blacked it out for the rest of my stay.

I had planned to return to Paris in the spring for two or three months, but family matters got in the way. Instead of returning to the article I'd been working on about American women in France, I started going to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) at the Tamiment Library housed in NYU's Bobst Library (another project proposed in my sabbatical application). I was looking for some material about how the American nurses who had joined the American Medical Brigade had crossed into Spain as international volunteers during the Spanish Civil War. It seemed a simple problem, but what did I know? What I found brought me back day after day to read more papers and letters written by the nurses themselves, from 1937-1939, and also in later years as they tried to recreate a history of their experiences.[1]

What I want to stress here is the role of accident in research—I had no idea what I would discover; that I would discover, for example, that the nurses had been supplied with condoms when they set out for Spain—clearly a matter that could not be made public in 1937. I knew enough about cruel rumors regarding American women serving in the US military during World War II to know that anything indicating women's sexual independence and agency had to be kept quiet. But it also intrigued me, a sign of women's sexual and thus social agency,

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[1] The papers of Frances Patai (who actually was on the faculty at BMCC), are vastly rich in details about the nurses who went to Spain; she was building on the papers, letters, interviews, etc. of Fredericka Martin, who had been a nurse/volunteer in Spain, and then proceeded to try to write a history. Both women's projects were unfortunately curtailed by their deaths. A solid history of the American medical units, doctors and nurses, remains to be written.

and I realized that this would be the germ of an essay that fit into my larger project on American women crossing the Spanish French border 1937-1945. A happy accident of research—yet, if it needs to be said, it is not that I roamed anywhere the whim took me. These were solid and interesting projects, projects I was eager to work on—the accidents fell within this context of devotion and ambition.

This happy accident was possible because I was on sabbatical, a year-long sabbatical I had been awarded to complete early drafts, and to begin new essays connected to my work on American women and World War II—and to work on a poetry manuscript that has been in progress for at least a few years, with some idea of connecting at least some of this work to future teaching. All in all this was an ambitious multi-faceted project which I hope wooed the College P & B and the President because of its quality, not quantity.

It is undoubtedly a great honor, and a privilege, to be awarded a nearly full salary to pursue one's research, creative interests, and writing (the 80% salary is a provision from the latest PSC-CUNY contract, which must be carefully protected from the current budgetary chaos). But while it is an honor, I also feel that it is a right as well. Not just because I've been teaching for six years (preceded by some 18 years in various positions in CUNY and other NYC colleges), but because I needed this renewal, this time to think, uninterrupted by thinking of my students—a mother's illness, having been kicked out of the father's home, the baby with autism, the difficulties with documentation (a brother being chased by the INS, a husband locked up by the INS), a job that interferes with the class assignments, etc., a difficult boyfriend, two friends recently killed in shootings, a sister who is mentally ill and needs assistance—in addition to the many other challenges our students face, not prepared to read or write a college level essay…. I love my students. I treasure them. I respect them. I challenge them. They frustrate me. They disappoint me. They surprise me. They astound me. I give them A's. I fail them. But, for a year, it has been very good to escape their presence in the classroom, and to not find them in my unconscious nearly every day and week and month of the academic calendar.

Thus, the sabbatical has been an honor, but also a necessity—a time to breathe, to be able to think full thoughts, and time to devote to research, to focus on projects that have been simmering for perhaps years. Indeed, I did not know how much I needed this expanse of time until I was sitting on the no. 38 bus in November, during an unexpected snowstorm. I was heading from the Place Victor and Helene Bosch (an elderly, political, Jewish couple the Nazis killed during the war) to the Gare de l'Est, the train station where I was going to take a train to Vittel, in the Vosges, eastern France not that far from Nancy. In this spa town, with its scads of hotels, the Germans had imprisoned some 2000 British women and 450 American women living in France during World War II, and I was on my way to see it, to spend two nights in a hotel which it turned out had been attached to the 'camp' in 1941-45. Going on this trip made this part of my project more real, in way that reading about it from afar could never have accomplished.

Just recently, in Paris again for a too-brief stay, I was visiting CC, a French professor of science and history, author of a number of books about the history of

science, now working on a novel about the Piltdown Man, the supposed human who pointed to humankind's origins, origins much earlier than had previously been thought. With financial support from her Paris university, she had traveled to various parts of England, to East Sussex to see where the bones of this early man had been supposedly unearthed, in 1912, and she had visited a British scientific society in London which had celebrated this discovery, proven in 1953, to their dismay, to be fabricated, simply the bones of an orangutan. Her account validated my own foray to Vittel—where I had found, not surprisingly, and once again, that historical memory is difficult to keep. There seemed little record of the three years of internment, and little historical memory among the townspeople, even at the one-room welcome center at the train station, that same station where the hundreds of women had arrived, and where some 300 Jews from Eastern Europe had been forced onto two transports of trains to be reshipped to the east, to their immediate deaths at Auschwitz and other killing camps.[2] (My French colleague CC's experience was a little different: a memory remained. Apparently the scientific society she visited was somewhat hostile to this historical counterfeit being unearthed once again). Perhaps if I had dug deeper in Vittel, I would have encountered the same reluctance to remember, for those were, indeed, bad years, even if there were parallel tales of resistance and heroic deeds.

Names of Vittel Jews smuggled out by a passeur, written on cigarette paper by British internee Sofka Skipwith, with an urgent "SOS" to provide papers for the Jews who had come from the East.

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[2] The sole reminders of these war years are a sign at the Grande Hotel that it was a hospital for the American Army in both WWI and WWII (with no mention of the interned people) and a plaque to the Polish poet Ytzak Katznelson, who wrote his grim memoir and hid it here before the Germans shipped him to Auschwitz with his son, where they both were gassed upon arrival. Vittel offers an interesting, bleak combination of those who were treated very well—British and American women—and those whose brief stay was solely a respite from horror and death.

One Internet link names the Piltdown Man "the man that never was" (Talk Origins Archive). Although he is the subject of CC's research, he is for me as well a fitting trope for a sabbatical—not that one's research ends in collapse, but that one is constantly re-inventing what one knows about one's subject, one's topic, one's fervent passion, in pursuit of a man that never was. While the Piltdown Man was a conscious hoax on the part of people yet to be identified, many of the people I am seeking to find out about indeed existed, but the historical record has faded, or indeed never existed. Some feminist scholars of the French war years have noted that women in particular were not 'recorded'—in part because they themselves thought their work in the resistance, or perhaps as internees, wasn't that important, in part because—as I suspect—they returned to a normal life as much as possible when war ended (Veillon). But the sabbatical scholar in general traipses through a territory when he or she is inviting and retrieving something that, up to this point, has not existed. In the sense we are creating knowledge in the process. The validity of our projects, in their final forms as essays, or poems, or books, we leave up to our peers to assess. A little more on that later.

Historical memory is a complicated thing. Paris is full of signs about Resistance fighters who fell, or were shot by the Germans. It took years for the French to acknowledge the complicity of the Vichy government and the French police in both rounding up Resistance networks and Jews throughout France. Since Jacques Chirac's statement in 1995 that the French state was complicit in Nazi crimes, signs have emerged that note, for example, at schools around the city, the deportation of Jewish school children and their deaths occurred "because they were born Jewish, innocent victims of Nazi barbarism with the active complicity of the Vichy government" (my translation). And indeed, Paris is certainly a city built upon memory, and its erasure—of the French revolution, glorious monuments to both neo-classicism and modernity, and an urban public space and aesthetic that speaks of France's Enlightenment heritage. The ancient city torn down and replaced by the Haussmannian construction; the Hotel de Ville burned down during the Paris Commune of 1871, fully rebuilt—to name a few re-constructions. But of course, the construction of this narrative is always under revision, revised to suit current political needs.

My reader must forgive me—my reader may see that I want to talk about the work I've been doing, what I've been thinking, how I am revising the article on "The Things They Carried"—what the nurses took to Spain, my three days in snowy Vittel, the bus stop at avenues Alésia and General LeClerc. Indeed, in researching this article, I have found that one of the most common ways that sabbaticals are explained (which is, I assume, a form of assessment) is through narratives. I am more than happy to relate the trip to the British Archives in early December, my great disappointment in not finding bookbinder Mary Reynolds's name mentioned as one of Gabrielle Pacabia's agents in the Gloria Network (a resistance cell in the Paris area which the Gestapo chased and ultimately destroyed). But I did hold in my humble hands a statement written by Samuel Beckett, explaining his work with the Gloria network, in which he does mention Reynolds. At my visit to the Getty Museum archives, which I visited for a day after giving a paper at the MLA in early January, I held numerous letters by Man

Ray to his sister, correspondence between Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, and even some letters that Mary Reynolds wrote to him, some about his paintings she had carried on her back while she traversed the Pyrenees in 1942. The point is not to reify these objects, but there is something about getting so close to the source, to the moment, enabled by the unusual expanse of time a sabbatical gives one to locate such objects, arrange visits, and think about them… as part of incorporating them into a project, even if the project takes a turn as a result of encountering such objects. After all, most turns worth taking take time.

Instead of a neat narrative overview, however, I want instead to address the importance of the sabbatical, some of the differing views of why the sabbatical, and the varied ways in which sabbaticals might be 'assessed,' which may be of import in our over-zealous age of assessment.

In "An Overview of the Sabbatical Leave in Higher Education: A Synopsis of the Literature Base," Bai Kang and Michael T. Miller (ERIC 1999) found that since Harvard began the practice in 1880 (and in the 1930s some 178 institutions took up this released time practice), sabbatical leave has become widespread throughout American universities, and is seen generally as a way to boost faculty morale and at the same time benefit the institution by furthering scholarship. Etymologically, the word sabbatical is rooted in the term Sabbath (or Shabbat), the biblical concept of the seventh day of rest and worship. The Sabbatical was in ancient usage as an agricultural term, where vineyards and fields lay fallow every seventh year. In the 1880s the term was introduced to education, indicating a period, again, every seventh year, in which the professor was not expected to produce a "crop" of students (noted in Kang and Miller 6). The purpose of the academic sabbatical presents a broad visage, at once a time to restore one's abilities as a teacher and a time to create new scholarly work. I think it's possible that both aspects have been at work in the last 80 years—against burnout (which seems to occur in no matter what institution one teaches), and for increased scholarly/creative production. There is also, perhaps, a tension between the value for the individual faculty member and for the institution as a whole; data shows that the individual faculty member is the beneficiary. As Kang and Miller note, "the allowance of free time without interruption from daily routine work" seems to reinvigorate the faculty member.

Universities (provost's offices, etc.) often grant sabbaticals on the basis of the merit of the project, and the likelihood that it will be completed. Some colleges insist that the quality of the project should be judged by the faculty. Some suggest that all projects submitted are worthy of support, even if some need tweaking and revising before being re-presented to the decision-making bodies. Some argue that the sabbatical is a time for renewal; others suggest that it is a component of faculty development, part of maintaining a "high caliber" of faculty (Sabbatical Leave, Fort Lewis College) or even that it is a compensation for a generally lower salary than that in other fields. In some institutions a sabbatical is a release every four (!) to seven years, not automatically granted, of course, but for which one is eligible.

The CUNY bylaws note this (but they're out of date, since the salary compensation is now much greater):

The granting of such leave shall not be in any sense automatic, but the board will consider the advantage to the applicant as a scholar and teacher to be expected from such leave, and the consequent advantage, through his/her service to the college. Special consideration will be given to those applicants who have not had a sabbatical leave in fourteen or more years. Sometimes sabbaticals are dependent on staffing considerations.

My sense is that the 14-years guidelines at CUNY are not enforced, but it is clear that there are wide variances in different institutions, within CUNY and beyond—with the common features of full-time employment, tenured or on a tenure track. This is not an essay about the erosion of faculty salaries and rights: I leave it to my reader to explore such issues outside of this reading. But suffice it to say, the larger research institutions offer a much greater plate of research and release time, support from institutes and grants, than public institutions, even when faculty are expected to do research and publish (and surely, many faculty themselves expect to do so). A contributor to a Chronicle of Higher Education forum notes that some institutions have a 2/3 rate of granting sabbatical requests. Another contributor to this same forum noted a recent 'equalizing' in granting releases to older faculty members who "haven't done much of anything in 17 years" and to the newer members who need time to publish to get tenure. We can note a possible similar conflict among community college faculty in this tension. While this is not the focus of this essay, it is perhaps a conversation that might take place among our colleagues.

A recent article in Academic Leadership, The On-Line Journal offered a commentary about sabbaticals:

He (Bachler 1995) also argued that sabbaticals are effective tools for combating burnout, morale problems, and stress. Douglas (1995) took an ideologically similar stance in defining the need for sabbatical leave programs, with a more intellectual-focus than an employee-management focus. Referring to them as a 'pause' from academic duty to 'recharge batteries,' Douglas indicated that sabbaticals should be opportunities for faculty members to examine disciplines, ideas, scholarship, etc., from a different perspective, one which has no specific predetermined outcome. Douglas' column incited a number of letters to the Chronicle of Higher Education defending the ideals of sabbatical leaves as something that should not be quantified into specific outcomes. These letters to the editor were consistent with much of the anecdotal literature praising sabbatical leaves (Wilson, 1999; Patrick, 1991; Reynolds, 1990).

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) indicates an interesting perspective in 1995. The academic senate of community colleges of California reproduced their comments in "Sabbaticals: Benefitting Faculty, the Institution, and Students,"(2007) in the face of severe budget cuts threatening sabbaticals at public community colleges.

> Leaves of absence are among the most important means by which the teaching effectiveness of faculty members may be enhanced, their scholarly usefulness enlarged, and an institution's academic program strengthened and developed. A sound program of leaves is therefore of vital importance to a college or university, and it is the obligation of faculty members to make sure of the available means, including leaves, to promote their professional competence. The major purpose is to provide opportunity for continued professional growth and new, or renewed, intellectual achievement through study, research, writing, and travel. (AAUP 1995, quoted in "Sabbaticals: Benefiting")

I share these thoughts, and my own, not to be polemical but to note the various perspectives on sabbaticals, of which I had been relatively ignorant when I applied for mine. I, for example, only stumbled into the importance of travel when I realized I had time enough to spend a few months in Paris, made possible by finding an apartment through a sabbatical rental website (I rented after efforts to secure a Craig's List free exchange did not materialize). My excursions to Vittel and London seemed to me somewhat whimsical, until I realized they were valid and crucial components of my research.

So, the question remains—how to assess the sabbatical? Certainly, publication is one component, although this may take longer than the applicant anticipated in her proposal. That one might re-invigorate teaching is another aspect—whether this means rethinking a particular curriculum, creating new courses, adding insight into courses long taught, or even simply refueling for the delicate dance of the classroom. All this and more may be fruit of the year (or semester) away. The interruption, itself, I would argue—the time in which the faculty is not required to plant seeds in the field of students, but to think widely, wildly—may be a less 'measurable' aspect. I know that I started reading last August/September always asking myself the familiar question: 'how would I teach this text'—something I love about reading, but also a burden to reading. Then, slowly, I shifted: reading fiction for sheer enjoyment with no questions or goals in mind—and reading piles of books from the Brooklyn College library (and still, relying on the good efforts of my colleagues in BMCC's library for interlibrary loan books and articles). This reading, freed and apart from immediate concerns with students and the classroom, opened up new ways of thinking and seeing.

Is it possible that a sabbatical is a great 'paleontological hoax,' as Wikipedia describes the Piltdown Man? In trying to write a true text or two, might I yet come up with orangutan bones (not consciously, of course)? Now, as of August, I count the sabbatical over. I am merely on summer leave, folding into preparing my fall courses. Now I can look at the sabbatical as a thing of the past. I'm not quite ready to assess it in full, but I do know that the lift of "morale" and other aspects of renewal have been crucial partners to the intellectual and artistic path I've taken these fourteen months. It has stirred up novel ways of thinking and seeing, and, more important, ways of imagining what perhaps is not there until we create it.

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Looking Both Ways

Brahmadeo Dewprashad
Science

Community college faculty members tend to be zealous in helping underserved and under-prepared students transition to college courses and develop their academic confidence and strengths. As such, it is common practice for community college faculty members to tailor their pedagogies and assessment with due consideration to students' diverse learning styles, academic background, language and comprehension proficiency, family and work responsibilities, and so on. This is wonderful and as it should be. However, community college's promise to underserved and under-prepared students is not just "A good place to start," but usually is (or should be) in line with BMCC's banner of "Start here, go anywhere." If community colleges are a good place for our students to start, and our goal is to prepare them to "go anywhere," of equal if not greater importance is to prepare them to compete and excel when they get wherever they are going. This is particularly true in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines where the large majority of our students come not for a specific certification or training for a job, but as preparation for transfer to senior colleges to continue studies in the STEM disciplines or in professional health sciences programs. As such, it is a worthwhile endeavor for community college faculty members, and in particular those in the STEM disciplines, to reflect regularly on their classroom practices on how well they prepare students for future success and excellence.

It could be argued that such reflection is not of primary importance, and may not be warranted, since the general belief is that students who start at a community college perform as well at senior colleges as native four-year school students. Two studies are often cited to support this belief. One such study compared GPAs of native and transfer students at a southern four-year institutions and found no significant GPA differences in cumulative upper division GPAs (1). In another study, undertaken in an accounting class at a senior college, transfer students performed better than native students (2). These two studies may well imply that a similar scenario occurs nationwide; however, there does not seem to be a body of similar studies that would support or dispute these findings. In addition, a survey of 133,000 seniors of their participation in "high impact" activities, like internships, doing research with a mentor, and undertaking a culminating senior experience, like a capstone course or senior seminar, found that 40 percent of native seniors had participated in such activities, compared with 30 percent of transfer students from other four-year colleges, and 25 percent from community colleges.

Such "high impact" activities greatly enrich students' education and better prepare them for the workforce, yet it seems as though community college students are not taking full advantage of such opportunities (3). A further indicator, that seems not to have been studied, is how well students transferring from com-

munity colleges do at the start of their senior college studies. I once listened to a presentation that included data of such performances for students transferring to specific STEM disciplines in a sister senior college and the data indicated that initially these students experienced a dramatic decrease in GPA, but that over time their GPA increased. I do not dispute the data presented, as anecdotal feedback from many of our Science and Engineering students who have transferred to senior colleges seems to support it. In addition, many of these students have shared the disappointments, frustrations, and (for some) heartbreaks they felt on having difficulties adjusting to coursework at senior colleges. As such, I put special effort into preparing students taking my organic chemistry classes. Here I will share some examples of practices both outside and within the classroom that help prepare students for success at senior colleges and beyond in the hope that it promotes similar refection by other community college faculty members.

Organic Chemistry I and II are traditionally taken by science students in their sophomore year in college. Undergraduate organic chemistry has a reputation of being a "killer course" even at elite STEM institutions, and has been placed on a short list of courses that act as "filters" to the science pipeline (4, 5). In order to train my students to leave these courses with skills desirable at this level, I need to be aware of what skills and competencies students nationwide are expected to have upon completion of these courses. Textbooks are not usually the best indicators of such knowledge as there is a tendency to give the widest breath of coverage without weighing the relative value of each concept covered. As such, instructors working lockstep with a textbook can end up covering a sea of material at the expense of developing student's in-depth competencies in core concepts. In addition, textbooks tend not to directly address the development of analytical skills, curiosity, and people skills of students. Though typically under-emphasized, such skills are as valuable as subject knowledge itself.

Subscribing to and reading every issue of the *Journal of Chemical Education* (for as long as I have been teaching) has been helpful, and serving as a reviewer of the journal over a number of years has been similarly helpful. But it is not enough. In addition to keeping up with the educational literature, I have found that regularly developing new pedagogical techniques (suitable for use not only in community colleges but also senior colleges), writing manuscripts on the same, and subjecting these latter works to external peer-review has been immensely helpful. The feedback from students and peers alike has forced me to reflect on my own teaching and, at the same time, to align my work with national norms. Presentations at meetings are, of course, a great way to communicate one's work and share one's interests as a teacher and scholar. However, I have found that audience feedback can be generous and accommodating and lacking the hard and cool clarity of anonymous feedback that is often necessary to ascertain that one is on a sound pedagogical track for a particular concept or topic. Service to national professional organizations can also be helpful. I currently serve as Consultant to The Division of Chemical Education Committee on Chemistry in the Two-Year College and the Society Committee on Education (SOCED) Task Force on Two-Year College Activities. My interactions and discussions with other chemical educators on this committee have also provided me with new

insights into the core competencies in which we need to train our students.

Developing awareness of requisite core competencies for a course is but the first step, and it is the easiest step. Before I even start teaching chemical concepts, I work on selling to the students the benefits of developing core competencies in the course, as well as analytical, inquiry, and "soft" skills. In addition, for every major concept that I teach, I try to show how the concept is applied to our every-day lives and/or its relationship to concepts to be covered in higher level courses at senior colleges. Students usually seem convinced of the need to develop these skills and core competencies. What is much more challenging is motivating them to work hard enough to develop true proficiency in their core competencies.

This is an uphill battle. Many students (including some who earned As in the prerequisite courses) display a surprising lack of knowledge of even the funda-mentals of some of the most important concepts covered in prerequisite courses. This makes the work much more challenging, as the fundamental concepts in the pre-requisite courses are the foundations on which the course concepts are based. This is in no way a criticism of the previous course instructors as each class has its own challenges and instructors can only do so much in a semester, particularly with under-prepared students. In addition, there are many dedicated and well-intentioned instructors who do try to challenge students to work harder and master core concepts but are sometimes forced to relent in response to vo-ciferous pushback from students. As such, I accept that many students in my classes come in without all of the necessary prerequisite background and start from there.

For every concept I teach, I review and practice students in the foundation concepts from the pre-requisite course. This does require extra time. As my sec-tions of the courses are writing intensive, I use writing assignments to reinforce these fundamental concepts. For major concepts covered, I ask students to ex-plain how these concepts are related to concepts learned previously. These as-signments not only provide them with an opportunity to review the fundamental concepts but also to practice discerning the connectivity between concepts and developing their analytical skills. I have also been able to use writing to help stu-dents develop the ability to determine the most important concepts in each chap-ter. I usually ask students to select a concept (one from each chapter) that they feel is very important, to explain it using suitable examples, and to describe the reasoning behind their choice. I have noticed that the better performing students are usually able to identify the most important concepts. The poorer performing students in many cases do not demonstrate that they are able to do so initially. The topics that they choose tend to be the ones that are relatively simple and eas-iest to understand. I wondered if this was because they really believe that their chosen topics are indeed the most important ones or they simply choose topics that they find easiest to explain. My subsequent discussions with them about this lead me to conclude that both of these factors play a part in their choices. The encouraging thing though is that as the semester progresses, through repeated efforts to write about what they understand, many of these students do make the switch and are able to select and explain the most important concepts.

A major portion of my classroom time is spent applying core concepts to

solve practical problems. Each student is assigned to a group and encouraged to contribute to the group's effort. A member of the group then presents the group's solution to the class. As such, attention is not drawn to any individual student's weaknesses but to the group's collective strength. Such group work develops students' analytical as well as "soft" skills. I have found that the practice of applying concepts immediately after they are taught is advantageous in that it provides both the instructor and student with immediate feedback on concepts learned and any remediation required. Participation by each student helps to develop core competencies not only in highly motivated and better-prepared students, but in students of every level.

Assessment is also crucial. Assessments not only provide both instructors and students with feedback on the extent of learning that has occurred but signals to students the skills than an instructor values. As such, I pay particular attention to designing exams. I do not ask students to solve problems that we have previously solved or are in the book. Reproducing memorized information is not a valuable skill, neither in the discipline nor in a professional workforce. However, I do ask students to solve analogous problems, and especially problems that require them to apply several different concepts. (I always make sure that adequate practice is provided such that students can develop the necessary skill and confidence to undertake such problems.) In addition, I do not let student use "cheat sheets" nor do I give extra-credit assignments to make up for poor exam scores, despite many students' expectations based on their stated past experiences. In addition, final exams are comprehensive and account for about 40% of the course grade. To take some of the sting out, I do drop the lowest score of these hour long exams. These assessments may seem tough, but they motivate students to prepare to a level that, if maintained, will make the transition to senior college easier.

Research experiences can play a major role in developing students' curiosity. For that reason, I engage students in my research into the chemistry of medicinal plants from the Caribbean. Every semester, I try to recruit students from my classes to work on research projects with me and to share their work with the class. In addition, I make arrangements for many of these students to do some of the work in sister senior colleges and to eventually present their work at regional and national meetings. A few of these students have won prizes for their research. In addition, upon transfer each of my research students has continued the "high impact activity" of research at his or her senior college. Many of these students have gone on to work in research and/or other STEM and Health related professions. I often invite them back and have them talk to current students about their research experiences at BMCC and how it has helped them along the way. This works as a nice adjunct to discussion of significant research findings of other students and professionals, particularly those in our sister CUNY colleges.

Challenging students to work at a higher level than they are accustomed is not without risks. Student frustration can rear its head and student evaluations can dip. In addition, retention rates can go down as some underperforming students become demoralized. I do identify and privately seek out such students, discuss any challenges these students face, and offer extra help sessions. Many (though not all) of these students take up these offers and do improve. Most im-

portant though, throughout the course I make sure students understand why I am asking more of them. This can be a hard sell as, although many students do have ambitions beyond a two-year college, they do not often have a realistic grasp of the skills and competencies that will be required for them to realize those ambitions. As such, I often have to make convincing augments using specific examples of successful strategies and successful students. The majority of them, in time, come to the understanding that such efforts on their part will work to their benefit in the long run. For some, of course, the realization does not come until after they have transferred to a senior college and come face-to face with its rigors. This does not matter. There are no guarantees. Teaching is not about validation, but about always doing what is best for the students, even when it is the more difficult thing to do.

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Sociology Rap

Jack Estes
Social Science and Human Services

Sociology is powerful meaningful stuff.
Knowing *names* just ain't enough.
What did these folks try to say?
That's what matters—*Hey! Hey!*

Start with Comte, sociology's pappy,
saw this field as cool and snappy.
It took the place of philosophy's schtick;
better than the Pope for makin' things tick.

Durkheim followed with *social facts*,
convinced his readers that our acts
are all due to the force of others:
friends, strangers, even our mothers.

Then we had our good man Tonnies:
Gemeinschaft and *Geshellschaft* funnies.
Why do you REALLY wanna be my friend?
Am I just a means to an end?

Weber too gave that some thought:
Sometimes got a bit overwrought.
Rational acts are for a reason;
Nonrational acts are in that free zone.

Ah, this takes us up to Karl.
Marx, that is, who wears a snarl
for those who think that life is fair.
Only the *rich* get anywhere.

Revolt, peasants! Revolt!

Herbert Spencer—What's his thing?
Saw *his* world with lots of bling.
If you're fit you will survive.
The others don't deserve to be alive.

Jane Addams—*a social engineer*
who went to work to make things fair
and won a Nobel Prize for *doing*
Not just *talking* lots of *hooey*.

On to WEB DuBois
who saw more problems than he saw joy,
problems caused by *racial hate*.
He had *those* issues on *his* plate.

It rests with Thomas and his theorem of old—
Things come down to what we're told:
If we believe, it has an impact—
Don't really matter if it's a fact.

These aren't just names I'm rapping 'bout.
Names ain't really worth this shout.
What we have here are deep-down ways
that we can *think* (and get A's).

- by Jack Estes

Making a Prerequisite Feel like an Elective

Alan Herman
Health Education

I remember the prerequisite courses during my college years. I was never happy about them. I felt left out of the 'normal process'—whatever that was. How could the prerequisites help me? Why did they have to help me? Thank you, college, for having my best interests in mind, but no thanks.

Other students felt as I did. We talked about the prerequisite annoyance. Rudiments and elementary facts we already knew—or so we thought. We'll just do it, not think about it. What next, we sighed to ourselves? We had attitudes.

Now, as a teacher of a prerequisite, I sense these attitudes when I look out at my students on the first day. Many will also become friends over this common enemy. Could the prerequisite ever feel like an elective?

Appreciating the context helps. College offers choice, independence, and opportunities. Colleges intend achievement, but expect students to take responsibility and be realistic about ability and readiness. Can students accept this responsibility? How can students begin with the best chances for success?

These questions inform college policy regarding admission and advancement, and prerequisites. It is assumed that students may not understand their weaknesses, may not sense the value of 'success' skills and fundamental knowledge, and may fail without remediation. As a result, they may not willingly accept the need to take a prerequisite.

While prerequisites can strengthen the potential of higher education (US-DOE, 2006), and insure that "all accepted students have the foundational… knowledge to successfully complete the advanced courses…" (Northwestern University, 2010), prerequisites may only be hoops colleges impose, hoops without guarantees that can mean higher costs for students, and greater risks for colleges. "Insufficient prerequisites lead to inadequate preparation and thus inadequate performance… This leads, in turn, to an increase in withdrawal rates and a drop in success rates. On the other hand, an excess of prerequisites leads to an unnecessary prolongation of the time needed to graduate and, consequently, an increase in the likelihood of dropping out" (Abou-Sayf, 2008). The data are, at best, ambiguous. One Education Resources Information Service report found no relationship between students' completion of prerequisite courses and their success in an advanced course (Kauffman, Gilman, and David, 2008), while another study reported enhanced academic success after completion of a prerequisite course (Biggers, 2006).

These findings, however contradictory, can inform a syllabus-making strategy. I put myself in the place of students, and imagine what they are thinking once they decide to continue learning beyond high school. They likely have worry and uncertainty, and hope. Higher education can mean costs and debt, a way station during a recession; but also a credentialing link to self-support; and a place in which to grow and leave changed for the better.

My strategy assumes that a prerequisite *can* feel more like an elective, and that benefits of prerequisites depend on principles, the teacher and the student, and answers to these questions (among others): What are the pedagogical challenges for the teacher presenting a course not willingly chosen? And what are the psychological challenges to the student compelled to take a course not willingly chosen? The answers can inform the components of the syllabus, overcome students' negative attitudes, and counter their belief that a prerequisite is a waste of time.

For example, the syllabus can explicitly incorporate skills and competencies needed in later courses, or to success in a career (Abou-Sayf, 2008). Emphasizing the importance of attendance both to success in college and to success on the job may help. Asserting that the transition from the first job to a promotion is the same as the transition to more desirable study may then breed more interest not only in attending, but in participation and achievement in the prerequisite.

This approach is suggested by the 'Pre-requisite Tree': The Pre-requisite Tree is composed of two elements, an obstacle and an intermediate objective. The intermediate objective is the stage a teacher and student must reach to overcome the perceived obstacle of the prerequisite course. Teaching methods that can reach this stage arise from testing one method versus another using a system of branching. If one branch does not help to remove the attitude, then another branch may offer a better method, and so on until a branch leads to the most success-driven syllabus (Youngman, 2009).

I employ the Pre-requisite Tree to determine components of my syllabus. I choose components that convey the benefits of attending and taking an interest in class, grounding these benefits in a comparison between succeeding at work and a path to more desirable courses. Accordingly, completion of the prerequisite is not a hoop, but instead the achievement of a credential. Just as a diploma is a credential for landing a job, so too, a prerequisite is a credential for landing a major, and also for admission to a four-year school.

This is not ordinary teaching. Students' negative attitudes need to be appreciated. Try to remember the prerequisites when you were in college; imagine what might have thwarted your cynicism.

I tell students that my role is to give them the means to get to the next stage in their academic careers. I also tell them that getting to this next stage is similar to getting the job they want. In a job search, for example, this means surmounting the interview; in college it means, among other things, succeeding in the prerequisite.

I give them no illusions about the importance of passing for the near and long term. I spend a lot of time preparing the syllabus, and a lot of time explaining it to students. They hear that they cannot be lackadaisical and expect to pass. They hear they are expected to prepare and engage course content; to take weekly quizzes; to participate by writing and speaking in class. They hear demands similar to those an employer imposes.

To create an atmosphere of seriousness, and serious commitment on my part, the syllabus states that BMCC policy forbids distractions in class, distractions such as idle talk and personal digital devices. Again, I refer them to the

dismay of an employer with a job candidate who is distracted. The syllabus also states that I will do whatever I can to help them succeed; and that I am accessible before, after, and outside of class to prevent and manage any problems. Students could, and should, expect the same resolve from a company investing in them.

Keeping In Touch

Faculty accessibility is vital to making the prequisite feel like an elective. I encourage students to email me as often as desired. Approximately 25% write to me. Most of the email content during the semester concerns taking missed quizzes; and much of it, of course, conveys reasons why they cannot attend a class. At the end of the semester and soon after, most of the content concerns final grades and INC's received. I find that being vigilant and responding to emails promptly is a successful way to diffuse prerequisite tensions that may arise. Such cooperative use of email helps students take responsibility for their success or failure, in a prerequisite course as in the world.

Importance of Preparation

I find that a portion of my students think a text is unnecessary, so I urge them to have a copy of the text, continually emphasizing the connections between a prerequisite, a credential, and a job. I tell them that showing up for an interview for a second-best position without your best outfit, a resume, references, etc., may leave you sadly out of luck if you find the job is really what you're after. Showing up to a second-best class, the prerequisite, without a copy of the text can be a risk if the class is not a pushover, and passing and moving on may not be as easy as you thought. I know texts are expensive so I share options for getting a copy less expensively (of which there are many these days).

Clear Understanding about Evaluation

I use the importance of having a text as a segue to telling them there is a quiz every week. Each quiz has 10 short answer questions; all questions are taken from the text. I add that I do not give a midterm or final. I also state the quizzes are open book, and only five minutes in length. I bring a timer and quizzes are collected when the buzzer goes off. Amidst an air of relief, I then caution that five minutes will not be enough time to use the text unless they read the chapter ahead of time. My syllabus also states an additional alert that any student missing even one of the quizzes will receive a final grade of INC.

Allowing students to use their texts for quizzes is particularly helpful for the ESL student who may be on a learning curve for vocabulary and comprehension. But it helps all students because they can feel my commitment to help them succeed amidst the need to prepare for and attend class. Frequent testing also allows students to learn and move on to the next topic, free from the pressure of cramming once or twice during the semester. Many students tell me they appreciate this feature of my class. I too found that frequent tests worked best for me when I was student.

Anticipating questions about how grades are determined, my syllabus shows a table equating total correct answers received on all the quizzes with a final

grade. The syllabus also shows a table equating total correct answers received each week and the estimated grade for that week, to provide an assurance or alert.

I mark the quizzes by hand and write the number of correct answers on the top. This is a lot of work, but it is worth the effort. I am better able to keep track of my students' progress both from a macro, class view, and from a micro, student view. I use a spread sheet and can see at a glance how each and every one is doing. I also show the correct answers for each of the incorrect answers to help students judge their reading and comprehension. Indeed by doing this, I purposely give them a reason to appeal, so they can also test my accountability and commitment, should they believe an answer is not in the text, or the question is confusing.

I find that many students don't measure their progress and potential final grade despite the help the syllabus gives them. As a result, at several junctures during the semester, I print out my grade sheet so they can compare scores received against scores on the sheet. I also let them know I will promptly correct any mistakes.

Extra Credit Option

I offer an evaluation extra, a chance to earn one higher grade by doing a short research report on a course-relevant topic. The condition is that all quizzes must be taken by the end of the last class. After the last quiz is handed to me, I confirm each student's eligibility; each eligible student then receives instructions for writing the report. I discuss plagiarism; and require at least two citations and two references. I suggest the APA style and explain how it works. The completed report must be emailed to me no later than 5pm the next day. A student who completes the project successfully receives a final grade one grade higher than the final grade based only on the total correct answers. Students again see how they can truly be in charge of their success.

Eye Contact for Recognition

I present the weekly content by lecturing. Generally, that's about 40% of the class. I stand up the entire time. My style is informational and confrontational; and encourages students to ask questions or comment. I tell students to follow along with my presentation by having the book open. Doing this also helps them prepare for the quiz.

By standing, my eye contact is continual; and my glance changes to be sure everyone is noticed. Distracted students don't go unnoticed, and I respond immediately to any challenge to an unfocused classroom. Maximizing the chance of a dialogue is my goal. More talkative students are tempered while the timid are assured when I state that speaking up is not graded. I make sure I respond to any student who raises a hand. I state that there should be no worry about saying something incorrect, saying something in an accent, or saying something when unsure about using English. I encourage students to speak up stating that it is good practice, once again, not only in the classroom but for a job interview and in the workplace.

Writing Exercise

A writing exercise, also ungraded, takes up another 40% of class time. I give them a theme based on chapter content about which to think critically. They have five minutes. I tell students not to be concerned about spelling, grammar, or the amount of words; but to instead write what they know, and to allow themselves to think spontaneously.

I read their comments in class. While doing this may daunt some students, I tell them that writing is a valuable skill needed in school and out; and can be a way to share opinions with the class, and get recognition. I make sure everyone is writing, encouraging students to orally add to what they have written, and to comment on what others have written.

The next 5% of the class time is the quiz, leaving the remaining 15% for students to pick up and review quizzes from the week before, and for commenting and asking questions. This tends to continue for a few minutes after the end of class.

Building and then implementing a syllabus that emphasizes reading, writing, and speaking, teacher and student accountability, and connections to self-support is critical to making a prerequisite feel like an elective. Most students tell me they like my method, but a few, I sense, are still not convinced. For them I can try the Pre-requisite Tree again and seek an even more convincing syllabus.

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Cha-Cha-Chá, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Advancing Cultural Awareness through Embodied Latino Expression

Jorge Arévalo Mateus
Ethnic Studies

While some BMCC students may have been exposed to *cha-cha-chá* in the form of a ballroom dance via the highly popular *Dancing with the Stars* television program, the cultural-historical trajectory and significance of this quintessential, pre-Salsa Latino dance style has often been overlooked and generally misunderstood. Regarded more an archaic quasi-Latin popular dance than a cultural signifier, cha-cha-chá has been relegated to the dustbin of generational Latinidad/Latinness. I therefore welcomed an invitation to speak during Hispanic Heritage Month at a BMCC event during the Fall semester of 2010, where I had the opportunity to provide students, faculty and guests with some background about the origins and development of the Cuban style that became the first commercially successful international Latino dance phenomenon. Organized as a sort of lecture/dance demonstration, the evening also featured a small trio of musicians, Son Cubano de la Calle, young dance students from Herencia Dancers, and dance instructor Omaira García of Salsa Salon.
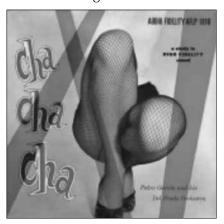

Figure 1: "Cha-cha-cha", Long-play record cover, ca. 1950s.

As an applied ethnomusicologist, public programming around the *cha-cha-chá* theme appealed to me for its interdisciplinary and performative potential; an opportunity to observe and participate with members of the college community in an informal environment through which embodied cultural subjectivities were expressed via Latino music and dance. Moreover, the pedagogical potential of cultural heritage programming is not to be underestimated, evidenced by the audience's reaction and willingness to participate in the event.

Before getting to the material presented however, allow me to begin with a reflexive anecdote about my own experience as a "Latino" in New York, particularly as a Colombian immigrant during the late 1950s, a time when the number of Central and South Americans in the US was still rather low. I do this in order to provide some historical context, cultural perspective, and authorial self-positioning: elements I try to tease out from students in my Music of Puerto Rico classes at BMCC, where issues of identity, media and cultural politics are central themes.

As I prepared for the lecture component of the presentation, I recalled a recent visit with my mother, whose own narrative of survival and courage is al-

ways inspiring, though not entirely rare among immigrants (her latest adventure had to do with high seas drama on the so-called Carnival "Spam Cruise" off the Mexican Riviera—yes, she was on it!). She lives in Riverdale, the northernmost section of the West Bronx, just south of Yonkers, the city where we relocated after emigrating to America in 1959. Widowed at a young an age, with two young children, the dire circumstances in our homeland compelled her to seize upon the US' then "open door" policy, which enabled her to emigrate and, thus, find better life possibilities for herself and her children—a true survivor! A year after emigrating, my older sister and I arrived in New York to reunite with her in this completely different world.

I can still vividly recall being taken to a New Year's party at some person's house, either in Morningside Heights or Harlem—I remember that cold subway ride as if it were yesterday. I mention this only because at that raucous house party, the memories of music and dancing resonate beyond time and space; we heard *boleros* by Lucho Gatica, the exotic guitars of Los Indios Tavajares, but most of all, I watched *cha-cha-chá* being danced. The rhythm was unmistakable, the sensuality undeniable, especially to my developing precociousness. The sense of communal bonding among Latinos and others was equally intense. By this moment, *cha-cha-chá* was already on the decline, having reached its zenith of popularity; it had been worked and reworked, commodified as "Latin popular music" by US recording companies interested in marketing the biggest names in Latin music: Damaso Perez Prado, Beny Moré and Tito Puente, even Xavier Cugat and North American crooner Nat King Cole took a stab at it! For a young boy, watching the mostly Puerto Rican and Cuban *parranderos* (party people) as well as few other Latin Americans on the scene dancing to this music was exciting, intoxicating and enriching in ways that have since made me all the more aware of the significance of what it means to be a migrant Latino in New York City!

Figure 2. Cha-cha-chá dance competition, NYC, circa late 1940s. Martin Cohen.

The Historical-Musical Perspective

We know that *cha-cha-chá*—that onomatopoetic musical construction with the accent on the final **chá**—refers to a complex of Cuban popular music and dance forms, including danzon and danzonetes, mambo, rumba and the "ephemeral" pachangas.

Cuban music and dance, and specifically Afro-Cuban forms, all the way from the chuchumbés of the 18th century to changüi, son montuno and beyond have been perpetuated through the universal appeal of African rhythms, improvisation and collective participation, blended with Spanish (and later English) song. It is no accident that Cubanophile Ned Sublette finished his book about the prehistory of Cuban music, *First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago Review Press, 2004), with a coda section that provides a glimpse of the then emerging musical genre that came on the heels of mambo. True to popular cultural temporalities however, *cha-cha-chá* shone brightly, if only for a brief historical moment.

So how are we to understand how the *cha-cha-chá* came about and what it may represent? Cuban bandleader and musician Enrique Jorrín is generally credited with the innovation of *cha-cha-chá* in the early 1950s. Working in the *charanga* ensemble format—lead flute, two violins, Cuban percussion—Jorrín retrofitted *danzon* and *son*, tailoring his musical innovation towards couple dancing; in the process, simplifying dense, syncopated Afro-Cuban rhythms into duple (2/4) meter; and, later, in the increasingly commercial versions that later emerged, *cha-cha-chás* were set in quadratic meter (4/4), with an always reliable and comfortable medium tempo for body movement. The result: a dance that was accessible to even the most rhythmically challenged person (e.g., non-Latino), a phenomenological embodiment of Latino bodies in motion easily replicated.

Jorrín further reduced once ornate, fluid melodies into stabbing, staccato (pointillistic) phrases and, most importantly, incorporated *montunos*—repeated melodic-rhythmic patterns—and group vocals into arrangements that made it easy to hear the musical and textual "hooks" of the songs. As a result, greater audience participation was encouraged both on and off the dance floor, among the musicians, dancers and revelers. Why Jorrín did this is difficult to say, but it struck a chord—although appealing perhaps more to dancers than musicians, many of whom found its simplicity of structure and musical elements rather tedious—and became widely accepted and popular.

The larger cultural picture: cha-cha-chá beyond Cuba

By the late 1940s , the gradual demise of America's powerhouse big bands (Ellington, Basie, Goodman, Kenton) created a space for Cuban music and dance to emerge, as the mambo (or *rumbero*) craze took hold under the leadership of the big three Latin bandleaders: Frank 'Machito' Grillo, Tito Rodriguez, and Tito Puente; particularly in New York City, where the Puerto Rican population comprised the largest Latin ethnic demographic. The aforementioned charangas, especially Orquesta Aragon (Alfred de la Fe), popularized Jorrin's innovation throughout the Caribbean. In NYC, Jose Curbelo, Noro Morales and Tito Puente—a disciple and Cuban dance music fanatic—among others, also composed and re-arranged popular songs into *cha-cha-chás*, albeit with a more urban, sophisticated sen-

sibility. *Cha-cha-chá's* commercial success, then, was in large part attributable not only to its relative simplicity but also to its wide accessibility via the recording industry. Most of the large, international record companies at that time (Columbia, Victor, Decca), along with countless smaller ethnic labels, released countless *cha-cha-chá* records by their roster of "Latin stars", both Latino and non-Latino.

What happened to cha-cha-chá?

The standard narrative or discourse about *cha-cha-cha's* demise suggests that it was rendered obsolete by over-saturation of "Latin" and popular music markets with of-

Figure 3: Billy May, non-Latino "Cha-cha." Long-play record cover. Note omission of the final accented "chá".

ten mediocre product; Damaso Perez Prado—no musical or marketing slouch—alone accounts for dozens of *cha-cha-chá* recordings. Flooding the market with less than stellar performances, cha-cha-chá soon became a passing trend. Moreover, the emergence of Rock'n'Roll (Elvis, the British Invasion: The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, etc.) is also often cited as a factor. Closer examination of the cultural politics, however, reveals that while some and even many Latinos gravitated toward assimilation of Anglo cultural products, a cultural realignment was also starting to take place among young Latinos.

Observing or otherwise participating in the race and class struggles of the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, marginal economic conditions, and so forth, by the early 1960s Latinos were no longer adequately represented by charangas or *cha-cha-chá* orchestras, regardless of how urban or sophisticated they had become—or were marketed as being. In addition, a shift toward Rhythm and Blues, Rock and the Latinized Bugalú of Joe Cuba, for example, became increasingly evident, setting the stage for Salsa's subsequent emergence in the 1970s. *Cha-cha-chá* can therefore be considered a stylistic link between Cuban charanga and salsa bands. Its popular success set an industry precedent for New York City's Puerto Rican and Latino communities, with respect to the direction that cultural and business relationships would take with both the US and international recording industries. These relationships, tenuous at best, eventually led to the re-emergence of Afro-Cuban music's influence at the height of US political tensions with Fidel Castro's revolutionary government. Reconstituted and expanded as neo-charanga ensembles (e.g., Johnny Pacheco), New York City's grassroots bands of Puerto Rican musicians, with horns and Afro-Cuban percussion, began to play socially conscious Latino dance music based on Cuban son montuno, guarachas, guaguancos, with *cha-cha-chás* looming in the fading background: Salsa!

As in anything in life, it's not all good; and it's not all bad.
Ironically, music industry processes that capitalized on the *cha-cha-chá* trend proved detrimental to both the music and dance, reflecting economic and cultural politics of appropriation, assimilation and commodification. Notwithstanding *cha-cha-chá's* short-lived, popular success, its significance is notable nonetheless. I am reminded of the temperamental 1950s television Cuban bandleader Desi Arnaz, aka Ricky Ricardo. Eric Cesar Morales of Indiana University, presenting a paper at a recent New York Folk Alliance conference, argues that "Ricky" and the production of *I Love Lucy* was important to issues of identity and representation. His thesis was that although Desi/Ricky certainly did not invent television, he created innovative techniques that have made a wide, lasting impact on television production: the three-camera shoot (now standard) for sitcoms, the semblance of a "live" audience (canned responses), the inclusion of once "taboo" topics (women's aspirations, wives in the bedroom, pregnancy, etc.), are all Arnaz designs that—even if stereotypical—introduced Latinos into mainstream American living rooms.

Similarly, *cha-cha-chá*—the commodified version—while clearly reductive in its simplification of Latin musical elements, also served a significant cultural purpose that, like Arnaz, is often overlooked: *cha-cha-chá's* international success served to illustrate the potency of Latin popular music and dance; its "innovations," admittedly oriented toward popularization, demonstrated cross-cultural potential for a nation of immigrants; and, finally, with both a Latin accent and a good beat, it was made for dancing. In other words, in its highly mediated form (recordings, television, etc.), *cha-cha-chá* was introduced as Latin dance music to mainstream audiences as popular entertainment.

Final Steps and Pedagogical Thoughts on cha-cha-chá
Our students are in a constant search for ways to understand how their ethnicity, race, class, and gender fit in, blend with, or are unique to them as markers of identity or personhood. Cultural heritage programs such as the Hispanic Heritage event provide a platform for all to listen and observe how, for example, dance and music reflect and continue to mediate cultural expression and movement—a process that extends to every member of the BMCC community. Although new visual and aural technologies make the "trending" process ever faster, understanding the unfolding layers of cultural history requires simultaneous consideration of the reflexive/communal past, present and future. In the very structures of *cha-cha-chá*, where there is movement and pause, forward and backward motion, we see how we can utilize our own cultural awareness and personal experiences as teaching tools. Society is always in motion. In the phenomenon (and phenomenology) of Latino dance, when given the opportunity, our students get it. So, *bailemos! Let's dance!*

Using Hint Fiction to Make Inferences

Shane McConnell
Developmental Skills

This article focuses on the benefits of using hint fiction to teach inference to developmental reading students. Hint fiction is a new genre that tells a story in 25 words or less, and I have used it successfully in my ACR094 class. A description of the classroom activities I conducted follows, along with a few reflections on the pedagogical appeal of this new genre.

As an adjunct lecturer in the Developmental Skills Department, I taught inference by using hint fiction. I discovered hint fiction in an article on *The New Yorker*'s website titled "What Can You Do in Twenty-Five Words?," wherein Ian Crouch reviewed *Hint Fiction: An Anthology of Stories in 25 Words or Fewer*. Crouch explained that a piece of hint fiction "should do in twenty-five words what it could do in twenty-five hundred. [...] it should tell a story while gesturing toward all the unknowable spaces outside the text." This led me to another explanation in a review on NPR which revealed, "[...] the genre isn't defined only by its length. It's characterized by the way the form forces readers to fill in the blanks...." Considering that this type of literature forces the reader to generate questions and answers, I used it to inspire students to draw inferences in accordance with the section in the textbook *Ten Steps to Advancing College Reading Skills*, titled "Guidelines for Making Inferences."

The first guideline read, "Never lose sight of the available information," which means the reader should stick to the facts and draw conclusions that can be supported by the text. The second guideline read, "Use your background information and experience to help you in making inferences," which means the more you know about a subject, the better your inferences will be. The third guideline read, "Consider the alternatives," which means there are many possible explanations to be explored. To get the discussion rolling I brought attention to Hemingway's powerful six word 'story' (which is often noted as being a predecessor to hint fiction):

"For Sale: baby shoes, never worn."

This provoked the students to speculate in a classroom discussion about the different scenarios that may have prompted the reality of this six word tale. I divided the class into groups of three and assigned them to pick a piece of hint fiction (from the examples given in the New Yorker article) that they all wanted to work on. Each member was responsible for generating a different explanation for the circumstances and logic of the piece of hint fiction. As I walked around the room I asked students "Why?" to get them to reveal their logical moves and assumptions. After the class had ample time to reflect and write, I addressed them as a whole to contrast my findings.

I then brought their attention to this piece of hint fiction:

"I'm sorry, but there's not enough air in here for everyone. I'll tell them you were a hero."
- "Houston, We Have a Problem" by J. Matthew Zoss

I explained to the class that a student from one group believed that the person who was chosen to die was the least important person on the ship and may have been either assigned to perform the lowest duty or was not even an official member of the crew, while a student from another group said that the person who was chosen to die was the captain of the ship. When I asked the latter student why he thought this to be the case, he explained that the captain is the most important person on a ship and the person with the most responsibility. When I asked him why the person with the most responsibility should be chosen to die, he said that the person with the highest level of responsibility should have to make that kind of sacrifice. By following the path to inference, the student was asking questions and answering them. When I pushed him to explain his point of view further, he articulated his assumptions. Underneath the inference that the student constructed was a belief that completed his argument and raised self-awareness simultaneously.

In the case that students need help generating questions, I created this list to pertain to the piece by J. Matthew Zoss:

- What is the setting?
- What is the identity of the speaker?
- Who is the speaker addressing?
- Who comprises "everyone?"
- Who comprises "them?"
- What could be motivating the speaker?
- How many explanations are there for this interaction?

While as a rule I discourage my students from relying on Wikipedia, for the purposes of this discussion I make an exception—being sure to emphasize once again that Wikipedia is a useful resource, not a properly academic source. From reading multiple entries on Wikipedia, students can gather that there are three basic kinds of inference: induction, deduction, and abduction.

The Wikipedia article titled "Abductive Reasoning" states:

Abduction allows inferring a as an explanation of b. Because of this, abduction allows the precondition a to be abduced from the consequence b. Deduction and abduction thus differ in the direction in which a rule like "a entails b" is used for inference. As such abduction is formally equivalent to the logical fallacy affirming the consequent or *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*, because there are multiple possible explanations for b.

In this light, and despite the "formal equivalence" to a well-known fallacy, abductive inference appears to be the kind of reasoning that would encourage

students to fulfill the third guideline for creating inference, "Consider the alternatives." If the correct answers cannot be known when it comes to hint fiction, then the students are in a position to assert sovereignty over their thinking process without concern of whether it will have been for naught should the teacher inform them that they thought incorrectly.

Also in the same Wikipedia article, in the subsection on the history of the concept of abduction, is the statement:

> Before 1900, Peirce treated abduction as the use of a known rule to explain an observation, e.g., it is a known rule that if it rains the grass is wet; so, to explain the fact that the grass is wet; one infers that it has rained. This remains the common use of the term "abduction" in the social sciences and in artificial intelligence.

As this applies to the case of hint fiction, students could see how they were employing "a known rule" to explain and interpret a piece of hint fiction. Once the students constructed the context, such known rules were relied on heavily. "Induction seeks facts to test a hypothesis; abduction seeks a hypothesis to account for facts." Thus students were treating the information given in the piece of hint fiction as detectives might treat evidence, except that the students were piecing together not only the motive of the character but the crime scene evidence as well. Their attribution of psychological motivation to a character was largely informed by a maxim that the student felt was reliable enough to insert into this fictional space to explain its machinations.

Further into that Wikipedia article, under the subsection "Applications" it states:

> Abduction is the answer to this conundrum because the tentative nature of the abduction concept (Pierce likened it to guessing) means that not only can it operate outside of any pre-existing framework, but moreover, it can actually intimate the existence of a framework.

The "framework" is the very context that harbored the fictional reality asserted by the hint fiction. As Crouch said, hint fiction is "gesturing toward all the unknowable spaces outside the text." This invites the student to project beliefs into the process of inferring, and more advanced inferring can be reserved for longer works where less and less of the student's identity will be required to support the inference.

I propose that abduction can be effectively used as the first stage of teaching inference. Because hint fiction is so compact, all of the relevant observations are confined to one small digestible piece of text which makes it easy for those being introduced to inference to group their observations and connect them. Students may find it more inviting than other initial exposures because with abduction, knowing is not the goal; artfully constructing speculations that bear the weight of intimate investment demonstrates both necessary and sufficient student involvement.

Institutional Repository for Scholarly Communication

Kanu A. Nagra
Library

Introduction

Institutional repositories (IR) software and systems have gained significant popularity over last decade. An increasing number of academic institutions and research libraries have established Institutional repositories to collect and provide digital access to locally produced research in the institution. Institutional repositories are institution-wide repositories of diverse locally produced digital works (e.g., research articles, preprints and post prints, learning objects, technical reports, grant reports, institutional reports, etc.) in an organized, searchable form which is available for public use.[1] The real strength of the IR is its ability to collect, preserve and project the scholarly output of the university and make it available to the people of the state, nation, and beyond.[2]

The Institutional Repository and Scholarly Communication

Institutional repositories (IR) are a necessary apparatus and vehicle to support, disseminate, and display the scholarly communication and intellectual life of an institution. The scholarly communication crisis is one of the fundamental direct causes to start, develop, and implement institutional repositories around the world. The idea of IR arose with concept of open access to overcome the barriers of reaching, displaying, and communicating research to a broad range of audiences while removing intermediaries. (For types of IR content, see Appendix.)

Mission and Objectives to Create an IR and Its Benefits to an Institution

There are many reasons that argue for creating an institutional repository. Here are five points that seem most relevant (BEP 2009). First, an IR fosters community outreach and engagement. The IR enables an Institution to return the fruits of its research to the local community and to enhance community outreach and engagement. The purpose of a digital repository is to ensure that scholarly and creative products that have been paid for by the public or donors are ultimately accessible to the public, as well as to students, faculty, and researchers everywhere.[3]

Second, IR's promote visibility and brand awareness. The IR enables a college to improve its global visibility and standing in the university and in the academic enterprise more generally. IRs expand the opportunities for institutional research to be discovered and utilized by a global audience, including media, corporate entities, grant funders and other research institutions. It focuses and highlights what an institution does best and strengthens areas of specialization by showcasing works in repository.

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[1]ARL (2006) SPEC KIT 292 Institutional Repository July 2006
[2]Richard Clemant, Dean of Libraries, Utah State University.
[3]David Sculenburger, VP for Academic Affairs, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU).

Third, IRs are important in that they enhance the quality of teaching and research. The IR helps in archiving and enhancing the quality of scholarship through sharing, collaboration and creating basis for ideas for faculty for future research projects.

A fourth advantage of IRs is that they promote institutional advancement. The Vice President[4] of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) notes that "The Folks who pay our bills need to and want to know how those investments in the university are benefiting them. It's time to let the light of Universities shine and allow digital repositories to entice additional funding". The IR is a timely, organized, searchable collection of scholarly production and research output of the institution that can facilitate institutional advancement and fundraising.

The fifth argument for IRs is that research is more valuable when it is shared and marketed. Research that languishes in a box in a basement or an inaccessible file is as good as lost. The IR system increases access to material that would otherwise be hidden. It can provide leads to related electronic resources or databases.

How an IR is Beneficial for Faculty and the Institution's Community

When search engine searches lead to a particular institution and its faculty, it raises the profile of that faculty and institution. In this way, among others, IRs expand access and visibility globally. The faculty can benefit by depositing their copyright owned material in an IR, since it increases their personal visibility for their research projects as well as enhancing their professional career.

Another benefit is digital preservation. The repositories provide a platform to collect and organize digital information. The type of material can be in any digital format but should have the necessary permission from author for submitting it to the IR. The material that might otherwise have been lost or at risk can be preserved in an institutional repository. Further, the IR increases the collaboration between the library, academic departments, administrative units, and the institutional community as a whole on campus and world wide. This cross-fertilization can lead to more opportunities for interdisciplinary research and collaboration.

A final benefit is that IRs help us stay relevant to the changing needs of communities. Institutional repositories are built to address the trends in the production, dissemination, access to, and use of scholarly materials. The faculty, researchers, and higher education institutes as always play a significant role in research and development cycle of scholarly efforts. By establishing successful repositories, faculty, researchers, and institutions keep up with the latest scholarly communication trends. It increases their participation and role in the research and communication process, as well as increases their visibility and value to the community.

Copyright and Obtaining Necessary Permissions for Submission of Material in an IR

Before submitting and uploading any material in Institutional repository, it is necessary to make sure that one should obtain all required permissions wherever applicable, e.g.,

[4]Ibid.

1. Legal Consent
2. Permissions or Licenses
3. IRB approval
4. Publisher's approval
5. Editor's and/or co-author's approval
6. Image/photo creator's approval, etc.

It is expected that no one should submit material which infringes another's copyright and/or property rights. In case of uncertainty, librarians are always there to help and guide you towards the right procedure for taking necessary permissions for material submission.

Building a Digital Institutional Repository for BMCC

Prof. Sidney Eng, the Chief Librarian at BMCC, encouraged me to research and work on the implementation of an IR project for BMCC. After my research on IR systems (and discovering the lack of a budget for an IR project implementation), we decided to use the Dspace platform for our institutional repository. BMCC library launched an IR pilot program in Spring 2011 to get firsthand information about the necessary parameters to expand and grow further in this project.

The Dspace software platform is available CUNY-wide. It is an open-source software That enables institutions to capture and organize digital works using a submission workflow module. The system enables these works to be archived and distributed over the web through a search and retrieval system. The metadata categories for search, like Author, Title, Journal Name, Publisher, and so on, can be created and populated while uploading the document for submission. BMCC Institutional Repository is following CUNY Dspace policies for preservation.
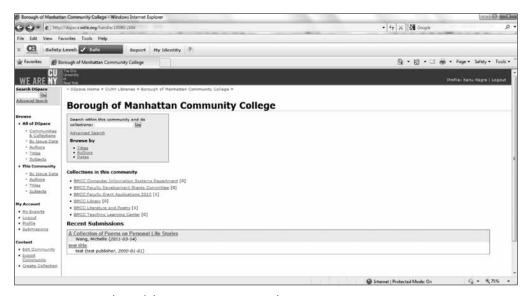

Figure 1: Screenshot of the BMCC Institutional Repository

Procedure for Submission of Material on the Dspace Institutional Repository of BMCC

Submission of text and media material is very user-friendly in Dspace. In order to submit material, one must have a username and password, and only members of the BMCC community are allowed to upload submissions in the BMCC institutional repository. The username and password are created by the library upon request of faculty, staff, and administrators. The account holder needs to understand completely and agree to the terms and conditions for submissions to the institutional repository. The material uploaded in the repository will have open access within the CUNY system, and is accessible globally through internet as well.
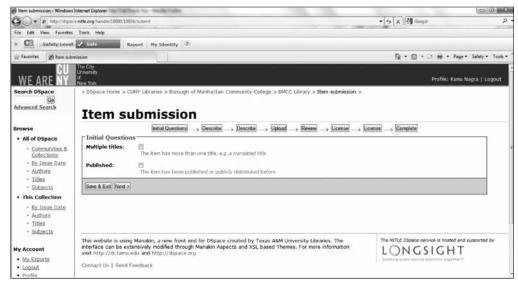

Figure 2: Example of Digital material submission in the Institutional Repository

Once a login name is created, submission of material into the Institutional Repository is not difficult. Again, first make sure you have the necessary permissions for submission of materials in the IR. Follow the prompts on the Dspace platform for item submission and provide the title, author, description information, etc., followed by uploading and a review of the material submitted. Finally select the creative commons license for your submission and complete your submission. It is that easy.

Once the document is uploaded successfully, it will have a stable URL and a unique identifier. Material will be searchable using search criteria like author, title, subject, etc., in the Dspace platform. Also, internet search engines will start providing leads to uploaded material for similar and related searches.

Conclusion

Institutional Repositories are essential infrastructure for research and scholarship in the present digital age. They are strategically important for institutions of higher education and learning. They gather the intellectual output of the institution, make it available for a broad range of purposes—not least among them,

assessment, outreach, teaching, communication, research, and institutional advancement—and they enhance the visibility and awareness of the institution and its community nationally and internationally. If it needs to be said, none of these benefits come easily. The success of an institutional repository requires support, participation, and active involvement from everyone in the institutional community. I hope this article has sparked your interest in the IR at BMCC.

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Appendix

The type of content contained in institutional repositories can vary from institution to institution. The content can include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Creative works
2. Published articles
3. Conference papers and posters
4. Book chapters
5. Pre prints
6. Technical reports
7. Working papers
8. Learning objects
9. Presentations
10. Grant reports
11. Data sets
12. Dissertation and theses
13. Administrative records
14. Curricular materials
15. PowerPoint slides
16. Audio and video material
17. Event recordings
18. Institutional archives
19. Institutional reports
20. Institutional publications
21. Academic departments' publications and more.

Using Peer Tutors in a Human Services Course at a Community College: A Strengths Approach

(Rose) Rosalie J. Russo-Gleicher
Human Services

What would you do if you had a student whose name was on the class list since the first day of class, did not show up, and did not drop the course? Although this was my 5th time teaching Human Services 201, a course in counseling skills, nothing like this had ever happened before. Each class, I was ready to give the student the course syllabus and handouts, but as the days passed, the package was getting thicker and thicker. I expected that there was a good reason for the absences and that the student would eventually show up. However, I wondered how the student was going to catch up because the tutoring center at the college does not have tutors trained in Human Services.

Finally, the missing student showed up to class during the 6th class meeting and I had to make a quick decision about what to do. At this point, still rather early in the semester, there was little information to know which student might make a good peer tutor. I selected a student with good class participation, 100% attendance and punctuality, and good writing as evidenced by the first written assignment. I praised the student's performance so far in the course and offered extra credit towards an exam in exchange for helping the new student to catch up, and the student said, "yes." I now had my first peer tutor and felt the new student would have a chance of passing the course.

Peer tutoring, as the term suggests, is when students help other students to learn (Loke & Chow, 2007). This article argues in favor of peer tutoring. I will briefly review the literature on the benefits of peer tutoring. Next, I will describe the roles and values of the field of human services. I will discuss Strengths Theory as used by human service workers, and how this can be used for selecting tutors and discussing tutoring options with students. Finally, I will discuss the outcome of the peer tutoring experience. In the appendix, I provide sample conversations and a sample of a written tutoring agreement to help other professors to initiate peer tutoring in their classrooms.

Literature review

Research supports the positive effects of peer tutoring in college (Loke & Chow, 2007; Kowalsky & Fresko, 2002; Teaching Pupils, n.d.). Loke and Chow found that both tutors and tutees experienced positive aspects of peer tutoring such as learning new skills, intellectual gains, and personal growth. Similarly, Kowalsky and Fresko studied the impact of peer tutoring on tutors and students with disabilities and found that there were academic and social benefits for both tutors and tutees. Benefits of tutoring for the tutor include increased knowledge, self-esteem, empathy, confidence, and problem-solving skills; improvements in interpersonal, listening, and communication skills; and valuable work experience for his/her resume (College Parent Central, 2010). Peer tutoring helps academically

gifted students to use their knowledge and talents in a positive way and fosters relationships between students of all levels (Teaching Pupils, n.d.).

In addition, Kowalsky and Fresko reported a study by Lee (1988), which found that use of peer tutoring was found to increase student retention in college. This finding is important because college graduation rates are particularly low (Beaky, 2009; Bowler, 2009; Edelman, 2009; Leonhardt, 2009). For example, 28% of students graduate after six years at CUNY's community colleges (Beaky, 2009); BMCC graduates 0.5% of first-time freshman who enrolled two years earlier, which makes it the lowest of the CUNY community colleges (Edelman, 2009). Thirty percent of college students drop out after their first year, and half of all students admitted to college never graduate from college (Bowler, 2009). A recent dissertation by Rosemary Capps about community college students found that retention efforts were most effective when students were reached by faculty right in their classrooms (Glenn, 2011). Faculty members knowing students personally was shown to make a big difference in retention (Glenn, 2011). Thus, even the smallest opportunity to save one student and make a small impact on the college graduation rate is crucial, and easily worth the time and effort it takes to make peer tutoring arrangements.

Human Services 201

Human Services is about helping people to make a difference in people's lives. The aim of human services is to address human needs, and human service practitioners focus on prevention and remediation of problems, with a commitment to improving quality of life (NOHS, 2010). Peer Tutoring shares many of the aims of Human Services. Tutors make a difference in the lives of the students that they tutor just like human service workers make a difference in the lives of clients that they work with.

Human Services 201, Human Service Skills, is a required sequence course in Human Services that teaches counseling skills to prepare students for doing internships at social services agencies in the following semester. In this course, students learn that human service practitioners utilize a variety of roles; these roles can include teacher/educator, behavior changer, and case manager (NOHS, 2010). Likewise, as faculty, we can role model appropriate human service roles. We can educate students about choices/options, and make connections between behaviors and consequences. As educators, we can inform students about the option for tutoring. As case managers, we can link students to a variety of services to help them to do better in the course.

In my HUM 201 course, a student' final course grade is based on the following: Three Exams: 60%. Second Paper: 20%. Class participation (and professionalism), and attendance: 15%. First paper (completed satisfactory): 5%. The student that arrived late to class in the semester was tutored and passed the first test. After the success of the first student, I asked the peer tutor to take a second student, who failed the first exam, to prepare that student for a re-test of the first exam. In addition, I engaged three additional students as tutors for three other students who obtained a low grade on the first exam for a variety of reasons. A total of four peer tutors and five students participated. Peer tutors received (5) five points of extra credit for tutoring a classmate.

Strengths Theory

The *Code of Ethics* of human service practitioners, in particular, Statement #9, points out that human service practitioners should recognize and build on client strengths (NOHS, 2010). Furthermore, Saleebey (2005) writes about the strengths approach to working with clients. Likewise, as faculty, we can recognize strengths in our students and build on those strengths by encouraging them to help their peers. Saleebey points out that there are five principles of a strengths approach that relate to working with clients. I will cite each and briefly consider its relevance for working with students.

1. *Every individual, family, and community has strengths, assets, and resources* (Saleebey, 2005). As faculty we can recognize strengths in our students. Student strengths can include: being a quick learner, good class participation, being punctual, attending class every day, having good writing skills, taking good notes, good study skills, submitting assignments on time, having good time-management skills, having good test-taking skills, and so on. In addition, many students in community colleges are non-traditional students who work and attend school, are older, have prior work experience, and/or have children. Such experiences might make them good tutors. For example, a student who is a parent/grandparent might have patience and experience with teaching study skills, time management, test-taking skills, etc. Another student who has had the experience of being tutored might now like to be on the other side, to help his/her classmates in one of his/her stronger subjects.

2. *Trauma, abuse, and illness may be devastating, but they also may be opportunities for growth and sources of challenge and opportunity* (Saleebey, 2005). "Resilience" is when people show the ability to rebound or bounce back (Saleebey, 2005). Likewise, our students might have experienced similar experiences to those of clients that got them interested in helping others. In dealing with those situations, some students have had a good helping experience and their helper is seen as a role model to them. Other students have had a poor helping experience and want to make things better so others don't have to experience what they did. Being a peer tutor is a good opportunity to experience the good feeling that comes from helping others to discover their own resilience.

3. *Assume that you don't know the upper limits of any individual's capacity to change and grow* (Saleebey, 2005). Like clients, it is important to realize that students can change. With encouragement from faculty who utilize a "strengths" approach, students can be referred to appropriate resources at the college or outside to help them to do better in the course, such as peer tutoring, tutoring, and/or counseling. Students can learn to take better notes, to improve attendance, to improve punctuality, to improve their writing skills, to improve study skills, and to do better on exams and/or papers. Students need to know that their professor has confidence in their ability to change and succeed.

4. *Take individual and community visions and hopes seriously* (Saleebey, 2005). When it is early enough in the semester, faculty can talk to students in a way that demonstrates caring and hope. We can collaborate with students toward the goal of passing the class; this would include discussing with a student what steps he/she needs to take to improve his/her grade, instead of only telling

a student that he/she should drop a course. Depending on the student's needs, these steps can include participating in counseling at the counseling center to deal with "test anxiety" and time management skills, going to the tutoring/learning resource center to practice note-taking or test-taking strategies, going to the career center to explore other majors, and working with a peer tutor.

5. *Every environment is full of resources* (Saleebey, 2005). Likewise, faculty can recognize that every college is full of resources; again, some of these resources are the counseling center, the career center, the tutoring/learning resource center, and students in the classroom who are doing well and can be mobilized as peer tutors. Moreover, there are also community resources for counseling centers, public benefits, employment assistance, day care, and healthcare, depending upon the student's needs.

Conclusion

This article has argued that peer tutoring fits neatly with the broad aim of Human Services and a strengths approach. When tutors are not available in the BMCC tutoring center for the subject that you are teaching, you can offer extra credit and create your own peer tutors utilizing the strengths and talents of students in your classroom. It is important to convey hope and to arrange peer tutoring as early on in the semester as possible so that a student will have time to improve. Peer tutoring can be used effectively for dealing with students who arrive late in the semester for a good reason, students who have difficulty understanding class material as evidenced by a low grade on an exam, or students who are absent for a few consecutive classes for a variety of reasons (medical, legal, death in the family). It does take a bit of time to outreach absentee students by phone calls, e-mails, letters, and brief meetings to arrange peer tutoring, but I feel it is worthwhile.

All five students who received peer tutoring passed the course successfully with good grades that were beyond my initial expectations. The final course grades for the five students were: two students received a B; two students received a B-; and one student received a C-. Without this peer tutoring opportunity, I have a feeling that more of these grades would have been Cs and Ds, and that one or more students would not have completed the course successfully. I received uniformly positive comments from the students and tutors involved indicating that the students on both sides of the process were grateful for the experience. For example, a student remarked that he/she had never "seen anything like this done before."

In conclusion, I am optimistic and enthusiastic about the benefits of using peer tutoring and very likely will do this again. At the time of this writing, one of the peer tutors from my class is in the process of being hired as a paid tutor at the BMCC tutoring center. I am happy that all 27 students were able to successfully complete this course this semester, and feel that I made a positive difference in the lives of these students, tutors and tutees alike.

Appendix

Sample conversations

Here is an example of how I recruited one of the peer tutors for my class:

Prof: I noticed that you are doing very well in the course. Your exam score was excellent. You have attended every class on time or early. You participate well in class. You get all the answers right and you ask good questions. Human services is about people helping people, so I thought that you might like to help another student who is not doing so well. I will give you five points extra credit towards our next test if you can meet with the student at least once a week and review class materials, and answer any questions that he/she has about the class work. What do you think?

Here is another example of how I recruited another peer tutor for my class:

Prof: I am looking to develop a list of peer tutors in the class in regard to our upcoming 2nd exam. You have been selected because you are doing well in the course. Peer tutors would receive (5) five points extra credit on the next exam in exchange for helping another classmate to prepare for the exam plus the good feeling of knowing that you have helped a classmate. There are several students in the class who appear to be in need of a tutor right now. This would involve meeting with the student maybe once a week and talking on the phone maybe 1-2x/wk about class materials. If this interests you, please e-mail back, call me, or discuss it with me in class. Also, let me know what days you would be available and I will check with the student to see if your schedules match up. Thanks.

A student responded:

...I would like to let you know that I am pleased to hear that I'm one of the chosen to be a peer tutor because of my progress in class. Also, I will take the offer. I'm available (dates and times). Once again, thank you for the compliment. See you on Tuesday.

The following is a sample conversation with the student who arrived late in the semester to the class. The student was given a peer tutor and passed the first test.

Prof: Welcome to class. You missed five classes. What happened that has kept you out of class?

Student: Death in the family....(Student elaborates details.)

Prof: I am sorry to hear that. You missed a lot of classwork, but we are not having a test yet for another 3 weeks, so you have time to catch up. I have a peer tutor for you. A classmate will help you to give you the classnotes, go over them with you, answer any questions that you have about what you missed, and help prepare you for the test. What do you think?

Student: Thank you....

The following is a conversation with a student who obtained a low grade on the first test. When I saw the low grade, I called the student for an appointment before class. The student agreed to a peer tutor, was re-tested a week later, and passed the first test.

Prof: (privately before class) How do you think you did on the test?

Student: I don't know. I guess I did OK.

Prof: Did you study for the test?

Student: No. I lost my notebook and textbook on the Subway on the way home from work. I had two bags. One bag was my gym bag and one was my schoolbag. When it was my stop, I ran off the train. When I noticed I was missing one bag, the doors already closed.

Prof: I am sorry to hear about that. How come you didn't tell me this before?

Student: Well, I thought the class was easy and I could still pass the test.

Prof: Well, you got a 33. You definitely need to study for the test. I would like to provide you with a peer tutor and give you a re-test in one week. I have a student in the class who is doing well who will help you in exchange for extra credit. What do you think?

Student: Thank you, thank you....

The following is a sample conversation with a student who obtained a low grade on the first exam. The student agreed to the options I offered, one of which was a peer tutor, and did better on the next test.

Prof: I am concerned about your grade on the first exam. What happened?

Student: I guess I didn't study enough. I work and go to school. I guess I got nervous when I saw the test in front of me. Are going to tell me to leave your class?

Prof: Well, no, I am not going to tell you to drop the class yet. It is still early in the semester, so there is time for you to get some help and make some changes. Yes, it is hard to go to school and work at the same time. I would like to see you do better on the next test. I would like you to consider working with an in-class tutor, going to the counseling center, and going to the tutoring center. Are you open to that?

Student: Yes.

Prof: That's good to hear. I would like you to go to the counseling center to talk with a counselor about how to deal with your test anxiety; the services at the counseling center are free and confidential and provided by licensed social workers and psychologists. I would like you to go to the tutoring center to get help with taking multiple choice questions. I also would like you to work with one of our in class tutors to focus on class materials because the college tutoring center at the college does not have anyone who specializes in human services courses.

Sample contract between a peer tutor and a student

Guidelines for HUM 201 study partners/tutors

First Name of Peer Tutor:_____ First Name of Student:_____

Responsibilities of the Peer Tutor:
Check that your school/work schedules match up. See if there is a time that both of you have free at the college. Ex. right before this class, right after this class, other day/time:

Day/Time that we can meet:_____ _____ _____

Do not give your notebook, textbook, or handouts/class activities to anyone to borrow.

If your student requires making photocopies of these items, go together and make the copies together.

Exchange each other's telephone number and e-mail.

Student's cell:_____Best time to call student is:_____

Student's e-mail:_____Time e-mail is read:_____

Inform Prof. if you have any difficulty meeting/contacting your student or getting cooperation.

Meet with your student at least 1x/wk and keep in contact by phone. Review class-notes. Quiz each other.

You receive 5 points extra credit towards the next exam plus the good feeling of knowing that you helped a classmate.

Responsibilities of the Student Receiving Tutoring:
Check that your school/work schedules match up. See if there is a time that both of you have free at the college. Ex. right before this class, right after this class, other day/time:

Day/Time that we can meet:_____ _____ _____

Exchange each other's telephone number and e-mail.

Tutor's cell:_____Best time to call tutor is:_____

Tutor's e-mail:_____ Time e-mail is read:_____

Do not expect to borrow classnotes, textbook, or readings from your study partner/tutor. He/she also needs these materials to prepare for the exam. Use them when you meet together. Make all of your photocopies together.

Inform Prof. if you have any difficulty with your study partner/tutor, including avail-ability and ability to explain the class materials.

Meet with your study partner/tutor 1x/wk and keep in contact by phone. Quiz each other. If you put in a lot of effort to prepare for the exam, you should receive a good grade.

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Journal Writing in the Sociology of Family Class: Synthesis, Engagement and Making Connections

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Background: Writing Across the Curriculum

Many *Inquirer* readers are familiar with the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) pedagogy, a movement in higher education that established itself on college campuses in the 1980s. The basic premise of WAC (and WID, Writing in the Disciplines) is that while students tend to pay attention to the writing process in their English Composition courses, they may have a more difficult time when writing in subject-oriented classes, i.e., being at a loss for how to write an essay in Intro to Sociology, even though they may have "learned" to write essays in Comp I. Professors in the disciplines have not been trained to incorporate writing pedagogy into their teaching and are often no less at a loss when they find that their students "don't know how to write," have difficulty understanding and doing writing assignments, and are even more unlikely to use drafts and revise papers. For community college students, many of whom have required or are in writing remediation, the task of writing is even more onerous, and so the task of teaching it becomes that much more challenging.

WAC starts with three basic premises: First, writing is a process and there must be conscious attention to writing in subject courses. Instructors need to create writing assignments that fulfill their learning goals and develop them in such a way that students are able to understand what the assignment requires overall and what precisely it is asking the student to do. At least some assignments should be broken down into stages, with exercises, activities, and specific steps that lead to a final product. Perhaps most important, students should be encouraged to write *and* revise drafts.

Second, writing is not just about writing, but can help students to learn course materials. Writing should not be thought of merely as a way of demonstrating student mastery or comprehension of the subject. The writing process can actually help students master the material and work effectively with complex concepts and ideas.

Third, in order to facilitate Writing-to-Learn, WAC-oriented courses should include both formal, graded assignments and informal writing. Informal writings are low-stakes (un-graded), typically short, in-class writing assignments related to course topics or discussions. They may also be pre-writing exercises, homework, or journals, to which I now turn.

Take Away: What can using reading journals do for students?

The main take away in my experience of using reading journals is that it changes how students approach, read and comprehend course materials. The journals act

as a challenge to ensure that students read texts before they come to class. The use of reading journals requires students already to have read and *written* about the material to be discussed that day. By writing, students have a "stake" in what they read and a structured place to grapple with ideas and make comments and reflections.

After teaching The Family (SOC 250) for 2 semesters, I was frustrated with the small number of students who came to class having read assignment chapters and who were prepared to engage in class discussions. The class is not lecture-oriented; rather, I present students with a series of questions about a topic and set or readings and we answer them together in the course of a guided class discussion. When students are not prepared for discussions, and don't read the material, they do not participate and don't feel as engaged with the subjects. In Fall 2009, I introduced a reading journal connected to the weekly readings, using one of the journal techniques described in the WAC "bible" by John Bean, *Engaging Ideas*. It is now the primary form of informal writing we do in the course.

The main textbook we use in the course is Skolnick and Skolnick's *Family in Transition*, which is organized as a series of readings (excerpts of articles and books from leading researchers in the sociology of the family). Students are required to write a 1-2 page journal entry on each reading that we will cover in a given class. The entries consist of (1) a summary of main ideas and points and (2) comments and questions that the reading generated.

Most students are uncomfortable with summary writing. It is not an especially exciting form of writing but even more of an issue is that students have little experience writing summaries and many find it difficult to identify main points. I understood that there would be instruction required and I turned to a colleague in developmental skills who referred me to numerous texts on writing pedagogy to find ways of helping students write summaries. In addition, I created a handout that specifically outlines policies (regarding late journals, impact on grade, etc.) and provides students with formatting and tips. I also provided students with a sample journal (another idea from WAC), and students who had trouble getting started found it very helpful.

How do I get students to do ungraded informal writing and how do I evaluate the journals? The reading journals are a required part of the class and my policy is that when students are missing journals, points will be deducted (as for say, excessive absences) from the students' final grade. I read every journal, giving them a check or check plus. Occasionally, I will make *brief* encouraging comments about either their summaries (e.g., if a student included a key theoretical concept) or comments/questions. If I notice a pattern of problems, I may also comment that I'd like to help them and that they should see me.

From the perspective of a teacher, the journals help me identify students that may need extra help or encouragement as well as students who are doing very well, whom I can also encourage and acknowledge in my comments. If I notice improvement, I will comment on that and provide further encouragement. The journals also help me to "get to know" my students, including the "quiet ones" who don't like to participate in class. Sometimes, I will ask a student if I can mention a particular insight or question that they wrote. On another note, getting to

know my students' writing styles can also help me identify potential plagiarism down the road.

With their "portfolio" of journals, students have a repository of notes and insights about course readings that they can use to reference and study for exams as well as incorporate into the formal writing assignments in the course. While the style of reading journal I use is not part of a scaffolded writing assignment, I have received student feedback that they do in fact use their journals to help them in preparing for exams and when they want to reference course materials in their papers.

Despite early groans and resistance (in my first classes, and throughout the semester, I explain why and how the reading journals are important), most students do the journals and submit them in a timely fashion. Class discussions are more lively and include a larger number of students participating on a regular basis than before I used the journals. Because they had read and written about the material, students feel more confident asking questions and commenting on the topic being discussed. My comments on returned journals seem to encourage students as well—I noticed that a student who had not said a word in 3 weeks, starting participating after two weeks of reading positive comments on her journals. Students reported that writing a journal helped them with difficult readings. In my last class, we discussed an excerpt of an article by Judith Stacey on the postmodern nature of gay and lesbian family life and students commented that the reading was more difficult than others we've discussed so far. I asked them if writing a journal on the piece made a difference. Yes, it did. In fact, many commented that if they didn't have to write the journal, they would not have finished the reading and waited for me to "explain it for them."

Some things to work on

Yes, reading, recording, and commenting on journals is extremely time-consuming. Given the very heavy teaching loads of community college professors, this is a serious concern. In addition, I have wondered whether it would be better to have students complete reading journals online on Blackboard and if this would make a difference in my experience of processing the journals and/or the students' experience of writing them. My sense is that requiring students to submit a typed, formatted piece of writing "trains" them for more formal writing tasks. Given that most students' experiences of writing seem to be 'text-speak,' with its wanton disregard for the conventions of formal writing, the formal aspect of this type of "informal" journal may not be a bad thing. I have also thought about how the journals could be used to engage students with each other, and how might I use journals to encourage shy students. I am thinking about ways in which students can share the wonderful insights and comments they include in their journals with other students. I have a "shared space" area on Blackboard and I will sometimes ask permission to post student writing for their classmates to read. Acknowledging good thinking and writing in this way is a form of feedback that extends beyond a "check plus" or a good grade to allowing the student to experience positive feedback from peers as well.

Conclusion

Students at community colleges have numerous non-academic challenges that they have to grapple with. As we all know, in addition to ordinary academic challenges, they often have stressful work and family situations. While students may initially feel that this regular writing is a burden, it provides a structured way of making sure students spend the time needed to do well in a college course—something that they do not usually calculate into their schedules. On a pedagogical level, I do believe in the process of Writing-to-Learn and feel that it helps students, even those with learning challenges, understand and engage with the materials they are asked to read. And if you don't believe me, ask them:

"After doing all that writing, taking the CPE was a piece of cake."

"Honestly professor, if you didn't make us do the journals, I don't know if I would have even cracked the book."

"It was hard and sometimes with my busy life, I had to stay up late to do the journals but I'm glad I did them."

"When you have to write a journal, it forces me to really pay attention to what I'm reading and spend more time trying to get it."

"Most of the time, if I read at all for my class, I just skim, but this made me actually really read. And sometimes, it's hard and even when I write the journal, I'm still not sure I get it but I had to try."

Misconceiving and Stereotyping: A Developmental Perspective

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There are formidable challenges to being an optimally-functioning member of a community as rich in sexual, ethnic, racial, religious, economic, linguistic, and national diversity as the one found at BMCC. However, numerous internal and external motivators compel each of us to encounter our errors in conceiving the other and challenge us to more clearly take the perspectives of our classmates, instructors, and colleagues. For reasons described below, in extreme cases, encounters with "ourselves as the other" might be so anxiety-provoking that we may retreat from them and toward that which is most comforting and familiar. At its base, such reactions may evoke self-preservative instincts (Freud 1915) that are bound with our developed personal and cultural identities. Both faculty and administrators can foster greater openness and development in our students and ourselves by challenging assumptions, undoing stereotypes, and correcting misconceptions.[1]

At the moment, there is little or no space to consider the fine distinctions between *bias* (the cognitive processing aspect of the tendency to systematically exclude some information, e.g., the confirmation bias), *prejudice* (the result of forming conclusions without adequate evidence), *discrimination* (a behavioral manifestation of some prejudice), and *stereotyping* (fitting an event, object, or person into a previously formed mental category, often while disregarding the appropriateness of the assignation). In this article, I would like to share an interdisciplinary developmental view on the somewhat broader topic of stereotyping and misconceptions (results of errors in thinking, especially, in category formation and attributions to categories) of the other. In this view, interpersonal misconceptions are viewed as arising from multiple overlapping forces, including biological, evolutionary, cognitive, social, and cultural forces. Ethnic, racial, religious, gender, and national stereotyping, I assert, often are shaped by such forces.

Reliance on linguistic and phenomenological categories, to the extent that we are less aware than we might be, appears to play a role in both adaptive and maladaptive functioning. Mental shortcuts allow us to focus on more immediately—and personally—relevant information while excluding information less relevant to our perceived proximal goals. Adaptation is a relative term but, psychologically speaking, it may reasonably be associated with mental fitness within an environmental niche, as well as the flexibility to fit across environmental and social contexts. Ultimately, our adaptation may be measured by our orientation to reality as such (however prone to change these realities may be), as opposed

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[1]This paper is adapted from a presentation originally prepared by the author for a seminar on misconceptions hosted by the BMCC Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, Borough of Manhattan Community College, March 30th, 2011.

to the reality that is imposed on us, which we have incorporated uncritically, and which may have been distorted by conflict (Hartmann, 1958). We rely on concepts and categories to think symbolically and logically, yet with any aspect of humanity, there will be some error. One type of error, forming misconceptions, is ever-present and, arguably, adaptive. Given the consensual nature of reality, one's cultural embeddedness and identifications consciously and unconsciously influences his or her information (reality) processing.

Biological and Evolutionary Forces

There is consistent evolutionary pressure on us all to assess threats and recognize objects with real or perceived survival and reproductive value. In particular, we may consider misconceptions and stereotypes as relatively non-conscious adaptations representing instincts and learned behaviors with the aims of self-preservation and reproduction. For human beings, however, not all threats are physical; some are psychological and emotional. Feelings of social isolation often are associated with the perception of danger. Likewise, not all perceptions of attraction have as their aim the ultimate process of reproduction. The impulses to love are constrained by social conventions and social taboos. Over time, humanity's basic self-preservative and reproductive instincts have become increasingly complex and linguistically symbolized. Developmental and cognitive processes of classification and sub-classification of physical and internalized objects associated with pleasure and unpleasure states may be related to the aforementioned biological pressures.

Ultimately, we construct categories (schemas) that guide our perceptions of individuals, objects, and situations. We may conclude that forming schemas (representing, for example, friend, enemy, compatriot, bunny rabbit, hungry tiger) satisfy survival and reproductive aims. An ineffable attraction to another may be explained not only biologically, but also by examining one's schemas about appropriate love objects. When a sense of being threatened becomes salient, one might ask oneself, "Why is it that this person feels threatening?" Arguably, the question may be more readily answered from a perspective of nurture rather than nature. By way of analogy, the adaptive value of schemas, for example, a fast-approaching object directed squarely at your face or the aroma of your grandma's best stew, may induce a sense of danger or well-being, respectively. More often than not, we continually and unconsciously scan our environment for personally-relevant information. This may be more prevalent in the modern wired, mobile, and "instant-on" world of today.

Cognitive Contexts

Following this line of thinking of schemas as mental representations or categories that form the basis of misconception and stereotypes, we are able to consider stereotypes as shortcuts in thinking of which every person consistently makes use. These shortcuts result in the recursive formation of biologically- personally-, and socially-relevant categories and the assignation of objects into those categories. There is a relatively small cognitive limit to human beings' working memory (Miller, 1956), which places a band around the complexity of information that

can be processed from moment to moment. Conversely, we can say that there is a relatively large limit to our long-term memory. It may often be more personally reliable to fall back on our personal histories than our present experiences to make sense of lived experience. By freeing up our attention for other pressing matters, while often inaccurate, stereotypes may have a logical place in our collective and personal histories. We can quickly identify potential threats and resources that maximize our capacities to survive and reproduce. We also can dismiss from awareness those things that offer no personal benefit. That's a good thing. The downside, however, is that without sufficient attention and awareness, these basic cognitive tendencies may be 'hijacked', so to speak, either wittingly or unwittingly by others who wish to shape our beliefs.

Academics, marketing and advertising executives, religious and political leaders, and others are aware of distinctions between central route cognitive processing and peripheral route cognitive processing. Central route processing involves a relatively thoughtful, conscious, critical, and elaborated means of encoding information. Peripheral route processing takes a relatively unelaborated, uncritical, and often emotional tack that bypasses the central route. Appealing to non-verbal, instinctual, and familiar attributes tends to allow for greater peripheral route processing. We often revert to peripheral route processing because central route processing uses more cognitive resources; the latter tends to require greater motivation and ability (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Unfortunately, however, uncritically digesting information via the peripheral route may leave one open to malignant influence.

Social and Emotional Forces

Above, I have briefly commented on some biological, evolutionary, and cognitive foundations of misconceiving and stereotyping. Presently, I will briefly touch on the soft sensitive spots of the matter—the sternum and the temple, if you will—the interpersonal and emotional forces that obtain in misconceiving and stereotyping the other. Our earliest socialization processes in infancy are powerful primary organizers of schemas. From the first moments after birth (and perhaps even before) schemas related to emotional, social, and psychological safety have been written, revised, re-written, and edited in memory as internalized symbolic representations of the self (self-schemas), internalized representation of others (other schemas), and internalized representations of emotionally-relevant relationships (Fairbairn, 1944). We incorporate and internalize the values of our caregivers and their religious, social, and cultural worldviews. Alongside this process, we are identifying with them, other attachment figures, and those who otherwise are socially-influential. We make who they are a part of us—so much so, very often, that it is impossible to fully trace back how we came to be the persons we are.

These seemingly magical processes are a special means by which an infant may come to know itself, others, and the world. Very new humans have relatively little long-term memory of the availability of caregivers. Over time, the infant, if fortunate, *will* gain a consistent experience of an available and responsive caregiver (Bowlby, 1982). Such experiences augment the young child's emerging fac-

ulties of deductive logic while facilitating the integration of a sense of cause and effect. If the sum of the child's experience is good, he or she likely will conclude that he or she and his or her world is good. Later, the young child's moral development, formed in part out of its emerging cognitive capacities, enters into this determination. Insofar as the capacity for concrete (and later formal) operational thinking develops, non-selfish, non-clannish, abstracted moral thinking becomes possible (Kohlberg, 1984). This moral advance coincides with new developments in the capacity to internalize value systems handed down from the total environment. The nascent perception of things as *me* and *not-me*, as *good* and *bad* is based on a constitutional endowment; a cognitive capacity to assess probable outcomes based both on rational thought and emotionally-laden memory traces; and an internalized sense of morality developed within our biological, cognitive, social, and emotional selves.

We should remain mindful that our parents also have internalized the signs and symbols of their culture. Due in part to a biological imperative to attach to and identify with our caregivers, we take in, sometimes quite uncritically, their ideas, values, and goals. As an extension, we take in as a part of our selves, an oftentimes unquestioned allegiance to religious, social, and cultural institutions. Dynamically, as development progresses, representations of social groups become firmly set up in our minds as extensions of the all-protective good mother and good father.

Such gratifying identifications take the form of in-group and out-group schemas as our group identifications (in reality and in fantasy) come to be associated with expectations of protection and the satisfaction of perceived life and death imperatives. Nonetheless, we can and should peer into an often murky abyss to identify the extent to which the conventions, values, prohibitions, taboos, etc., that relate to personal and social identities are associated with often inaccurate schemas. These highly-organized schemas exist to maximize security and survival, as well as the biological imperative to mate with a 'fit' partner. In contrast to distal biological and evolutionary trends, social and cultural forces may be more proximal causes of individuals' specific tendencies to stereotype or misconceive. Survival for many, therefore, is not literally a life or death matter. Instead, we consider as important tools for survival self-esteem, self-concept, status, rank, upward mobility, and so on. These all *feel* necessary for survival.

Our stereotypes of others may be positive, negative, or ambivalent. In any event, stereotyping, especially when the target confirms the accuracy of the stereotype, allows one a sense of security at the expense of a sense of reality. Stereotypes adaptively allow us to make sense of the world in the ways in which we know and trust. Hopefully, a fully-mature individual understands that although the bargain of exchanging reality for fantasy may appear to be a good one, the true price to adaptation is exorbitant.

What we must continually question our assumptions, especially divisive assumptions that might be easier to leave unquestioned. "What might I gain from questioning my assumptions about women, Muslims, Christians, Latinos, gay marriage?" It also is valid and important to honestly question what we might lose. The potential loss of the real and perceived caring other may in reality or fantasy

actually be lost. There are real social pressures that must be taken into account. Despite all this, even if only in the privacy of our own minds, we must feel some freedom to allow these questions to see the light of day.

We may not agree with gay or interfaith marriage because of social taboos and legitimate threats of being disowned by family and community. Thus a key motivation for a person to negatively stereotype out-group members may be to reaffirm his or her personal and social beliefs as inviolably correct; in doing so, he or she may hope to gain continuing advantages from the in-group. Failing to validate in-group norms may result in being re-classified as an member—an emotionally and socially very threatening place to be. Therefore, as we challenge our misconceptions and stereotypes, we must respect the complex manner in which they were constructed and embark upon any disassembly carefully and methodically.

Conclusion
In many cases we may trace our tendency to misconceive and stereotype back to early infantile tendencies to feel threatened and vulnerable. These anxieties provide the motivation to bond with and identify with our caregivers. These caregivers, themselves having been socialized within segmented groups, tend to want to see those groups survive. Consciously or not socialization of children, adolescents, and young adults by reinforcing stereotypes produces a social glue (a 'Krazy Glue' if you will) that ultimately allows for increased feelings of safety and desirability. Nonetheless, as adults, we are responsible to ourselves and society to advance beyond the anachronistic methods of our forebears.

As educators, we at BMCC strive to equip our students with a knowledge base relevant to their chosen careers and aspirations. As global citizens we strive also to prepare our students to interact successfully in a multicultural and rapidly changing world. The tendency to stereotype, while, arguably, adaptive in a closed system, is increasingly maladaptive in an open one. As faculty, we are uniquely positioned to understand those forces and, as appropriate, incorporate into our curricula pedagogical techniques to reduce the chances of students falling back on unchecked assumptions. There are individual differences in the degree to which individuals have a "need to think," that is, gain intrinsic reward from thinking and thinking about thinking (Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, and Rodriguez, 1986). Fostering in our students an intrinsic motivation to critically evaluate new and old understandings as thoroughly as possible should be among our greatest aspirations.

Irrespective of discipline, during classroom exercises, we may have opportunities to moderate some forms of stereotyping by increasing the cognitive complexity of tasks (Stewart, Latu, Kawakami, and Myers, 2010). Situational Attribution Training and variations on that method may be useful insofar as it guides students to consider the situations of out-group members, as opposed to the perceived individual and group characteristics of those out-group members. Attributing individual behavior of those about whom we tend to negatively stereotype has shown to help attenuate automatic stereotypes. Current initiatives at BMCC, for example cross-listing critical thinking and philosophy and promoting

programs to develop a sense of global citizenship among students, to name but two, also are promising.

As a whole, BMCC students show a remarkable tolerance of and desire to embrace diversity. Nonetheless, much more can be done to promote personal growth and social acceptance of those with differing identities. However daunting, transforming low "need to think" students into high "need to think" students is an aim that we all at BMCC have in common, and one which may serve our students personally, educationally, professionally, and culturally. Our early attachments proceed from that of infant-caregiver, to person-peers, to adult romantic attachments, and beyond. As a community, BMCC can help take first steps to consciously foster a more secure and open base for the emerging global community.

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The Heavy Price of Globalization: Globalization and the Treatment of Workers in China

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The task of this essay is threefold. First, I make some general comments about the nature of economic globalization, both in theory and in practice. Next, I provide a brief case study to highlight the disparity between the theory and the reality of globalization. Last, I offer a few remarks on the challenges and benefits of teaching our students about globalization.

Economic globalization

Globalization is a modern term used to describe the changes in societies and the world economy that result from dramatically increased international trade and rapidly increasing interconnectedness. Supporters of economic globalization claim that the economic growth of any given country depends on the degree of its integration into the world market. The market is a social structure which optimally serves all economic needs. If the market functions without any restrictions, the argument goes, it will efficiently utilize all economic resources and automatically produce full employment and economic growth. From this point of view, the reason that we have poverty, unemployment, and periodic economic crises in the modern world is because markets have been constrained by labor unions, the state, and a host of social practices rooted in culture and history.[1] According to this viewpoint, globalization is a process: it is the tendency of investment funds and businesses to move beyond domestic and national markets to other markets around the globe, thereby increasing the interconnectedness of different markets; this process is enhanced by the removal of barriers to the interdependence of people and nations. In specifically economic contexts, globalization is often understood to refer almost exclusively to the effects of trade, particularly trade liberalization or "free trade," i.e., the increasing movement of money, services, information, technology, goods, and often people, not just within countries but also between them and between continents.
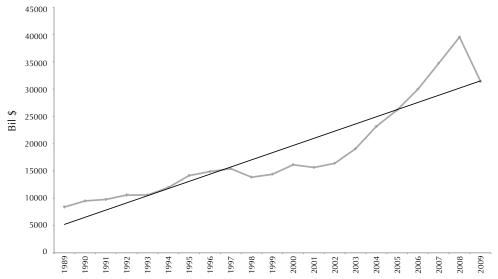
Exports and openness

For at least the last two decades, there has been a steeply upward trend in world exports of goods and services; in this same period world imports of goods and services have also grown. This is a question of "openness." Openness refers to the sum of the total exports of goods and services and total imports of goods and services. Graph #1, based on data from the World Trade Organization (WTO), indicates that the countries of the world are becoming increasingly open and integrated into the global economy. Due to rapid technological advancement

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[1] Shaikh Anwar, 2004 'The economic mythology of neoliberalism." New School University, p.1

from 2000-2008, the annual growth of world openness is 12.1%, which is much greater than the 5.59% growth rate for the period of 1990-2000. However, the recent worldwide economic slowdown has had a negative impact on the growth rate of openness; this important fact is clearly shown in the more recent -20.6 growth rate of world openness.

Graph #1
World Openness (Total export of goods and services + total Import of goods and services) (billion dollars 1989-2009)

Poverty alleviation and Economic Growth

Proponents of globalization argue that the only way global poverty can be alleviated is through economic growth, and that economic growth will occur only if countries participate in international trade to the greatest extent possible.[2] Globalization's critics counter that increased participation in international trade forces developing countries to focus on exporting raw materials and other basic commodities—the only products that they can produce competitively on the global market—which keeps these countries impoverished and does not allow for the development of healthy, diversified economies.[3] Globalization's supporters, in their turn, argue in favor of the ongoing efforts to integrate world economies by changing government policies and by aligning dozens of countries and billions of people into one work force, all with the alleged goal of reducing poverty. Moreover, supporters of globalization encourage doubtful countries to integrate into the world economy by arguing that this is the direction of so many countries because the benefits outweigh the risks. Thus countries become drawn into globalization, hoping their economy will grow too. Undeniably, the world has benefited a great deal from globalization. The world's economic growth (output) looks very interesting, and the annual growth rate of output is highly and

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[2] IMF staff, April 2000 (corrected Jan 2002) "Globalization: Threat or Opportunity?", pp.1-5
[3] Oxfam International, Made Trade Fair Campaign, www.oxfam.org

positively correlated with the annual growth rate of openness. If we run the function relationship between openness and growth rate of real output, we will see there is a strong direct relationship between openness and growth rate of output.

Y = Annual growth rate of real GDP.
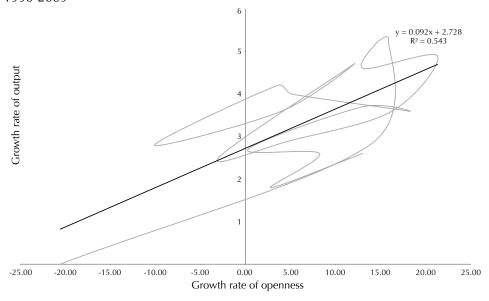X = Openness.
R^2 = Degree of fitness.

Y = 2.72 + 0.09 X
R^2 = 0.54

Graph #2
Functional relationship between growth rate of output and openness
1990-2009

y = 0.092x + 2.728
R^2 = 0.543

Growth rate of output (y-axis)

Growth rate of openness (x-axis)

However, contrary to the rosy predictions made on the basis of this world aggregate empirical evidence, the share of the less developed countries is far below that of the highly advanced industrialized nations.

Openness and less developed countries
To elaborate the earlier definition, economic globalization refers to the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services, free international capital flows, and more rapid and widespread diffusion of information and technology, all of which are measured by openness. Graph #2 shows the upswing trend of world openness, as well as different economies' group openness. The deficiency of the standard view thus lies within the notion of openness, since the share gained by developing economies is clearly well below that of developed economies.

Openness as an aggregate is inadequate. Expansion of trade does not mean developed economies and developing economies benefit in the same way from

economic globalization.[4] I use the work that Anwar Shaikh has done in this regard. Sheikh proved that free trade generally favours the developed countries over the developing countries, and the rich over the poor.[5] Countries that have been able to globalize their economies do see faster growth and reduced poverty. Conventional economic theory concludes that trade and financial liberalization lead to increased trade, offer more extensive access to a wide variety of foreign products for consumers and companies, and create a global market based on the freedom of exchange of goods and services. Based on this teaching, the primary reason why countries have trade is the application of comparative advantage. The foundation of comparative advantage is simply the idea that one country would produce a product which it is most suited to produce and trade that product with another country for the thing(s) that it lacks and/or gave up. With this, both sides are supposed to be happy. But is that the case? Hardly. (For details, see Appendix I.)

Before we proceed any further, an important dimension in current economic globalization must also be noted, namely, the rapid advancement and dissemination of Information Technology. A combination of developing and developed countries is involved in exports and imports of information technology products. I use World Trade Organization data to sort through this dimension of the problem. For example, China and Hong Kong together have the average percentage share of information technology products exports equal to 41.1% for 2008 and 38.83% for 2009, making China and Hong Kong extremely powerful economic forces. Here, again, we see that while economic globalization offers extensive opportunities for truly worldwide development, it is not progressing evenly. I return to this point presently.

Negative Consequences of Economic Globalization in China
In this section, I offer a brief case study of China to give some flesh to the general claims made above. Much more could be said about the case of China, but this is a start.

The Free Market: growth and inequity
To repeat, economic globalization has three major components: globalization of production, the expansion of international trade, and international capital mobility. Economic globalization is causing severe economic dislocation and social instability. The free market needs to have limits imposed on its operations. Otherwise, as we now see, the unfettered free market tends to weaken or destroy the resources of life and freedom. Economic globalization creates internal unevenness as well as external unevenness. The real issues behind economic globalization relate to power. Most so called trade agreements are really agreements securing the rights of global corporations to operate freely wherever they choose, so it is quite disingenuous of those who sit at the pinnacles of corporate power to advise countries to make them more globally competitive. If recent history is any indicator, it is clear that multinational corporations are not interested in the

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[4] China, India, Hong Kong, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, among other economies are beneficiary of globalization.
[5] See Shaikh Anwar, 2004 'The economic mythology of neoliberalism." New School University, pp. 5-10

needs of the people of their host countries. Among the others, China is a prime example of a negative aspect of economic globalization.

The impetus of globalization has been at the center of China's economic expansion. China is being integrated into the world economy faster than many other countries. The Chinese expansion of production comes with great promise of a new phase of export growth globally, whose inclusion in the process opens new markets and introduces new technologies. China has maintained its huge share of world exports and has significantly expanded its share of world exports of manufactured goods. And it cannot be denied that China has benefited enormously from globalization. On the face of it, China's economic growth and prosperity look very compelling. The average growth rate of China's real GDP for the period of 1990-2000 was 9.67%, the highest in world. Figures for the period of 2000 to 2009 are even better, at 10.06%. However, as elsewhere, globalization in China has created an unequal development. Most glaringly, broad integration of China into the global market has worsened the divide between a small but growing urban middle class and a vast population of rural poor.

The Environment: electronic waste
There is a further downside of economic globalization in China, related to its burgeoning IT trade. China imports huge volumes of electronic waste (e-waste) from the US and other industrial nations. Millions of American families own computers, and on average between two and three old or defunct computers are stored in the basements or backyards of these families.[6] At the end 2007, the United States had over 500 million obsolete computers. Moreover, according to the Silicon Valley Toxic Coalition, in the US, 130 million cell phones are annually disposed.[7] China with its cheap labor force is able to repair these items at very little cost, and resell them for a profit. US companies have to pay China—and India and other Asian countries, to say nothing of similar practices in Africa—to take these obsolete computers and other electronic devices, in the hope that they will be recycled.[8] Benjamin Joffe-Walt, among others, argues that the United States is using "recycling" as a hidden escape valve to export internal environmental problems to China and other Asian countries.[9] However, US claims about the environmental soundness of these exports notwithstanding, China rebuilds only 10% of those e-waste items, and dumps the rest[10] (see Appendix II for data on the environmental footprint of "recycled" computers).

The severity of China's environmental nightmare is well-documented. However, China *and* China's trade partner should be blamed for this. (It should be

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[6] Ibid, pp.179-180
[7] http://svtc.etoxics.org/site/PageServer?pagename=svtc_global_ewaste_crisis.
[8] Clearly, Basel convention accord states that " Ensure that hazardous wastes should be treated and disposed of as close as possible to their source of generation"
[9] Basel convention's Ratifications, http://www.basel.int/ratif/convention.htm.
[10] On 25 March 1994, the 65 Parties of the Basel Convention, led by the G-77 group of developing countries and China, took an historic step and voted by consensus for a full ban on all exports of hazardous wastes from the rich OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries to non-OECD countries. The Basel Ban is to come into full force of international law on 31 December 1997. However, a handful of powerful countries and businesses continue efforts to sabotage this landmark agreement for the environment and justice

noted that the United States is not the only country that is dumping e-waste in China. European Union countries, as well as Japan and South Korea, all are doing it too.) China and the US follow the rule of market without restraint, claiming in unison that free trade optimally serves the economic needs of both countries. Consequently, China ends up with easy profits from the US's so-called "recycling," and the US's e-waste problem is "solved." This in turn relieves pressure on manufacturers to develop more environmentally friendly products and production processes that might cut into profit margins.[11] And so the cycle of waste and environmental and social degradation continues.

One unfortunate and little-known aspect of this e-waste problem in China is that China is abandoning viable farm lands in some rural areas and using it as e-waste dumping grounds, creating veritable e-wastelands in the process—with environmental consequences we have only begun to comprehend. One of these places is Guiyu, a former rice farming land. Guiyu, in the south part of the Guangdong of China, is a cyber-desert. In this town and in many others nearby, abandoned mountains of electronic waste pepper the landscape. Thousands of immigrant workers dismantling computers monitors, keyboards, and other similar materials, cutting wires, scavenging for salvageable materials, and discarding the rest. Admittedly, this type of work provides life support sustenance for people there; and yet, ironically, the waste comes from industrial nations to China without being subject to any environmental or health and safety regulations.[12] Few of us realize the magnitude of harm that industrial nations are creating for the people who handle e-waste. They save the high cost of recycling; however, little

recycling is actually accomplished, and the people involved end up suffering all manner of environmental, social, and health-related problems. In this case, as in so many others, the alleged beneficiaries of globalization pay a high price.[13]

A picture speaks a thousand words. The sign in the photo at right reads: "Do not dump environmentally hazardous substances."

Conclusion: globalization in the classroom

How to teach our students about this rapidly globalizing world? The challenges vary, depending on one's discipline and orientation. In my economics classes, I start with few fundamental concepts which are vital in our work to understand exactly what "economics" is attempting to explain. I present to our students the fact that economics is the study of how human social interaction is governed once the

[11] Eva Cheng, "China; E-waste and environmental colonialism", 21 June 2007. http://www.greenleft.org.au/2007/715/37118

[12] AsiaNews.it, http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=3693

[13] To fully comprehend how harmful they are? See : Toxics and Health at http://svtc.etoxics.org/site/PageServer?pagename=svtc_toxics_and_health, Body Burden.

market becomes the dominant means (locally and globally) of the production and distribution of goods and services. Among the predominant questions about today's world are: Does the market have a self-correcting mechanism? Has it helped advanced economies to become more powerful? And is it creating a big gap between developing economies and developed economies. It is common knowledge that if ten different economists are asked a question concerning some economic phenomenon, chances are all have different answers, so it is fair enough to challenge the related and commonly held ideas that economic growth is synonymous with globalization, and that free trade (so-called) will make wealthy countries wealthier and aid in the development of poorer countries. These two views, which the promoters of globalization and unregulated markets support by focusing on figures rather than reality, ignore other relevant social and political factors.

But I don't have to teach this to my students. As students start to engage the analysis of mainstream economic theories, they see that the evidence shows the inaccuracy of the claims, and they themselves begin to recognize the problems posed by the orthodox view. This is the most rewarding part about teaching, that is letting the knowledge go, and allowing the doubts and questions and alternative answers to emerge on their own.

Appendix I

Due to historically uneven economic division of labour, the majority of developing economies[14] have comparative advantage in producing four categories of products, called primary products by to UNCTAD. They are:

  A. Agricultural raw materials
  B. Ores and metals
  C. Forestry and forestry products
  D. Food items excluding fish

Table #1 shows shares of developing and developed economies from the world total exports of major commodity exports:

Table #1
Percentage share of total exports by type of products
Selected years

Categories of Economies	Food Items			Manufactured goods			Ores, metals, precious stones			Agricultural raw materials		
	1995	2005	2009	1995	2005	2009	1995	2005	2009	1995	2005	2009
Developed Economies	67.3	68.2	62.0	67.4	65.8	60.4	68.9	60.2	52.2	67.7	61.0	52.8
Developing Economies	28.6	31.0	36.9	29.6	31.3	36.3	27.6	37	45.7	30.3	36.5	44.5

Sources: Table calculated based on data from UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics, chapter 3. International Merchandise Trade by Product, Table, 3.2.C, pp. 162-172

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[14] China, India and few other countries are not among this category of nations.

Moreover, from 2000 to 2009 the gap between developing and developed economy's exports is getting narrower, due in large measure to the growing level of exports from developing economies (see table #2):

Table #2
Percentage change of commodity exports of a few Developing Economies 2000-2009

China	Hong Kong	Korea, Republic of	India	Brazil	Mexico	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand
382.3	57.8	109.9	283.7	177.6	38.1	60.3	95.8	120.5

Table constructed based on data from: UNCTAD "Handbook of Statistics chapter 3.

As I mentioned in the text, developed economies have the comparative advantage of producing manufactured products, as well as capital intensive productions. On the other hand, developing economies have comparative advantage of producing the low value added products and exporting them, as indicated in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

Table #3
Selected Developing Economies International Merchandise Exports 2009 (volume and percentage)

Country	Products	Mil $	% of Country	% of world Total
Argentina	Animal feed excluding unmilled cereal	8210	13.1	15.29
Brazil	Iron ore and concentrates	14892	8.5	23.84
Chile	Copper ores and concentrates	20966	34.9	19.97
Cuba	Nickel ores, concentrates	1089	30.8	13.35
Côte d'Ivoire	Cocoa	1953	31.2	20.9
Ghana	Cocoa	1639	42.3	10.97
Indonesia	Fixed veg fat and oil, excl. "soft"	13208	10.4	45.65
Kenya	Tea and mate	1464	19.5	14.1
Namibia	Uranium & thorium ore concentrates	924	21.9	55.6
Pakistan	Rice	2107	11.1	10.2
South Africa	Silver, platinum, platinum metals	8293	13.0	17.94
Sri Lanka	Tea and Mate	1088	16.7	19.5
Ukraine	Ingots, Iron steel primary products	1088	16.7	19.5

Table calculated based on data from UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics, chapter 3. International Merchandise Trade by Product, Table, 3.2.C, pp. 170-180.

Table #4
Selected Developed Economies International Merchandise Exports
2009 (volume and percentage)

Country	Products	Mil $	% of Country	% of the World
Japan	Passenger cars and race cars	27719	13	16.56
Japan	Ships boats floating structures	21008	3.2	14.75
USA	Aircraft, spacecraft & equipment	40046	3.4	24.67
USA	Civil engineering plant & equipment	20221	1.7	19.85
France	Aircraft, spacecraft & equipment	36325	6.9	22.37
France	Perfume toilet cosmetics, excl. soap	12993	2.5	20.95
Italy	Furniture part; bedding furnishing	12166	2.5	11.81
Germany	Passenger cars and race cars	121289	9.4	22.6
Germany	Aircraft, spacecraft & equipment	30885	2.4	19.02
Switzerland	Pharmaceuticals excluding medicine	19056	10.2	16.43
Switzerland	Watches and clocks	14004	7.5	43.19

Sources: Table calculated based on data from UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics, chapter 3. International Merchandise Trade by Product, Table, 3.2.C, pp. 170-180.

Table #5
Exports of office and telecom equipment of selected economies
2009

	Billion dollars	% of the World 1980	% of Country 1990	% of the World 2000	% of the World 2009
China	346	0.1	1	4.5	26.2
European Union	328			29.2	24.8
Hong Kong, China	138				
United States	113	19.5	17.3	15.8	6.5
Singapore	97	3.2	6.4	7.6	7.3
Japan	79	21.1	22.6	11.2	5.9
Republic of Korea	77	2	4.8	6.1	5.8
Taipei, Chinese	62	3.2	4.7	6	4.7
Malaysia	57	1.4	2.7	5.4	4.3
Mexico	50	0.1	1.5	3.5	3.8
Thailand	29	0	1.2	1.9	2.1

Sources: WTO, International Trade Statistics 2010, Table II.42-II'45, pp.80-85.

Appendix II

Table shows the composition of Hazardous material of 500 million computers.

Table #6

Waste Inside 500 million computers

Plastics	6.32 Billion Pounds
Lead	1.58 Billion Pounds
Cadmium	3 M million Pounds
Chromium	1.9 M million Pounds
Mercury	632,000 Pounds

Sources: The Basel Action Network (BAN) Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (SVTC), February 25, 2002, p.6.
February 25, 2002, http://svtc.etoxics.org/site/DocServer/technotrash.pdf?docID=123 p. 8

Pedagogical Poems

Michelle Wang
Cooperative Education

In higher education, teaching has emphasized student's conceptual understanding. However, a lack of connecting of affective dimensions of student learning can lower student's motivation to learn. Conceptual understanding comes from the mind. Feeling connected with what we learn comes from the heart. Learning should be a combination of our heart and mind.

What's Behind…?

What's behind…?

A question that leads to a secret connection

A question that reveals a colorful mask

A question that elicits a deeper self

What's behind…?

Connection—a joy or sorrow?

Mask—a destiny or surrender?

Self—a comfort or struggle?

What's behind…?

An old memory reviving

A need for embracing support

A journey of searching for light

An answer echoes in What's behind…?

(Note: The question of "what's behind…?" has been my inquiry for over a decade both within and beyond the classroom. I see the world as a theater. People wear masks and play various roles on this big stage. I often get lost in colorful masks. A desire of searching for authenticity in human relationship never stops.)

Image

An image comes from a story—
A story lives in life itself

How the story begins?
What's in the story?
Who's playing in the story?
When the story ends?

An image comes from a place—
A place that welcomes freedom

How the place creates?
What's in the place?
Who's traveling by the place?
When the place closed?

An image comes from you and me—
We, travelers passing through unlimited space
Images flying among clouds

How the image shapes?
What's in the image?
Who's leading the image?
When the image dies?

(Note: What is an image? How does the image begin? Where does it come from? When does it end? What does it mean? More important, do we know "what's behind the image?" The above questions are asked in career planning class, when students entertain 'image' application as to their respective resumes.)

Black Resume

A color of BLACK

covered on a piece of paper

The paper

is

crying

I am

WHITE and PURE

The cruel Black

S-T-I-C-K-S

The paper

FIGHTING

SHOUTING

begging

tearing

surrendering

The color of BLACK

Never wash away

The color of WHITE

Fading away in the dark, dark BLACK

(Note: What is behind a resume? The poem was written based on my drawing of the feelings behind my resume. Students, too, must face the felt dimensions of resume writing.)

Feeling and Thinking

Thinking—
destroys the beauty of Feeling
BUT
Without Thinking—
Feeling has no meaning

Feeling and Thinking
like
Black and White
Yin and Yang

They seem contrary
BUT
Behind the contrast -
an energy of balance flows in-between

In truth—
Feeling and Thinking
are complementary
in
whole-person learning

(Note: This poem was inspired by abstract expressionist, Franz Kline's "Black and White" paintings, Chinese "Yin and Yang" philosophy, and more importantly, an insightful dialogue about whole-person learning with my professor, Lyle Yorks of Teachers College.)

CALL FOR PAPERS

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- the impact of syllabus or curriculum changes
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