

*The Journal of
Effective Teaching*

J&T

an online journal devoted to teaching excellence

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Effective Teaching is accepting submissions for review for the Spring 2010 issue. Manuscripts will be due October 31, 2009. The expected publication date will be February 28th. Articles will be accepted in any of the Content Areas supported by the journal.

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The Journal of Effective Teaching is an electronic journal devoted to the exchange of ideas and information about undergraduate and graduate teaching. Articles are solicited for publications which address excellence in teaching at colleges and universities. We invite contributors to share their insights in pedagogy, innovations in teaching and learning, and classroom experiences in the form of a scholarly communication which will be reviewed by experts in teaching scholarship. Articles should appeal to a broad campus readership. Articles which draw upon specific-discipline based research or teaching practices should elaborate on how the teaching practice, research or findings relates across the disciplines. We are particularly interested in topics addressed in the particular Content Areas described at this site, including empirical research on pedagogy, innovations in teaching and learning, and classroom experiences.

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Manuscripts for publication should:

- Follow APA guidelines (5th Edition).
- Include an abstract and 3-5 keywords.
- Typeset in English using MS Word format and 12 pt Times New Roman
- Articles/essays on effective teaching should be 2000-5000.
- Research articles should be 3000-8000 words.
- Tables and figures should be placed appropriately in the text.

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Deadlines for Upcoming Issues		
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Submissions Due	October 31, 2009	May 31, 2010
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Final Manuscripts Due	January 31, 2010	August 31, 2010

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief: Living on The Cloud

Russell L. Herman¹

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wilmington, NC

In this volume of *The Journal of Effective Teaching* you will find articles on experiential learning, a variety of experiences in different disciplines, constructing syllabi, podcasting, and using crossword puzzles. We have had many contributions submitted and some have been saved for publication in the next issue as the numbers of submissions has grown. At the same time we have maintained a healthy acceptance rate of roughly 27%. In fact, a recent search in Google for “teaching journals” put *The Journal of Effective Teaching* at the top of the search list.

Also, this year we have been able to provide our readers with three issues of the journal. Last month we gave our authors an opportunity to write for a special issue on teaching evolution in the classroom. Early in October, a search for the phrase “teaching evolution in the classroom” brought up the special issue high on the search list. Not only did the journal page come up, but several other sites appeared which had noted the publication of the special issue. Some posted the Table of Contents at their sites with links back to the articles, such as the [National Center for Science Education](#), [Evolver Zone](#), [Genomicron](#) and [Kaboodle](#). Should you have other ideas for special issues, feel free to let us know as we consider other topics of interest to our readers.

As always, we appreciate the efforts made by our reviewers and thank the authors for bringing our readers excellent articles about their teaching experiences in the classroom. We look forward to future contributions describing effective teaching practices at colleges and universities.

Living on the Cloud – Cloud Computing in Academia

You wake up to a typical day as an educator, thinking about a topic you plan to cover in class and do a little research on it while glancing at the daily news. You check your email and calendar appointments. You head to teach your class from prepared notes, multimedia, and the other supporting material you earlier researched in hopes of stimulating those eager minds. Afterwards, you return to your office and work on a committee report with a colleague. Interspersed in your work there are office hours with students, a committee meeting, and papers to grade. It is a typical ten hour day, much like what you have been doing for the past decade, or so ... or is it?

It was only a decade earlier when university instructors were just becoming comfortable with using the Internet in the classroom. Online courses were being promoted as a way to deliver courses economically as university budgets were feeling another periodic crunch.

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It was a time when the concept of Web 2.0² was just beginning to be formulated and the Y2K³ threat was on the horizon. At the same time the Millennial Generation⁴ was coming up through the education system and was about to enter our classrooms.

A decade before that our meetings were face to face; reports were passed from hand to hand; email was unknown to many; and, the concept of the World Wide Web, a system of hyperlinked documents via the Internet, was a mere dream about to launch us into the information age.

Two decades later, we find our email baskets overflowing. Our mornings are filled with reading, writing and deleting emails. Email has become the fastest way to communicate with students. We email at work, home, or on the go, using desktops, laptops, PDAs, and smart phones. Email is now recognized as an official communication at many universities and it is now common to exchange many megabytes of data by email. Scheduled meetings pop up automatically on our calendars. We now write and edit reports using collaborative software or simply pass the documents back and forth until completed. Information is at our finger tips, making our search for new approaches to teaching and daily information bites easily found. So, what more could we want and how will our access to this technology change? What new practices lurk on the horizon?

Over the last few years a new term has begun to floating around. It is called “the cloud”. It has mostly been used in business and amongst computer geeks for over a decade. More recently, Google⁵ has been pushing the term. However, the term has begun to pick up steam during the last couple of years as seen in Figure 1 from a Google Trends search. More importantly, the cloud has cast its shadow on academia. In 2008 IBM and Google have teamed up with several major universities in order to expand the impact of the cloud⁶. At ASU this impact has gone beyond just computer science departments.

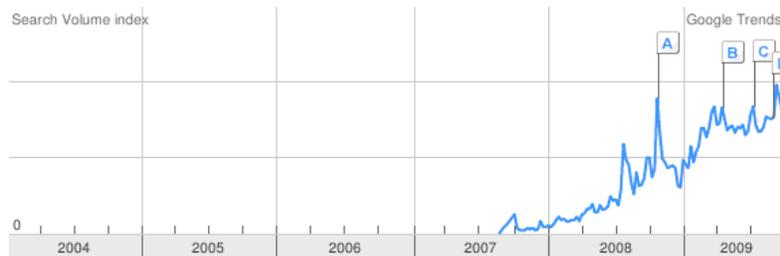


Figure 1. Cloud Computing has grown recently as indicated by Google Trends.

<http://www.google.com/trends?q=cloud+computing>

² Web 2.0 – This is the idea that static content of the 90’s Internet could be elevated to an interactive and dynamic level, providing a richer user experience.

³ Y2K, or millennium bug, resulted from the use of computer code saving dates as two digits potentially leading to computer problems in 2000.

⁴ Millennial Generation, or Generation Y, are the generally the offspring of the baby boomers.

⁵ This came up in an interview with Ken Auletta, author of “Googled: The End of the World as We Know It”, on the C-SPAN show Q&A, which aired Nov 1, 2009.

⁶ Google-IBM Academic Cluster Computing Initiative <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBrDPRlplyo>

So, what is this cloud? There are many definitions of the cloud, depending upon whom you ask⁷. One definition is that cloud computing is the use of a third party service to perform computing needs that are publicly accessible. Clients use the cloud to store and serve up data, access applications, and write to the cloud. All of this activity takes place on a remote server; i.e., IT is outsourced. For example at Google all applications are stored on a network of Google servers and are accessed a variety of ways. All one needs is an internet connection to download to a desktop, a netbook, a Blackberry, etc.

The trend is to mimic electricity networks – you just plug into a national grid, leading to utility computing. Various services would be offered on a pay-as-you-go basis. For example, software services would provide online office applications, like Gmail and GoogleDocs, management tools, collaboration tools, and socialization tools like Facebook and Flickr. Also, there would be hardware services in which processing capacity can be purchased. Examples of this are already here in the form of Amazon's EC2 and Google's App Engine. Such services need to be flexible, inexpensive, secure, scalable, and reliable.

Essentially, the cloud hides the nitty-gritty of how things are done. There is a cloud around the documents or social interactions, not caring where the documents are, where the data is, or who owns it. Users are mainly concerned with getting their applications running to get work done or connecting to the cloud to socialize and collaborate with others without worrying about installing software or having the correct versions installed on their devices. The younger generation of students does not see the cloud. It is like air - all information and applications are accessible when needed and without worry as to where the applications are located.

Imagine universities not needing IT departments to maintain local servers and software licenses. Costs to universities would be based upon a pay-as-you go model and not purchasing licenses for big packages containing user functions that are occasionally used. There would be more use of utilities like Google Docs⁸ and collaboration software. Students and researchers would have access to the use and manipulation of larger data sets, such as satellite data on global warming, the genome project, access to books and movies, etc. Personal files could be stored in remote locations, with a backup, like dropbox (<http://www.getdropbox.com/>), or shared through sites like drop.io (<http://drop.io/>).

The cloud is here. For example, on October 30th NPR's Morning Edition reported that the city of Los Angeles is moving its entire email service to Gmail and storing public data on the cloud⁹. It is a return to centralization and mainframes, bringing back visions of the past when computer access was through terminals and hard drives on desktops did not exist and computer geeks carried floppies in their shirt pocket. Except now, we will carry memory cards in our wallets imprinted with our identities. All we would need to do is plug into the cloud from anywhere and access our documents and applications, connecting with our students any time of the day. Will we be ready for this brave new world?

⁷ See the YouTube video entitled "What is Cloud Computing" interviewing famous participants at the 2008 Web 2.0 Expo <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PNuQHUiV3Q>

⁸ Google Docs - <http://docs.google.com>

⁹ Listen to NPR's coverage at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=114300948>

Reviewing for Exams: Do Crossword Puzzles Help in the Success of Student Learning?

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Abstract

The goal of this project was to further our understanding of how students learn. Does reviewing for exams using certain teaching methods actually enhance students' learning of course material? Through a comparative analysis of two sections of the same class the researchers tested to see if using crossword puzzles as a 'fun' review technique actually affects students' exam scores as evidence of successful learning. The results revealed that some classes benefited while others did not.

Keywords: Games, teaching methods, learning, exam review.

All students, at some point in their academic career, must review for an exam. There are several different study techniques that can be employed, including flash cards, rote practice, practice tests or quizzes, and games to review the material. Because of the potential for these methods to impact student learning and exam outcomes, it is important that research is done to look at the effectiveness of these methods. Not only might they positively impact grades, but the ways in which students choose to study may negatively impact their grades as well.

It is first helpful to identify why employing different study techniques in classroom teaching is important. Krätzig and Arbuthnott (2006) found that varied learning techniques aid in retaining complicated information, and Klepper's (2003) study found that a multi-approach in vocabulary was more effective than using a single approach. Because individuals differ in the type of stimuli from which they best retain and process information, such as verbal or visual (Krätzig & Arbuthnott, 2006), it is best to have a variety of resources available to students to aid in the learning process (Franklin, Peat, & Lewis, 2003). Not only can this accommodate a range of learning styles, but it can also minimize repetition and boredom in the classroom (Franklin et al., 2003). This is more important now than ever, as research has found that today's students have more diversity in learning styles (Moore & Dettlaff, 2005).

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In response to different styles of learning, the use of games in the classroom can be an effective tool, especially at the college level. Gifted and talented students, who are the most likely to attend college, have been found to prefer games and other alternative teaching methods (Moore & Dettlaff, 2005). For some teachers, implementing alternative methods of teaching may be difficult, as many teachers prefer to use the traditional methods they are comfortable with, but games can be used as a supplement to traditional methods, not as a replacement (Moore & Dettlaff, 2005). Finally, it is important to note that games can add flexibility to the classroom, allowing students to adjust to the way in which they learn best (Moore & Dettlaff, 2005). Games allow students to work in groups or alone, to be competitive or not, to be creative, and to have fun while learning.

Games have been a widely utilized form of study by students and teachers alike, across all age groups and areas of study. These methods are a desirable learning method, as they can make studying more enjoyable (Franklin et al., 2003; Weisskirch, 2006; Crossman & Crossman, 1983). Haun (1985) reports a number of benefits to using games in the classroom, including teaching students alternative techniques to studying, impacting cognitive development, motivating students to learn instead of simply memorizing, and boosting students' confidence when they get a correct response.

Due to the fact that games are a useful tool, it is not surprising how many different types of games are used for test review and classroom teaching at the university level. BINGO (Klepper, 2003), simulation games and role playing (Childers, 1996), games formatted like the Olympics (Clark, 1997), Jeopardy-type games (Rotter, 2004), web-based quizzing (Gurung & Daniel, 2006), discussion games (Franklin et al., 2003), and crossword puzzles (Weisskirch, 2006; Franklin et al., 2003; Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Childers, 1996) have all been used by instructors to review course material. Using these different approaches to learning can be helpful in several ways. Games can relieve the tedium of lecture and traditional teaching methods, as well as create a more relaxed and friendly classroom atmosphere (Dorn, 1989). Reinforcement of critical information can be done through the novel use of games instead of rote practice (Rotter, 2004). This can increase the amount of attention students give to the material, thus increasing retention (Klepper, 2003). Another positive outcome of using games in the classroom is that participation in them makes learning a matter of direct experience (Dorn, 1989), and research has shown that students prefer hands-on learning such as this (Moore & Dettlaff, 2005). Making students' interaction with material active rather than passive is important as "the mind is an instrument to develop rather than a receptacle to be filled" (Dorn, 1989, p. 5).

With these benefits in mind, the crossword puzzle stands out from the rest as a classroom tool. Crosswords have been used successfully in many different disciplines (Childers, 1996), showing their versatility and flexibility. They are also a useful tool as most people are already familiar with them, which reduces the need to explain directions, saving class time (Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Weisskirch, 2006). Additionally, these puzzles are often perceived as being a recreational activity, therefore making them more enjoyable and less threatening than traditional teaching techniques (Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Childers, 1996).

Crossword puzzles have been shown to be effective teaching tools of terminology, definitions, spelling, and pairing key concepts with related names, resulting in greater retention and memorization of facts (Childers, 1996; Franklin et al., 2003; Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Moore, 2005). Because of the need to spell items correctly to complete the puzzle, their use results in increased care in studying as well, and when completed, can be used further as a study device (Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Childers, 1996).

As a study tool, crossword puzzles are helpful in identifying areas of understanding as well as lack of comprehension and areas of weakness (Weisskirch, 2006; Franklin et al., 2003; Childers, 1996). When students identify answers correctly, they may have an increase in confidence (Weisskirch, 2006; Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Franklin et al., 2003; Childers, 2003). This can have a positive effect on grades, as self-efficacy has been shown to be connected to performance (Cassidy, 2004), and satisfaction has been shown to reinforce learning (Childers, 1996). When students have difficulty with the puzzles, they are prompted to ask questions and research to find the correct answers (Franklin et al., 2003). Overall, students found this method of study to be helpful (Childers, 1996), and research has shown crosswords to have a positive effect on learning (Weisskirch, 2006). Research has also shown that these puzzles increase motivation and students' interest in the topic at hand (Franklin et al., 2003; Crossman & Crossman, 1983).

In contrast with all the research showing that crossword puzzles are a positive tool to use in the classroom, there has been little to examine and evaluate the success they provide in student learning. Most studies look more closely at teachers' and students' attitudes toward the puzzles (Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Franklin et al., 2003; Childers, 1996; Weisskirch, 2006), rather than the actual effect using them has on students' grades. Crossman and Crossman's (1983) study did compare pretest scores to final exam scores after crosswords were used in the classroom, but there was no control group in which students did not use the crosswords to see if the increase in scores was actually due to the puzzles and not some other factor. Although there are some holes in earlier studies, they provide a foundation for the analysis of crosswords as effective study tools.

The current study advances the literature to show whether crossword puzzles do enhance student learning and therefore student grades. This is accomplished through a comparative analysis of two sections of an introductory sociology class. The research question to be studied is: Does the use of crossword puzzles as test review enhance students' test scores?

Methods

Participants

Eighty-seven college students in two sections of an Introduction to Sociology course participated in this study (Class A, $N = 43$; Class B, $N = 44$). The majority of students were freshmen (Class A, 86%; Class B, 59.1%); the remainder of the classes consisted of sophomores (Class A, 11.6%; Class B, 36.4%) and juniors (Class A, 2.3%; Class B, 4.5%).

Procedure

Key terms were chosen and presented to the students to review for the exams. Using a crossword creator software program, the review terms, along with their clues, were generated into a crossword puzzle. The crossword puzzle review aid was given to one group and a review of just the key terms used on the crossword were given to the other group. The class that received the puzzle was given time to complete it in class, they were allowed to work in groups or individually, and the answers to the puzzle were reviewed at the end of the class period. The class that did not receive the puzzle was given the key terms, and the students were able to ask questions about the terms prior to leaving class. The exams were multiple choice based on both definitions and applications of the key terms. Table 1 shows that the class given the crossword puzzle was alternated throughout the semester for each of the four tests.

Table 1.

Test Number	Class A	Class B
1	Crossword puzzle review	No crossword puzzle review
2	No crossword puzzle review	Crossword puzzle review
3	Crossword puzzle review	No crossword puzzle review
4	No crossword puzzle review	Crossword puzzle review

Results

Repeated Measure ANOVAs

The results demonstrate that the crossword puzzles had a significant effect on students' exam scores for both class periods (Class A: $F = 5.617$, $p = .001$; Class B: $F = 8.850$, $p = .000$). Specifically, it was found that students' exam scores in Class A were higher when they were given the crossword puzzle as exam review (Exam 1 $M = 73.30$; Exam 3 $M = 76.075$) than when they were given a list of terms for exam review (Exam 2 $M = 71.463$; Exam 4 $M = 68.575$). However, in Class B students' scores on exams were lower when they were given the crossword puzzle as the exam review (Exam 2 $M = 73.605$ and Exam 4 $M = 70.744$) than when they were just given a list of terms for exam review (Exam 1 $M = 77.512$ and Exam 3 $M = 75.860$). This indicates that there is a possible difference between the classes on the exams.

Independent t-tests

In order to examine the possible difference in scores between the two classes, an independent t-test was conducted on all four exams. Results found that the means for each of the four exams did not differ significantly between the two classes ($p = .310$; $p = .321$; $p = .933$; $p = .456$, respectively). Levene's test for equality of variances also indicates that the variances for Class A and Class B for each of the four exam times did not differ sig-

nificantly from each other ($p = .230$; $p = .208$; $p = .427$; $p = .712$, respectively). Thus, there is no significant difference between the two classes in terms of their scores for each of the exams.

Pair-sample t-tests

Pair-sample t-tests were conducted to compare both non-crossword puzzle review times and the crossword puzzle review times within both class sections to see if there were significant differences between the same conditions for exam review. In both class sections, the results for the non-crossword puzzle exam review times found that the mean scores were not significantly different from one another (Class A, $p = .095$; Class B, $p = .474$). For the crossword puzzle reviews, the results also found in both class sections that the mean scores were not significantly different from one another (Class A, $p = .316$; Class B, $p = .060$). Thus, there was no difference between the scores on the students' exams under the same test condition.

Pair-sample t-tests were then conducted to compare the exams scores between the crossword puzzle reviews and the non-crossword puzzle reviews within each of the classes separately. For Class A, the results were mixed. When comparing the first pair (Exam 1 & Exam 2) it was found that the mean score on the exam with the crossword puzzle review ($M = 73.000$) was not significantly different ($p = .125$) from the mean score on the exam with the non-crossword puzzle review ($M = 71.463$). However, when analyzing the second pair of exams (Exam 3 & Exam 4), the mean score for the crossword puzzle review ($M = 76.075$) was significantly different ($p = .000$) from the mean scores on the exam with the non-crossword puzzle review ($M = 68.575$). Thus, having an exam review using crossword puzzles did affect students' exam scores in Class A, but only for one of the exam pairs. For the pair that was significant, students did better on the exam when they were given the crossword puzzle as review. The results also found that a significant correlation exists between each of the exam pairs ($r = .573$, $p = .000$; $r = .623$, $p = .000$), indicating that those who scored high on one exam tended to score high on the other.

For Class B, the results for both tested pairs found that the mean score on the exams with the non-crossword puzzle review were significantly different from mean scores on the exams with the crossword puzzle review (respectively, $M = 77.512$ to $M = 73.605$, $p = .017$; and respectively, $M = 75.860$ to $M = 70.744$, $p = .001$). Thus, having an exam review using crossword puzzles as a review technique did affect students' exam scores in Class B, but in the opposite direction; the mean scores show that students did *worse* on the exams when they were given the crossword puzzle as review. The results also found a significant correlation exists between each of the test pairs ($r = .711$, $p = .000$; $r = .671$, $p = .000$), indicating that those who scored high on one exam tended to score high on the other.

Conclusions

The results of this study varied in how the use of crossword puzzles, when used as an exam review, affected the success of student learning. The students in one class showed

improvement in their exam scores when given crossword puzzles to use for review, but only one exam pair out of two was shown to have significant difference. On the other hand, the second class' results showed a decrease in exam scores with use of crossword puzzles, with the difference being significant in both exam pairs.

What does this mean?

The differing results between the two classes used in this study suggest that further research on this topic needs to be done. The procedures that were followed in administering the crossword puzzles for exam review have been shown to be effective ways to increase student learning. Weisskirch (2006) found that students were more likely to complete the puzzles when given time to do them in class, and when given the chance to work collaboratively with others, students found the puzzles to be more useful and enjoyable than when doing them on their own. In addition to these findings, allowing students to complete the crosswords in class can provide the opportunity for them to ask questions or review answers orally with the instructor (Weisskirch, 2006).

In contrast to the positive aspects of crossword puzzles, past literature and research offers a few reasons as to why student grades may have been negatively impacted by the use of this study method. As stated earlier, a multi-approach to learning is more effective than a single approach (Klepper, 2003), so the addition of crossword puzzles to the use of a standard review technique may have been more effective than providing students with only one or the other. Because of the recreational connotation associated with crossword puzzles, some students may have not taken the task of completing the puzzles seriously, as they were perceived to be unimportant (Rotter, 2004). On the other hand, students may have done the puzzles given to them at the cost of spending time studying the material in other ways. As Gurung and Daniel (2006) found, "many students spend too much time on some aids...at the expense of studying important material or working on elaboration and understanding of material" (p. 53). Because students tend to gravitate towards study techniques that require less time and effort (Gurung & Daniel, 2006), students may have assumed that completing the crossword puzzles was sufficient for studying for the exams. One way in which the use of crosswords might be made more effective is to allow students to develop puzzles for their fellow classmates to complete (Moore & Detlaff, 2005). In this way, students are forced to research and understand the material so that they are able to write meaningful clues for the puzzle.

This study provides a glimpse at the use of crossword puzzles for exam review and the impact they have on student learning. Future research is needed to further explore how these puzzles might be used to more positively impact students' exam scores, and items such as what study methods students report using, how study aids are used, and the length of time students spend using these methods and aids should be looked at. Demographics could also be researched in future studies. Level of study in college (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), sex, academic skill (measured by SAT scores or GPA) could be looked at further to see if they have differing impacts on student learning. Instructors may also have an impact on how students study and use study aids, and future research should look at how instructors inform their classes to use study aids, and how this impacts the way in which students use the aids. Finally, future research may want to explore learning

styles, and whether a particular learning style will lend itself to the use of crossword puzzles with positive, negative or neutral results.

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Student Disability and Experiential Education

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Abstract

As a significant percentage of students in higher education today have one or more disabilities, it is important for instructors to be aware of what disabilities, and how disabilities, impact student performance. Students with a wide range of disabilities can encounter significant obstacles when experiential instructional methods are implemented assuming that learners are disability-free. This article presents a taxonomy of disabilities and illustrates how experiential instruction can place students with disabilities in situations where they may not do well. The article also evaluates Universal Design, an approach to course design and management that attempts to address a range of student disabilities and learning styles. Finding that this approach does not fully address the problems of the experiential classroom, three strategies are proposed that increase the likelihood that all students, including those with disabilities, will have satisfying and successful experiences in courses using experiential methods.

Keywords: Disability, experiential, Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, accommodations, universal design.

Faculty in higher education today are increasingly aware of student differences – for example, differences in learning styles and national origin and culture - and the need to alter their instructional practices to better reach more of their students (see, for example, Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Auster & Wylie, 2006; Evans & Porcano, 2001; Niehoff, Turnley, Yen, & Sheu., 2001; Ryland, 1992). This article argues that possessing one or more disabilities is another important way in which college students may be different, and that this difference warrants instructor reflection and action.

Specifically, this article's major purpose is to explore the interface of student disability and experiential instructional methods. This may be the first article to examine this interface as no other could be found that examined student disability and management education (my specialty) or experiential teaching and learning. Experiential methods include role plays, case analysis and discussion in groups, and other exercises designed to test and build student capabilities and skills. Experiential instructional methods are used across many disciplines and academic departments today, including social work, communications, labor relations, counseling, and clinical psychology. I argue that students with a wide range of disabilities can encounter significant obstacles when experiential instructional methods are implemented assuming that learners are disability-free. Courses that

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are built primarily around the use of experiential methodology, as is one of mine, may pose a considerable challenge for students with disabilities. My experience base is a course with significant experiential components in management, organizational behavior, and leadership. The article argues that instructors can be more responsive to and accommodating of students with disabilities in experiential courses.

A second purpose of the article is to describe and evaluate Universal Design, which has been advanced as a classroom strategy addressing a wide range of student disabilities and learning styles. Finding that this approach does not adequately address the problems of the experiential classroom, I propose three strategies that increase the likelihood that all students, including those with disabilities, will have satisfying and successful experiences in courses using experiential methods. The third purpose of the article is to present and discuss these strategies. Because there is great variation among students with the same disability and because students may have multiple disabilities, in general I recommend, as do others, tailoring accommodations to a student (e.g., Shapiro & Rich, 1999, p. 42-44; Smith, 1998, p. 4; Byron & Parker, 2002, p. 362).

The article begins with an overview of student disabilities in higher education that indicates how prevalent they are. A taxonomy of student disabilities is then presented. The Universal Design strategy is presented and assessed in relation to the experiential classroom. The theoretical foundations of experiential teaching and learning are presented next and examples are provided that illustrate how experiential instruction can place students with disabilities in situations where they may not do well. Finally, strategies are offered to mitigate the difficulties that students with disabilities can have in the experiential classroom. The article also reports on an intervention I have begun to use at course start-up that consists of a self-assessment questionnaire for students and attached fact sheet (Appendix C). Among the several purposes of this intervention is to prompt early and valuable discussion between students with a disability and me that would indicate how I could help provide a course experience that was comfortable and successful.

Student Disability and Higher Education

A significant percentage of students entering higher education today have one or more disabilities. Data from three recent studies suggest that approximately eleven percent of undergraduate students and approximately seven percent of students in graduate and professional programs, such as law and medicine, report a disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2000, 2004, 2006). Nationally, data from the 2000 United States Census indicates that one in thirteen US children, five to fifteen years old, has a physical or mental disability (2000 U.S. Census, 2007).

The number of students with disabilities in post-secondary education has been increasing, in part, because they have received sufficient support at previous educational levels to qualify for college and post-college admission (Paul, 2000; Zirkel, 2001). Also, legislation, notably Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, protects students with disabilities from discrimination, and requires that they be provided with reasonable and appropriate accommodations and

equal access to programs and services. Significantly, the legislation also requires that students be provided with *access to the content of courses*, that is, text, lectures, videos, assignments and handouts must be in a form a student can access (*Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*). These statistics and trends indicate that it is likely for college and university professors to have a student with a disability in the classroom. The next section describes the disabilities an instructor may encounter in higher education.

A Taxonomy of Student Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provide protection to individuals with both visible and invisible disabilities, and to those with either permanent, temporary, or occasional impairment (*Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*). Examples of the last two include students receiving chemotherapy for the treatment of cancer, students recovering from surgery, and some depressions. Today, it is not uncommon for instructors to encounter temporary or occasional impairments such as these.

Those having *visible disabilities* include students who are blind, who have cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, or muscular dystrophy; and/or use a wheelchair, crutches or braces. For some of these disabilities, students will require assistance in accessing the visual elements of courses – syllabus, textbook, written exams, videos, chalkboard, cases and exercise instructions. For others, the comfort of the classroom chair, mobility in the classroom, and writing will be issues.

Invisible disabilities include visual impairment including color blindness and macular degeneration; hearing loss and deafness; neurological disorders such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Asperger's Disorder; Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS); psychiatric disorders; and a chronic health impairment such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, cancer, cardiac problems, and HIV/AIDS. It is useful to consider briefly four of these disabilities in more depth as they are particularly relevant to the experiential classroom. The general implications of these four and the other “invisible” disabilities for the classroom follow these descriptions, and are further discussed in other sections of this article.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities is a group of disorders marked by significant difficulty in taking in, encoding, organizing, retaining and/or expressing information. Remembering, reading, writing and speaking may be affected. There is also one kind of learning disability (prosopagnosia) that makes it difficult for individuals to remember the faces of others, though this disability can also arise from a traumatic brain injury (Brinkerhoff, McGuire & Shaw, 2002, p. 112; Shapiro & Rich, 1999, p. 10-19, 29-37; Smith, 1998, p. 2; Gruter, Gruter & Carbon, 2008).

Psychiatric Disorders

Psychiatric disorders include chronic or temporary major or minor depression; bipolar disorder characterized by alternating periods of high, even manic, energy and periods of moodiness, irritability or depression; anxiety disorders, including social anxiety disorder; and obsessive-compulsive disorder, in which adherence to ritual, or avoiding germs or close proximity to others, drives behavior (Koplewicz, 2002; Waltz, 2000; Heimberg, Liebowitz, Hope, & Schneier, 1995; Attiullah, Eisen, & Rasmussen, 2000).

ADD and ADHD

An individual with ADHD is impulsive, easily distracted, inattentive and hyperactive, often wanting to get up and change his or her location. An individual with ADD has difficulty is sustaining attention but is not characterized by hyperactivity (Hallowell & Ratey, 1994; Byron & Parker, 2002).

Asperger's Disorder

Asperger's Disorder was first described in the 1940's by Viennese pediatrician Hans Asperger, who observed autistic-like behaviors and difficulties with social and communication skills in boys who had normal cognitive and language development (Autism Society of America, 2008). Individuals with Asperger's often want to fit in and interact with others, but they may be awkward, not understanding of conventional social rules, or show a lack of empathy. Common are limited eye contact, difficulty in sustaining normal conversation, unusual speech patterns – e.g., lacking inflection or too loud - and not understanding the subtleties of language, such as gestures, irony or humor (Autism Society of America, 2008). On my campus, disability services staff report that the number of students with a diagnosis of Asperger's Disorder has significantly increased, and the integration of these students present a major challenge.

In relation to the classroom, students with invisible disabilities may have limited energy; difficulty walking or sitting for long periods; difficulties in reading, speaking and writing; social difficulties; and difficulties in attending and in listening.

Concerning the disabilities present among students in higher education, an orthopedic or mobility impairment is the disability most frequently reported (29.4% of undergraduates who report a disability; 25.1% of graduate students who report a disability); and the data indicates that all disabilities are present and reported across both student populations (U.S. Department of Education, 2000, 2004, 2006). Universal Design is an instructional strategy that its proponents argue meets the needs of many students with disabilities. The next section describes this strategy and evaluates it in relation to the experiential classroom.

Universal Design

Universal Design (UD) is a contemporary approach to course design and course management at any academic level that aims at meeting the needs of diverse learners, including students with different abilities and different disabilities, students speaking English as a second language, older students, and students with different learning styles (Northwestern University Services for Students with Disabilities, 2005; Brinkerhoff, 1991; Ohio State University Partnership Grant, n.d.).² Done well, UD “minimizes the need to make special arrangements for individuals” (Burgstahler, 2007, p. 37). UD has been found to benefit all students, and one resource describes UD as “just good teaching” (Ohio State University Partnership Grant, n.d.).

In UD, in essence, a classroom is created that permits all students access to content, materials, tools and support services. A UD course is characterized by features such as the following (Northwestern University Services for Students with Disabilities, 2005; Brinkerhoff, 1991; Ohio State University Partnership Grant, n.d.):

- Course decision making is completed so others have ample time to have course materials developed in alternate formats, such as books on tape and Braille.
- Preferential seating for those with visual and hearing problems.
- Material is presented in an organized fashion and at a reasonable pace.
- The previous lesson is reviewed; the present lesson is previewed and summarized at the end.
- Important terms or ideas are written on the board.
- An instructor avoids talking with his or her back to the class.
- Questions asked by students are repeated by the instructor.
- An instructor secures a note taker for some students, allows students to tape record lectures, or provides students with a copy of his or her notes.
- Technology is used to increase student accessibility to course content. For example, selecting a text that is also available on-line, and making the syllabus, assignments, and homework sheets also available on-line as well as in class. This permits students to locate material that may be misplaced and, in some cases, to view these materials using assistive technology, that is, technology that presents text in a large-type format, translates text into the spoken word, or, when a student is preparing a paper, translates the spoken word into written text.
- Instructional methods are varied to stimulate interest and to permit movement. An instructor provides illustrations, distributes and reviews handouts, and uses audio and visual supplements in class. When videos are used they are closed-captioned.
- Peer mentoring, group discussions, and cooperative learning are used in addition to whole class sessions.

² Additional resources on Universal Design are: Preiser, Wolfgang F.E. and Ostroff, Elaine, Eds., 2001, *Universal Design Handbook*, McGraw-Hill Professional, New York; and Higbee, J.L., Ed., 2003, *Curriculum Transformation and Disability: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN. AHEAD – the Association on Higher Education and Disability – has assembled a comprehensive list of resources on Universal Design. See http://ahead.org/resources/ud_intro.php. Retrieved December 30, 2008.

- Both written and oral instructions for assignments or a class activity are provided, instructions are clarified, and questions are welcomed and sought.
- Shorter exams are given more frequently.
- Students are permitted to demonstrate knowledge of subject matter through alternate means.
- Clear feedback is provided to students.

Certainly, the proponents of UD have proposed classroom accommodations appropriate for and responsive to different student abilities and many student disabilities and, in the end, beneficial to virtually all students. Notwithstanding the suggested work with peers and in groups, the thinking and work done here has assumed a primarily traditional, rather than an experiential, classroom experience, that is, one involving daily lectures, whole-class discussions, videos, overheads, and Power Point slides (Northwestern University Services for Students with Disabilities, 2005; Brinkerhoff, 1991; Ohio State University Partnership Grant, n.d.). Though UD is a valuable contribution, it does not adequately address the issues that are likely to arise for students with disabilities in the experiential classroom.

Experiential Teaching and Learning, and Student Disability

In experiential teaching and learning students are involved directly in an activity, discuss the activity and build awareness and insight, and, it is hoped, incorporate their new understanding into their daily lives (Luckner & Nadler, 1997). Experiential learning involves a direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter (Brookfield, 1983; Kolb, 1984). One source claims that “what experiential learning does best is to capture the interest and involvement of participants but most importantly it contributes significantly to the transfer of learning” (Utah State Office of Education, 2008).

The work of David Kolb has been very influential in shaping the experiential approach in education and experiential practice (Kolb, 1984). Influenced by the powerful methodology of the T- or Training Group, in which the spontaneous behavior of participants becomes the source of important learning, Kolb proposes a four-step model of learning. The learning process often begins with an individual carrying out a particular action and observing the effect of this action in this situation (Step 1 – Concrete Experience). This experience is reflected upon and, in part, what was revealed about the action’s strengths and weaknesses is identified (Step 2 – Observation and Reflection). The individual then formulates some generalized learning that informs action taken in the future in similar circumstances (Step 3 – Forming Abstract Concepts). The intent of the individual may be to have action in the future be more effective. Finally, an individual tests out his or her learning by actually applying it (Step 4 – Testing in New Situations). Accordingly and in general, experiential education and the experiential classroom features the direct in-

volvement of students in experiences from which learning can be derived, and the opportunity to engage in subsequent experiences where they may apply their learning.³²

The experiential classroom makes use of many tools to foster learning by students. These include simulations that may involve role plays; case analysis and discussion in groups; group problem solving; events designed to test student capabilities and skills in such areas as communicating, listening, summarizing and representing; and instruction followed by practice. The experiential classroom will often involve confronting students with various tasks and challenges and is characterized by an element of spontaneity, that is, what is done and worked on in class may not be announced in advance. Though students can learn much from simulations and exercises in class that require action, involvement and reflection on their part, in this author's experience, for many students with a disability there is a very real possibility of negative outcomes, such as ineffectiveness and embarrassment.

Theoretically it is conceivable, and some past classroom experience confirms, that recurring and vital exercises in my courses are very difficult situations for students with certain disabilities, particularly neurological disabilities, such as learning disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); auditory disabilities; other physical disabilities, such as the effects of chemotherapy; and psychiatric disabilities, such as social anxiety disorder, bipolar disorders and depression. For example, take the experience of small group problem solving and decision making, a common pedagogical strategy used in many courses. This experience typically requires: quick reading and mastery of a written case that contains essential facts; high sustained energy and focus until a group decision is achieved; the ability to take in, understand, remember and combine the ideas of others; relevant, appropriate comments; members taking turns across many such experiences in recording or posting on newsprint group members' ideas; a well-reasoned decision concerning why one supports or does not support a course of action tentatively favored by the group; and the willingness and the ability to present the group's decision to the instructor and to the class. While acknowledging that there is great variation among students with the same disability, in general, disabilities such as the ones above make it difficult to perform, and therefore learn, these roles and responsibilities.

For example, depending on a student's particular learning disability and the degree of disability students with learning disabilities could have difficulty reading and mastering the facts of a written case in the time typically allotted for this activity; organizing and remembering case facts; combining and integrating one's own and others' ideas; recording the ideas of others; and publicly articulating and defending a group's decision in a case, particularly if the decision was complex. Maintaining sustained focus and energy until the decision-making task had been concluded, essential for combining and integrating ideas and other group tasks, would be difficult for certain students with ADD, ADHD, depression, or a chronic health issue.

³ Experiential education has been defined to include cooperative education placements, service learning and practicum experiences (Keen & Howard, 2002; Cantor, 1990), but the experiential classroom is the focus of this article.

The following are examples of other experiential exercises that are developmentally important and widely used in some form in my field and in others, yet which are likely to pose problems for students with disabilities. Identified for each exercise are a selection of disabilities that could affect a student's performance. It is important to note that medications taken by a student for a disability, such as for anxiety, depression, or a chronic health issue can also adversely affect student performance.⁴

Self-Introductions in Small or Moderately-Sized Groups, or to the Entire Class, and Learning Other's Names

This exercise may pose problems for students with social anxiety disorder, a learning disability, TBI, Asperger's Disorder, depression, bi-polar disorder, or a chronic health issue. For example, a student with social anxiety disorder may experience severe stress that interferes with recalling personal information and learning other's names.

A Personal Space Exercise

In this exercise a student seeks answers to simple questions from a partner, while walking towards him or her, infringing on his/her personal space. This exercise may pose problems for students with an orthopedic disability, social anxiety disorder, a learning disability, an auditory impairment, depression, bi-polar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, Asperger's Disorder, TBI, or a chronic health issue. For example, certain orthopedic disabilities makes this an awkward or difficult exercise for a student, and a student with an auditory disability may be unable to hear the questions asked by his or her partner, most certainly in a classroom where other students are simultaneously carrying out this activity.

A Back-To-Back Exercise Designed to Test and Improve Clarity in Communication

In this exercise, two students are seated back-to-back and each, in turn, must describe a drawing to be reproduced by his or her partner. This exercise may pose problems for students with an auditory impairment, blindness or a visual impairment, an orthopedic disability, a learning disability, Asperger's Disorder, or TBI. Because this is invariably a noisy class activity as many student pairs are communicating at once it is likely to be an especially challenging environment for a student with an auditory disability. Students with a learning disability may have great difficulty in accurately displaying spatially the spoken instructions of his or her partner.

⁴ As an example, a student with schizophrenia at my university reported to campus disability staff that the new medication he was taking was successful in blocking the voices he heard for years. However, because of the medication he was either falling asleep in class or had great difficulty in maintaining attention and understanding the information being presented (personal communication, university disability services staff).

Listening Exercises

In one common form of this exercise a moderately complex story is read to the class. Students working alone then answer questions on the story, volunteer and discuss their answers, and score their work. This exercise may pose problems for students with an auditory impairment, blindness or a visual impairment, a learning disability, TBI, depression, bi-polar disorder, ADD and ADHD, or a chronic health issue. A student with TBI or some learning disabilities may have difficulty remembering facts from the story and are likely to have fewer correct answers than most group or class members.

A Listening Exercise in Pairs

In this exercise a student is expected to remember and apply certain listening/helping rules in his or her interaction with another. This exercise may pose problems for students with social anxiety disorder, an auditory impairment, a learning disability, Asperger's Disorder, TBI, depression, bi-polar disorder, ADD and ADHD, or a chronic health issue. For example, a student with a learning disability, TBI, or depression involved in this exercise or in the ones described immediately below may have difficulty following directions provided to the class and remembering the actions to use and to avoid.

Other Exercises in Which Students Practice Behavior

In these exercises students are expected, in pairs, to either practice or to demonstrate to the class right or wrong ways of handling a particular interpersonal task, such as checking a perception, evaluating work performance, and responding to problems. These exercises may pose problems for students with social anxiety disorder, a learning disability, an auditory impairment, depression, bi-polar disorder, Asperger's Disorder, TBI, or a chronic health issue.

Mock Interviews

In mock interviews a student is expected to answer questions posed by a "recruiter". This exercise may pose problems for students with social anxiety disorder, an auditory impairment, a learning disability, Asperger's Disorder, TBI, depression, bi-polar disorder, ADD and ADHD, or a chronic health issue. Interviews are performances and these may be uncomfortable and difficult for a student with a social anxiety disorder. Carried out in a noisy classroom this exercise would be difficult for a student with an auditory impairment, ADD or ADHD. The retrieval, organization, and articulation of personal information could be difficult for certain students with a learning disability or TBI.

Many of these exercises are conceived as "challenges" for students from which significant learning can be derived. From student journals I have learned that students experience them as challenges, as well. It is very likely that for students with certain disabilities these classroom events may be terrifying and, unfortunately, the exercises may elicit behavior that becomes a source of embarrassment. No instructor, of course, wishes these outcomes for any student. The next section proposes strategies for instructors that reduce

the likelihood of these outcomes, and provides examples of accommodations that can be created for experiential activities.

Proactive Strategies

It is possible to visualize at least three proactive strategies available to an instructor that make it more likely that the outcomes from experiential activities and courses are, in balance, positive ones for all students, including those with disabilities. These will require the investment of additional time by a faculty member, yet it is hoped that he or she will consider this investment worthwhile. These strategies are not mutually exclusive, that is, the strategies, including the last two, can be implemented together.

To date, I have effectively implemented the first strategy. Funded inquiry on student disability in higher education led to extensive discussion with staff at the University's disabilities services office, and participation in its workshops. The student self-assessment questionnaire and fact-sheet to be discussed shortly (Appendix C) and this article and its examples were inspired and informed by these activities. I have not as yet had the opportunity to fully implement to my satisfaction the second and third strategies, which involve close work with a student with a disability across a semester, but will most certainly do so when the next opportunity arises. I am confident both in my ability to implement these strategies and confident that implementing one or both will lead to a better classroom experience for students with a disability. The self-assessment questionnaire has prompted constructive discussion with students with disabilities enrolled in my courses in two successive semesters. These discussions will be summarized in the section of this article that describes the self-assessment instrument.

In advance of implementing the recommendations in this article, including administering the self-assessment questionnaire, an instructor is advised to consult with the professional staff of his or her campus disability services office. Some colleges and universities have specific policies in place that are relevant to these activities and the professional staff of this office is usually very well informed about them. These recommendations, particularly the first and second ones, are also important ones for, and relevant to, courses primarily using lectures and those that infrequently employ experiential methods, including group work.

Disability Services Office

Today, most college and university campuses have a disability services office responsible for counseling students who have, or who believe they have, a disability, and for arranging campus and course accommodations. Typical course accommodations include providing students with assistive technology, some examples of which were described above; requesting extended time on examinations; and providing distraction-reduced exam settings with exam monitors and, when required, keyboards on which answers to examination questions can be typed.

Most students with a disability will pass through and have discussions with personnel in this office. For this reason, it is important for instructors who teach experiential courses to talk with the professional office staff about them. With course descriptions, disability professionals are in an excellent position to counsel and prepare their students. For example, some students, such as those with a temporary disability, may be counseled to take the course in another semester when they would be better able to handle its requirements.

The staff will be able to indicate to an instructor how he or she can help a particular student with a disability who is enrolled, or future students with a disability, in advance of the start of the semester and during the semester. For example, students for whom reading is difficult often wish to begin reading in advance of course start-up, and would, therefore, appreciate learning of early reading assignments. Again, disability services staff can often arrange for a student to receive assistive technology if this is required.

As professionals, they are also likely to highlight problem areas in a course beyond those an instructor might see, and to suggest remedies for those problems. Finally, the professional staff may want to know if there is a more conventionally structured course a student could take in lieu of one employing experiential methods.

An instructor should be aware that, often, there are a number of students with disabilities who do not work through this office and its staff, or who work with the staff only sporadically (Tincani, 2004; personal communication, university disability services staff).

Pre-Semester, Early-Semester and On-Going Discussion with Students with Disabilities

An instructor is sometimes informed in advance that he or she will have a student in class with a disability, either by the disability services office or by the student him- or herself. In other cases, a student will approach an instructor at the end of an early class and indicate that he or she has a disability, or a student might make this known on a student information card he/she completes and submits in class. A statement in the course syllabus, like the one in Appendix A, which is the one I use, will convey that an instructor is willing to meet with students to discuss disability-related issues.

In these instances, an instructor can arrange to meet with a student outside of class to discuss the course. Some disabilities are obvious because they are visible and others are not. It is important to note that the name of a student's disability or disabilities is a private matter. While a student may choose to reveal this information to an instructor, an instructor cannot ask, nor can the disability services office reveal, a student's specific disability or disabilities (LRP Publications, 2007). Nevertheless, even in the absence of this information, there is much that is constructive that can be done.

At the meeting, the instructor can begin by stating that he or she does not have to know what the disability is but wishes to know how it affects the student. The instructor should describe in detail the goals of the course, his or her expectations for students, the nature and examples of class activities, and how he/she intends to evaluate student performance.

Appendix B presents a selection of questions an instructor could ask a student after describing the course. If a student disability is temporary, for example, chemotherapy effects or some depressions, discussion might indicate that it would be better for a student to take the course once he or she is better able to handle its demands. However, many disabilities, such as Traumatic Brain Injury, ADD, ADHD and learning disabilities are permanent conditions. Discussion might indicate that it would be better for a student to take a more conventionally organized elective.

Assuming that these are not the outcomes, that is, a student elects to remain enrolled in the course, the student in this discussion will almost certainly be able to describe the kind of assistance in the semester he or she would value. For example, a student with a learning disability might request to receive in advance copies of written cases, a role in a role play, in-class instruction sheets, and the like, so that these can be studied in advance and need not be quickly read and mastered in class. A student with a learning or vision disability might request that cases and instruction sheets be read aloud in class so he/she can better comprehend them. In a course where self-introductions are required, a student might seek permission to refer to notes or cards that had been prepared in advance when it is his or her turn. Students with significant anxiety may request permission to present a paper or group decision from his or her seat rather than standing or presenting it at the front of the class. Students might also indicate how their medical treatments and medications will influence their class attendance and class participation. Students may indicate a need periodically to stand and stretch during class. A student might indicate in this meeting or a later one that because of his or her disability performance in a particular class activity would be poor and/or embarrassing. He or she might request to observe rather than take part.

This student-centered approach is prudent because there is great variation among students with the same disability. Obtaining the assistance of students with a disability in shaping course accommodations also supports the larger movement to train students and adults with disabilities to be effective self-advocates. In settings that may not be ideal for those with a disability, self-advocacy by individuals improves the chances of personal and career success (Brinkerhoff, 1994; Palmer & Roessler, 2000; Skinner, 1998).

At this initial meeting plans should be made to talk again once the semester is underway. With regard to the conversations an instructor may have with students, it is important to remember two things. First, it is important that an instructor indicate to the student in the initial discussion that it is necessary to treat the agreed-upon accommodations as tentative until they are reviewed and approved by the professional staff in the disability services office. This review is crucial before accommodations are made. By law and in the interest of fairness, accommodations must be valid and appropriate ones for a disability, and only the professional staff, by virtue of their training, can make this determination. Recognizing the primacy of the disability services office protects the student, professor and university from claims of favoritism and unfair advantage. Second, the course accommodations granted must be reasonable ones and not diminish the integrity or ignore the goals of the course.

Enlist the Support and Assistance of Other Students in the Class

This author's experience suggests that students can be very supportive of students with special needs. Students have been observed assisting athletes and others in class who have been injured; working with and bringing up to date students who have missed class for health reasons; and consoling colleagues who have experienced a significant loss of a friend, family member or pet. In line with this, an instructor may be able to enlist the help of students to create a positive and supportive class environment for a student with a disability. For a student with Asperger's Disorder or another form of autism this strategy would seem to be most important as the student's actions might not otherwise be understood by other students, and easily misunderstood. Reports indicate the importance of supportive social networks that include other students to the academic and social success of students with Asperger's Disorder (Myers, 2009; Bullard, 2004). Indeed, it is increasingly common for families with an autistic child to hold a party when they move into new neighborhoods, so other children can learn about and be predisposed to be kind to their child (e.g., Hardy, 2004).

There is evidence that disabled and non-disabled students benefit from this arrangement, some academically when students without disabilities provide tutoring assistance to students with disabilities (Smith, 2003; McDonnell, Mathot-Buckner, Thorson, & Fister, 2001). Of course, in a university business program establishing alliances between disabled and non-disabled students is good preparation for future work roles, including the role of a manager. Work settings, like educational settings, have to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and it is often the manager and the worker who craft these accommodations (*Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*). Miller (2000) indicates how business schools are an appropriate venue for educating future managers about managing HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

For this approach to work a student must be willing to make his or her disability known to the instructor and to other students. The student is not required to name his or her disability⁵, yet he or she must be candid and disclose the kinds of difficulties encountered because of the disability. A student needs to let others know the forms of assistance he or she would find valuable, and perhaps re-open this issue as the course unfolds. For example, a student might request that cases distributed for group analysis and decision making, and instructions for other class exercises, be read aloud. A student with Traumatic Brain Injury, a learning or another disability might desire to have one or more in-group run-throughs before presenting a group decision to the class. Because certain disabilities such as cerebral palsy and learning disabilities affect the formulation or expression of ideas, and reaction to the ideas of others, students may request that a group or class be patient when he or she participates. A student with an anxiety disorder might indicate a desire to step out of the group briefly in order to do deep breathing or, in another way, calm him- or herself before rejoining the group. A student with ADHD may indicate that he or she may occasionally forget to bring materials needed for class and that he or she would appreciate being reminded of course assignments and due dates. To keep a group member with ADHD focused and involved in a group task he or she might be asked to function as

⁵ By law, a student cannot be required to disclose this information (LRP Publications, 2007).

group recorder, or assigned another group task. Both the student and his/her group can treat this assignment as an experiment to see if this action achieves the outcome(s) desired.

These are only a few examples of the kinds of understanding that might be sought, and the accommodations that might be arranged. With the understanding and acceptance of his or her group and/or class, a student with a disability might, on occasion or across a course, be more willing to throw him- or herself into class activities in order to learn how well he or she can perform.

Prompting Student Disclosure Through a Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The successful use of the previous two strategies requires voluntary self-disclosure by a student with a disability. Recently, I developed a student self-assessment questionnaire and associated fact sheet to make this more likely (see Appendix C).

The primary purpose of the questionnaire and fact sheet is to prompt students who may have an undiagnosed disability, or who are attempting to cope with a known disability on their own, to meet with staff at the disabilities services office for informal discussion and evaluation. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, if students are willing, the office can facilitate collaboration between students and me that is very likely to be mutually beneficial. Another purpose of the questionnaire and fact sheet is to prompt direct and immediate constructive discussion with students. Of course, another outcome is to increase the likelihood that students receive assistance in relation to their other courses, as well. The questionnaire and fact sheet are intended to be helpful, and this intervention is a proactive response to the increasing number of students on campus with a disability.

The self-assessment has thirty-four questions and is capable of suggesting the presence of up to nine disabilities: learning disabilities; ADD and ADHD; a health problem or impairment; social anxiety disorder; Asperger's Disorder or Syndrome; clinical depression; bipolar disorder or bipolar depression; and obsessive-compulsive disorder. The fact-sheet offers information on each disability and encourages students, depending on their answers on the self-assessment, to have informal discussion with and evaluation by professional members of the campus disability office. The telephone extensions for these staff are provided. (The course syllabus has their names, telephone extensions, and e-mail addresses.)

The questionnaire and fact sheet were developed using materials prepared by the disability services office, including materials used in campus presentations; resources discovered in the preparation of past scholarly work; and information from WebMD.com, information created in close collaboration with the world-renown Cleveland Clinic. The questionnaire and fact sheet was reviewed, refined, and approved by disability services professional staff, who supported its classroom administration.

Students complete and retain the questionnaire and fact sheet. To preserve privacy, the questionnaire is not collected and students are not required to share their answers with other students or with me. I administered the questionnaire in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009, and spoke about it briefly after its administration. It may be possible to turn this intervention into an activity or exercise that engages the entire class, though this would have to be done with great care. Reflection on this application of the questionnaire will continue.

In both semesters, students seemed to take great care in completing the self-assessment and in reading the information on the fact sheet. The results of an eight-question survey completed by students in Spring 2009 about two weeks after the self-assessment was administered strongly supports its continued use. Students indicated that: they trusted the instructor when he said their answers would remain confidential; they provided honest answers to the questions; completing the self-assessment did not make them uncomfortable; they learned a lot from the instrument; and the self-assessment should be used in classes in the future.

The administration of the questionnaire in the fall did not prompt any immediate discussion with a student, and, as far as the disability staff and I could determine, it did not prompt any student to visit the campus disability office in the course of the semester. During the semester, I did have a constructive discussion with a student with a disability prompted, I believe, by both the questionnaire and a record of poor exam performance. The student had been attempting to cope on her own with dyslexia, a learning disability. For this particular student, the experiential methods used in her course – primarily completing brief cases in advance of class and sharing and discussing answers to case questions in a small group – did not pose significant problems for her. I encouraged her to secure more current external evaluation of her disability, something desired, as well, by the disabilities services office and which would be required if she was to receive potentially useful accommodations, such as a distraction-reduced examination environment or extended time on examinations. Unwilling to pursue a new evaluation of her disability during the semester she did benefit somewhat from our review and discussion of her previous examinations.

In Spring 2009, I had another constructive discussion with a student with a disability. The discussion was initiated by the student and, again, was prompted by both the questionnaire and poor performance on the first course exam. Diagnosed four years ago with multiple disabilities, by his own admission only one – a learning disability – seemed to affect his performance in the almost entirely experientially-based course, and it impacted only his exam performance. He claimed to have moved beyond his depression and to have perhaps “outgrown” his Aspergers – the latter surprised me as he did not display the characteristic behaviors. I subsequently learned from disabilities services staff that individuals may be diagnosed with mild Asperger-like symptoms. Following my suggestion, this student, a junior, contacted the disabilities office and learned that his parents, unbeknownst to him, had filed reports documenting his disabilities when he had first enrolled at the university. As the reports were sufficiently current he was able to receive assistance and accommodations at once. His discussion with disabilities staff focused on test-preparation and test-taking strategies. The staff suggested, and I approved, extended time

on examinations and a distraction-reduced exam setting. These activities and accommodations considerably improved this student's exam performance.

Both students would likely benefit from shorter and more frequent examinations, one of the principles of Universal Design. While this may certainly be possible in future semesters, this change in course design will have to be most carefully weighed in terms of its impact on instructional goals.

Prior to the administration of an instrument like the self-assessment an instructor would be advised to determine if students have taken part in a similar activity, perhaps in their new-student orientation or first-year program. I know this is not the case for my institution. In the future, I plan to either make available to students additional information on counseling services or have on hand a counseling professional who would speak briefly to students after the self-assessment has been completed and the associated fact sheet reviewed.

The Disability Excuse

Faculty report that some students, in response to poor performance on an exam, in a lab, or on an assignment, will plead to the instructor that they have a learning disability or other special need and seek future accommodations (reviewer's comment; presentations by campus disability services staff). To be clear, only the disability services office and its professional staff, alone or in consultation with other professionals, have the ability to determine and to request course accommodations on a student's behalf. Most colleges and universities have policies to this effect. Individual faculty members and departments need to refer these students to this campus office rather than crafting accommodations on their own. This could be clearly stated in the course syllabus and reinforced through an announcement in class at the beginning of a semester.

Summary

The proportion of students with a disability in higher education has reached a point where it is likely they will be encountered in the classroom. Consequently, it is important for instructors to be aware of the challenges faced by students with different disabilities, and to be willing to plan and conduct their courses with these students in mind.

The principles of Universal Design provide a template for the design of courses that accommodate the needs of students with different abilities, disabilities, language facility, and learning styles. It is clear that the application of these principles will likely help all students, not just those with a disability. Readers are encouraged to do additional reading in this area and to apply UD principles in their classrooms.

If experiential teaching and learning, with its emphasis on direct experience, action and spontaneity is carried out without some awareness of student disability, it is likely to place students with disabilities in difficult situations. Without additional and often advance work on an instructor's part the characteristics of a disability may function to keep

some students from performing well. In this article specific recommendations are made to increase the likelihood that all students will have satisfying and successful experiences in experiential courses. First, it is recommended that an instructor using experiential methods establish a relationship and begin a dialogue with personnel in the campus disability services office. Course descriptions provided by instructors to disabilities staff are valuable for several reasons. They can be used to counsel students in course selection and to prepare students for course requirements. Provided with a course description disability services staff can allocate or acquire course-related resources students will need and value, such as assistive technology and tape recorders. Professional staff may highlight problem areas in courses for students with disabilities and suggest to an instructor supplemental course practices and procedures that would be helpful to these students.

Second, instructors are encouraged to have at least one pre-course or early course discussion with each student enrolled with a disability. Knowledge that a student has a disability may come from the disability services office or from the student, and students may be more prone to reveal this information by a statement concerning disability in the course syllabus, a statement by the instructor in class, or through the distribution of an instrument like the self-assessment questionnaire. In the initial meeting with the student the instructor would describe course requirements and procedures and the student would indicate the kind of accommodations that would lead to improved learning and to a more comfortable and successful course experience. The agreed upon accommodations should be shared with disability services professional staff so that they can verify that the accommodations are appropriate ones for the student's disability. While instructors are encouraged to be open and flexible, in the end, no instructor is required to make accommodations that reduce the integrity of a course. An instructor is also encouraged to have additional discussion with students across the semester for the purpose of learning, and for the purpose of making additional course adjustments, if required.

Finally, if a student is willing to disclose his or her disability to a class, or to an assigned class group, his/her classmates can support, encourage, and assist a student across the semester. The student with a disability can indicate to classmates and instructor what forms of assistance would be most valued. As a consequence of the support that he or she receives a student with a disability may be more willing to engage in experiential experiences in the same way a student without a disability would, as a test, and to learn how well he or she can perform.

This is perhaps the first article to explore the intersection of student disability and experiential learning. I will continue to look for opportunities to apply the strategies proposed in this article and to carefully record and report their outcomes. As the number of students with disabilities in a course section is likely to be small and the degree of disability will vary a qualitative research strategy rather than an empirical one would seem to be most appropriate here. The Kolb four-stage model of learning and growth, which involves experience, reflection, learning and planning future action, and practicing new behavior, could be used to shape at least part of this research (Kolb, 1984). With some modification, student journals, essentially self-reports on significant classroom experiences that I currently use in an experiential course, could be used to monitor the experi-

ences of students with disabilities and to evaluate their movement through these four stages. One potentially valuable empirical strategy would be to divide a population of students with disabilities into cohorts based on their disability, and to have them report on their experiences in experiential classrooms. Both qualitative and empirical research methods would contribute to a fuller understanding of student experience and suggest strategies for using experiential methods.

There are many instructors who employ experiential methods in their teaching, some extensively (Luckner & Nadler, 1997; and personal communication with members of the Experiential Learning Association, an affiliate of the Eastern Academy of Management, and others). I encourage them to use the strategies proposed in this article and to report on the outcomes. As these instructors, collectively, are quite creative, I encourage them, as well, to suggest new approaches for working with students with disabilities in experiential settings.

It is important to note that given the increasing prevalence of disabilities on the college campus it may be necessary for an academic department to re-visit and weigh the issue of the courses that are required in a major field of study. While complete treatment of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, the issue of reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities has been and remains a key one, particularly in professional programs in medicine and law (e.g., Denbo, 2003; Blair & Salzberg, 2007). In light of the discussion in this article, an academic department may want to weigh both alternate paths through a major and legitimate course substitutions that would be permitted on occasion because of student disability.

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Appendix A

Sample of a Disability Statement for a Course Syllabus

If You Have a Disability

I am most willing to make accommodations for students having a disability.

Please contact either of the persons below immediately to schedule an appointment for a confidential informal assessment if

1. You have, or think you may have, a disability or medical condition that may affect your performance, attendance, or grades in this class and for which you wish to discuss course adjustments or accommodations;
 2. You may require medical attention during class: or
 3. You may need special emergency evacuation preparations or procedures.
- Dr. _____ (____ - ____ X7xxx; _____@rider.edu)
Director, Services for Students with Disabilities
 - Ms. _____ (____ - ____ X7xxx; _____@rider.edu)
Specialist, Services for Students with Disabilities

Following a review of documentation submitted by a student and his/her health provider(s) appropriate course accommodations can be requested.

You are welcome to contact me privately to discuss your specific situation or needs. I would like to know how I might be of help.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

The following is a selection of questions that could be posed by an instructor when he or she meets with a student who has a disability. The purpose of this initial discussion is to surface information and to learn what course accommodations would be valuable ones for the student.

- What is your overall reaction to the course as I have described it?
- Are there elements or aspects of the course you are concerned about? Why?
- Is there anything I could do concerning these elements that would be helpful to you?
- What elements or parts of this course would not pose any problems for you?
- In other courses what course and instructor practices and procedures have you found helpful because of your disability?
- How do you think your attendance will be affected by your disability?
- How do you think your preparation will be affected by your disability?
- How do you think your participation will be affected by your disability?
- In this course you will be working with other students (or, with a small, stable group of students; or, with small groups of students). In my experience students can be very understanding. Are there useful things they could be told about you and your disability? Are there things other students you will be working with could do that would be helpful to you?

Appendix C Student Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Associated Fact Sheet

SELF-ASSESSMENT

This assessment may be of great value to you and requires completely honest answers to each question. You will not turn in this assessment and you will not be required to share your answers with other students. This assessment is entirely for your benefit.

Answer all questions and then consult the information that follows these questions.

SECTION A

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Is understanding readings in courses difficult for you? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is organizing and writing a paper difficult for you? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Do you have trouble remembering material for exams? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do you have difficulty in following oral directions? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Do you make careless mistakes in doing math? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION B

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6. Are you easily distracted and have difficulty completing tasks? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Do you consider yourself disorganized? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Are you frequently late with assignments or unprepared for class? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Do you often make decisions without thinking enough about the consequences? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION C

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10. Are you experiencing a health issue, receiving treatment for a health issue, or taking medication that makes it difficult for you to get to early morning classes? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Is there a chance you may need assistance during class because of a health condition or illness? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Do you have a health condition which makes it a challenge to take tests on time or finish projects on time? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Do you have a health condition that periodically leaves you fatigued or makes it difficult to do work or concentrate? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION D

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 14. Are you very self-conscious and fearful of embarrassment in social situations? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Do you often experience any of the following in social situations – blushing, sweating, trembling, fast heart beat, nausea? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Are you usually anxious when you enter a classroom? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Are you most comfortable when you are alone? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION E

18. Do new social situations make you anxious? Yes No
19. Do you often get the message from others that your actions in a group or social setting are inappropriate? Yes No
20. Do you have trouble understanding others? Yes No
21. Do you avoid eye contact with others as much as possible? Yes No
22. Do you believe that you often do or say the wrong thing in conversations with others? Yes No

SECTION F

23. For some while have you felt little pleasure or interest in doing things? Yes No
24. Have you experienced long periods of sadness or guilt that has kept you from doing things or getting things done? Yes No
25. Do you frequently have thoughts of feeling worthless? Yes No
26. Do you lack the energy to take care of your work, social, and daily life? Yes No

SECTION G

27. Do you have mood swings – feeling low or depressed for a period of time and then feeling great? Yes No
28. Have you experienced periods of feeling down followed by periods where you had great energy and needed little sleep? Yes No
29. Have you experienced sudden changes from being joyful to being irritable or angry? Yes No

SECTION H

30. Would you describe yourself as frequently obsessive – exceptionally devoted to some activity or task to the exclusion of everything else? Yes No
31. Often, do you not submit work because it is not perfect? Yes No
32. Do you have thoughts, images, and impulses that occur over and over? Yes No
33. Do you frequently perform some activity, like checking a lock or a door, in order to feel safe? Yes No
34. Is it important to you that you perform repeated rituals that interfere with your daily life? Yes No

Turn to the next page and consult the information you will find there and on the pages that follow.

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If you have one or more “Yes” answers to questions in a section it is recommended that you explore further the possibility that you may be functioning with a disability. Success in school and work – having your performance match your aspirations – may be blocked by one or more **disabilities**.

The origin of many disabilities is neurobiological or neuro-chemical, so a person should not feel guilty or embarrassed if he or she has a disability. What is important is that a person seeks assistance at once to better understand and manage a disability.

At Rider, at other universities, and in workplaces there are personnel who are very willing to join individuals with a disability in evaluating adjustments in courses and settings that make personal success more likely. They are required to keep information about a student’s or worker’s disability **confidential**.

If you have not already done so, your instructor strongly urges you to contact and speak with one of the individuals from Rider’s Services for Students with Disabilities mentioned in your syllabus (campus number – (609) 896-5000 Ext.7xxx or Ext.7xxx). They can help you in your exploration of the possibility of a disability. They have been of great help to other students and are able to discuss next steps with you. Your instructor is most willing to provide additional information or to talk with you about your answers on this assessment, as well.

SECTION A

A “Yes” answer to one or more questions in this section may indicate that you have a learning disability, a disorder in which a person of at least average intelligence has difficulty in taking in and understanding, organizing and expressing information. There may be difficulty in listening or reading comprehension, written and oral expression, and in performing math calculations. Sometimes, visually, words or lines of text are skipped, or, in doing math and adding up a column, the wrong numbers are included or numbers are missed.

SECTION B

A “Yes” answer to one or more questions in this section may indicate that you have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Individuals with these disorders are often creative, intuitive, and bright. Indicators of these disorders are difficulty in maintaining attention or focus, disorganization, chronic procrastination, work that is not completed, restlessness, and impulsively making decisions without thinking them through.

SECTION C

A "Yes" answer to one or more questions indicates that you may have either a permanent, temporary, or occasional health problem or impairment. When these interfere with major life activities such as learning and working they are considered a disability. Individuals

with significant health issues must be provided with reasonable adjustments and accommodations at school and at work. Rider's Services for Students with Disabilities can help you arrange your schedule to better meet your needs, can help you with time management strategies to help you cope with your courses and condition, and can help you explain your needs to your professors. Examples of permanent health problems are cardiac and some respiratory problems, epilepsy, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), arthritis, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. Examples of temporary and occasional impairment include individuals receiving chemotherapy for the treatment of cancer and individuals recovering from surgery.

SECTION D

A "Yes" answer to one or more questions in this section may indicate that you have a Social Anxiety Disorder. A person with this disorder is fearful of social situations, is self-conscious, and is afraid that he or she will be judged and criticized by others, or make mistakes and be embarrassed in front of others. Sometimes a person will be afraid only of specific types of situations, such as speaking in public. A person will fear a situation before it even happens, for days or weeks before the event. Sometimes a person may avoid going to school or work to avoid social situations, and have difficulty in making or keeping friends.

SECTION E

A "Yes" answer to one or more questions in this section may indicate that you have Asperger's Syndrome. A person with Asperger's Syndrome is typically average to bright yet has problems in the important areas of social and communication skills. A person with Asperger's may not pick up on social cues, does not realize when someone is joking, avoids eye contact in conversation, and may often feel as if he or she has said or done the wrong thing in interaction with others. Starting and sustaining a conversation and understanding others may be difficult.

SECTION F

A "Yes" answer to one or more questions in this section may indicate that you have clinical depression. Feeling sad and depressed at times can be a normal response to life events and to loss. When feelings of intense sadness, including feeling helpless, hopeless, and worthless last for days to weeks and interfere with a person's life and work, he or she may be experiencing clinical depression. Clinical depression is a medical condition that can be treated. Signs of clinical depression are a depressed mood during most of the day, particularly in the morning; fatigue or loss of energy almost every day; impaired concentration and indecisiveness; feelings of worthlessness or guilt almost every day; and a marked diminishment or lack of interest in almost all activities.

SECTION G

A “Yes” answer to one or more questions in this section may indicate that you have Bipolar Disorder or Bipolar Depression. A person with this disorder switches between two opposite mood poles – thus the name, bipolar. A period when a person is feeling very happy and energetic is followed by one in which he or she feels very sad, has low energy, and may be irritable. A person with a bipolar disorder is sometimes referred to as manic-depressive because the word “manic” describes the high mood period in which a person is excessively happy, excited, restless and sometimes impulsive. During low periods, besides the symptoms mentioned above, a person experiences a loss of enjoyment from things that were once pleasurable. This period may also be characterized by crying, and difficulty in concentrating and making decisions.

SECTION H

A “Yes” answer to one or more questions in this section may indicate that you have an Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. With this disorder a person is troubled by recurring thoughts, fears or images that he or she cannot control. These thoughts lead to the need to perform certain routines to reduce the anxiety created by the thoughts and fears. A fear of contamination by germs can lead to repeated hand washing or bathing. A fear of harm can lead to repeat checking of things such as locks and stoves. A need for order or exactness can lead to constantly arranging things a certain way, or strict adherence to a daily ritual. The disorder can progress to the point of taking up hours of a person’s day and interfering with his or her life. A person may be aware that one’s obsessions and compulsions are senseless and unrealistic, yet it is often difficult to stop them.

Key Issues in Teaching EFL/ESL Intensive Reading: A Videotaped Self-Observation Report

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Abstract

This paper reports a videotaped self-observation of a 47 minute ESL reading lesson. The focus of the lesson was on intensive reading. The entire teaching session was videotaped; the videotaped data were analyzed using (a) ethnographic microanalysis, (b) selective verbatim transcripts, (c) Seating Chart Observation REcord (SCORE), (d) conversational analysis, and (e) Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences. The paper addresses key issues on the nature of reading questions and the nature of teacher-student and student-student interactions at pre-, while-, and post-reading stages. It also addresses how the intensive reading lesson could be integrated with other language skills and what roles a teacher, students, and teaching materials played. Moreover, the paper highlights an issue on how all of the reading class activities analyzed were connected to the SLA theories. This self-observation report has pedagogical implications for the implementation of intensive reading programs in EFL contexts, such as in Indonesia.

Keywords: EFL/ESL contexts, intensive reading, self-observation, video recording.

Self-observation or self-monitoring can be a mediating tool for teachers to do vibrant professional development, and more crucially, self-observation can be used to foster “an awareness of what the teacher’s current knowledge, skills, and attitudes are and the use of such information as the basis for self-appraisal” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 34). Richards and Farrell elaborate that self-observation enables a teacher to record her or his own teaching practices, thereby providing an objective, descriptive, and critical account of it.

Further, Stanley (1998) argues that self-observation is one of the most powerful tools for a teacher to practice reflective teaching. In this regard, a teacher can look at what she or he did in the classroom, think about why she or he did it, and reflect if it worked. In short, self-observation can provide a language teacher with a venue for doing reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action. These terms mean that a teacher can examine when she or he looks at her or his teaching in the moment (reflect-in-action) or in retrospect (reflect-on-action) in order to examine the reasons and beliefs underlying their actions and generate alternative actions for the future (reflect-for-action).

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Thus, through self-observation, teachers can explore their teaching to see the teaching differently (Gebhard, 1999) and help them better understand their own teaching practices and make decisions about the practices they were unaware of before doing self-observation and might wish to change (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Finally, self-observation can be a useful tool for practicing teachers to explore and gain a critical self-awareness of their own teaching beliefs, attitudes, and practices.

In response to the benefits of self-observation, as succinctly pinpointed above, this paper reports a videotaped self-observation on “an ESL intensive reading lesson.” The goal of the paper is to provide critical issues in teaching intensive reading that EFL reading teachers may take into account. Overall, the paper treats self-observation methods, data analyses and discussions, the use of video and reflection in higher education and teaching, and conclusions.

Self-Observation Methods

The Nature of the Lesson

The lesson was designed for teaching intensive reading. The lesson ran for 47 minutes, and it was conducted in Leonard Hall 205, an American university, from 17:10 p.m. to 17:57 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19, 2008. This class was part of the Introductory College ESL English Course, and designed for introducing ESL students with an intermediate level of English proficiency to five reading skills as defined by Barrett (1972). These skills include (1) literal comprehension like recognition of characters, places, and time, recognition of a sequence, and recognition of character traits; (2) reorganization concerned with classifying persons, things, and places into groups; (3) inferential comprehension such as inferring main ideas, conjecturing about what might have happened or will happen when no explicit statements are included in the text, and inferring character traits; (4) evaluation like judgments of worth, desirability, and acceptability (decisions of good, bad, right, and wrong); and (5) appreciation concerned with verbalizing feelings about the selections and demonstrating sensitivity to or empathy with characters or events. In other words, the class was tailored to equip ESL students with the five basic intensive reading skills.

Participants

Five international students participated in the intensive reading lesson, including (1) one Portuguese-speaking Brazilian female, (2) two Arabic-speaking males from Saudi Arabia, (3) one Taiwanese-Chinese speaking female from Taiwan, and (4) one Amharic-Italian speaking female from Ethiopia. The Brazilian participant is a freshman majoring in international studies at an American university, and she has been in the USA for one year. One Arab participant is an American Language Institute (ALI) student, and he has been in the USA for one year and two months. He would enroll in engineering science at an American university. Another Arab participant is a freshman majoring in communication studies at an American university, and he has been in the USA for eight months. The Taiwanese participant is an ALI student at an American university, and she has been in

the USA for a one year student exchange program. She has been in the USA since the last August 2007. She is a junior student majoring information communication technology (ICT) at one of the Taiwanese colleges. Lastly, the Ethiopian participant is a freshman majoring in nursing at an American university, and has been in the USA since the last August 2007. All of the participants' ages range from 19 to 24. These participants were chosen because they are college ESL freshmen with an intermediate level of English proficiency, and they have different cultural backgrounds and genders. Throughout this paper, the participants are identified for anonymity, as follows: the Arab male participant (S1_m), the Taiwanese female participant (S2_f), the Brazilian female participant (S3_f), another Arab male participant (S4_m), and the Ethiopian female participant (S5_f).

A Negotiated Intensive Reading Lesson

All of the participants were informed of this teaching session one week before the session began. First, the participants were asked to fill out the University's IRB approved consent form verifying that they did wish to participate in the lesson, and their participation was voluntary. I also informed the participants that any information on the observational data was kept confidential. Moreover, I informed them of the data would be published in a public domain (e.g., a journal publication), but the participants' identities remained confidential. For a lesson schedule, I contacted them by call personally until all of the participants were willing to spend their time on this lesson. This is a sort of negotiation for time because I had to assure that all of the participants had no time conflict with their personal schedules. More crucially, I also informed the participants that the session would be videotaped, and the videotaped data would be analyzed for the teacher's self reflection. None of the participants objected to the video recording of the session. Thus, all of the participants were well informed of the 47 minute long lesson, thereby allowing me to build transparency and trust in the participants.

Teaching Material

I designed the teaching material based on a genre-based approach because it helps students build an awareness of rhetoric, content, and linguistics (Hyon, 2002). In designing the material, I used a reading text from online stories from "the ESL Fast Website" in which the title was about "Searching for a Missing Husband," and I designed reading activities on the basis of the text. That topic was chosen because it characterizes a narrative text type in which the features of the text include orientation or background information (i.e., characters and events), and problems or complications (e.g., the problems that the main character encountered), and resolutions (the solutions to the problems). The text chosen is an open-ended story, which challenged the students to predict what would happen in the end of the story or no resolution in the story; thereby fostering students' creative and imaginative thinking.

Furthermore, the content of the story has moral messages/values because the story tells how the main character has been looking for her missing husband with courage, for example. In short, the teaching material includes reading questions for the class discussions like literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation, and

appreciation. Overall, the teaching material was structured into three main parts: (1) pre-reading, (2) while-reading, and (2) post-reading activities (See Appendix: Teaching Material).

Teaching Procedures

The entire teaching procedures were based on the following lesson plan:

A Lesson Plan for an Intensive Reading Class

Date	: March 19, 2008
Time	: 47 Minutes
Class	: Mixed ability (ESL college students in different fields of study)
Level of Proficiency	: Intermediate
Subject	: English Language
Language Focus	: Intensive reading comprehension
Genre	: A short story
Text Type	: Narrative
Topic	: Searching for a Missing Husband
Goal	: Students will be able to apply such basic reading skills as literal comprehension, reorganization, referential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation when reading the assigned text.
Prerequisites	: The students have sufficient schemata, and they have already known scanning and skimming skills.
Sources	: - Online stories from ESL Fast Web - Teacher-made materials
Materials	: - Student worksheets - LCD + Screen
Procedures	

Pre-reading (12 minutes)

- Start the lesson
- Distribute quiz worksheets to the students
- Activate students' background knowledge
- Introduce the students some qualities of a character and vocabularies in the text
- Ask the students to predict what a topic they are going to read

While-reading (31)

- Distribute reading texts
- Get the students to read the text silently
- Have the students discuss the reading questions in pairs/groups
- Have the whole class discussion

Post-reading (4 Minutes)

- Explain assignments for the next class period
- Close the lesson

Videotaped Data

The lesson was video recorded until the end of the session. Before the session began, I asked my fellow to volunteer as a videographer. He videotaped the whole session. Once the camera along with the tripod was already set up, he signaled me to start the lesson. Once the lesson was done, I transferred the videotaped data into a MPG version recording so that I could play the recording in a MP4 player.

Videotaped Data Analysis

In analyzing the videotaped data, I used a variety of instruments like ethnographic micro-analysis, selective verbatim transcripts, Seating Chart Observation REcord (SCORE), conversational analysis, and Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences. I have a number of reasons for choosing such data analysis instruments. First, ethnographic microanalysis was used to review the entire lesson in detail so as to select the different foci of the observed behaviors (Erickson, 1992; Richards & Lockhart, 1994) and provide “an objective record of what actually took place” in the class (Wallace, as cited in Bailey, 2006, p. 124). More importantly, the ethnographic microanalysis enabled me to connect the detail to the big picture of the event by replaying the recording many times (DuFon, 2002).

Second, selective verbatim transcripts helped me to look at such specific details as teacher’s questions, teacher’s responses to students’ statements/questions, students’ responses to teacher’s questions, or students’ questions. Such selective verbatim transcripts also assisted me in doing conversational analysis on teacher-student and student-student interactions. Third, SCORE allowed me to sketch the amounts of teacher’s and students’ talks in teacher-student and student-student interactions, and conversational analysis enabled me to see what types of conversational utterances or speech acts took place in teacher-student and student-student interactions. Last, IRF was used to look at what the nature of initiation, response, and feedback in teacher-student and student-student interactions occurred.

Further, the procedures of the data analysis include:

- 1) Review the overall event to examine the entire sequences of the reading lesson without pausing or using slow motion;
- 2) Take notes while watching the video; the notes were written based on pre-, while, and post-reading activities. These notes were used for writing descriptive narratives or prose descriptions of the entire lesson;
- 3) Identify major constituent parts of the reading lesson by playing and replaying the videotaped data forward and backward to identify any detail of the pre-, while, and post-reading stages;
- 4) Identify aspects of organization within major parts of the lesson, involving the pre-, while, and post-reading activities;

- 5) Identify the actions of individuals by doing detailed transcription of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the participants involved in the lesson so that the detailed understanding of the behavioral organization of interactional events could be identified;
- 6) Examine the whole audiovisual records to determine if there were exceptions, which made conclusions less than comprehensive;
- 7) Select the focused behaviors for data analysis;
- 8) Code the selected data so that these were written in an organized manner;
- 9) Analyze and interpret the selected data in non-judgmental and qualitative ways;
- 10) Reflect on the data analyzed; and
- 11) Draw conclusions of the entire data analyzed

Thus, the analysis instruments above allowed me to contemplate, deliberate, and ponder the data before drawing a conclusion of the entire lesson (DuFon, 2002), and hence enabled me to do provide detailed prose descriptions, and to do careful analysis and reflection of my teaching performance as a whole.

Data Analyses and Discussions

Based on the data that I coded, I highlight twelve main selected issues, as consecutively presented as follows.

The Structure of a Reading Lesson into Three Stages

The pre-, while-, and post-reading reading stages helped me organize the lesson in order to provide the students with step-by-step instruction. Such teaching procedures enabled me to predict how much time I had to spend on each stage, and decided what kinds of learning activities that the students would go through in one lesson. I had different purposes of each stage in the reading lesson. First, the pre-reading stage was intended to provide a smoother transition for the students to the reading stages. This stage allowed the students to activate their schemata or background knowledge of a reading topic and arouse students' interest in the assigned reading text. Second, the while-reading stage enabled the students to read silently for particular information and the global understanding of the text. This stage also allowed for building conversational interactions for meaning negotiation between the students and me and among the students.

Last, the post-reading stage was designed to extend the understanding of the students learned at the pre-reading and while-reading stages into other learning tasks like writing a short story. Such tasks were geared to connect the reading tasks the students experienced in the classroom to writing tasks because both reading and writing are "essentially inter-related and mutually reinforcing" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 206). In short, the post-reading allowed the students to work on a follow-up activity (i.e., writing a short story) related to what they learned, and informed them of what they would learn in the next class period.

Thus, the three reading stages above corroborate the concept of "structuring," as defined by Richards (1990), referring to the clarity of the teacher's intention and se-

quence/structure of instructional activities. Organizing the entire lesson allowed for managing timing and pace to keep students alert, motivated, and engaged in reading activities (Wajnryb, 1992) in such a way to help the students develop their reading skills.

Types of Questions for the Pre-reading Stage

In the pre-reading phase, I generally asked the students three main categories of leading questions: (1) open-ended, (2) content-based, and (3) lexically-oriented questions. The purpose of the first category (i.e., “did you ever read a short story?” or “what kind of the short story (e.g., epic, humor, or romance) did you read?”) was primarily aimed at activating students’ schemata. Activating students’ schemata helped the students comprehend the text they were going to read. As Anderson (1999) pinpoints, much empirical research on second language reading shows that schemata facilitate reading comprehension and reading skill acquisition. The idea of schemata influencing reading comprehension implies that meaning does not rely merely upon the printed words, but that students bring certain knowledge, experience, emotion, and culture to the reading that affects comprehension (Brown, 2007). This notion corroborates Keshavarz, Atai, and Ahmadi’s findings (2007) that schemata have a significant effect on EFL reading comprehension. Thus, students’ schemata are believed to be facilitative of reading comprehension.

Regarding the content-based question, I asked the students the question about some qualities/traits of a character (i.e., hard work, confidence, or altruism) that they admire when reading a short story. This question was intended to relate such qualities to the main character in the reading text so that the students could predict what kind of story they would read. In this question, I did not tell these qualities related to those of the main character so that the students could express their own opinions about the character qualities that they like when reading the short story.

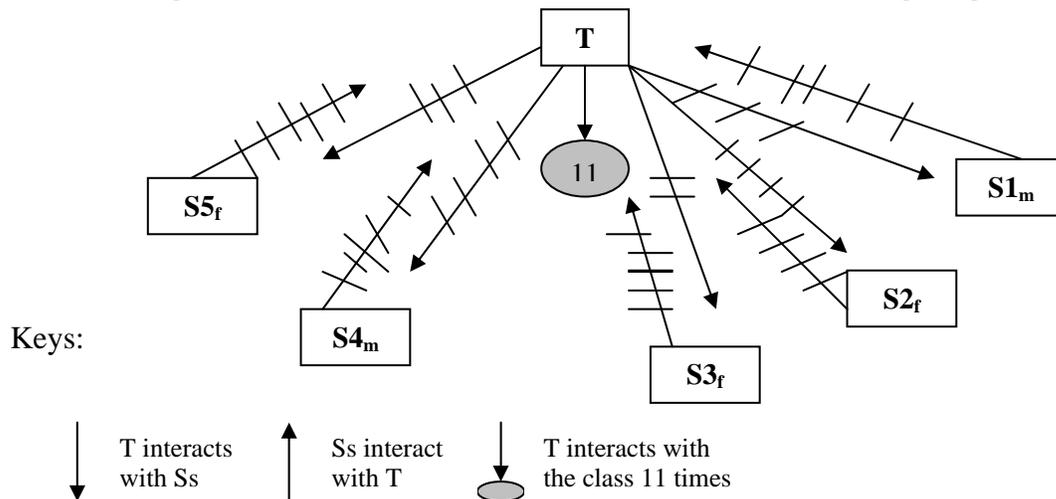
At last, the questions for lexical items provided the students with linguistic input. I chose some difficult words (i.e., “desperate,” “look into,” “smuggle,” or “track down”), which they might not know. To save time, I designed such questions in a matching question form. That lexical input could help the students to comprehend the text (Anderson, 1999) although the questions were de-contextualized. Further, to reduce students’ cognitive loads, I asked the students to work in pairs. Working in pairs could create student-student interactions for negotiating lexical meanings so that they could acquire new vocabularies (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). Thus, providing lexical input in the pre-reading stage could enhance students’ reading comprehension (Hunt & Beglar) and anticipate particular lexical items with which the students might be unfamiliar.

In summary, the three types of the questions allowed the students to see what they have known about the topic. More crucially, such questions could promote conversational interactions between the teacher and the students (Chaudron, 1988). Those questions could also help the students predict what a text they were going to read or allow the students to realize how much they knew about the topic of the text (Day & Park, 2005), and in turn lead them to the next reading stage.

The Nature of Teacher-Student and Student-Student Interactions in the Pre-reading Stage

In the pre-reading activity, the teacher-student interaction can be seen in the following figure.

Figure 1. Teacher-Student Interaction at the Pre-reading Stage



As Figure 1 shows, in the students' schemata activation session, I nominated the students to express their opinions about their experience in reading short stories. The reason for nominating students' talks was to encourage the students to participate actively and equally in sharing their experiences in reading short stories, and I had to balance students' turn-taking at talks, as seen in the following excerpt 1:

- T: Did you ever read a short story?
 Ss: Yes ((the class responded together))
 T: How about you:: Adel?
 S1_m: Yes::
 T: What kind of a short story did you read?
 S1_m: Short story umm...last time umm (.) I read about umm (.) he is from Saudi Arabia (.) this man is Aqtar Muhammad (.) his story is about the...when he moved from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia like 15 years ago from yeah it's about when he moved from Pakistan/
 T: Is it err adventurous romantic or humorous short story?
 S1_m: Yeah humorous/

Based on the IRF pattern, the teacher's initiation "Did you ever read a short story?" indicates giving the floor to the whole class. Since the class responded together, I nominated one of the students to share his experience in reading a short story. I asked the follow-up

questions to know more information about the story and the genre of it that the student read. My intention of asking the leading and follow-up questions was to activate the student's background knowledge, not to evaluate the student's utterances. Thus, the IRF-oriented participation is interpreted as instances of teacher scaffolding (Wood, as cited in Kinginger, 2002) in which the teacher acted as a mediator for dialogic teacher-student interaction.

Further, when I posed the question to the class about the qualities of a character in a story, I did not nominate students' talks because the students immediately responded to the question. I thought the students already knew what to say, so they expressed their own justifications for their answers. As a whole, the purposes of the teacher talks were (1) to give prompts; (2) to provide explanations; (3) to ask for clarification, elaboration, and confirmation; (4) to steer the students towards pre-planned reading stages; (5) to warm the class up; (6) to give feedback; (7) to encourage the students to engage in the learning process; (8) to manage students' turn taking at talks; and (9) to guide students' learning (Christie & Mercer, as cited in Lee, 2006). Most of the questions I asked were referential because I did not test out the students' comprehension, but activated their background knowledge.

In addition, in the lexical question session, 18 second silence took place, so I immediately decided to ask the students to work in groups because I wanted to make the class more interactive. As a result, the student-student interaction occurred, and the class became interactive, as seen the following excerpt 2:

- S4_m: I know (.) I know just "smuggle" (.) "desperate" what is the "desperate"?
- S5_f: [err] eager to know/
- S4_m: What again? Umm...
- S5_f: Eager (.) to be eager/ do you know "eager"?
- S4_m: eager eager ((thinking))

Based on Excerpt 2, the students negotiated the meaning of the word "desperate." In this case, some conversational utterances (i.e., asking a question, giving information, asking for a clarification, and comprehension checks) took place. In this situation, the students interacted with one another to complete the task for lexical questions. In this respect, my role was to monitor the groups; if the students needed my help, I would intervene in the pair discussion. The student-student interaction lasted only for 2 minutes and 10 second. Then, I guided the class to discuss the answers for the lexical questions that the students shared in groups. The students, immediately, responded to the questions. I just gave scaffolding by providing further confirmation when the students gave the answers.

Thus, the quality of the teacher talks is more important than its quantity (Kumaravadivelu & Seedhouse, as cited in Walsh, 2003) because a teacher has a responsibility for creating and maintaining classroom communicative competence, recognizing that learning opportunities are jointly constructed, but primarily determined by the teacher.

Silent Reading Activity in the While-reading Stage

Before the students discussed the reading questions, they were told to read silently without the teacher's interruption. This activity allowed the students to read the text and to possibly notice particular linguistic features (i.e., difficult words that they might encounter) and non-linguistic features (e.g., plots of the story) in the text. More crucially, the silent reading activity allowed for students' gaining a sense of understanding the message of the input given because meaning was primary (Skehan, 1998). Thus, the goal of the silent reading was to afford the students an opportunity to read the text for the global understanding because the text could be message-based input and a trigger for getting the students involved in the next reading activities.

Taxonomies of Comprehension Questions in the While-reading Stage

The reading questions that the students worked on include ten questions with different taxonomies of comprehension, categorized based on the Day & Park's and Barrett's taxonomies, as seen in the Table 1. The reason for choosing both models was that they show representative levels of comprehension for the intensive reading lesson.

Based on the table, there were two literal comprehension questions. The purpose of asking such questions was to encourage the students to recall important details on the characters involved in the story and check student's basic understanding of the text. Further, there were three reorganization questions, basically based on a literal understanding of the text. Such questions required the students to use information from various parts of the text and combine such parts for additional understanding. Question 6 challenged the students to make inference or hypothesize characteristics/qualities of the main character. In this respect, the students needed to draw some related evidence from the text. Questions 8 and 9 required the students to use their global understanding of the text so as to determine what might happen next in the story. Thus, in the prediction questions, the students were to provide various answers with their own justifications, based on some evidence in the text and their personal experiences. Questions 7 and 10 asked the students to answer the questions with their feelings or verbalize their feelings about the text and the main character in which no answers were explicitly found in the text.

Based on the teacher-student and student-student interactions during the while-reading stage, the ten questions promoted interactive reading activities, which allowed the students to construct meaning using the text because most of the questions went beyond a literal understanding of the text. More crucially, throughout the group and class discussions regarding the reading questions, the students seemed to be motivated to answer such questions through dialogic negotiation for meaning. In short, those reading questions encouraged the students to interact with the text to create or construct meaning and in turn to think critically with the teacher's scaffolding.

Table 1. Taxonomies of Comprehension Questions

No	Questions	Taxonomies of Comprehension Questions	
		Day & Park	Barrett
1	Who were involved in the story?	literal comprehension	literal comprehension
2	Who was the main character in the story?	literal comprehension	literal comprehension
3	When did the event happen?	reorganization	reorganization
4	Where did the event take place?	reorganization	reorganization
5	Was there any conflict or problem in the story? If so, give a brief explanation of this issue.	reorganization	reorganization
6	How did the main character in the story look like regarding her personal traits?	inference	inferential comprehension*
7	Suppose you were a main character in the story, what actions would you take to find your husband?	personal response	Appreciation
8	Where had the main character's husband been?	prediction	inferential comprehension**
9	Would the main character find her husband? If so, give a brief explanation of this case.	prediction	inferential comprehension**
10	What moral messages could you learn from the story?	personal response	Evaluation

Note: * Implicit ideas

** Prediction

The Nature of Questions in the While-reading Stage

Questioning is seen as a way to encourage students to pose, answer, and discuss questions. The practice of questioning touches not only on linguistic production but also on cognitive demands and on interactive purpose (Van Lier, as cited in Lee, 2006). When sharing the answers with the class for the comprehension questions, more inferential questions from the students and the teacher arose because in the reading activities, the students were not asked to demonstrate their understanding by answering literal comprehension questions, but required to display their capabilities of communicating the text particularly when answering the inferential, prediction, appreciation, and evaluation questions. In the classroom, such questions could promote genuinely communicative and cognitively complicated interactions. This conclusion does not mean to devalue display questions regarded as a stepping stone for accomplishing communicative and interactional competences (Lee, 2006).

The Nature of Student-Student Interaction in the While-reading Stage

The class worked in groups when they discussed the ten reading questions. This group discussion allowed the students to share their own opinions with each other; thereby promoting conversational interactions among the students. As I observed, when discussing questions 6-10, the students seemed to verbalize their feelings using the text content and character, as seen in the following excerpt 3.

- S4_m: Okay number seven (.) you should answer this question suppose he were your husband?
S5_f: ((reading the question)) I'll do the same thing/
S4_m: Umm (.) you will go alone or (.) you will have to hire professional people-
S5_f: Like...if I were her (.) I'll hire professionals...((laughter))
S4_m: ((laughter))

Thus, the group discussion could encourage the students not merely to comprehend the global understanding of the text that they read, but also to develop students' reading comprehension skills like inferential comprehension, appreciation, and evaluation. These skills could promote interactive and meaningful reading activities that posit an interaction between the students and the text.

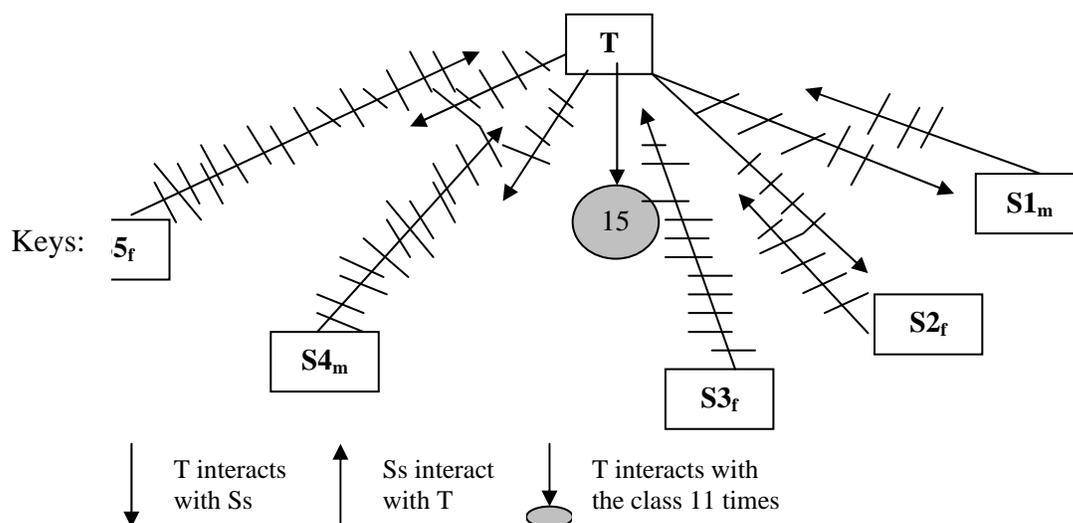
However, as I observed, during the group discussion, in one group, S3_f seemed to dominate the discussion. Although two other students S1_m and S2_f were passive, they listened attentively to S3_f. This unequal verbal participation in the discussion might be due to possible factors like personality, willingness to communicate, anxiety, cultural beliefs, and social and personal identities (Brown, 2007; Morita, 2004). In short, based on that case, participation could be associated with the interaction of mind. This notion suggests that participation be seen as both students' overtly verbal behaviors and internal communication of students' mind.

The Nature of Teacher-Student Interaction in the While-reading Stage

In the while-reading activity, the teacher-student interaction can be seen in Figure 2 below.

As seen in Figure 2, the students talked more than the teacher did because in discussing the answers for the comprehension questions, the teacher served as a facilitator who just provided the clarifications for the answers if required. Further, as Figure 2 shows, out of the five students, two students S1_m and S2_f were passive. This case was surprising because these students participated actively in the pre-reading activities, but at the while-reading stage, they might be unwilling to participate in the class discussion, or might have no chance to participate due to the other students' domination of the whole class discussion.

Figure 2. Teacher-Student Interaction at the While-Reading Stage



In spite of the unequal participation, when discussing questions 3-6, both students and the teacher engaged in more conversational interactions (e.g., asking for clarifications, elaborations, and confirmations). When discussing questions 7-9, the students mostly verbalized their feelings by giving justifications for their own opinions based on some evidence in the text. In this respect, I just provided some prompts if required. Because questions 3-9 are open-ended in nature, I asked the students to provide the answers along with good reasoning. Thus, in the teacher-student interaction, I acted as a scaffolding provider whose task was to promote dialogic interactions among the students for meaning negotiation and enhance students' global understanding of the text discussed.

Integrating Language Skills in the Entire Classroom Activities

In the whole reading activities, the students were asked not only to read the text, but also to communicate the content of the text with others. I got the students to express their own opinions (e.g., "Suppose you were the main character in the story, what actions would you take to find your spouse?"). In this case, the students performed reading, listening, and speaking skills altogether. Thus, I made an attempt to connect reading to speaking, and in turn speaking lends itself to listening. This effort corroborates this notion "language knowledge and ability are best developed when language is [integrally] learned and used..." (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 206). In short, integrating reading with other language skills like listening and speaking is a way to promote interactive practices for a negotiation of meaning from input so as to produce comprehensible output (Johnson, 2004).

Connecting Reading Activity to Writing Activity in the Post-reading Activity

At the post-reading stage, I connected my reading lesson to writing activities through short story and reflective journal writing. In short story writing, the students were expected to apply the genre that they learned implicitly by writing a short story based on

students' memorable experience. That task could also be a medium of directly assessing what they learned, and would help the students prepare what they would learn from the next class period. In reflective journal writing, this would enable the students to reflect on what they learned during the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities, what they achieved from the entire lesson, what they did not achieve yet from the lesson, what aspects they would improve, and how they would make such improvements. In short, both tasks could provide more learning opportunities for the students outside the classroom.

Roles of a Teacher, Students, and Teaching Material

In designing and implementing the overall lesson, I played some crucial roles. These roles include: (1) choosing a suitable and interesting text, (2) selecting and sequencing the reading tasks to develop students' reading skills, (3) giving directions in the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities, (4) encouraging the students to get involved in the group and whole class discussions or facilitating the students to go through the three reading phases, and (5) providing scaffolding to the students as they went through reading activities.

Regarding the roles of the students, they played some roles in becoming active interactants. In this case, they were responsible for working on reading activities individually and collaboratively. Such interactions were dialogically negotiated in nature, and each student had an opportunity to produce comprehensible output with the teacher and peer's scaffolding. Further, the students served as negotiators when discussing the questions, which required their own background knowledge/experience along with good reasoning for their personal opinions.

Pertaining to the roles of the teaching material, this material served not only as instructional input for creating the reading tasks so that the student-student and teacher-student interactions were made possible in the classroom, but also as a useful guide for the teacher and students to go through pre-, while-, and post-reading activities. Thus, the entire role of the material could be a navigator for the teacher and students to work on all of the reading activities in the whole lesson.

Connecting the Entire Lesson to SLA Theories

All of the reading activities in this lesson reflect four main dimensions of second language acquisition (SLA). First, in the pre-reading activities, the teacher activated students' schemata by asking them personal questions. This idea is compatible with schema theory (cognitive SLA) that students' schemata facilitate them to comprehend the text (Hyon, 2002). Further, in this lesson, the teacher gave two types of input: (1) lexical input in the pre-reading activity and (2) text-based input in the while-reading activity. The former may help the students overcome unknown vocabulary when they read the text silently. The latter served as a trigger for the group and whole class discussions so that teacher-student and student-student interactions were made possible. In other words, that input is related to comprehensible input believed to help learners activate their internal mechanisms (e.g., prior knowledge) (Saville-Troike, 2006).

Third, during the teacher-student and student-student interactions, such conversational moves as asking and giving a clarification, confirmation, and elaboration and comprehension checks took place. Such moves are part of the comprehensible output and interactional hypothesis in which both cognitive and social dimensions are considered equally important and in turn students could negotiate or co-construct meaning so that the meaning is successfully rendered (Johnson, 2004; Mackey, 2006).

Last, teacher and peer's scaffolding occurred. The metaphor of scaffolding refers to verbal guidance in which the teacher or more capable students provide help so that the students or the less capable students perform a particular learning task easily or participate actively in the class. More crucially, in scaffolding, students should not be considered as passive recipients, but be considered as active learners (Saville-Troike, 2006). In other words, scaffolding facilitated the meaning negotiation and reading activities as a whole.

The Use of Video and Reflection in Higher Education and Teaching

Videos and reflection have a close relationship because videos can serve as a mediating tool for critical and focused reflection. In addition, videos allow one to understand observational contexts when looking at videotaped data. In such a way, videotaped data enable one to recall what she or he observed, thereby enhancing a degree of reflexivity because videotape data can be played many times. Video recording can also enhance the validity or trustworthiness of the one's interpretation of being observed or done because the use of reflection and video recording altogether can be a means of method and data triangulation. By considering the reasons for blending videos and reflection, both are potentially applied to doing self observation or self appraisal for one's own teaching and reflective teaching. Both videos and reflection can be powerful tools for doing qualitative studies like ethnographic research, ethnographic classroom research, classroom action research, ethnographic classroom observation, participant observation, and ethnographic narrative inquiry (e.g., ethnographic auto-ethnography). Thus, videos and reflection can be tools for doing teacher professional development through reflective teaching and self-observation and carrying out qualitative research so as to improve or maintain teaching quality, thereby allowing teachers to better serve their students in higher educational contexts.

Conclusions

Drawing from the video recorded data analyzes above, I would like to make three main points.

First, in one group, as I observed, one of the students nominated the group discussion. This observation suggests that student-student interaction could not automatically promote equal opportunities for the students to participate (Johnson, 1995). For this reason, it is crucial that providing particular roles to the students in group/pair discussions may promote equal opportunities because each student has a responsibility for contributing to the outcomes of class discussions (e.g., a list of the opinions shared during the discus-

sions). In short, such equal class participation would allow students to have a sense of ownership of the ideas shared (Tsui, 2007).

Second, noticing a particular text would help students spot particular features of the text before they were asked to discuss the reading questions. This noticing activity may include identifying linguistic and non-linguistic features of the text like identifying text types (i.e., narratives or recounts), text forms (e.g., short stories or newspaper articles), the generic structure of the text type (i.e. narratives: orientation, complications, resolutions, or coda), and particular grammatical features of the text type. Although SLA researchers (e.g., Truscott, 1998) have argued that the foundations of the noticing hypothesis in cognitive psychology are weak due to a lack of its empirical evidence, in language teaching and learning, noticing activities have played crucial roles in internalizing new knowledge and rule linguistically (Doughty, 2001; Schmidt, 2001) and helping learners become aware of non-linguistic features of the given input or task (Skehan, 1998).

Third, allowing students to initiate class discussion and participate fully in it is the key to promoting student-centered learning and teaching activity. In other words, providing the students a chance to read the questions and to talk more in the pair/group discussions would facilitate students' greater participation, thereby tapping their potentials to take more initiative and responsibility for their own learning (Clifton, 2006). In this respect, a teacher should position herself or himself as a facilitator whose task is to assure students' active engagement in both in-group and whole class discussions.

Overall, in the reading lesson, the students participated in the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities, and they engaged in dialogic interactions for meaning negotiation. In this regard, the students not only comprehended the global understanding of the text, but also developed their reading comprehension skills. More importantly, teacher scaffolding may be of great help to building a personally and academically enhancing classroom communication atmosphere.

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Appendix: Reading Material

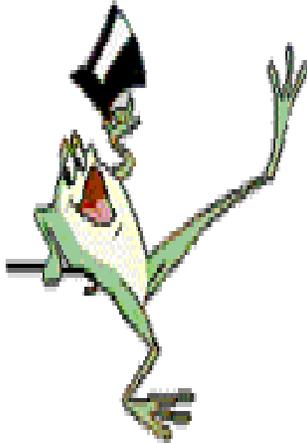
Pre-reading Zone

A *Questions for Schema Activation*

1. Did you ever read a short story?
2. If so, what kind of the short story (e.g., epic, humor, romance, etc.) did you read?
3. What kinds of short stories are you interested in reading?
4. Does reading the stories benefit you? Give a reason for this.

B *Put a check (✓) on the table of the survey questions below. Share your answers with your partner(s)*

What are some qualities/traits of a character that you admire when reading a story?



No.	Traits	Yes	No
1.	hardworking		
2.	unselfish		
3.	brave		
4.	persevering		
5.	self-sacrificing		
6.	confident		
7.	independent		
8.	desperate		
9.	decisive		
10.	loyal		

B *Match the following words with the words in the box below. Work in pairs.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. look into (____) | 4. smuggle (____) |
| 2. desperate (____) | 5. squeeze (____) |
| 3. interfere with (____) | 6. track down (____) |

A to find something or someone after looking for them in a lot of different places
 B to press something firmly
 C to prevent something from working effectively or from developing successfully
 D to examine the facts about a problem or situation
 E to take things or people to or from a place secretly and often illegally
 F needing or wanting something very much

Story Reading Zone



Read the following story carefully.

Searching for a Missing Husband²

Courtney had not heard from her husband in three weeks. Five weeks ago Jacob had gone to Iran to track down cigarette smugglers. He was working for a US company that was losing millions of dollars worth of cigarettes annually to criminal activity. He had communicated with Courtney at least once a day for the first two weeks. Then his calls and emails stopped coming.

5 Jacob was a retired FBI agent who had his own private investigation agency. He had no enemies that Courtney knew of. After the third day of not hearing from Jacob, Courtney contacted her US representative in Congress and her two US senators. They all said they would look into the matter. Three weeks later, after many calls from her, they all said they were still looking into the matter. Courtney had also made many calls to the US Embassy in Iran. The officials there told her they had no idea where her husband was, but they were “looking into it.”

10 Desperate to find her husband, Courtney flew to Tehran. She did not speak Farsi, and she knew nothing about Iran and nobody in Iran. All she knew was that she loved her husband and she would not leave Iran until she found him. If worse came to worst, she had decided to sell their house to continue her search. They had been married for forty years, and she loved him now as much as she had on her wedding day.

15 On her first day in Tehran, Courtney went to the US Embassy and told an official who she was and why she was there. The assistant to the deputy ambassador told her that she should return to the US, and leave the investigation to “professionals.” She politely refused, saying that the “professionals” had so far discovered absolutely nothing. He said that these things took time. He told her that her efforts would interfere with official efforts, and might even put her life in danger. She told him that she would gladly risk her life in order to find her husband. He said he had to go to a meeting. “Go home,” he ordered. Frustrated, she walked out of the embassy and sat down on the steps outside. With her head in her hands, she wondered what her next step would be.

20 Minutes later, a well-dressed Iranian man walked over to her and asked, in fluent English, if he could be of any assistance. He offered Courtney a handkerchief. He sat down next to her. She looked at a kind, caring face, and felt hope for the first time in almost a month. She explained her situation to the man. He frowned. He told her that cigarette smugglers tolerated no one who got in their way. He said he would talk to some people he knew. He gave her his business card and the name of a good hotel to stay in. He said he would contact her at the hotel the next day. He squeezed her hands in his, and then said goodbye.

² Online Stories <http://www.eslfast.com/eslread/ss/s169.htm>, <http://www.eslfast.com/eslread/ss/s170.htm>

Discussion Zone

Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Once you have finished discussing the questions in pairs, share your opinions with the class.

1. Who were involved in the story?
2. Who was the main character in the story?
3. When did the event happen?
4. Where did the event take place?
5. Was there any conflict or problem in the story? If so, give a brief explanation of this issue.
6. How did the main character in the story look like regarding her personal traits?
7. Suppose you were a main character in the story, what actions would you take to find your spouse?
8. Where had the main character's husband been?
9. Would the main character find her husband? If so, give a brief explanation of this case.
10. What moral messages could you learn from the story?



Post-reading Zone

- A.** Write a short story based on your memorable and appealing experience. Your story should include clear settings/characters, sequences of events, conflict(s)/problem(s), and an open/close-ended story whether the problem(s)/conflict(s) was/were resolved. Write up your piece in 200-250 words long in a separate worksheet.
- B.** *Write down a reflective journal on what you have learned from today's class in the following space.*

Letter Writing and Learning in Anthropology

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Abstract

Writing has special importance in anthropology. Writing fieldnotes is a central methodology for documenting and analyzing culture, and written personal reflections upon this process are viewed as providing insight into how knowledge is produced by a “situated” researcher. That said, there is little discussion in the discipline about the use of writing as pedagogy or a tool for popularizing the discipline. This article considers how old fashion letter writing to anthropologists can strengthen students’ learning to write and analyze culture. It also indicates how writing letters popularizes the discipline. Letter writing is communication, method, tradition, and now pedagogy in anthropology. This progression of uses has relevance to teaching and learning in other disciplines.

Keywords: Anthropology, letter writing, pedagogy.

In anthropology, discussions about pedagogy appear in a few texts (Rice & McCurdy 2002; Mandlebaum, Lasker, & Albert, 1963; Hofman & Rosing, 2007; Kotack, White, Furlow, & Rice, 1997) and a special theme issue in the journal *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* (see volume 21). Within these publications, writing is rarely discussed as a specific strategy for teaching anthropology to undergraduates (see Segal, 1990) on journal writing for an exception). Ironically, writing is especially important to the discipline. Writing fieldnotes is a central methodology for documenting and analyzing culture. And written personal reflections upon this process are viewed as providing insight into how knowledge is produced by a “situated” researcher (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Harstock 1987; Sanjek, 1990). Why, then, do anthropologists have little to say about pedagogy in general and writing pedagogy in particular? This paper seeks to fill this gap by describing an assignment that uses writing as a means to teach students about anthropology as well as strengthen undergraduate composition skills. The assignment is called, “My Dear Anthropologist,” and it involves guiding students as they write formal letters to the authors of well-known ethnographies in anthropology.

In the pages below I describe the details of the writing assignment and lessons learned about anthropology and writing. I provide excerpts from students’ and anthropologists’ letters to illustrate my points. In my view, the project’s power lies in the connections it fosters between students and anthropologists. Considering the misperceptions that the general public holds of anthropologists—they are all like Indiana Jones or esoteric and difficult to relate to—capitalizing on the connections is a means for popularizing the dis-

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cipline. In addition, letter writing gives students an opportunity to improve their writing skills. It helps to develop awareness of audience, purpose, and the notion that writing is a process among other skills. Often, instructors in the social sciences assume that teaching these lessons is the responsibility of composition instructors. However, these are core writing skills that students practice across the disciplines (and in emailing and tweeting as well); therefore, it is the responsibility of all instructors to provide students with opportunities to practice and enhance their ability to write. “Old-fashion” letter writing is one means to help students reach this goal.

Letter Writing in Anthropology

Before describing the project, I outline the special place that letter writing holds in anthropology. In earlier days, letter writing was a tool for analyzing culture. Margaret Mead, for example, often recorded and analyzed her data in letters to her family and friends (Mead, 1977). Letter writing gave her an opportunity to reflect on and theorize her observations. For Mead, letter writing was part of her methodology.

Brownislaw Malinowski made his student, Camilla Wedgwood, write to him from the field. This was his way of ensuring that “headnotes” were converted into fieldnotes (Sanjeck, 1990, p. 111-112). For Malinowski, letter writing was a tool for teaching the novice anthropologist how to do fieldwork.

Letter writing was also one of Margaret Mead’s many strategies for disseminating anthropological knowledge. While in the field, she would type letters to her family on multiple sheets of carbon paper. Her mother would then retype her copy on a set of carbons and send them off to a broader circle of family and friends. In effect, one letter from Mead would be read by seventy to eighty people (Mead, 1977, p. 8-10; Sanjeck, 1990, p. 112). On the one hand, this strategy kept Mead in touch with a large group of friends and family. On the other hand, it was a means for Mead to share her knowledge and to test her ideas before engaging a broader American public in a dialog about culture and why it matters.

Today, letter writing plays a different role in the profession. With the rise of the Internet, there is hardly any need for researchers to hand-write letters from the field. Nonetheless, some do. For example, while I was doing dissertation research in a highly networked city in West Africa, a peer researcher proudly told me that she received a hand-written letter from her mentor in the U.S. On one occasion she showed me the letter from her mentor. Actually, she flashed it at me so I couldn’t read it. It was in a plastic sleeve and had been stored in a three ringed binder as if it were an archival document. In this moment, it occurred to me that this letter was more than a piece of correspondence, or even a tool for enhancing note-taking. It was a trophy or seal of approval that symbolized a beginning anthropologist’s legitimate entry into the profession. This story shows that letter writing is not at all a dying cultural form. In anthropology, it is part of an on-going tradition that some practice in the name of reproducing culture in the discipline. In this light, it is a cultural practice that is constantly being redefined.

Given the interesting history of letter writing in anthropology, it is therefore surprising that letter writing doesn't play a more prominent role in ordinary anthropology courses, especially those for undergraduates. Does its omission from undergraduate courses suggest that letter writing is a tool and cultural symbol reserved for the elite in anthropology? If not, how can letter writing be more broadly used in undergraduate anthropology courses for pedagogical purposes?

To be fair, some anthropologists are experimenting with letter writing as pedagogy in anthropology. Robert Borofsky's (2008) work with the Public Anthropology's Community Action website is one example (<https://www.publicanthropology.net>). At this website, classes of students post letters that they have written to government agencies, museums, and NGOs regarding exploitation of the Yanomami. Classes of students at other universities are assigned the task of reading and evaluating the letters according to a particular rubric. The highest scoring letters win awards of recognition. The peer review process prompts students to develop an awareness of how they sound on paper. It also motivates a deeper engagement with the problems of the Yanomami. In this sense, the Public Anthropology Community Action website represents a shift in the power relations of teaching and learning. Through the Public Anthropology Community Action website, students teach and learn from one another.

According to the undergraduates who participated in Borofsky's web-project at my university, writing and posting letters to the site was definitely a rewarding learning experience. Students enjoyed learning about the Yanomami, and they appreciated the opportunity to write a letter for an academic assignment instead of the traditional expository essay. Most of the students found it interesting to read others' letters, too. Some said they felt empowered by the opportunity to assess and evaluate peers' letters. Others were engaged by the notion of advocating for the rights of a cultural group in need of recognition and protection.

A few participants, however, did not enjoy the project as much as they expected. While they enjoyed receiving feedback from peers at other universities, they saw writing letters to an imaginary government official as an academic exercise more so than social action that helped the Yanomami. They had hoped for more direct contact with government agencies, students at other universities, and the Yanomami. Thus, in their view, the project had limited real-world reach.

“My Dear Anthropologist”

Over the past couple of years I have been experimenting with a different approach to using letter writing with undergraduates². My approach does not get students writing to government officials on the behalf of exploited cultural groups. It does, however, give students an insiders' view of the discipline, which generally gets them excited to learn more. It also provides students with an authentic writing experience which generally prompts students to care more about the quality of their writing.

² I have primarily used letter writing pedagogy with students in introductory course, although I have also practiced it in 300 and 400 level courses.

Before including the assignment in my course syllabus, I make sure that authors are willing to respond to students' letters before the end of the semester. Most of the time authors write a one or two page letter to the entire class. In the body of the letter they address overarching comments and reference a few students' comments. I have had one author take a more personal approach. He addresses at least one comment or question from every student, and uses headings in the body of his letters to organize his responses. For example, his letters have headings such as, "Jessica, Robert, Rebecca: How Fieldwork Changed Me" and "Steve: Am I Still in Touch with My Informants?" Students are thrilled to see their names and questions highlighted in his letters.

In terms of guidelines for students, I ask that letters highlight their understanding of the book, reactions, and questions about issues that remain unresolved by the ethnography. In class, I review professional letter writing protocol such as appropriate greetings, closings, tone and formatting. Most students have been taught these skills in other courses, but it is good to remind everyone what readers generally expect from a formal letter. I teach at an urban university with students who come from many different cultural backgrounds, so I use discussions on letter writing protocol as an opportunity to teach about letter writing practices around the world. Students find it interesting to learn from Japanese classmates, for instance, that it is important to mention the weather and season in the greeting of a letter. Middle Eastern students share how it is common to use dramatic and emotional phrasings, and how long letters are seen as a sign of building relationships. These practices stand in contrast to the American approach where letters are expected to be cast in neutral language that gets to the point right away. Comparing notes on the cultural differences in writing formal letters gives students some insight into other cultures while clarifying the expectations and norms for this assignment.

I also use letter writing to convey the belief that writing is a process that entails revision. Like the Public Anthropology Community Action website, I have students critique each others' letters. But they do this in small groups in class where they can see and hear each other. This is very important because there is a difference between reading one's writing aloud to oneself and reading it to an audience. Allowing students to experience this is more powerful than lecturing about it, and the letters are short enough to be read in class without using too much time.

After students weigh in on each others' letters I provide a final round of editing. During this process I am very aware of the cultural dimensions of letter writing. For example, anthropologists show how missionaries and colonial administrators reshaped and muted expressions by introducing letter writing to the "natives" (Bensier, 1995). In the 19th century in the United States, instructing students in the art of letter writing was a utilitarian means of disseminating the principles of Christian morality, definitions of the proper citizen, and other prevailing cultural norms of the time (Schultz, 2000). These works make me ask if editing the students work alters and silences their expressions. Does the whole letter writing exercise colonize their minds by boxing them into a particular linguistic format? Does it liberate by providing a non-academic approach to the critical analysis of a text? I share these questions with students and get them engaged in a conversation about the power of writing, genres, and the power that individuals bring to their own

writing process. I have found that this kind of discussion enables many to realize how anthropology can be useful for understanding one's own experience as a student learning to write and as one developing competencies in other areas of study.

Anthropological Discoveries

The letter exchange conveys a number of important lessons about anthropology which gets students' interested in the discipline. Students learn that anthropologists are, in fact, "real" and human. They find out that anthropologists have emotional lives and make mistakes like ordinary human beings and therefore the discipline cannot be too far out of reach. One class discovered the human side of anthropology when a student asked in her letter, "If you could do your fieldwork over again, what would you change? The class was expecting to learn about methodological choices. Instead the anthropologist replied,

Good, hard question. Maybe I shouldn't even tell you this, but I will tell you that there's one thing that I still regret to this day: Letting one of my godsons give me money for a tape player that I gave him. I should have just given the tape player to him as a straight gift. To this day, I'm deeply embarrassed that I accepted money for the tape player. What was I thinking?!!!

Well, to recapture my thinking at the time, I had already given him many things, and with that tape player, in particular, I felt like I was being manipulated a bit—like he was forcing me to give it to him. This all sounds terrible, but I think many anthropologists who work in these conditions, with people with little resources, have to turn down some requests, and then they usually end up feeling guilty for doing that (or manipulated). In retrospect, I still think I was being manipulated, and it's true I was on a limited student budget at the time, but I just wish I'd given him the tape player as a gift. It's a small thing, but it's what hurts the most when I look back in hindsight.

Students were shocked by this anthropologist's response. First, they could not believe that an authoritative scholar would care to share such a personal story with them. Next, they were impressed by the level of honest emotion in the anthropologist's reply. They could fully empathize with his sense of embarrassment and regret. The opportunity to hear about this anthropologist's experience and to empathize with him created a rich "teachable moment." The story got students talking about what they would have done in this situation and about similar experiences of compromised ethics in their own lives. This led them to discuss the economic status of the community that the anthropologist studied, the community's social marginalization and their particular worldview of material goods. In short, hearing an anthropologist talk about his "mistake" in such personal terms gave students a more humanized view of anthropologists and led students to a deeper appreciation of the discipline.

At the time, I found this discussion to be very ironic. It seemed to me that students had already learned about these lessons from reading Richard Lee's "Christmas in the Kalahari" (2006 [1969]) which we tackled in the beginning of the semester. In Lee's article, he exposes a faux pas that he commits in the field and illustrates how he deepened his knowledge of the Ju/wasi by reflecting on his "mistake". The students immensely enjoyed Lee's article, and based on their quizzes and class discussions, they grasped his main message that hidden aspects of culture are revealed to anthropologists when they make mistakes. Reading about this lesson in an academic article had meaning for students; however, learning about it in the context of a personal letter made the lesson come alive. Seeing a difference in students' responses to an article and a personal letter highlights for me the importance of the relationship between human experience and knowledge. The closer one gets to experiencing something for oneself, makes knowledge more real and powerful. Anthropologists know that—that's why they do fieldwork. Letter writing, then, is a way of getting closer to the field. As a result, students begin to value of concept of fieldwork.

A more nuanced understanding of fieldwork is yet achieved through letter writing. Students in introductory courses often have two views of it: fieldwork is stressful because the jungles are thick and the natives are restless; and, fieldwork is like a party because it involves "hanging out" with people, drinking their food and listening to their music. These superficial ideas are revised when students begin to understand how researchers situate themselves in the field, and how one's social identity becomes a dynamic of research. In a letter to a female anthropologist, a student begins to see just this. She writes,

...I have a personal question: how did you feel while doing this research? I would like to know how you felt in the male-dominated culture of the parks. In Parque Central, did you ever feel uneasy doing your fieldwork? I understand that the women in the area did not like to visit the park during the week because of the men who filled the area. Did you ever have the same feeling being in the parks? The Plaza de la Culture has a huge male influence in its design [the author describes how the park is designed so that men can watch women]. Did you ever feel as though you were being watched by the men in the park? How did this affect your research?

This student's questions reveal an elevated understanding of fieldwork. They reflect an ability to imagine how gender shapes an anthropologist's personal experience of fieldwork and at the same time provides special insights onto local cultural behaviors. This student's question to the anthropologist prompted a class discussion on how gender and other social markers such as age and race/ethnicity might play into students' potential fieldwork experiences. The discussion afforded students a deeper understanding of fieldwork as a particular approach to research and it generated interest in learning more about other anthropological research.

A deeper understanding of the ethics of writing about culture also emerges when students correspond with authors. These lessons generate interest in the discipline because they get students thinking about their own cultural histories and structures of power that have created misinterpretations of their communities. In a letter to a white, male anthropologist, a Latina student writes,

....Another interesting part was when you explained the way North Americans/Europeans applied their culture to interpreting the Salasacas culture....North Americans/Europeans assume that Salasacas are naïve because they don't know how to read or write. This assumption is quite askew because the Salasacas value literacy but not as North Americans/Europeans do; they aren't naïve. Based on this observation, how did you make sure that you weren't too relativistic or ethnocentric in your writings about the Salasacas? I think it's easy to apply one's own cultural standards to others. At the same time, it could be easy to assume not to apply aspects of one's own culture to another culture and then miss something important...

This student's writing is interesting on several levels. Ethnocentrism³ and the relativistic fallacy⁴ are concepts that are explicitly discussed in introductory courses. Thus, it is interesting to note that letter writing provides an authentic opportunity for students to practice the language of anthropology. Strengthening one's competency with terminology develops confidence for new comers to a discipline. This increases the likelihood that students will engage anthropology instead of feel mystified by it.

On another level, the student's application of ethnocentrism and the relativistic fallacy reveals a deeper engagement with the ethics of ethnography. The student might have applied these words in her letter to talk further about colonialism, state education, or images of the indigenous in popular culture. These are all themes addressed in the ethnography. However, she chooses to apply the terms to explore the author's ethics. Her question, "How did you make sure that you weren't too relativistic or ethnocentric in your writing?," challenges the power of an accomplished anthropologist. Given the student's cultural background as a Latina, second generation immigrant, and working class youth, her comments underscore how letter writing goes beyond conveying lessons about anthropological concepts and the ethics of research. It gives students a means to interrogate the production of anthropological knowledge and to critically engage the discipline. Writing from this empowered position motivates students to want to know more about what anthropologists do and what they have to say, especially when the subject of ethnographies relate to their own cultural backgrounds.

Overall, I have found that the letter exchange gets students interested in anthropology because it validates their legitimacy as participants in an academic community, and makes

³ The tendency to judge the beliefs and behaviors of other cultures from the perspective of one's own culture (Robbins, 2001, p. 276).

⁴ The mistaken idea that it is impossible to make moral judgments about the beliefs and behaviors of members of other cultures (Robbins, 2001, p. 278)

them feel welcomed in the discipline. I have found that often students do not feel that their questions and experiences are taken seriously despite the supportiveness of many caring colleagues. As a result of feeling out of place, some do not ask questions and hesitate to invest much effort into their work. This perception of being in the margins is revealed when a letter from an anthropologist is read in class. Students express surprise that an author took the time to write back (even though I assure students that the author will reply). On one occasion a student announced, "Had I known that my letter would get so much attention, I would have put even more effort into it!" This kind of comment reminds me that many students do not feel they are legitimate members of an academic community. When they find that their letters are considered important, however, they become more interested in their studies and are more willing to put time and effort into their work.

This brings me to an important point about popularizing anthropology through letter writing. I hadn't anticipated that the letter exchange would provide much for the corresponding anthropologist. One participant pointed out, however, that the letters help anthropologists to understand how their writing is received by the public. The author wrote in his letter to one of my classes,

"I feel incredibly lucky to be able to read these letters, to learn in detail about the various ways you have responded to my book. This is a special experience. My sense is that many academic authors never really know what readers are making of their books, outside of a small circle of reviewers and colleagues. I remember once, for example, asking the author of a theory book in anthropology what the response to the book had been, and he said, 'You know, there really never was any response.' How sad! This limited response might seem like par for the course in academics, but after spending 10 or 15 years working on a book, I think it has to be disappointing, even to the toughest soul."

In anthropology, some argue that anthropologists are not consulted in important debates on developing social trends because their writing is arid and esoteric; anthropologists do not effectively communicate with the public (Eriksen 2005). At least one author's experience with the letter writing project suggests that hearing from students is helpful to locating a style of writing and voice that can effectively reach a broad range of readers. Perhaps greater contact with readers can help inform writing in anthropology and extend the reach of the discipline.

Writing Discoveries

Students make a number of discoveries about writing through the letter exchange. First, they learn about audience. Undergraduates know that when writing a professional letter one needs to keep their reader in mind throughout. For the letter assignment students tend to interpret the concept of "audience" as avoiding the use of "street" and extremely casual language in their letters, and writing with a voice that sounds positive and respectful. This

definition of audience complicates their ability to include constructive criticism of an author's work in their letters. Some feel that any kind of criticism would be disrespectful to the author; therefore, they avoid discussing confusing points in the books. Others who seek to please authors legitimize the avoidance of constructive criticism by arguing that the book is "perfect"—there is nothing to critique. In reality, students find it difficult to strike the right tone when critiquing an author's work. In early drafts, I often observe students using blunt phrasing and strong words to talk about issues they struggled to understand in an ethnography. After a round of peer review, these paragraphs often disappear from the letters. When asked what happened to these ideas, students say that their critique was confusing so they left it out of the final draft. Thus, conveying a critique of ethnography is an area that challenges students when it comes to writing letters to authors.

Not all students struggle to critique the books they have read, however. One student finds a simple way of communicating her critique. The anthropologist's reply provides an additional lesson on audience. The student writes,

...As much as I enjoyed reading your book, I did have a tough time reading parts of it. Of course, it had to be the parts where you went into depth about the politics of the culture. I began to get confused about the ideas you were trying to express what it all meant. Chapter Five had me stumped. I was completely lost. There were so many people and groups that were talked about that I had trouble keeping up....

The anthropologist replies,

Thank you for your honesty. You're right: some parts of the book are really hard to follow! I can especially understand how Chapter Five's "comparative perspective" would not make any sense. To be honest, that section was written less for undergraduate readers and more for anthro colleagues, who want to see how my findings fit into previous research. I was citing a bunch of studies there all at once, without going into detail on what they had said, so if you didn't already know those other studies, the section didn't make sense. ...This is just one of the compromises I had to make in trying to reach both audiences, undergraduate and anthro specialists. In writing the book, I realized that this is actually very hard to do; in trying to reach both audiences, you run the risk of creating a book that doesn't satisfy anyone. I'm just glad that you didn't find the entire book opaque!

Hearing this reply made students realize that all writers struggle to consistently address their audience, and that some pieces of writing must communicate to more than one audience. It underscored for students that learning to write is an on-going process. Rather than assume that one was not born to write, one must be patient with the process and be prepared to revise.

Depending on students' questions to the anthropologist, the letter exchange affords a look behind the scenes in the world of publishing. One anthropologist shares with students some of his experiences publishing his ethnography. He writes,

“Carmen and John, for example, notice that there was touch of humor in the opening scene of my book. I'm so glad you felt that! I say this because, yes, I agree: in retrospect, it WAS a funny, bizarre scene, running away. But I've always been afraid that the way I wrote that scene didn't capture any of the humor of it. In fact, I had a bit more humor in the first draft of that scene, but I was told by some editors to cut it out; just to make it serious. Ahh, editors! I did blindly follow those editors at the time, but I've regretted it in retrospect, which is why I'm so glad that at least some of you still got a taste of that humor...”

Students were surprised to learn that the ethnography they read had been written a different way. This led them to wonder what else had been left out of the book, and who else besides editors weighed in on the author's writing. This discussion allowed students to acknowledge writing as a complex act that is both social and individualistic, and requires knowing what one wants to say and developing the tools to say it. This prompted students to revisit the notion that time and drafting are important to producing good writing.

Explicit and Tacit Outcomes

A grading rubric allows me to assess a number of explicit outcomes in students' final drafts. I often use the following criteria to assess the letters⁵:

1. Evidence of a critical understanding of anthropological concepts in the ethnography.
2. Awareness of letter writing genre and ability to engage a reader.
3. Attention to prose, structure, organization, and development of ideas.
4. Mechanics and Editing

The letter exchange, though, helps students develop other “skills” such as a sense of the relevance of anthropology, the practice of anthropologists, the cultural meanings of letter writing, and an awareness of their own writing process and identity as an undergraduate. Evidence of these gains is salient in classroom discussions, group work, and informal conversations with students. This knowledge is tacit, however, and not always possible (or desirable) to capture in a rubric.

In closing, letter writing produces a broad range of outcomes that benefit students of anthropology and undergraduates in general. There is a lot to explore in anthropology and in composition when undertaking the assignment. The assignment goes beyond teaching “content,” however. It also benefits the discipline of anthropology by helping to change the image of the discipline, and communicating that it is an inclusive area of study. In

⁵ The criteria is modified to meet the particular needs and skill levels of different courses and groups of students.

this sense, letter writing is dynamic pedagogy. It allows instructors to take student learning in many directions. For this reason, it is worthwhile to explore.

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A Labor of Love: Constructing a Service-Learning Syllabus

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Abstract

Service-Learning has become a popular pedagogical strategy; yet, little attention has been given to the construction of a syllabus that includes a service-learning component. The purpose of this paper is to help instructors identify essential components of high-quality service-learning, to learn ways to incorporate these components into appropriate courses, and to effectively communicate the service-learning requirements through their syllabus. Specifically, the process of developing a service-learning syllabus is discussed in relation to course goals and objectives, service-learning activities, and reflection activities.

Keywords: Service-learning, syllabus construction, pedagogical strategies.

Service-learning is a type of experiential learning that engages students in service opportunities within the community as an integral part of a course. Service-learning enhances a “traditional learning” course by allowing students the opportunity to link theory with practice, apply classroom learning to real-life situations, and provide students with a deeper understanding of course content.

Service-learning can be beneficial to all those participating, particularly the students who engage in service-learning activities. Students sometimes report that service-learning experiences enhance their learning of course material more than a traditional lecture course and they are more enthusiastic toward course material (Roodin, 2002). Service-learning may strengthen students’ sense of civic responsibility as well as aiding them in dispelling any stereotypes they may hold regarding the population in which they are interacting (Butin, 2003; Hamon & Way, 2001). Other researchers have found an increased awareness of career options among students (Fenzel & Leary, 1997) or a reinforcement of their career choices (Blieszner & Artale, 2001), greater civic responsibility and commitment to service (Eyler & Giles, 1999), enhanced critical thinking, communication skills, leadership, awareness of social responsibility, and respect for cultural diversity (Roos et al., 2005).

Although there is increasing evidence that suggests positive outcomes of service-learning, the quality of the service-learning experience is paramount to these positive outcomes. Instructors may feel increasing pressure to incorporate service-learning into their own courses and may not follow best practices in doing so. Others who are interested in trying service-learning may not know where to go for information on developing

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their service-learning course component and then incorporating the component into their syllabus. Still other instructors may develop a high quality service-learning experience but not adequately convey the service-learning component in their syllabus. The purpose of this paper is to help instructors identify essential components of effective service-learning, to learn ways to incorporate these components into appropriate courses that they may teach, and to effectively communicate the service-learning requirements through their syllabus.

Elements of an Effective Service-Learning Syllabus

Course syllabi do more than provide basic information regarding a course (e.g., required text, course policies). In a review of course syllabi and the corresponding presentation of these syllabi, Thompson (2007) found that many instructors use the syllabus as a chance to sell their course (e.g., explain what they will gain from the course), and to welcome students into the learning experience by using positive and encouraging language. The syllabus provides a first impression of both the instructor and the course and it sets the tone for the course (Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Wolfe, 2004). Course syllabi that are detailed, show connection between course goals and course requirements, and have a warm tone have been found to be most effective in achieving positive student outcomes (Slattery & Carlson; Thompson). Additionally, students should be able to easily navigate the syllabus; therefore, good organization and a user-friendly feel are important points to consider in syllabus construction for any course (Slattery & Carlson).

Consistency between course goals and course requirements and an enthusiastic welcome to the course may be particularly important when the course includes a service-learning component. Students may feel overwhelmed by something new or the prospect of putting in hours in the community in addition to the classroom. The syllabus can provide an opportunity to address students' fears and temper the challenge of service-learning with words of encouragement (Thompson, 2007).

These elements of warmth and clarity along with elements of quality service-learning need to be considered when developing a service-learning syllabus. In the following sections, we break down the process of developing a service-learning syllabus into the following components: (a) Goals and Objectives (b) Service-Learning Activities and (c) Reflection Activities.

Goals and Objectives

Service-learning is a pedagogical strategy used to help students achieve learning goals and objectives. It is not appropriate for all courses or as a strategy to meet all course objectives. It is critical to identify appropriate courses and to establish the link between service-learning and the desired goals of the course.

Appropriate Courses. One of the first steps in incorporating service-learning into your teaching is to think about the courses you teach and determine which ones would be appropriate for service-learning. You may already have a course in mind or you may simply

be exploring the possible fit of service-learning with one or more of your courses. When thinking about which courses might be a good fit with service-learning, consider the level of maturity and experience of the students, (Karasik, Maddox, & Wallingford, 2004) because the types of service activities you include might be dependent on the level of the students. Students in an introductory class might need more help getting started with a service-learning project. More advanced students might benefit from experiences that are directly related to their discipline. For example, in the first author's experience, simple exposure to older adults was the key for an introduction to gerontology class. Yet, planning an in depth needs assessment for a local church was a better fit for a graduate level program planning class.

Making Connections. As you are thinking about the courses you teach, reflect on the goals of each course. Think about how a service-learning component might contribute to achieving those goals. Not only do you want to think about how service-learning will help you achieve the overall goals for the course, but you may want to develop specific goals or objectives for the service-learning component of the course. However, service-learning is a pedagogical tool that will help your students achieve the course learning objectives rather than a separate add-on to a course, so be sure that objectives specific to the service-learning component are congruent with the overall course objectives.

After you have thought through the connections between the service-learning activities and the course goals and objectives, this must be communicated clearly to the students. The course syllabus helps to clarify this relationship between goals and objectives and course requirements (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). Clearly articulating the integration of service-learning with course content within the syllabus allows students to see service-learning as an integral part of the course right from the beginning. In turn, this clarity may help students see the relevance of course requirements to the overall goals of the course.

Service-Learning Activities

As you are thinking about the goals of the course, look for ways in which the service-learning will help you achieve those goals. One of the criteria for meaningful service-learning is the clear and useful connection between course substance and the service-learning experience (Ethridge, 2006). The specific service-learning activities are crucial in establishing this clear connection. Think about what kinds of community projects, placements, or research would be appropriate to achieving outcomes for the course. What adjustments will you have to make to course requirements (readings, writing assignments, etc.) to accommodate and integrate the service-learning component of the course? Do not compromise academic rigor!

Community Partners. Needs of community partners must also be considered when thinking about service-learning activities. Cleary (1998) emphasized the importance of defining the needs of the community with the community partners themselves rather than assuming that you know the needs of the community partner. Yet, this community need must be balanced with the needs of your course. In addition, be sure that your students

will get a good experience at the service-learning site – you want them engaged in meaningful activities – activities that are truly connected with your course content. This reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship is the result of careful planning and good communication. Howard (1993) identified three criteria for establishing the service-learning activities: a) community partners should reflect content of the course; b) duration of service must be enough to fulfill learning goals, and c) service activities and placements must be able to facilitate relevant learning.

Establishing and maintaining good communication with the agencies involved is also important (Huckin, 1997). Instructors using service-learning have noted the value of providing community site supervisors with copies of service-learning syllabi and guides. Gaining continual feedback from site supervisors and from students is helpful in continually updating and refining service-learning course materials (Rowls & Swick, 2000).

If you have a volunteer and service-learning office on your campus, the staff of this office will be able to help you establish community partnerships that are right for your course. It is important to give clear guidelines regarding community partners and in many instances, it may be important to let students choose the community partner with whom they want to work (Huckin, 1997). In addition, students should be the ones to contact the agency and arrange a schedule, not the instructors.

Clear Guidelines and Expectations. Rowls and Swick (2000) noted that the exact service-learning activities in which students were expected to participate were not described on many of the syllabi that they reviewed. This lack of clear guidelines on the nature of the service-learning activity can lead to confusion not only for students but for community partners. Clarity regarding types of activities that are acceptable also is likely to lead to good matches between student and community partner. As you think about the types of activities in which you want your students to engage, be sure they are consistent with your course goals and objectives. Another benefit of including a clear description of service-learning expectations on the syllabus is to maximize the opportunity for students to receive liability protection from the university (Cleary, 1998).

Time consideration is another important step in planning your service-learning activities. The amount of time spent in service-learning and the manner in which that time is organized appear to influence the value of SL as a learning experience. What will be the parameters of the project, e.g., number of hours? Students must put in enough time to meet the goals and objectives. In terms of the service-learning being optional or required, it usually depends on the nature of the course and what you hope the students will gain from the service-learning experience. Think about the established objectives – are there other ways for students to meet these objectives? Can you require the service-learning but give different options within that requirement? What are the consequences of forcing students? Remember, instructors don't usually make other requirements, such as writing a paper, optional. Service-learning, like a writing assignment, is a pedagogical strategy designed to help students reach certain learning objectives.

Rowls and Swick (2000) found that many of the service-learning syllabi they reviewed, particularly those for introductory or general courses, were vague concerning the number of hours required. This lack of detail may cause unnecessary stress for students. Effective syllabi provide structure for the course and can assist students with successful time management (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). Many students work and are involved in a variety of clubs or other extra-curricular activities in addition to their coursework. The thought of completing service-learning hours can cause panic for students who lead busy lives. Students' anxiety can be exacerbated by not knowing the details of the assignment such as how many hours they are required to do and how the service-learning figures into their course grade.

Becker and Calhoun (1999) examined the ways in which students use syllabi and found that students paid the most attention to things like grading policies and assignment details. Providing sufficient detail about the service-learning component as well as other course requirements can help ease students' anxiety and provide them the needed information to efficiently schedule their time. Resource information such as a volunteer and service-learning center and disability support service is important information to include on a syllabus as this might help reduce student anxiety and increase their confidence in being able to handle the course requirements.

Reflection Activities

The next step is to determine how your students will reflect on their service-learning experience. One of the most critical attributes of meaningful service-learning is the reflective process (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997; Roos et al., 2005; Ethridge, 2006). After reviewing several case studies, Ethridge found that it was through the reflection process that students were able to learn about themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses. Through reflections, these students also voiced their fears and learned to be somewhat comfortable in their own discomfort.

Along with increasing self awareness, Hatcher and Bringle (1997) see reflection as the process that helps learners to link service to their course goals. Experience by itself is not learning; connections between the experiences and course concepts must be made. Students may have difficulty making these connections so you may find it helpful to provide examples or demonstrate the process of connecting experiences with course content. The role of the reflective activities and related learning expectations increase the potential for students to have successful service-learning (Rowls & Swick, 2000).

Reflection activities often include journals, directed writings and structured class discussions. Directed writings might prompt students to analyze the service experience in relation to a section from the text or to a class lecture. Short written assignments can lead students to critically review the text and synthesize it with their service experience (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). Reflection can be uncomfortable for students so consider this when you decide the method(s) of reflection and regardless of the method that you choose, make your expectations clear.

The grade value given to the SL part of a course is likely to influence student motivation and performance (Rowls & Swick, 2000). When assigning grades, remember that it is important to evaluate the learning rather than the service (Howard, 1993). In other words, students should not receive points or a grade for each hour they complete. The grade should be given based on the amount of learning that occurred as a result of the service. Student learning is best documented through the reflection activities. Therefore, meaningful reflection activities and a clear description of these activities are particularly crucial to a student's success.

Conclusion

Remember, your students may feel overwhelmed, yet a clear syllabus might help them to feel more positive and more confident in your course. You may want your syllabus to include: service-learning as an expressed goal; a clear description of how service-learning will be measured; a description of service-learning placements and/or projects; student responsibilities; a definition of needs the service meets; how students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned; course assignments that link the service and course content; and a description of the reflective process. Use the checklist (see Appendix A) as a guide in reviewing your syllabus to be sure that you have included all the necessary components. A clear syllabus can make the difference between a service-learning experience that is a source of frustration and confusion for the students or a successful service-learning experience that contributes to student learning.

Appendix A Syllabus Construction Checklist

As you prepare your syllabus to include a service-learning component, be sure that you think through each of these elements.

- _____ Service-learning as an expressed goal.
- _____ A clear description of how service-learning will be measured.
- _____ A description of service-learning placements and/or projects.
- _____ Student responsibilities (e.g., # of hours; timeline; due dates)
- _____ A match between needs of the community and the needs of your course.
- _____ Course assignments that link the service and course content.
- _____ A description of the reflective process (e.g., journals, discussion, presentations)

Remember, clear descriptions and expectations will help alleviate student anxiety about this component of the course and will facilitate the effective integration of service-learning into your teaching!

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Words on the Wadsworth: Podcasting and the Teaching of Art History

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Abstract

This course, *Words on the Wadsworth*, was the Humanities Honors course for the spring of 2009 at Hillyer College, the two year Associates degree program at the University of Hartford. Combining the content of a chronological survey of modern art with the new technology of podcasting and the venue of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford CT, the intent of the course was to create a challenging environment for the most successful students in our program. The practices of skill development, active learning, and connection with a community partner were integrated into the learning structure of the class. The case study addresses the ways in which the technology were integrated into the class, where students excelled and suggestions for other professors thinking of using similar technology. A sample podcast, made by student Larisa Woykovsky, has been included.

Keywords: Podcasting, experiential learning, course design.

“We don’t do our best when we simply instruct. We do our best when we answer questions alongside the visitor, and ask questions alongside the visitor... We do our best when we offer multiple avenues of interpretation, and when we keep a lot of room for audience response.” Madeleine Grynsztejn (Samis, 5)

Hillyer College is a four semester, associate’s degree college which operates as part of the larger University of Hartford. Many of our students begin in Hillyer because they have struggled as high school students; there is largely a disconnect between their grades and their SAT scores, reflecting clear deficiencies in basic academic skills and struggles with academic culture, time/resource management, and goal completion. Hillyer offers a structured general education program with small class size as a learning environment which will help students develop the critical skills they need to meet their ambitions. As part of a core liberal arts curriculum, art history is offered as an elective, along with other humanities offerings such as music, theater, and philosophy.

While the University of Hartford has an Honors program in other colleges, Hillyer’s participation struggled against a culture which rigidly defines our students as remedial. Each year, students distinguished themselves in the courses we offered, earning high GPA scores and excelling in the academic environment, despite past history. Every year, some of these students transferred from Hillyer and, indeed, away from the University of Hart-

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ford. The Hillyer Honors program became a way to reach these students, challenge them intellectually, while also fostering necessary foundation skills, and retain them at the University. We identify these students early in their freshman fall, and offer a program of a freshman humanities class in the spring, a sophomore fall science or social science class, and one class taken for “contract” at the choice of the student and through direct collaboration with a professor. Students are also offered the opportunity to take an interdisciplinary winter term class in Hawaii. The course offerings are proposed by the faculty, connecting with their teaching interests and expertise, and are chosen by committee in order to afford different professors this distinctive teaching opportunity. The program has been a tremendous success in engaging our students, increasing in participation every year as more of our students see the program as an interesting challenge beyond the mechanics of the general education degree.

The Course

Words on the Wadsworth was selected as the Hillyer Honors Course for spring 2009. From the beginning, we knew it would be ambitious in terms of content and projects; the rationale was to take students who were already at the top of the Hillyer program in terms of grade point average and challenge them beyond the standard curriculum. I pitched the class as a chance for students to become “tech-savvy art critics”. In the classroom, we used a combination of lecture and discussion to learn the history of modern art. We used the Wadsworth Atheneum, located in nearby Hartford, CT, and its premiere collections of Hudson River School and modern European art as our site for exploration. Students were asked to develop a podcast applying their knowledge from the classroom to works in the Wadsworth Atheneum. The course philosophy and pedagogy aimed at the high goals of teaching art history of the modern period, enhancing students’ reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills, introducing new technological skills, and engaging them with the critical community of scholarship in a way that breaks down the limiting cultures of “received” learning and boundaries of the classroom. As Chickering and Gamson have written in their work on principles for undergraduate education, “Expect more and you will get more” (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

The course was structured to cover the same material, vocabulary, and academic skills as the standard art history survey, ARB 112: Introduction to Western Art (modern). It was important to me that I change the content of the course as little as possible so that I felt these students got as solid an introduction to material as students taking the standard class in modern art. Both ARB 112 and *Words on the Wadsworth* were chronological surveys of art in the modern period (ca. 1850-present). Assignments were structured in both classes to test student comprehension of art historical concepts and key works through lecture discussions, tests and short papers. The research project, usually the standard culmination of a class as an application of skills in formal analysis and textual investigation, was still an exercise for students, though it took a non-traditional format.

As professors in the Hillyer College environment, we are often asked to be sensitive to the different learning styles our students bring to their studies; art history tends to attract learners who are primarily visual (Keefe & Jenkins, 2000). New technologies offer ways

to reach students who are stronger in aural and read/write areas of cognition (Buffington, 2000); indeed some scholars have argued that these students have significantly different expectations from technology in their classroom (Barone, 2003). The reading component was supplemented with an audio component in order to open a more engaging environment for critical listening. Audio technology, particularly podcasting, is becoming far more common as a result of technological advances and personal publishing. As museum education departments explore the use of audio technology to reach new audiences, including internally created podcasts of exhibit tours and interviews with curators and artists, and educators explore the use of podcasts as supplements to the classroom lecture, this is becoming an arena for creating a more active environment for the study of art. Over the semester, I chose podcasts from a number of sources—both student and curator casts from MOMA, SmArtHistory, and the Tate Modern, as well as several that I made for them directly. Listening to casts as part of the class was one way to introduce very specific material about works of art; we could choose individual works for more in-depth analysis. The second purpose was, however, to give students a range of styles to listen to in order to develop their own podcast style. By listening to different styles—informal, formal, single voice lecturing to a listener, two or more voices having a critical discussion and asking questions, designed for complete novices or for those with some background in art history—students could explore options for their own creations. Each listening assignment was also part of a writing assignment that asked students to explore two questions: what did they learn about the work and how did the podcast approach the material. Students thus developed critical approaches that were both aural and written as they examined both content and style.

It has been said in many ways that learning is not a spectator sport; the more we can ask students to experience art in a number of different arenas, the more we raise a community of engaged thinkers about the subject, able to relate it connectively to their lectures, readings, writing, and past experiences. The *Words on the Wadsworth* was shaped around a number of supplemental experiences. We attended a talk by contemporary artist Taiga Ermansons at Real Art Ways (Hartford, CT) and film-maker Rachelle Dermer screened her film, *Commit to the Line*, and talked with students as a way of exposing students to the artists' ideas of their own works. We visited an exhibition opening at the New Britain Museum of American Art (New Britain, CT) to see an exhibit on the Eight and to discuss the larger context of museum operations. We made two trips to our partner, the Wadsworth Atheneum (Hartford, CT); the trips were paired with unscheduled work time for students' projects. On the first trip we toured the galleries to gain greater understanding of the collections; on the second trip, we discussed the planning and execution of an exhibition and visited the conservation lab. These experiences were primarily for exposing students to a range of artistic venues, styles, and media, but it cannot be discounted that their secondary function was to increase contact between the students and myself and to increase their cohesiveness as a group.

The integration of a technology component into the *Words on the Wadsworth* class was the final element which made this course different from the standard art history class. Many studies have been done to assess the value of technology in the classroom, finding improvement in both basic and technical academic skills, a pedagogic tool for individual-

izing student learning, and increased student engagement in academic study (Means, Blando, Olson, Middleton, Morocco, Remz, & Zorfass, 1993; Reeves, 1998; North Central Regional Educational Laboratory 1999/2005; Center for Teaching History with Technology) I wanted to use technology under the umbrella of connectivist engagement (Siemens, 2006): more conscious of technology in the classroom because they are more familiar with it outside the classroom, students were challenged to learn to use podcasting as a way of stretching those boundaries of learning. “The course is not the container; teaching ‘space’ is not a physical place; personal does not mean ‘in person’” (Barone, 2003). Students were assigned to create their own podcasts from art in the Wadsworth Atheneum. Since the University of Hartford is an institutional member, the Wadsworth Atheneum was already familiar with our students but Associate Museum Educator Charlene Shang Miller went above and beyond in her special tours for our students and embraced the project wholeheartedly. The objective was to create an outlet for their learning about art history, applying vocabulary and analytical skills and concentrated research on actual works in the museum context, all building on the critical listening and speaking skills they were developing in the classroom. The application of art historical analysis and research was central to the project assignment and my grading. The podcast project aimed at teaching a number of goals simultaneously: a practical outlet for their knowledge of art and art history, practice at writing and presenting an oral presentation, the technical skills of working with a microphone and digital recording and editing software, and critical thinking about questions of museum experiences, audience and connection between presenter and audience. I also hoped to instill in students with difficult academic backgrounds a desire to take ownership of their interests and knowledge as they created their presentations; it was a hope that the project, in its service-learning aspects, (Buffington, 2007) would develop into a way to dynamically reach other students and young people as part of the Wadsworth Atheneum’s mission as a premiere cultural institution in the difficult urban demographic of Hartford. While this article addresses the academic experience of student podcasting, the benefits of podcasting in the museum setting are correspondingly numerous and rewarding: intensifying visitors’ active learning, time spent with collections, and overall satisfaction (Smith & Tinio, 2008).

Audio Avenues for Teaching Art History

It is important to set this class in the context of responses to media that are part of the cultural landscape of my students in a way that was not part of my experience and education a generation earlier. Loïc Tallon and Kevin Walker have edited a new volume, *Digital technologies and the museum experience: Handheld guides and other media*, looking at the new ways in which the museum technology is changing. These technologies reflect a change in museum interpretation to move from the context of curators and educators as solely responsible for the teaching in the museum venue to the idea of visitor-driven, experiential communication with the material. (Bradbourne, x) These are a reflection indeed of a culture which is overall moving towards “personal relevance and interpretations, interactivity, and easy access and control of content” (Tallon, xiv); the increase in personal blogging, video casting from sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, file sharing of music, creation of learning communities in wikis, and the changes in television programming to reflect audience voting and ‘reality’ television are all part of a shift in media

experience. That these new technologies are changing the discipline of art history is clear in the new collection, *Teaching art history with new technologies: Reflections and case studies*, edited by Kelly Donahue-Wallace, Laetitia La Follette, and Andrea Pappas.

There are a number of new avenues for enhancing classroom teaching of art appreciation and art history from audio files. A number of American museums and galleries develop their own casts, notably the Metropolitan Museum of Art (<http://www.metmuseum.org/podcast/index.asp>) which uses the medium primarily for special exhibitions and reflections of its former and formative director Phillippe de Montebello, SFMOMA whose Artcasts includes both more “formal” presentations by artists and curators and a “Vox Pop” in which regular viewers to the museum talk about their response to works, and the Walker Gallery (Art on Call, <http://newmedia.walkerart.org/aoc/about.wac>) which uses the technology as cell phone accessible comments about works by artists and curators. An unusual model is the Museum of Modern Art (<http://redstudio.moma.org/>) which has hosted officially produced curator and artist podcasts and student podcasts, first those developed by communications arts students at Marymount Manhattan College and then expanding to include their Youth Advisory Council and an open call from the public at large. Major museums in Britain and across Europe have begun similar programs.

In the academic arena, professors have long been posting audio casts of their lectures, a number of which are available beyond internal course management systems in more widely accessible arenas such as iTunes U and Podcast Alley. An exciting and dynamic project is SmARThistory (<http://smarthistory.org/>), the work of art historians Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, which seeks to use podcasts developed as part of their teaching as the foundation for an art history web-book. This is a more structured integration of what has been an individual pedagogic approach but its open and accessible nature suggests that it will gain adherents from both teachers and students. It is a source which I have used in this course as part of the critical listening assignments for students because of its comfortable format, accessible technology, and reliable content.

In addition, one pedagogic tool for teaching art history is VoiceThread (<http://voicethread.com/#home>) which allows the pairing of group conversations and images. I could post a single image or a presentation of images; students would log-in and could add comments on those images either through typing in a comment field or by leaving a sound comment from a computer microphone or a phone. The image palette also allows commenters to draw on the image to highlight certain elements. Like a discussion board, the comments can be private (by invitation) or public, moderated or open. VoiceThread does offer a much more interactive feature for pairing the presentation of images and group discussion, especially attractive as a distance learning feature. For *Words on the Wadsworth*, I chose not to use this platform but was able to incorporate some lessons from its implementation elsewhere.

Assumptions about Technology

In preparing for the class, I realized that one of the things I needed to ascertain at the very beginning of the class was students' comfort level with technology. Because of a generational gap, professors sometimes perceive students as being very comfortable with technology without necessarily understanding the parameters of what that means or the distinctions of what specific technology the students felt comfortable using or even the differences between students' technology use (Bain, 51). In my own case, when I started teaching, digital cameras were not commonplace; as I was planning the course, it became clear that the technology was now standard, as part of their cell phones. At a college such as Hillyer which draws both affluent and needy students, and students whose educational experience may have significant gaps in preparation as well as students who were quite well prepared, this kind of specific knowledge is critical for running the course.

A short, anonymous survey asked students to rate their feelings about their own use of technology on a scale from 1 (actively fearful) to 10 (completely comfortable). I expected a range of answers, including some at the very low end of the scale. Fifteen students responded: four in the middle range from 5-7, three rated themselves at 8, and 8 at the upper range of 9-10. This self rating of their own comfort level is particularly interesting, in light of the technical problems incurred (discussion follows). Students were also asked to check off from a list the technology they had owned or had easy access to: almost all owned a cell phone with a built in digital camera and a digital camera, allowing for easy acquisition of images; 10 out of 15 owned an mp3 player, allowing for easy access to sound files. Conversely, only 3 of 15 reported having either a microphone or a digital recorder. Finally, in order to establish a baseline of technical familiarity, students were shown a list of ten processes, including common activities such as using a word processing program to very complicated sound editing, and asked to select any that they had performed. Downloading images and sound files appeared to be very common skills but while about 12 students had manipulated images using an editing program, only 4 out of 15 reported having altered a sound file using an editing program.

This survey made three major differences in how I taught the class: first, through a Provost's office grant, I bought four voice recorders for loan to students; secondly, I taught a full class on the basics of Audacity, shareware editing software chosen for its ease of use, functionality, and lack of cost, and thirdly, I built time into the syllabus when I would be available to help students with their projects. Materials posted on our web course management site, Blackboard, included a PowerPoint tutorial (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/Audacity_High_School.ppt) and links to technical tips for working with Audacity (<http://www.guidesandtutorials.com/audacity-toolbars.html>). As the course ran, some technical problems arose. None of these were insurmountable problems but they did affect the overall semester activity. Students professed on the survey a greater comfort level with the technology than they actually exhibited. We had no designated technical assistance other than basic University support, which increased the students' reliance on me for technical expertise and greatly increased my administrative time. Students had difficulty converting from one file type to another; digital recorders often record in WMA format which only some editing programs can read and while mp3

is an industry format, mp4 is a standard output on the Apple system. Some students used alternative software, most commonly Apple's editing application, GarageBand, which also required separate assistance. Finally, on the assignment due date, we discovered distribution problems (file size of projects in anything other than mp3 format are often too large for e-mail filters).

While I needed to make technical changes quickly and responsively, some changes will only work in the next iteration of the class. The class on teaching technical material was at the beginning of the class, too soon in the semester; students were lured by the possibilities of podcasting but not yet attuned to what learning a new skill of sound editing would mean for their time allocation on the project. I also discovered that I cannot rely on them troubleshooting their own technical problems; fewer than half the class utilized the technical notes section on Blackboard, though one student reported doing his own search in both Google and YouTube to answer his own technical questions. Either distributing technical "crib-sheets" or creating internal working groups for technical information sharing might help these issues. Students should increase their familiarity with the technology earlier in the semester, perhaps through a mid-semester requirement of a recorded and electronically submitted short production accompanying the mid-term oral presentation. The software would seem less unfamiliar when it came time to record their final projects. These changes in the technical pace of the course and the methods for distributing information will strengthen the class overall.

Developing Presentation Skills

Active learning is something we try to encourage in a number of ways in our classrooms in order to create more direct engagement between students and the material. In the design of the course, I wanted to consider ways in which students could incorporate more oral and aural involvement; technology was clearly a focal point but it can also be an inhibitor for some students not comfortable with technology or a fall-back for students who are more comfortable with technology than the content of the class. Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) suggest "simulating techniques that do not themselves require computers", using the example of "dry" laboratories for practice before expensive tools and materials are used. At midterm, *Words on the Wadsworth* students presented one work to the class; the presentations were designed to accomplish a number of critical goals. Students were encouraged to use this presentation to develop one part of their final presentation, thus breaking the final assignment into more manageable parts and accommodating Hillyer students' difficulties with time management. Professor Ellen Meinke, who teaches speech classes at Hillyer, gave a one class condensed presentation on effective techniques and communication guidelines. We specifically discussed the differences between presenting to an audience in person and presenting a recording to a listener. Students picked up tips for structuring a presentation and introducing evidence persuasively, as well as pitching their voices for interest and engagement. Student use of images as part of the classroom participation was used to simulate the audio experience in the museum. Students were confronted by the problems of how much information to include or exclude given that the audience were looking at the image, and how much information could be used to create comparisons, given that their final listening audience would not have the benefit of com-

parative images from a slide library so the students would have to create visual references with words, very familiar images, or through comparisons in the gallery itself. This could be a problem solved by using vodcasts (video podcasts) but at the cost of further technical problems and requirements (Lopez, Daneau, Merrill Rosoff, & Congdon, 2008). We also discussed at length the issues of speaking to a group where one can see the audience and respond to them as the talk continued and the difficulty of speaking to an audience who can only hear you. Techniques such as using a warm tone and extra energy, introducing oneself to the listener, using second voices (interviews, questions, quotations), and breaking up the presentation with music or other sounds to create aural interest in the podcast were all focused on as a way of being sensitive to the problems (and potentialities) of the medium. These skills are all ones that are transferable beyond the course itself.

Podcast Projects

The project guidelines were set as broadly as possible to allow for the maximum amount of student input. The tour was to focus on the collections of the Wadsworth Atheneum and to focus on the period styles covered in the class (after 1840). The tour should cover about 10-15 minutes of time and it was suggested that students cover around three works in detail. Beyond that, students were asked to develop their own theme, aiming for a thesis that was significantly more rigorous than “here are three works of art I liked in the Wadsworth Atheneum”. Students were encouraged to use their tours as teaching tools, aimed at a hypothetical listener who was interested in art enough to download the podcast and go to the museum but who was not an expert in the field. Many of them pitched their podcasts to their classmates; this was ideal as a way of encouraging them to think of themselves as having something important to teach each other. Because the podcast was specifically to apply the art history they had learned in the semester course, students were encouraged to think of the podcast as an oral paper, requiring an introduction (both of themselves and the tour), a body organized into coherent sections with cogent evidence from both formal analysis and secondary sources, and a conclusion.

Several themes for the podcasts were concentrated examinations of single artists (Monet, Wyeth) or periods (Impressionism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, Synthetic Cubism, Surrealism). A few students examined more closely specific questions within a period (the influence of Japanese art on the movements of Aestheticism and Impressionism with a subtheme of images of women, class and gendered sexuality as themes of the American Impressionists). Many students adopted a very loose theme as a way of looking at broader questions of social culture (the relationship between artist and model, economic culture and its representation) or a genre of expression (three students used landscape as an organizing principle, choosing very different works for examples).

With all of the students, finding their own particular style was very difficult. Two students opted for no script at all because they wanted a level of spontaneity that they felt was inhibited by the use of the script; both podcasts had significant problems with presentation, evidence, and organization. A third student used an outline with some scripted material; this student used the script primarily because he used a second student from the

class to ask prompted questions. The technique was warmly received by his colleagues: "I liked how he brought in an additional voice and got his opinion on the paintings. F. did not seem to know a lot about the paintings and this was done to lead A. into talking about the paintings." The lack of formal script still created major problems in conveying critical details, however. Most students worked with a script and the resultant podcasts reflected the degree of rehearsal and familiarity; one student emphasized that while she worked from a script, she still recorded in segments to make the editing process easier. Some students used music as a personal accent. The techniques here ranged from a single clip used as a motif at introduction or conclusion or both, a single clip used as an intercession marker, several different clips used as intercession devices, or several segments of music played under the verbal track as a mood setting. Music was alluring, however; it lent an air of polish to presentations which students looked for, even when technical problems such as fading and volume level were distracting from the content track. Music also seemed to affect the attention students paid in listening to the podcasts as well, rating lower overall podcasts with more and better researched evidence than those with music but less good content.

Some students were very sensitive to the podcast as a tour, introducing the Wadsworth Atheneum as a place and walking the listener through the museum. One student used the walk time as an opportunity to discuss background on the artistic movement as a whole before beginning a new work's formal analysis. When students did not introduce themselves or their tour, the listeners felt lost and wanted that connection to the speaker. Students were sometimes frustrated by the changes at the museum which moved their works off display; in the interests of emphasizing the class content of art history and the podcast as a tool for teaching that content, students were told to treat the museum as a static display. We discussed, however, the ways in which podcasts, because of the self-publishing nature of their format, could be more responsive to these changes than the more formal, high-end productions of acoustic guides. The nature of the relationship between the classroom and the participating museum could have a tremendous effect on this problem; the more lead time students can build in to their preparations, the more the museum can inform students about impending display changes. There is tremendous potential in an academic museum, where advanced classes are often responsible for planning and designing an exhibition, for the technology of podcasting to open new educational directions both for students and visitors.

Good practice suggests prompt feedback is important (Chickering & Gamson, 1987); in this class, I tried to pair traditional feedback (comments on writing exercises, corrections on tests) with new technologies. After the midterm presentation, within 5 days of presenting, each student received an e-mail with extensive comments on the presentation, questions for direction of the final project, and a grade. In advance of the final project, students were given an extensive grading rubric for podcasts; having a sense of expectations and emphasis in the podcasts led to presentations which emphasized content (60% of the whole) over writing (included fully written scripts and less formal outline techniques; 25%), style (5%), and technical elements (10%). Similar to the midterm feedback as part of the grading of the final projects, students received extensive comments as well as grades. I felt my feedback in this class was extremely important to the class's success.

Moreover, the degree to which students participated in critiques was important in terms of developing critical listening skills both for new material and for their own production and editing and in terms of creating a community of learners sharing an experience around the material. At the midterm, students filed anonymous surveys rating and commenting on their colleagues' presentations; comments from these surveys were excerpted and added to the comments I sent to each student. As part of the final project, in lieu of a final exam on the content, we had a critique session, in the mode of studio art critiques. In preparation, each student was required to listen to every other student's presentation and to submit through Blackboard a short survey response. The survey asked students to rate the podcast on a five point scale from poor to exceptional, to choose the three strongest elements of the podcast from a list of characteristics (including elements like choice of images, research, formal analysis, and presentation elements such as clarity and music), to offer a few short sentences on what worked well and a few short sentences on what needed improvement. These anonymous surveys were then compiled so that each student received a report with all of his or her colleagues' responses. At the final critique, we listened to an excerpt from each podcast and the student was asked to discuss his or her goals, experiences, and to reflect somewhat on what he or she might have done differently. The rest of the students were asked to comment on what they had liked or not liked about the podcasts, connecting with their own experiences; it was a very fruitful discussion with some very critical and honest reflection on the end projects and the process ("I wanted an alternate voice that knew nothing about art"; "I should have spent more time on it"; "Going back to the museum for another visit didn't happen so I went on by doing more extensive research"). The technology of distributing the podcasts easily to all participants, the anonymous surveys as feedback, and e-mail responses from me were an essential combination to this idea of creating a committed and constructive environment for a productive critique session.

Art history provides a vital component in the liberal art curriculum, teaching students who live in a very visual culture to analyze works of art as primary artifacts reflective of cultural concerns and history. But just as our students are living in an age that is increasingly visual, they are experiencing academic learning and social interaction in ways which are increasingly less bounded by setting and schedule and increasingly marked by a broad range of technologies. Carl Rogers identified experiential learning as having three qualities: "personal involvement, self-initiated, evaluated by learner, and pervasive effects on learner." (Kearsley, n.d.). The *Words on the Wadsworth* podcasts were designed with this in mind: rather than top-down traditional use of the podcast as a lecture review (prof-casting), the student directly initiated the tour themes, thesis, choice of works and style. Student evaluation of their colleagues' work and self-evaluation in the final critique session clearly showed investment in the project. The lasting effects of new skills in writing, presenting, and technical knowledge of sound recording and editing are all important to students' academic development beyond the discipline of art history. Finally, the *Words on the Wadsworth* podcast projects created initial connections between students and the Wadsworth Atheneum, a reciprocal partnership with tremendous long-term potential for learning and community involvement, and connections between stu-

dents and a wider audience in a way which fosters a sense of ownership of academic ideas and a desire to share those ideas with others.

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