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Southern Dialogue

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 2

FALL 2010

To Know or Not to Know:

Faculty Forum XLV Offers Diverse Philosophies of Education

Edith A. Kostka

English Department

On Wednesday, August 25, 2010, a lively debate echoed throughout the Archie Tracy Lecture Hall in the Engleman rotunda at the University Forum XLV: "The Power of Inquiry as a Way of Learning." Dr. Virginia S. Lee, keynote speaker and expert on techniques of Inquiry Learning, assigned faculty into groups to solve the puzzle of a series of jumbled words and phrases in order to extract meaning from them. To guide the groups, Dr. Lee listed a set of questions on a Power Point screen: Who? What? When? Where? Why? Immediately the energy of the room shifted from a teaching-centered authority to an inquiry dynamic in which several levels of interpretation were set in place, including but not limited to the list of words on the screen and their relation to the set of words in the puzzle. Discussion became both paradigmatic and polyvalent as groups searched for models

across disciplines and epistemological relationships among historical cultures over several centuries.

What became immediately apparent was that each member of the group was valued for intellectual acumen and creative application. Words such as "father," "declined," and "women" signaled a gender issue that quickly inspired possibilities as to whom the speaker might be (a woman) and when the speaker might have written an argument calling for equality and suffrage for women (nineteenth century).

Our group included experts from four disciplines: Psychology, Public Health, American Literature, and Technical Writing. Despite the differences among us, we shared fundamental knowledge about American history, women's politics, rhetorical constructs including word choices, identification of audience, shape of argumentation, and a general sense that what appeared before us was part of a major historical

artifact in the evolution of American gender politics. We began by assembling the fragments into make-shift sentences that seemed to follow a rhetorical logic. The juxtaposition of "father" and "declined" signaled to us a sense of gender injustice which led us to the issue of nineteenth-century women's suffrage. Additional discussion brought us to Susan B. Anthony and the speech she delivered at Seneca Falls, New York in 1872. We rejoiced at our guesses because we felt we had achieved a level of success that ratified our historical knowledge and that valued our sense of self and our effort to do well. After all, is not education about high achievement and success? Is not education about learning all the right answers?

As we arrived at our conclusions, Dr. Lee recalled our attention to the front of the room to report our responses. While our energy shifted to the authority of Dr. Lee, the process of inquiry situated each one of us as a person of power who felt we

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From the Editor

Autumn greetings! It is time for the harvest and this semester's issue of *Southern Dialogue* offers a cornucopia of reflections and resources on teaching and learning effectiveness. While Edith Kostka follows up on the diverse philosophies of education debated at our University Forum XLV, Richard Cain muses on teaching students how to think critically in response to his visit to the 30th International Conference on Critical

Thinking. Rebecca Hedreen offers practical insights into the world of Open Access, and Elizabeth Rodriguez-Keyes and Dana Schneider share their experience with hybrid teaching.

As always, *Southern Dialogue* aims to energize faculty and inspire dialogue about teaching and learning. We hope to cultivate and maintain a stronger sense of community among

colleagues. Please feel free to send your article ideas, anecdotes, news and project results to me at hudsonjl@southernct.edu.

All best wishes for the remainder of the semester,

Jennifer A. Hudson
Editor

To Know or Not to Know (cont'd from page 1)

were on the right track to the right answers. Authority, therefore, was shared throughout the room with the groups as a congress of researchers, and with each individual who had made important contributions to the solution of the puzzle.

An atmosphere of friendly competition inspired each of us to do our best. What surprised and amused many of us was that we were all working on the same set of fragments and that we were all embarking upon the same journey of discovery and interpretation. Such a strategy suggested the many roles we all play in the world at large, and the value of the role of the individual as part of a vast global community. Although the room was large and the population diverse, ratification by peers enabled us to speak with a degree of credibility. Our symphony of voices resounded with the richness of many solos.

A number of positive outcomes emerged from such an inquiry-based assignment and seemed to offer opportunities for student learning, particularly on the threshold of the Liberal Education Program which is taking shape at our university. Firstly, while the instructor serves as a facilitator, the groups become the center of intellectual activity in which group members must draw upon their own foundations of knowledge and their own unique experiences to attempt to respond to a prescribed set of questions. In terms of our classrooms, a shift away from the instructor to the students valorizes student selfhood in ways that build confidence, ensure cordiality, and share in the effort of problem solving, which are among the competencies the Liberal Education Program seeks to cultivate in classrooms and also in life experience.

Secondly, as graduates of public education, our students already possess knowledge in history, literature, mathematics, science

and art, and the kinds of pedagogical practices in university classrooms that draw upon such knowledge ratifies the achievements of individual students and creates a sense that their systems of knowledge are respected as foundations for their university experience. Another important outcome identifies university classes as sites of intellectual curiosity. When students enjoy the attention of peers as well as faculty, they grow as people and flourish as creative investigators in an atmosphere of camaraderie and good will. Thus, the university classroom becomes a safe place to experiment, to make mistakes, and to flourish in the light of healthy inquiry and discussion.

Thirdly, inquiry-based practices call for knowledge across the curriculum and for multidisciplinary responses that might include identification of a set of philosophies, theories or arguments rooted in political or social reforms or expectations; or that might recall a recent political speech or public statement by a person of national importance; or that might echo the lyrics of a cherished ballad currently at the top of the music charts in popular culture. Because our university is rich in cultural and intellectual diversity, students soon realize that the lessons of one classroom or discipline might intersect or inform the lessons of a completely different classroom or discipline as part of a larger understanding of human experience.

Fourthly, by means of inquiry-based practices, students are able to interact with one another in ways that disarm the discomfort of public speech. Because of their smaller size and scale, groups provide a sense of privacy and safety that the larger, open classroom does not always offer. Many students fear exposure in an open classroom particularly when the response to a question seems

unavailable or unclear. Assertive students overcome their fears and often become dominant voices in the classroom, while students who suffer from insecurity or shyness fall silent and often fade into the background of discussion. Small groups with inquiry-based searches allow every student in the group to make a contribution and to feel that each voice matters in the chorus of reports and responses.

Fifthly, because all the groups are working toward the same or similar solution, the assignment becomes an equalizer in which everyone is a peer. Both the introvert and the extravert are able to participate in the dynamic of the group and to share insights and experiences. Small settings draw out the quiet students and allow them a forum to express their ideas and findings. Sometimes the deepest thinker is the silent student in the back of the room. In the privacy of a small group, that thinker is able to articulate ideas to a willing audience who will accept and consider them. In addition, because of an affable social environment, each group is able to cultivate its own unique personality and methodology, which, during the subsequent reports, allow students in other groups to hear a wide range of ideas and approaches founded upon opposing philosophies and points of view.

At the forum, as groups reported their hypotheses, a chorus of voices rose among faculty who debated the question about whether or not there were correct answers to the set of questions, and about whether or not there *ought* to be correct answers. Were the fragments historical? Was the writer well known? For what purpose were the phrases assembled and why would a writer undertake such a mode of address? Or, why should we even

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SOUTHERN DIALOGUE GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS AND EDITORIAL POLICIES

Southern Dialogue gladly considers:

- Short reports from different disciplines on classroom practices
- Articles that focus on practical ideas related to teaching and learning in higher education and explorations of issues and challenges facing university faculty today.
- Announcements of work-in-progress and requests for collaborators
- Announcements of conference presentations, publications, community outreach and creative projects
- Book and website reviews.

Submissions must be in electronic format (copied and pasted directly into the body of the e-mail or as a MS Word file). Send to Jennifer A. Hudson, Editor, at hudsonjl@southernct.edu.

The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity, and assumes no responsibility for the views expressed in the contributions selected for publication. Submissions accepted for publication may be published in both print and electronic copy. All rights revert to the author(s) upon publication.

Teaching to Think Critically

Richard Cain
Public Health Department

Last summer, I attended the 30th International Conference on Critical Thinking, hosted by The Center and Foundation for Critical Thinking. The theme, "How to Teach Students to Master Content by Developing the Questioning Mind," converged on the basic principles of critical thinking such as the elements that characterize its process, the intellectual standards that evaluate its quality, and the intellectual virtues that serve as a guide to think in such a way that is fair-minded. The Foundation defined critical thinking, in part, as "self-guided, self-disciplined, thinking [that] at-

tempts to reason at the highest level of quality and fair-mindedness." Skill-based workshops provided teaching and learning strategies that could be applied across the disciplines.

The practice of critical thinking is just as much an experiment for the teacher to teach as it is for the student to learn. As teachers, we cannot be successful in helping students learn how to think critically unless we actively engage ourselves in the practice of learning teaching as it applies to critical thinking. What follows are some of my reflections from the conference, in both philosophy and practice.

As a community of learners, teachers and students engage the process of learning when we connect with one another and contribute to satisfying our common needs for knowledge and understanding, clarity in thoughts and ideas, and freedom from discrimination in the expression of what we think. We use thinking to reason through and evaluate our ideas and choose those that are the most fair-minded. The quality of how we think and what we learn is consciously driven. While the teacher may be further along in the process, we cannot be successful in helping students learn how to think critically unless we

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Open Educational Resources: Increasing Flexibility for the Instructor, Decreasing Stress for the Student

Rebecca Hedreen
Coordinator for Distance Learning

I think we've all heard the complaints by now. From students: "I can't believe I spent \$200 on this book that we hardly used!" From faculty: "I can't find one book that covers everything I want to teach!" Not to mention students *not* buying the book and then not doing the readings, the bookstore not being able to get copies of your preferred out-of-print or older edition, and students complaining about books being stolen, lost, or unavailable.

There is a solution: Open Educational Resources (OER). "Open" in this case is like open source software; it is modifiable by the user, free to distribute and use. There are also Open Access resources, where the files are free to read, but not to modify.

Open resources can allow an instructor to remove portions that aren't necessary, add additional materials to cover subjects that aren't addressed in the original, reorder the material to fit a particular course, and update topics that need revision. You teach ex-

actly what you want to teach, without confusing students by bouncing around within a book or between books.

Since the materials are digital (nearly all open materials these days are in digital formats), they can be linked or uploaded into courseware (i.e. eLearning Vista) or course webpages. Students *can't* lose the book; it can't be stolen and the bookstore won't run out of copies. The Library can even catalog the books as Internet resources. Students can choose exactly how much material they want to print, saving the environment or their finances as they choose.

You aren't limited to texts, either. Dr. Mark Milliron of the Gates Foundation refers to curricular "playlists" containing whatever resources pedagogy demands for the course (Milliron, Bell, & Shank, 2010). These might include videos, audio files/podcasts, images, animations, simulations, games, as well as the more standard book chapters and journal articles.

How would this work in a typical class? Let's first take an example

where a digital textbook (simply an online text similar to what you use now) is used in its entirety. In your syllabus you'd list the required text with a link. If there is a printed text option, you might ask the bookstore to order a few copies (this varies by publisher and source) for students who prefer a printed text. If there is a PDF or similar file available, you could also arrange for the file to be printed like a course pack for student purchase. Students can also take the file to a copy shop and have it printed and bound themselves. (They may need to show the open license.)

As the course progresses, you'll list the individual readings required. Instead of just having the chapter and/or page numbers listed, you can also have a link, either to the main book or to the individual chapter.

As a second example, what if you want a variety of materials from a variety of sources? In the "playlist" scenario, you won't have an explicit textbook to add to your syllabus. (It's kind to explicitly

state this in **Continued on page 6**

To Know or Not to Know (cont'd from page 2)

to know any answers?

While some faculty believed that students would be empowered by learning what seemed to be the right answers to the questions, other faculty believed that there was even more power in *not knowing* the right answer, that, in truth, there *never was a right answer*, and that the entire exercise was about *more than finding answers*. It was about something else. That something else speaks to the mission of the Liberal Education Program. Inquiry-learning techniques seem to serve an integral purpose to empower students with competencies of reading, writing, critical thinking and oral communication. To pursue lines of inquiry is to embark upon a great journey of discovery, to venture into areas of knowledge that might once have been overlooked, to search both inside the self and outside the self to navigate the vast epistemologies of human understanding, to witness the good and bad of human behavior, the highs and lows of human spirit, and to do so as a thinking, growing, evolving individual who is characterized by self confidence and a sense of self worth as the journey unfolds.

Such a journey holds promise for fulfillment and also opportunity for defeat. To learn, to know, to acquire the kinds of information that rise among plateaus of success ennobles the seeker but also settles the seeker among comfort zones. To venture beyond the known to the places where the answers are not always easy is to risk failure but to dare discovery. Such discoveries are for the bold and the brave who understand that every endeavor does not result in success, that every inquiry does not reach satisfaction, that every great journey holds pitfalls and perils.

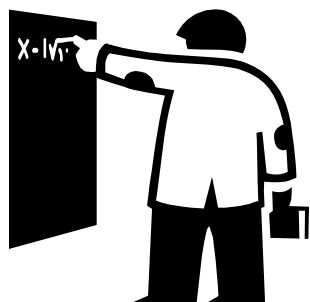
Inquiry learning, as demonstrated by Dr. Lee, seems to be about finding answers and also about not finding answers. It seems to be about success and also about open-ended questions that inspire additional searches and deeper quests. It is about courage and imagination and a pioneer spirit that does not flag at failure nor quail at disappointment, but, instead, looks at the classroom assignment, and ultimately the challenges of human life, as journeys of discovery, not only to recover facts and experiences, but also form and shape the self and

the fiber of which the self is made.

In terms of the relation between Inquiry learning and the Liberal Education Program, there seems to be a shift away from the idea of a student as a vessel to one in which the student is an active participant in the great unfolding of human understanding. As faculty, we invite our students to follow our leadership but break away to pursue their own paths of discovery, to learn what we know and then to surpass us in new and surprising ways. We need them to grow. We need them to be unafraid. We need them to be unique and resourceful and unfettered in spirit, to see themselves in the contexts of micro-and-macro-communities in which they play important roles. We need them to be self-resourceful, self-confident, self-reliant. We need them to be themselves and to grow beyond our wildest expectations.

As students take our courses, read our textbooks, and follow our instructions, they encounter many pedagogical practices and philosophies of education. In some courses they will hear questions and learn answers. In other courses, they will hear questions to which there are no answers. They will follow intellectual arguments that will take them to places where they want to go. They will listen to debates that will leave them disturbed and restless and wanting more. Such differences characterize the richness of human experience and underscore the necessity of critical thinking skills, unbridled imagination, and even inspired insight. What we faculty experienced in our debate about the need to know or not to know illustrates the kind of intellectual and pedagogical diversity that makes a Liberal Education Program such a vibrant and compelling experience. By means of such a pathway we are able to invest our students with a powerful sense of wonder.

That is our reward. *SD*



Teaching Critical Thinking (cont'd from page 3)

are mindful of learning how to teach critical thinking and its practice in the classroom.

Becoming a critical thinker starts when one recognizes the need to think about thinking with an intention to improve it and then takes action. The critical thinking person not only has the capacity to seek reason, truth, and evidence, but also the drive and disposition to seek them. No one will ever become a perfect thinker. The very nature of the definition of critical thinking implies that it is continuous. In other words, to be a critical thinker lies more in the sense of becoming rather than being.

The process of teaching students how to think critically must be slow and deliberate. Prior to entering college, many students have not been provided with the opportunity to learn how – and, most importantly, why – to use thought to gain knowledge or explore the meaning of their own ideas. Few have been inspired with the drive and disposition to use thinking to understand and assess thought, to question an argument, or to reason logically. The more defined these critical thinking skills become in college, the greater the likelihood students will come to realize that effective thinking is a lifelong process in which learning and decision making are inextricably linked, to know that knowledge about any subject can change and even become obsolete, and that curiosity can lead them toward creatively discovering what it is they do not know.

To avoid invoking fear among the students, it is important to carefully think through how to approach teaching and learning from a “critical thinking” perspective. The common conception of critical thinking is that it is negative and critical, and some students may be concerned that the teacher’s drive is only to find fault in their thinking or written work, or they are being personally judged. As part of my experience, I have learned to empathize with their concerns knowing that developing trust will take time. During evaluations, I suggest you place the emphasis on the work and not the student. Break the process of thinking down into smaller elements that emphasize early successes, and then gradually develop the challenge as the course progresses.

Asking questions is an important component of critical thinking. However, questions that are too complex can make the process of learning to think critically confusing. Posing questions that are too inquisitive, unclear or vague will lead to reasoning that is unclear, ideas that are riddled in thought, and answers that bear no relevance to the question at hand. Complex questions do not need a lot of detail, but they do need to be relevant and clear. The best approach is to break any complex question down into smaller, more precise questions. This will likely lead to a deeper more reflective answer.

Many students are used to engaging in a process of monological thinking – there is only one lens through which to view something, one way to reach an answer, or an answer can only be right or wrong. To encourage students to move away from a monological mode of thinking, take any concept from your discipline and create an activity that helps them to understand that for some things we know of today, at one time, never existed as a fact. Every discipline has established procedures that are settled by facts or definitions. The purpose is not to dispel its truth; it is to demonstrate its purpose exists because each had to be reasoned through and eventually decided upon.

Being curious invokes the learning process. To help students to understand that learning to think critically is a process of how to reason through a concept or idea, rely on the students’ own initiative. Most students have the capacity to think critically and want to develop their skills, especially when they realize that what they are learning is new or they will learn in a different way. Students are likely to be successful when they have the autonomy to inquire and direct their own learning in ways that allow them to master something that has meaning and purpose to themselves and others. Assignments that provide students the freedom to choose what they will learn and how they will learn it will likely provide greater outcomes. Provide the outcome in terms

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Teaching Critical Thinking (cont'd from page 4)

of the product expected and any propositions that should guide their learning.

As a final note, whether taught explicitly or not, the development of critical thinking skills is emphasized in our courses. As teachers at Southern, we help students understand and grasp the content within a discipline through the nature of study within a course and our pedagogical approach. Some courses emphasize the development and interpretation of the discipline, others emphasize application, and some do both. We use a variety of approaches: in-class discussions; individual and group projects; writing papers and essay examinations; the application of technique through individual and group projects; and mentoring and supervising culminating, capstone, and field experiences. The number of activities available to teach critical thinking is as endless as the teacher's (and students') mind. *SD*

Yale Library Cards 2010

The Yale Library Card Program allows faculty access to the resources of this major research library through non-borrowing privileges. The program stimulates and encourages research that will lead to publication. Congratulations to this year's recipients:

Carlos Arboleda, WLL
Lisa Bier, Library Services
Corinne Blackmer, ENG
Marie-Dominique Boyce, WLL
Westerly Donohue, SOC
Robert Eldridge, ECO
Steven Judd, HIS
David Levine, ART
Tricia Lin, WMS
Max Mintz, HIS
Byron Nakamura, HIS
Troy Paddock, HIS
Pina Palma, WLL
Christine Petto, HIS
Jean-Jacques Poucel, WLL
Thomas Radice, HIS
Troy Rondinone, HIS
Tony Rosso, ENG
Moses Stambler, SWK
Eric West, GEO
Julia West, WLL

Keeping the "Social" in Social Work: The Use of Hybrid Teaching in Undergraduate Human Behavior and the Social Environment Courses

**Elizabeth Rodriguez-Keyes and
Dana Schneider**
Social Work Department

Traditional teaching methods in the Department of Social Work undergraduate program have relied on once a week 2 ½ hour classes. It is not unusual for students to come to class underprepared, expecting the instructor to provide the majority of course material in lecture format. We have found that this can quickly become tedious for student and instructor alike if there is little engagement, and student curiosity goes under-stimulated. Out of this experience, we decided to try something different to meet the needs of the students, as well as ourselves. As a pilot, we developed a hybrid version of the course, Human Behavior and the Social Environment in which students attended class 1 ½ hours per week and were required to complete online quizzes, blogs, and activities in between class meetings. Focusing primarily on theory, students in the past have had difficulty being active participants. Our goal in developing the hybrid course was to engage students through the use of online activities and real life scenarios, as opposed to teaching with a more traditional lecture style. Given the University's strategic plan of incorporating technology in teaching, as well as similar imperatives from the 2010 Social Work Congress, we have found much institutional and professional support for innovative teaching methods.

We developed online assignments which required students to have out-of-class communication, using real life situations to understand theory. This approach proved to be successful, as we encountered in a relatively short time, students consistently demonstrating enthusiasm for learning and curiosity about how "real life" situations presented opportunities for understanding theory. As a result of these activities, student dialogues with one another were initiated

and continued outside of class, through online forums (blogs and discussions). Consequently, students came to class more engaged, active and excited about learning, and were better prepared to discuss material on a deeper and more experiential level.

We found that our teaching styles evolved to include development of online activities, encouragement of engagement between students out of class, and the use of online interactions during the on-ground class. The need to prepare a lecture had shifted, thus changing our roles from lecturer to facilitators. Some of the benefits we observed included the presentation of students' thoughts and ideas online while offering constructive critiques to one another, increased interaction with the instructors, and the possibility for increased group-class cohesion and awareness of diverse views.

We found that for our students, who are faced with competing responsibilities outside of class (i.e. work and family), activities which reflect contemporary lifestyle and culture were more effective in capturing their attention and interest. Students also consistently noted that the decreased class time enabled them to better juggle multiple demands and do work on their "own time." Through two tiers we emphasized the importance of observation and reflecting on observations and using the internet as a forum for discussing their observations and thoughts, while promoting productive critiques. We encouraged and required use of YouTube segments, current sitcoms which illustrated diverse populations, and promoted their active exploration of the internet as a tool in their own learning.

Ultimately, we discovered that these activities helped facilitate the integration of theory and practice.

The online activities allowed students

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Open Educational Resources (cont'd from page 3)



Alternating Currents (detail). Jeff Slomba (Art), carved wood, polychrome, hydrocal, stereo components, 2010.

your syllabus.) If you are using one or two main sources, you might list those in place of a textbook in your syllabus, with a note that additional readings are linked in the course calendar or reading list. That calendar or reading list can have links for each reading/viewing/listening assignment. You can even add non-open resources by adding links to materials in the library databases or online reserves, or uploading files to eLearning Vista or other courseware, where they will be protected within the restricted online environment.

So how do you find these resources? Is there an open text for your subject? One of the best sources for standard, textbook-like materials for lower level courses is the [Community College Consortium Open Textbook Collection](#) (URLs are listed at the end of this article). They also have a peer review program, so look for the starred resources or browse the reviews directly. MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching) has a textbook collection, as well as thousands of individual resources in their [Learning Materials](#) collection. [Connexions](#) is explicitly dedicated to modular materials, individual chapters, animations, readings, etc. Some of the resources are assembled into collections, the equivalent of textbooks. MERLOT and Connexions have peer review programs as well. Aside from the peer review programs in these collections, there is little or no editorial review, so be sure to thoroughly review any materials before use and carefully read any licensing and reuse policies.

If you aren't ready to leave the printed book, consider some of the publishers who are breaking ground with open materials. [Flat World Knowledge](#) commissions new textbooks on all subjects, making them available for free on the web, but with inexpensive

downloadable and print-on-demand copies. There are audio versions, supplemental materials, and instructor resources available for many titles. Instructors can tailor the books if desired, get an individual link by adopting the book, and the bookstore can order print copies. The University Press of Florida and the Florida state digital repository, Orange Grove, have teamed up to make existing open textbooks available in print via [Orange Grove Texts Plus](#). OGT+ will also work with bookstores. The review and editorial processes for these new publishing models are comparable to traditional textbook publishing.

There are many further resources, from government documents to digitized historic collections, which are open for use in your classroom. Besides the collections above, your subject librarian is one of the best sources for potential classroom materials. Librarians can also help explain some of the licensing options out there, and find answers to questions like "Can I modify this?" "Can my students print this out?" or simply, "I need more!" As Distance Learning Coordinator for the Library, I am also available to work with any professor in any subject to increase the use of online materials in a course.

Finally, consider publishing your own open textbook or educational resource collection. If you are frustrated by the options available, chances are that other instructors are as well. A department could get together and produce a collaborative work available to any instructor teaching an introductory or survey course. You can even get your students to write the text, by using a wiki to assemble "lecture notes" for each topic. Future classes can update and refine the material. (Be sure to be explicit to your students if you want to make a student-generated text open to the world.) You can add your work to MERLOT and/or

Connexions, mount it on your own or a departmental website with a [Creative Commons](#) license, submit it for publishing to Flat World or OGT+, or ask your own scholarly societies about open access publishing.

With our available courseware options, we are already at the point where no student should have to say, "I lost my syllabus. Can I have another copy?" Let's get there for textbooks too and expand our pedagogical possibilities at the same time: open access, open doors, and open minds. [SD](#)

Reference:

Milliron, M. D., Bell, S., & Shank, J. (2010). *Conversations on Curricular Resource Strategy on the Road Ahead Thursday*. Webcast presented at the Blended Librarian Webcasts. Retrieved Oct. 12, 2010 from <http://home.learningtimes.net/library?go=2352534>

Suggested sites:

Community College Consortium Open Textbook Collection <http://collegeopentextbooks.org/>
MERLOT's Learning Materials collection <http://www.merlot.org/merlot/materials.htm>
Connexions <http://cnx.org/>
Flat World Knowledge <http://flatworldknowledge.com/>
Orange Grove Texts Plus (OGT+) <http://www.theorangegrove.org/OGTfaq.asp>
Creative Commons licenses <http://creativecommons.org/>
Rebecca Hedreen's Open Access Guide <http://libguides.southernct.edu/openaccess>



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Keeping the “Social” in Social Work (cont’d from page 5)

to increase their ability to observe privilege and power, cultural differences, diversity among populations, while promoting critical thinking, application of knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, and self awareness. This promoted learning that they typically would not have experienced so fully until their internship year.

With our beginning use of hybrid models for teaching social work, we have actively sought out student feedback and reflection on their own learning experience. Students confirmed some of our own observations. Data derived from anonymous evaluations of 30 students in two separate sections of SWK 321 indicated that students found the hybrid model useful. While several students acknowledged preference for fully on-ground classes, the overwhelming majority of students indicated that the hybrid course was conducive to their learning. Themes emerged from the evaluations; the hybrid engaged the attention of the student better, enabled learning from other classmates, motivated (or “forced”) students to be active learners, encouraged independent learning and provided some students with a sense that they had “more time.” Students also noted that online assignments provided opportunities to connect learning with “the real world.”

Likewise students acknowledged collectively a number of ways in which the hybrid version of the course impacted their learning. Students noted that the online activities facilitated a different application of learning and shift of perspective. We received such comments as, “It has forced me digest the reading and apply it by having to write the blogs.” In other words, students reported absorbing the reading and applying and relating the material to the online activity. The blogs presented opportunities to engage and critique their peers’ application of theory. As another stu-

dent commented, “The blogs give me the opportunity to think of things differently and I am able to apply the readings to the blogs.” Students also acknowledge being invited into the learning experience. One student wrote, “The assignments give us a chance to take part in our learning experience rather than just sit in a classroom.” The invitation into this learning experience also includes for some students the experience of delving more deeply in the material. For example, another student noted, “It forces you to learn from the book and actually do some research which is a plus.” Some students felt not only better prepared for class, but also more prepared for eventual internships. As stated by a student, “I do much more learning, reading. I feel I am better prepared to work hands on with patients because a lot of work is done at home allowing more discussion in class.” This student’s comment demonstrates how deeper class discussions may enable some students to feel better prepared for their work in the field.

Students were not only eager to hear their classmates’ perspectives, but noted the importance of expressing their own views. As one student wrote, “The good thing about it is we get to “hear” from everyone in the class via blogs, whereas in person some people don’t feel comfortable voicing their opinions.” Another student wrote about her own experience, “Using e[Learning] Vista impacted my learning by allowing me to put my opinion down without feeling judged and also allowing me to see other peoples’ opinions that I may not have thought about.” Students also commented on improved organization through the use of online tools. For example, “I think that having those things online helped me to stay much more organized.” Another student remarked that online work “is so much more organized and easy to access.” The online course struc-

ture may also increase student awareness of their own progress in understanding the course material. One student noted, “The blogging allows us to see where we are in terms of grasping concepts.”

There are several lessons learned that we are addressing in our follow up hybrid courses. There is a risk of the pace of the course feeling too rushed and the course being experienced as “not a full course.” Confusion can be experienced by students who are used to getting “hard copies” of assignments or who prefer more in-depth lectures. Students consistently expressed preferences for deadlines for online work to not be on the weekends. Finally, students offered suggestions that included incorporating more media in the on-ground portion of class, and preferring if instructor also “blogged” alongside students. We also found it is helpful to educate students in advance of the different course expectations, the critical function of the online work, and prepare students for being dependent on one another to complete blogs and assignments in order for there to be time for response blogs. Ultimately, we were reassured by comments of students who consistently stated about on-ground time, “I like that we get right to the main points and don’t waste any time.”^{SD}

Reference:

NASW (2010). *Social Work Imperatives for the Next Decade*.



Faculty Activities

Mia Brownell, Art, had work exhibited in "Where Lies Beauty" running June 26 through October 24, 2010 at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury. Film director Carina Tautu featured Brownell in her film *Where Lies Beauty*, which premiered at the Mattatuck Museum on Friday, October 22, 2010. Brownell's solo exhibition, "Stomach Acid Dreams," ran September 10 – October 16, 2010, at Sloan Fine Art in New York City. She also gave an Artist Talk at the New York Academy of Art on November 16, 2010.

Richard DeCesare, Mathematics, has written an article "William Ludlam: portrait of an eighteenth century mathematician" that is scheduled for publication in the Spring 2011 issue of the *Bulletin of the British Society for the History of Mathematics*.

Glenda DeJarnette, Communication Disorders, presented two 3-hour short courses to colleagues at the April 2010 meeting of the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing in Tampa Florida. The courses were "Speech-Language Pathologists Teaming with Other Related Professionals in Education" and "The State Of Pragmatic Language Research for Children of Color" (Co-presented with Consortium Members, Yvette D. Hyter, Western Michigan University and Kenyatta O. Rivers, University of Central Florida).

Ellen Frank, Management, gave a one hour "travelogue" of a January 2010 travel around Buenos Aires, Cape Horn and Valpariso at the Southington Library. She will also present the photo commentary at Litchfield Community Center in November.

Barbara Glynn, Nursing, was invited to present her study entitled

"Characteristics of the Victim and Perpetrator in Lateral Violence Experiences among Nursing Students in the Clinical Setting" at a research symposium at St. Vincent's Hospital in Bridgeport on August 12, 2010.

Jennifer A. Hudson, Faculty Development and English, had poetry appearing in *Blinking Cursor* and *Lunerosity*. She is on the Editorial Board of the newly-instituted *Goddess Theology: An International Journal for the Study of Feminism and Religion* and will serve as Editorial Assistant for the publication.

Annette Madlock Gatison, Communication, had an invited entry on "Self-Esteem" appearing in *Encyclopedia of Identity* and a article titled "Playing the Game: Communicative Practices for Negotiating Politics and Preparing for Tenure" forthcoming in *In Search of Our Mother's Garden*.

Jonathan Preston, Communication Disorders, will present at the American Speech-Language Hearing Association annual convention in Philadelphia in November. He is first author on a session titled "An fMRI investigation of childhood speech sound disorders," and co-author on a poster session titled "Rapid articulatory sequencing predicts unique variance in word reading."

Jeff Slomba, Art, will exhibit a mixed media installation, *Alternating Currents*, at Wave Hill, Bronx, NY, through November 28th. He also gave an artist talk on the project at Wave Hill on November 14, 2010.

C. Michele Thompson, History, had an article titled "Sinification as Limitation: Minh Mạng's prohibition on use of Nôm and the resulting marginalization of Nôm

medical texts" published in Vol. 265 of *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*. Thompson also presented a paper "Missions of Mercy: the Dispersion of *Vaccinia* in the South China Sea" at the third international conference on History of Medicine in South East Asia, in Singapore June 22-25, 2010.

Susan J. Westrick, Nursing, co-presented a podium presentation on "Nurses as Advocates: Legal and Ethical Implications" at the 29th Annual Meeting and Educational Conference of The American Association of Nurse Attorneys (TAANA) in Lexington, KY, on October 22, 2010. She is also a member of the education section of TAANA which is working on a legal text for students and RNs, that will be published Spring, 2011.

Leon Yacher, Geography, had a book chapter, "Astana: A Geographic Perspective of Kazakhstan's Forward Capital City," published June 2010 in *АСТАНАНЫҢ МӘДЕНИ МӘТІНІ*, edited by P.A. Бердіғалиева (Astana: The National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan). He also had an article, "Photographic Journal Senegal," published in *Focus on Geography*, Spring 2010, as well as several book reviews, invited lectures including at University of Asuncion, in Paraguay in Summer 2010, and presentations of "The Hispanic Population in Fair Haven, Connecticut" at the annual meeting of NEST-VALL (New England-St. Lawrence Valley) Geographical Society in Storrs on October 30, 2010, and of "A geographic study of Ethnic Fairhaven, a neighborhood of New Haven, Connecticut," at the Race, Ethnicity and Place Conference in Binghamton, NY on October 8, 2010. A new plant species, *nicandra yacheriana*, will be named in his honor this month.

Request for Collaborators An E-Press for CSU

Colleagues,

Many of us are concerned with the high prices our students are faced with for their textbooks and course materials. A potentially transformative move to address this issue would be the establishment of an electronic press within the CSU system. Electronic versions of texts could be made available to our students at no charge while sales of hard copies and electronic versions extra muros could be expected to defray the associated costs.

I am seeking collaborators who are willing to help study the feasibility of an e-Press.

Joe Fields, Mathematics, – fieldsj1@southernct.edu

Congratulations to **Lisa Vitale** (World Languages and Literatures) and **C. Patrick Heidkamp** (Geography) on receiving Junior Faculty Fellowships!

Congratulations to **James Mazur** (Psychology) on his naming as CSU Professor!

Congratulations to **Brian Johnson** (English) on receiving the 2010 Faculty Scholar Award!



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The mission of the Office of Faculty Development is to support teaching and learning at all levels and in all contexts in which instruction occurs at Southern. The OFD supports faculty in their roles as teachers, scholars, and members of the university and wider community.

The Office of Faculty Development is committed to promoting a spirit of innovation, collaboration, and love of learning, as well as enhancing a sense of collegiality among faculty as they expand their intellectual, teaching, and scholarly horizons. In pursuing these goals, the OFD works to enhance the intellectual climate and promote open and ongoing dialogue among all members of the university community. It serves as an advocate for academic initiatives and enterprises that relate to teaching and learning through a variety of programs, activities, and resources in achieving the university's mission. The vision of the OFD is to create an environment at Southern that facilitates and promotes effective teaching, professional development, research, university service, and integration of new instructional technologies.

Check out the free *Tomorrow's Professor (SM)* e-mail newsletter at:

<http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/postings.php>



SCSU Awarded Davis Educational Foundation Grant for Curriculum Innovation Program

SCSU was recently awarded a generous grant for \$270,300 over three years to support a Curriculum Innovation Program. The Curriculum Innovation Program (CIP) targets four key areas for change and innovation: the Liberal Education Program, senior-level capstone courses, technologies that encourage collaborative learning and strengthen student engagement, and interdisciplinary collaborations.

To support faculty through wide-scale change efforts, four initiatives will be offered. Curriculum Innovation Fellowships will provide stipends for competitively selected faculty to create model courses and mentor other faculty in curriculum design. A Curriculum Innovation Retreat will offer faculty an intensive 3-day, on-campus, professional development experience in curriculum design, instructional technology, and effective teaching techniques. Faculty who submit completed course designs or significant course revisions will earn an extra stipend. The Curriculum Innovation Exchange will provide two follow-up sessions each semester for instruction, mentoring, and assessment. The Curriculum Innovation Workshop Series will provide three workshops each semester in curriculum development, assessment, instructional technology, and classroom facilitation. Faculty presenters will be competitively selected.

The CIP will be administered by Dr. Bonnie Farley-Lucas, Director of Faculty Development, with input from a Faculty Advisory Board. The grant was received from the Davis Educational Foundation established by Stanton and Elisabeth Davis after Mr. Davis's retirement as chairman of Shaw's Supermarkets, Inc. The Davis Educational Foundation has previously funded the Teaching Innovation Program and supported the SCSU Teaching Academy. As stated in the Davis Foundation's announcement letter, "In making the award, Trustees expressed confidence in project leaders and in their achievements in advancing the new liberal education program."

The call for Proposals for Fellowships and for Workshops is available at:

http://www.southernct.edu/faculty_development/CIP/