

Proceedings of the Roosevelt University Mini-Conference on Teaching

Volume Six
2009



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Editorial Preface

The Sixth Roosevelt University Mini-Conference on Teaching (“RUMCOT 6”) was held at the Schaumburg Campus on April 3, 2009. Full-time and part-time faculty members, administrators, and staff from many departments at Roosevelt University attended RUMCOT, which focused on enhancing teaching. This year we welcomed colleagues from nearby community colleges as well.

The event featured 14 interactive workshops, teaching roundtable discussions, panel presentations, showcase demonstrations, and exhibit displays. These proceedings provide a summary of many presentations from the conference. The authors address topics that are relevant to teaching at Roosevelt University subsumed under three main areas: teaching for transformation, online teaching and learning, and best practices in teaching and learning.

I hope that you find these readings helpful. For additional information about effective college teaching, you can explore related book and video holdings in the University libraries. These resources can be found by accessing the library’s webpage at www.roosevelt.edu/library and then clicking on the links marked “Resources for Effective College Teaching” and “Resources for Transformational Service Learning.” The Center for Teaching and Learning, located in Room 1046 inside the Auditorium Library, has even more resources for you to peruse. Ask a reference librarian for the key code to enter the Center.

RUMCOT 6 and these proceedings are sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President.

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Getting to Transformation with Service-Learning

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In the following five essays, we discuss our classroom-based experiences with service-learning and our efforts to harness the transformative potential of this method of teaching and learning. Collectively, we have considerable experience integrating service learning into our courses and working collaboratively with community partners to enrich the educational experiences of our students. Our disciplinary backgrounds and the courses we teach span the social and physical sciences, the humanities, and education. Yet we share the common purpose of engaging our students with the community in meaningful ways that promote personal and societal transformation, while meeting the self-defined needs of our social justice allies. With these objectives in mind, in the following set of essays, we consider how the application of best practices – reflection, reciprocity, sustainability, public dissemination and advocacy – operate as transformative mechanisms in academic-based, service-learning courses.

In the first essay, Pamela Robert elaborates her GATE model designed to maximize the power and transformational potential of reflection, particularly for students who struggle to make the connections between class content and service experiences. The model is based on engaging the “beginner’s mind,” an attitude of openness to new ideas coupled with an eagerness to explore ambiguity and difference. The second and third essays focus on reciprocity in service-learning partnerships. Elizabeth Meadows discusses how she establishes reciprocal relationships with mentor teachers and schools where her elementary education students do their pre-service teaching. She elaborates the importance of clear communication, flexibility, and site visits for maintaining a sense of reciprocity between all participants in the service-learning experience. Next, Erik Gellman reflects on the power of using oral history as a living tool that makes the lives and truths of ordinary people and their struggles for justice come alive. He views oral history as a reciprocal process that models critical citizenship for students and

subjects alike. In the fourth essay, Robert Seiser describes how his department is renewing the biology and chemistry curricula. This is being accomplished by incorporating service-learning into core courses and by developing a common framework for those courses to be taught in various formats and locations. This approach provides his students with opportunities to bridge the gap between science course content and social and public policy issues, while creating and maintaining sustainable relationships with community partners. In the final essay, Steve Meyers elaborates various ways that students in transformational learning classes can disseminate their knowledge and advocate for greater social equality. By advocating to public officials, voicing their concerns to the media and producing written resources or campus-based events, his students have experienced personal growth and realized that their actions matter. Their stories of transformation, in turn, raise the awareness of others and their willingness to engage in social action.

GETTING TO TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REFLECTION

Pamela M. Robert

Reflection – the process of critically analyzing the service experience for the purpose of making connections between lived experience and theoretical knowledge – has long been considered the gold standard for extracting learning from service (Bingle & Hatch, 1997; Howard, 2001; Porter Honnet & Poulson, 1989; Sigmon, 1979). Without reflection, service and learning often remain separate endeavors. Alternatively, when reflection is continuous, connected, challenging, and conceptualized (the 4Cs), learning from the service experience is enhanced (Eyler, Giles, & Schmieds, 1996).

Yet, even when practitioners of service-learning incorporate the 4 Cs into reflection assignments and activities, most agree that the quality of reflection varies from student to student. For some students, reflection comes easily; these students make insightful connections between theories explored in the classroom and their experiences in the community. For others, reflection is more difficult; these students struggle to connect classroom learning with community work. This raises the pedagogical question of how to maximize the transformational potential of reflection for more students. The answer I suggest can be found in what I call the GATE Model of Transformational Reflection.

The GATE model of reflection distinguishes itself from others in its intent to cultivate reflection that is transformational in that it opens the mind to appreciating difference and spurs action in the interest of social justice. Getting to transformation requires cultivating “beginner’s mind,” an attitude of openness, a suspension of preconceptions, and an eagerness to explore the subject under study as if one were encountering it or learning about it for the first time. Beginner’s mind opens the gate, metaphorically speaking, to new ideas, new perceptions, nuance, and ambiguities, while cultivating empathy for diverse perspectives. While a

full elaboration of the practices that might be employed to engage the beginner's mind is beyond the scope of these proceedings, a brief description of the three steps of the GATE model follow.

Step one: Guided assessment: Opening the gate

Students typically approach learning with background assumptions, including values, beliefs, and perceptions of normativity (VBPNs). But students do not necessarily understand the subjective nature of VBPNs, and, thus frequently treat their own VBPNs as superior to those of people they encounter in the classroom or the community. Professors will find that exploring students' VBPNs is a necessary precondition to cultivating beginner's mind and harnessing the transformative potential of reflection. To this end, the professor may use two forms of guided assessment: (1) a VBPN inventory and (2) an attitudinal inventory related to specific course topics (e.g., homelessness, inequality, etc.).

These inventories give students an opportunity to clarify their VBPNs and provide the professor with an opportunity to discuss the socially constructed nature of VBPNs. By situating VBPNs in a social constructionist framework, students learn to reflect more deeply on their service experiences and come to understand that VBPNs differ across time and space, depending on an individual's identity and location within the social structure. This approach lessens intolerance to perspectives encountered in the classroom and the community that are different than those held by individual students, and, thus, increases the possibility for transformative reflection. These guided assessment inventories also provide the professor insight into students' VBPNs and how open the mind/gate is to new and critical ways of thinking about salient social justice issues. With this information, the professor can devise effective and more individualized class discussions and exercises.

Step two: Critical incident analysis: Connecting action and critical thought

Getting to transformation through reflection requires linking action with critical thought. Encouraging students to neither act without thinking nor think without acting (Freire, 1972) warrants mantra status in community-based, service-learning classes. Using a variety of reflection exercises and assignments over the course of the semester helps students identify how they have and have not succeeded in connecting acting and critical thinking can be useful. One particularly effective way of making these connections is critical incident analysis.

In community-based, service-learning courses, students typically experience a critical incident that operates as a turning point. These are the "aha," unpredictable moments when action (service) and thoughtful reflection intersect to produce transformation. Turning critical incidents into transformative moments, however, requires skillful facilitation. How they are facilitated can make the difference between students achieving beginner's mind and reinforcing stereotypical perceptions and power imbalances, particularly when students from the dominant group are working with

less privileged groups or with groups from social and cultural backgrounds different than their own.

Indeed, turning points are a double-edge sword that may explain why some studies find that service-learning can either foster or dispel stereotypes (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Kingsley & McPherson, 1995; Reardon, 1994). To be an effective force for transformation, critical incident analysis must identify structural causes of injustice and dispel missionary-based ideologies of helping and charity. Reflection is not critical analysis unless it analyzes the structures, ideologies, and practices that reproduce social injustice. Because uncritical incident analysis overlooks structures, ideologies and practices of the dominant group, they often lead students to express their privilege by naming the "problems" of the oppressed and by offering simplistic "solutions" to what are exceedingly complex social and political issues (Erickson & O'Connor, 2000). Likewise, analyses that stop short of being critical are likely to engender sympathy rather than the beginner's mind necessary to work with organizations and people in the community in ways that lead to their empowerment.

In particular, the critical incident journal provides one of the most fruitful reflection assignments for deconstructing turning points and linking action and thought. (For a description of critical incident and other types of reflection activities, see Bringle & Hatch, 1996.) It focuses on the analysis of a particular event or experience identified by the student as having significance. For this assignment, students describe an incident that created a dilemma, an awkward situation, or uncomfortable feelings for them. Then guided by a set of prompts, they explore their thoughts and reactions to that experience and discuss what, if any, action(s) they took or would consider taking in the future. And, they reflect on why the particular incident was significant for them and what societal or interpersonal issues arose as a consequence of the incident. Next, students devise three alternative actions to the one taken or contemplated, which they share and discuss with the class. And, finally they identify what action(s) they would or would not take if they encountered the same situation again. As students learn to connect their actions and thoughts, the overall quality of service and learning improves, the beginner's mind is cultivated and the potential for personal and social transformation increases.

Step three: Engendering the beginner's mind in the synergistic classroom

While individual reflection exercises are a useful and necessary way to connect service and learning, they frequently are insufficient for getting to transformation. As noted above, some students easily connect theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the community, but many have difficulty doing so. For this later group, reflection may not reach its transformative potential if it remains an individual exercise only. For them, engendering the beginner's mind and with it an openness to new ideas, new perspectives, ambiguities, nuances, and issues of social justice requires engaging in collective reflection and dialogue in what Howard (1998) calls the "synergistic classroom."

In synergistic classrooms, professors facilitate rather than manage collective reflection and dialogue. Multiple and diverse perspectives are welcomed and intentionally cultivated. Students learn about and from each other. Taken together the elements of a synergistic classroom create a learning environment conducive to engendering the beginner's mind. Because the synergistic classroom tolerates and respects students' VBPNs, it affords them the opportunity to move from reactivity to differing perspectives to consideration of them. This does not mean that students necessarily change their VBPNs. But owing to the broad range of ideas and perspectives voiced in a synergistic classroom, students are more likely to develop an open mind toward VBPNs that differ from their own. Ideally, when this beginner's mind is engendered, students independently assess how they arrived at their VBPNs and how well they fit the knowledge they have accrued thus far. If a change in VBPNs occurs, it is because the student autonomously decides that her/his old worldview does not match the new knowledge or realities he or she has discovered. In classes lacking economic and social diversity or when students fall subject to group-think, professors may need to simulate these differences through structured class discussions that introduce perspectives not articulated or that disrupt and counter group-think.

Summary

In sum, the GATE model proposes a three-pronged approach to maximize the transformative potential of reflection by cultivating and nurturing beginner's mind. While effective generally, the model was originally constructed to ameliorate the challenges of connecting theoretical knowledge to service experiences, which some students do more easily than others. The model involves three interrelated processes: (1) doing guided assessment aimed at uncovering VBPNs and their socially constructed nature; (2) using critical incident analysis as a way to connect action and critical thought; and (3) engendering the beginner's mind through collective reflection and dialogue in the synergistic classroom. By harnessing the transformative potential of reflection, the GATE model enhances students' understanding of social justice issues and enlivens their desire to become agents of social change.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Elizabeth Meadows

The importance of reciprocal relationships in service-learning experiences has been emphasized in the literature. Jacoby writes, "Reciprocity suggests that every individual, organization, and entity involved in the service-learning functions as both a teacher and a learner. Participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients" (Jacoby, 1996, p. 36). In what follows, I describe the pre-student

teaching course, a service-learning course, and factors that seem to help promote these reciprocal relationships.

Undergraduate, elementary education students take this course during the semester before their student teaching, which is their last course before graduating and being certified as elementary school teachers. The overall course objective is to prepare students for student teaching. Each pre-student teacher spends one day a week in a certified, elementary school teacher's classroom and then attends a seminar with me. Roosevelt University students learn from their mentor teachers how to apply and practice their learning from previous courses (such as methods of teaching science, social studies, math, and reading) by assisting the classroom teacher in teaching the elementary school students. In the seminar, Roosevelt students reflect about their experiences and consider how they would like to teach in their own classrooms.

As I begin to establish a partnership with a prospective school for this course, I work to communicate what is meant by reciprocal relationships to the school principal and teachers. I tell them that there are two main goals for this course: (1) that the experiences that Roosevelt students have will contribute to their learning how to teach and how to do all that a teacher needs to do in a public elementary school; and (2) that the experiences that Roosevelt students have will contribute to the learning of the elementary students in the classroom as determined by the classroom teacher who is responsible to school, district, state and national standards, tests, and other directives.

Reciprocity is evident as Roosevelt students learn how to teach as they help the classroom teachers teach elementary school students. Roosevelt students provide much needed services for teachers and students. For example, often some elementary school students need one-on-one teaching that a classroom teacher, who is responsible for 25-30 students, does not always have time to give.

Clear communication among the instructor, Roosevelt students, and mentor teachers is paramount to establishing these reciprocal relationships. To help with this, I have written a guide about what Roosevelt students are expected to do that I talk over with prospective principals and teachers as we work to establish the partnership. This guide explains specific course assignments, which include working one-on-one with elementary students, working with small groups, teaching lessons developed by the classroom teacher, and finally, creating and teaching a unit plan of four, sequential and interrelated lessons. I speak directly with each mentor teacher and with students in this course early in the semester about these requirements. At this time, I listen, answer questions, and let mentor teachers and students know that I am flexible as to how these requirements are met. I tell them that whatever works to achieve the two main goals noted above, while providing Roosevelt students with opportunities to teach in the range of ways described in the guide, works for me. Recently, a mentor teacher told me that she liked how flexible and open Roosevelt was because she had found other universities to have more exacting requirements that

were not as open to the challenging realities that teachers face nor to what would work best for the mentor teacher and her or his elementary students. This guide facilitates communication throughout the semester among the pre-service student teachers, the mentor teachers, and myself.

I also work to establish clear communication by visiting each classroom at least once during the semester before formally observing each student teach. During these visits, I ask the mentor teacher and Roosevelt student how things are going and take time to listen. I also encourage students to establish clear communication with their mentors, and I help with this when asked and/or needed.

This example of how I work to establish and maintain reciprocal relationships among Roosevelt students, mentor teachers and myself as the instructor of this pre-student teaching course highlights the importance of clear expectations, flexibility in meeting these expectations, and regular and open communication among myself, mentor teachers, and Roosevelt students. These factors seem to have helped all involved learn with and from one another.

ORAL HISTORY AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

Erik Gellman

How have ordinary people struggled for social justice? And how do they integrate past experiences into an ethical framework to inform their present lives? These and other questions seem pertinent to the idea of transformational learning through service learning. And although oral history may not be the key component to service-learning curricula, it has potential to become a component for transformational learning by making oral history into a living tool.

In a 2007 course on the history of Chicago, I required students to intern at neighborhood historical or community-based institutions. Their final paper combined classroom learning with field experiences, and many students chose to conduct oral histories as a way to bridge these two components of the course. Through the process of listening to how activists told their narratives, students got a better sense of how social justice works on a day-to-day level and how ordinary people have made extraordinary impacts on local, national, and even global structures of power.

This past year, we lost one of the most prolific and path-breaking practitioners of oral history: Studs Terkel. In his collection on the Great Depression, *Hard Times*, Studs reminded the reader that “this is a memory book, rather than one of hard fact and precise statistic.” And furthermore, in his subjects’ “rememberings” of “triumphs, honors and humiliations” are “their truths.” These “truths,” Studs implied, mattered because they represented the complexity and contradictions of life.

Because of its subjective and imprecise nature, oral history can become a way of learning. Oral history allows for

people to construct their own past narratives to fit with a larger narrative. Therefore, *how* the story unfolds remains as important as the details of the narrative. As subjective history, stories become alive as an open set of interpretations and questions to better understand the present by thinking about the past. Thus, silences and contradictory tales of past experiences may reveal Studs’ version of “truths” as much as precise explanations of past events.

By interviewing people about the triumphs and disappointments of struggles for social justice, students gain knowledge through a process of reciprocity. Often, community organizers have busy schedules that lead them to concentrate on the urgent present more than the distant past; sitting down with students to discuss their lives provided an angle of repose, a time to reflect, and a space to communicate facts and feelings.

At its best, the process of oral history can result in dialogue that models critical citizenship for the student and subject alike. And thinking about the past as a living tool for the present has applications in any academic field. Thus, oral history becomes transformative, showing students the beautiful, chaotic, yet rewarding process of past experience filtered through present circumstances.

RENEWING THE BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY CURRICULA WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

Robert Seiser

Drawing on the Roosevelt mission of social justice and the ideals of scientific citizenship, the members of my department have identified new goals for student success in our majors and science education in general. These goals are based on a recognized need to explicitly bridge science course content to societal and public policy issues. One challenge to meeting long-term goals for transformational learning is the issue of *sustainability*: the idea that informative and effective service-learning activities will become an integral part of the student experience. Evidence of sustainability may be found in the higher number of faculty members who adopt alternative pedagogies, in the formation of a lasting community partnership, or simply by retaining the “spirit” of a service-learning course in the light of time, multiple instructors, and changing community needs.

Our approach to renewing the biology and chemistry curricula has thus involved several components:

- Target core courses first. Encourage both majors and non-majors to have multiple service-learning experiences, not just as a “bonus” in upper-level majors courses.
- Empower faculty to create their own transformational learning activities. Acknowledge that one size does not fit all and leave the number, type and scope of alternative pedagogies to the discretion of the instructor.

- Build on a common framework. Design course models that can be used in various formats by multiple instructors, especially those who have little prior experience with transformational learning.

One example of this approach may be found in Biology 113 – *The Nature of Science*, a new non-majors course based on the Biology 150 course for majors. BIOL 113 is offered online and on both campuses, has been taught by three different instructors, and enrolls students at all levels from across the university. Rather than take a broad survey of biological science or focus on a single theme, BIOL 113 deals with the process of scientific inquiry and the ever-changing frontier of scientific discovery. There are specific course objectives for BIOL 113, but these are focused on student learning outcomes (which are assessed using standardized online instruments) rather than extensive content mastery.

The course design addresses the need for sustainability in various ways. Instructors make extensive use of online resources – the Blackboard system, newspaper and journal articles, videos – that are updated on a regular basis. Students suggest topics and lead in-class discussions using the language of science. The key service-learning activity of BIOL 113 is a student-designed investigation that employs a standard method of scientific inquiry. The topics under investigation must have some relevance for a community or target population of the students’ choosing. In this sense, the students find their own community partners, based on their own interests. Regardless of instructor, format or location, the course can be taught with the same emphasis on process and then tap into a steady stream of new content. Thus, students gain direct experience with pre-disciplinary critical thinking, data analysis and the connections between science and society. They also provide real and meaningful research results that can be beneficial both to the student and to a wider community over the long term.

CAN STUDENTS SPEAK OUT FOR CHANGE? ADVOCACY AND DISSEMINATION WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

Steven A. Meyers

Transformational learning combines the insights that students derive from community-based service-learning with principles of social justice. Students not only learn about societal inequalities when professors use this approach to teaching, but students also use lessons learned in the course and field to become agents of change.

There are many ways in which students in transformational learning classes can disseminate their knowledge or advocate for policies to create greater equality for people who are often disenfranchised. Importantly, students’ firsthand interactions at their community sites provide them with a potent tool – individual stories – that can promote change.

Advocating to elected officials

Service-learning frequently involves students assisting people on a one-on-one basis. However, transformational learning focuses students’ attention not only on the individual, but also on broader social and political forces that are relevant at their site. In addition to providing direct assistance, students can also help the people whom they serve by advocating for legislation, policies, and programs that address overarching inequalities.

This advocacy process initially involves students locating their federal, state, and local elected officials. They then can write letters in which they identify themselves as constituents, explain the reason why they are writing, and request that the legislator support a particular issue or specific bill. One essential element in these letters is a personal story to support the points that they are making. Service-learning provides students with poignant and personal anecdotes to explain how policies impact actual individuals in the legislator’s community. Students can expand this advocacy work by meeting face-to-face with their legislators in their district offices to further share the stories and experiences of the people whom students serve at their service-learning sites. (See faculty.roosevelt.edu/meyers/outreach.html for related resources.)

Reaching out to popular media

Another venue for advocacy and dissemination of transformational learning is media, such as newspapers and blogs. Students can highlight social inequities evident at their sites and raise public awareness by writing letters to the editor or op-ed pieces to local newspapers. These are typically brief, provocative, and closely related to recent news stories. Many newspapers have online editions in which a section for readers’ comments follows articles; students may post responses in this forum using stories and knowledge gained from their service learning as well.

Students can also construct a blog (see www.blogger.com, for example) to showcase work from their service-learning placement to publicize the plight of those who are disenfranchised to raise awareness and inspire action. After taking appropriate cautions to obtain the relevant permissions or to de-identify information, blogs allow students to share photos, sound files, and written stories in moving ways.

Campus-based events

Transformational learning can make the boundary between the classroom and community more porous. Instructors who use service-learning are aware that their students have the opportunity to interact with members of the community, but these connections also provide a conduit through which community members can come to the university to speak with broader audiences. Campus lectures and workshops, enhanced by the stories of community members, can heighten awareness university-wide. Students involved in transformational learning may also inspire their peers to engage in social action consistent with their fieldwork by participating in relevant co-curricular activities, organizing

campus demonstrations, developing voter registration or petition drives, or even coordinating a community event (such as a boycott) that involves other students.

Developing resources for public informing or action

As a complement to organizing an event or speaking out for change, professors can use transformational learning to prompt students to generate written products that encourage social or political action. For example, students can expand their letter writing to elected officials by also developing policy briefs. When writing a policy brief, students present research pertinent to a social issue identified in their fieldwork, and incorporate stories and anecdotes to personalize the presentation and make it more compelling. In some disciplines, students can inform others by creating visual art forms, performances, or displays.

Concluding thoughts

Transformational learning not only allows students an opportunity for personal growth, but it also asks them to become engaged citizens who ameliorate social injustice. Advocating and disseminating knowledge gained from service-learning creates ripple effects well beyond an individual student or class. By virtue of their fieldwork, students are able to put a face on and “humanize” broader societal problems. These poignant stories also become vital tools to increase legislators’ and others’ awareness. Transformational learning ultimately empowers students; they often learn that their convictions and actions can matter.

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An International Faculty-Led Program to Guatemala: Infusing Multiculturalism and Social Justice through Cultural Immersion

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Multiculturalism has become a powerful component in counseling, psychology and education programs that emphasize helping students conceptualize distinctive characteristics of underrepresented groups and convoluted social systems, in addition to human differences and commonalities. According to Pedersen (1999, 2002), multicultural counseling has become a “fourth force” in counseling after psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and humanism. Preparing counselors to provide better services to diverse, multicultural populations is an instrumental part of counseling training programs regardless of the counseling specialty (Abreu, Gim, & Atkinson, 2000; Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Bradley & Ladany, 2001; Clemente & Collison, 2000; Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2001). Since Wrenn wrote the “Culturally Encapsulated Counselor” in 1962, a variety of multicultural counseling research studies that address the importance of including multicultural coursework in the curriculum have been published.

Historically, counseling, psychology, and education programs have put more emphasis on knowledge, information, and normative-historical data regarding multicultural issues. We realize that a traditional course in this area does not necessarily target personal beliefs, attitudes, and biases that students bring with them into their respective programs.

WHY STUDY ABROAD-IMMERSION COURSES?

Before my appointment at Roosevelt University, I (Roberto Clemente, associate professor) had traveled to Peninsula del

Yucatán, México and Puerto Rico with graduate students from counseling, psychology, and education. Upon my arrival at Roosevelt University, I built a relationship with the Universidad del Valle, Guatemala (UVG). After teaching courses in Spanish for graduate students of the UVG as an invited professor, I decided to take the institutional relationship to another level by bringing groups of students from Roosevelt University in the format of an immersion course. The course was co-taught by Professor James Choca who is also bilingual (Spanish-English) and who contributed his expertise in assessment and the Hispanic culture. Rubee Li Fuller, Director of International Programs, served as a key processor of documents, forms, deposits, and monitored every step of the organization prior to the trip. Her vast knowledge in the international arena in academia complemented our teaching and organization.

The main purpose of the trip to Guatemala was to teach the traditional concepts of multiculturalism, diversity, pluralism, tolerance, and sensitivity in a non-traditional context outside of the classroom. Also, the idea was to challenge the current perspectives about diversity held by our students.

CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

Constructivist educators have long criticized the assumption that students are idle recipients of knowledge, learning in a vacuum without being affected by their subjective experiences and contextual surroundings (Freire, 1994; Magolda, 1999). These educators maintain that general knowledge and information become relevant when students can incorporate them into their daily lives and work environments. Relevancy is acquired through contextual and experiential meaning (Freire, 1993). Isolated academic experiences are not sufficient to foster high levels of awareness of and sensitivity to the complex life issues reflected in counseling contexts. Likewise, hypothetical academic exercises rooted in intellectual knowledge do not incorporate the broad base of multiculturalism. Too often, multicultural training is based only on textbook case-cognitive experiences that are inconsistent with human experience. Exposure to real life experiences that stimulate the emotions, as well as the auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile senses are difficult to duplicate in an academic setting, particularly with respect to multicultural experiences.

This unique sociocultural context (Guatemala), in conjunction with the acquisition of new knowledge (course content) and a safe forum to process and construct meaning (group discussion), provided the ideal conditions to challenge students' beliefs and integrate new knowledge. In the following section, the conceptual framework is described.

THE GUATEMALAN CONTEXT

The Altiplano campus of the Universidad del Valle serves highland students in 7th grade through Junior College and specializes in tourism and agriculture. Most students are indigenous, and 40 percent speak an indigenous language of Maya descent in their homes. Ninety-two percent of the students receive full or partial scholarships either from the

university or the government. Many of them come from small rural towns and only get to go home on weekends. On Saturdays, the university offers a continuing education program for teacher certification courses as well as many other classes and workshops to hundreds of adults.

Spanish is the official language of Guatemala, but 21 ethno linguistic Mayan groups have kept their ancestral languages alive. Garífuna (a mix of African tongues, Spanish, Mayan, and English) and Xinca are also spoken. These languages have their own phonetic, grammatical and structural base. According to the CIA World Fact Book, Mestizos (mixed Amerindian-Spanish; in local Spanish called Ladinos) and Europeans comprise 22 percent of the population and Amerindians comprise 65 percent of the population (K'iche 9.1 percent, Kaqchikel 8.4 percent, Mam 7.9 percent, Q'eqchi 6.3 percent, other Mayan 8.6 percent, indigenous non-Mayan 0.2 percent, other 0.1 percent). Pure Europeans comprise 5 percent of the population.

PRE-TRIP ORGANIZATION

The following is a list of some of the most important steps in implementing a study abroad-immersion course, such as our own.

1. Contact the Office of International Programs (Rubee Li Fuller, Director) for information about course proposals. The proposal has to be completed and submitted for approval to the Department Chair, Dean, Director of International Programs, and Provost. It involves a budget, syllabus, activities, and information about the host country, facilities, and co-instructor.
2. Determine duration of the trip. For graduate students, trips should be short due to their family and work responsibilities. Extended stays are more expensive and will impede students from taking other courses.
3. Plan for summer and January (early spring) trips. These times of the year will not inhibit students from taking other courses.
4. Once approved, advertise the course/trip via email, flyers, and visits to classrooms. Determine the minimum number of students that would be feasible to fund the trip.
5. Once a group is formed, the Office of International Programs provides payment options.
6. Provide a copy of activities, course content, and logistics of the course to all the participants.
7. Ultimately, the professors leading the group will determine who will participate on the trip. Interviews are a screening option.
8. Organize one to two pre-meetings with the group for informational purposes.
9. Be aware of the host country's main issues (political and societal), type of facilities to be used, health and safety issues, and currency exchanges.

10. Point out the alcohol/drug consumption policies from Roosevelt University and conduct expectations.
11. Emphasize the importance of early passport acquisition.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE IMMERSION COURSE DESIGN

Consistent with constructivist principles, the immersion course was designed to challenge students at all levels of the human experience: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. The course was intended to provoke cognitive awareness as an initial step and affective sensitivity as a desirable goal.

Prior to exposing students to the culture, the course content, and experiential learning activities, students were encouraged to think about their own individual worldviews in order to provoke personal awareness and understanding of their own beliefs. This was accomplished through a series of journaling questions about culture and multiculturalism that they were required to complete prior to departure. During the course, different worldviews were challenged, compared, and analyzed as the information and course content were provided. After being challenged to think about their own worldviews, students were taken out of their “comfort zones” and detached from familiar U.S. context as they became immersed in the Mayan culture and their interaction with various dimensions of this society increased.

Language was by no means the only cultural variable that affected students’ comfort zones. As they became more immersed in the culture, they quickly learned that the time concept in Latin American countries was very different than in the United States. In order to further expose students to the culture, all meals consisted of authentic, typical food. Organized excursions in Guatemala included visits to the communities surrounding Lake Atitlán; each community has a different language and culture.

As the total immersion point was reached, students were challenged to explore their position in the world as U.S. citizens, including their beliefs, values, white privilege, and the concept of underrepresented ethnic groups (minorities). Students processed their personal feelings of being in a minority position in the Guatemalan culture from linguistic, cultural, and racial standpoints. Frustrations with their inability to communicate effectively and express their ideas in a different language were explored. The goal of the educational process at this point was to increase the affective sensitivity and point out the difference between objective (removed) and experiential knowledge.

After the conclusion of the study abroad course, students returned to the United States and completed an action project in which they extrapolated and implemented their newly acquired knowledge and experience into their own community contexts and realities. In close consultation with the instructors, students were given the freedom to select any multicultural activity that could serve as a vehicle to transfer their recently acquired knowledge into a counseling context. Community agency and school projects varied according to the preferred multicultural areas expressed by

the students.

CONCLUSION

Traditionally, multicultural counseling instructors have copied pedagogical methodologies used in other courses in hopes of achieving similar results. However, rather than promoting memorization and regurgitation of facts, multicultural courses ought to adopt a constructivist approach in which cognitive awareness and knowledge are the initial steps of competence. For that reason, alternative ways of teaching multicultural counseling courses are crucial in order to promote emotional awareness. Immersion in a different culture represents a complementary strategy challenging counselor education, psychology, and education programs to apply true multicultural strategies that depart from classroom activities based on artificial-intellectual exercises.

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Learning to Listen to Differences: Dewey, Democracy, and Interpretive Discussion

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My past writings have focused on two main interests: education in a democracy and how educators can support people in listening to ideas and perspectives that differ from their own. In this essay, these two interests are joined as I explore the questions: “Why is it important in a democracy for people to value, listen to, and understand ideas and perspectives that differ from their own?” and “How can teachers in a democracy help people value, listen to, and understand ideas and perspectives that differ from their own through the use of interpretive discussions?” Interpretive discussions engage participants in collaborative inquiry about the meaning of a text. Examples of texts are written works, films, mathematical problems, data sets, works of art, etc. that are ambiguous enough to support thoughtful questioning.

In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey describes two traits that “precisely ... characterize the democratically constituted society” (Dewey, 1916, p. 87) and that seem to require that people value, listen to, and understand perspectives and ideas that are both similar to and different from their own. These two traits are: (1) “... more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest ... greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control” (Dewey, 1916, p. 86); and (2) “... not only freer interaction between social groups ... but change in social habit and its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse” (Dewey, 1916, p. 87).

Dewey may mean by (1) that in order to co-create a democracy, people need to establish many, different common goals. Because people are unique (Dewey, 1916, p. 90) there will be differing ideas about which goals to pursue and how to go about them in any social group. Therefore, group members need to express their own, and listen to one another’s, ideas and points of view in order to arrive at common goals and to work together to decide on how to achieve them. The latter may be what Dewey means by “greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control” (Dewey, 1916, p. 86).

By his second trait (2), Dewey may mean that people in a democracy, as members of social groups such as families, schools, cultural organizations, and business groups, need to communicate openly with many, different groups of people in ways that give rise to events and contexts that are new to them. Then, people need to adjust how they live their lives in response to these new events and contexts that they encounter when they communicate with people who were previously unknown to them. For Dewey, these adjustments need to focus on the constant improvement of a democratic

society because for him, a democracy is, “... a society which not only changes but which has the ideal of such changes as will improve it ...” (Dewey, 1916, p. 81).

In this essay, I lay out five democratic practices that seem to help people enact these two traits and then describe how interpretive discussions engage people in these practices. First, I add my ideas to Dewey’s about why it is important to value, listen to, and understand ideas and perspectives that differ from one’s own in a democracy, and specifically, why these are important for educators to do. By valuing, listening to, and understanding ideas and perspectives that differ from one’s own:

- People can reconsider their own strongly held beliefs in light of the ideas of those who differ from themselves and thereby come to decisions that improve their own and others’ quality of lives. If they do not listen to and understand these ideas, then people might only pursue what improves their own lives and the lives of those who hold similar ideas to their own.
- People can identify shared concerns amidst their differences, such as a common desire for excellent education for their children, and then work toward achieving resolutions to these concerns.
- People can look beyond the sometimes narrow expectations placed on them, such as by consumerist tendencies in the United States today, and learn about alternative options for how to live their lives.
- Teachers can learn about who their students really are — their talents, their needs, and their life dreams — in order to support them in realizing their unique selves and life dreams for their own and others’ benefit (Meadows, 2006).
- Teachers can build trust with students to support their learning (Haroutunian-Gordon & Meadows, 2009).

The following practices may correspond with what Dewey would recommend that people learn how to do in order to enact the two fundamental traits of a democracy. Each practice is labeled with the trait that it supports.

- a. Communicate with one another in ways that help people realize their shared interests and multiply the goals that they hold in common. [trait 1]
- b. Communicate with one another and negotiate differences to accomplish common goals. This may be what Dewey means by “... individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own ...” (Dewey, 1916, p. 87). [trait 1]
- c. Interrelate with members of many different groups of people. [trait 2]
- d. Learn how to adjust their ways of living and thinking in response to new situations that arise when they communicate with members of groups other than their own. [trait 2]
- e. In a democracy, all of the above need to focus on the constant improvement of society.

Interpretive discussion is a form of teaching and learning whereby teachers and students can engage in the above five democratic practices. Haroutunian-Gordon has written about teaching through interpretive discussions, the ways in which they work, and how people learn through them (Haroutunian-Gordon, 1991; Haroutunian-Gordon, 2009). Here, I briefly describe what an interpretive discussion is and how it involves participants in each democratic practice.

- Students and teachers bring their own genuine questions about the meaning of a text to an interpretive discussion and work together to identify a shared concern. Preparation for facilitating an interpretive discussion includes choosing a text, reading it while generating one's own, genuine questions about the meaning of a text, and developing a basic question and eight follow-up questions that interpret the text to resolve the basic question. [practice a]
- The teachers and/or participants begin the discussion by expressing their questions and working together to arrive at a shared concern. In this process, participants share and listen to their differing questions about, and interpretations of, the text in order to come to and resolve a question of shared concern to the group. [practice b]
- Participants in interpretive discussions can be K-12 students, pre-service teachers, and/or other students in university settings. Therefore, they relate with one another as members of different families, political groups, social groups, religious groups, and racial groups when they convene in a new group to discuss and derive meaning from a text. [practice c]
- Participants in interpretive discussions are encouraged by the process to consider others' ideas and perspectives and to reconsider their own ways of thinking in response to these ideas and perspectives that are new to them. [practice d]
- Participants are encouraged to reflect on their discussion processes as a group to constantly improve them [practice e]. The teacher offers but does not limit participants to criteria such as: Did the teacher and participants help one another come to and make progress toward resolving a question shared by the group? (practice d); clarify their own ideas? (practice a); understand one another's ideas? (practice b); encourage discussion from everyone? (practices b, c, and d); and did participants change their ideas about this shared question through the process of the discussion? (practice d)

Through evaluating the discussion process as a group, participants may come to appreciate working with others to improve situations and processes for themselves and others. They may then want to bring their learning about how to do this to work with others to improve social processes and societal problems, such as providing excellent education for all, addressing homelessness, and redressing other forms of injustice.

In conclusion, teachers can help students sustain a democracy by learning to value, listen to, and understand ideas and perspectives that differ from their own through interpretive discussions. When educators invite students to develop their own genuine questions about a text and then help them engage with others in a process of identifying a shared concern and working together to resolve this shared concern, all are engaged in democratic practices. These practices can be utilized both within and outside of classrooms to sustain a democratic society and to improve it. In addition, through the interpretive discussion process, students engage with and interpret the content presented in a text rigorously and thoroughly with others in a dynamic learning process.

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Blogs, Wikis, Facebook, Twitter, and You

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WHAT IS THE SOCIAL WEB? WHAT IS SOCIAL NETWORKING?

The *social web* can be described as people interlinked and interacting with engaging content in a conversational and participatory manner via the Internet (Social Web, n.d.).

In the online world, *social networking* is the term used to describe the way that users build online networks of contacts and interact with these personal or business friends in a secure environment. Some of the most popular social networking sites include Facebook and MySpace (Webmaster Glossary Terms, 2009).

HOW DOES THE RU LIBRARY USE SOCIAL NETWORKING AND THE SOCIAL WEB?

Twitter: twitter.com/rulibrary

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates, known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them (Twitter, n.d.).

Blog: rulibrary.typepad.com

A weblog (usually shortened to blog, but occasionally spelled web log) is a web-based publication consisting primarily of periodic articles (normally in reverse chronological order). Although most early weblogs were manually updated, tools to automate the maintenance of such sites made them accessible to a much larger population, and the use of some sort of browser-based software is now a typical aspect of "blogging" (Glossary, n.d.).

Wiki: rulibrary.pbwiki.com

A wiki is a website that includes the collaboration of work from many different authors. A wiki site allows anyone to edit, delete, or modify the content on the web. The first wiki creator named the site after a chain of buses in Hawaii; Wiki means "quick" in Hawaiian. (Tech Glossary, 2009).

Facebook: www.facebook.com (*search for Roosevelt University Library*)

Facebook is a free-access social networking website. Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with other people. People can also add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves (Facebook, n.d.).

LEARNING HOW TO USE THE SOCIAL WEB

Blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, Oh my! Keeping up with each new widget that comes out of the social web can be trying; constantly updating your status, checking comments and direct messages, adding pictures, finding friends, avoiding spam, etc. Then there is also the increased ability of our mobile phones to plug into these online networks with native social applications that allow you to be anywhere and let everyone in your network know what you're doing or what your seeing in real time! That may be a bit hard to wrap your mind around.

If you haven't already noticed, your library has been adapting to the growing popularity of social networking tools. The Library has decided to create an online presence through our blog, Twitter, and Facebook in order to keep the Roosevelt community informed and enlightened. These tools provide a more interactive platform for us to communicate and share valuable information. Although using social networking can be fun, it is important to know how to effectively use these services to get the most out of them.

So in order to help you organize and prioritize your time online and content for the growing social web, here are five steps that may help decrease the information overload you're likely to experience:

Step one: Why sign up at all?

Figure out why you want to use this service and what are some of the features that interest you. Otherwise you may find yourself not signing in after the first week. Note that your profile still exists even if you never log in again.

Step two: Privacy issues – What to share?

How much information are you comfortable sharing with the rest of the world? Remember, once you post something on the web, it's instantly published and you are responsible for the content. To keep your online identity safe and secure, you must trust those with whom you connect.

Step three: Create and participate

Social networking sites can be incredibly useful sources of current information. This information may be entertaining, insightful, or personal, but informative nonetheless. By sharing things that you find or create, you contribute value to your online community.

Step four: Keep your online identities connected

The social web has brought you the ability to link your content from the different networks you may be a part of. You can integrate your Facebook status updates with your Twitter updates; if you blog you can alert others through RSS feeds, which can be embedded into Facebook; or you can send Facebook RSS feeds to the blog you may have created. The possibilities are endless. There are even sites like friendfeed.com that aggregate almost every change to your social networks into one spot.

Step five: Avoid online addiction

You should monitor how much time you spend checked into these social networking sites. Un-plug once in a while. There is a great deal of information available online these days and it is not possible to get through it all at once. Practice in moderation. Your friends will still be there tomorrow!

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Integrating Online Homework in Face-to-Face Lectures

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“The truth is that the technology train has left the station,” says Sandee House of Georgia Perimeter College, “and it is our job as responsible educators to determine the best technology available and the most appropriate way to use it while also making adjustments in our way of thinking about the role of the teacher in the classroom.”

At Roosevelt University, the math department is boarding the technology train. After designing and introducing our first-ever mathematics online course (MATH 217 Introduction to Probability and Statistics) at Roosevelt, we decided the current available classroom technology presented many benefits that our students could take advantage of as an alternative to face-to-face courses. In addition, we discovered that this technology could help coordinate our many diverse full and part-time instructors as well as provide consistency to the students. We will examine online homework integration from two points of view: an instructor and a coordinator.

AN INSTRUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

The summer of 2008 marked the launch of the inaugural Math 217 online course, and since then it has been taught several times by many instructors. The available technology played an important role in the decision to create an online course, which led to expanding web-based programs into other math courses. With many technology packages offered, first we had to choose a program. MyMathLab was selected for several reasons: it is Blackboard based, which provides familiarity and flexibility with its functionality; there is an e-book, online homework with many tools to assist in solving problems, individual study plans that can be developed, plus, an online grade book.

There are many advantages to using online homework assignments. For example, one benefit involves reducing and for some instructors, eliminating, the need for graders. Moreover, since the homework is graded electronically, the students are provided with quicker 24-hour feedback. As a result, the student does not have to wait until the professor grades the homework and returns it, which normally takes more time. This is probably one of the features that the students appreciate the most. Since they are given feedback when they are actually working on the homework, the whole experience turns out to be a lot more educational for them than traditional homework assignments. They feel empowered and lose some of the fear of trying to tackle the homework on their own.

Additionally, there are many tools to assist the students: Help Me Solve This, a step-by-step help guide, much like what an instructor would offer in office hours; View an Example, a step-by-step solution to a similar problem; Textbook, a link which goes to the textbook page related to the problem at hand; and Ask My Instructor, which emails the instructor with a question and the exact problem the student is working on. The students are given three chances to answer the question correctly, and then they are given the option for a “similar exercise.” This allows the student to try again and get the problem correct, and motivates him or her to succeed. Furthermore, the instructors receive instant results on the assignments, including a detailed Item Analysis that enables them to better communicate with their students. This function then highlights the problems with which students are struggling. This is a wonderful tool for an instructor who wants to spend some time on the homework in class, letting him or her choose the best problems to work on. One final benefit is that the efficiency and productivity of using online homework results in more time left for instruction and other activities within the classroom.

Another important benefit of this online homework system is the Study Plan. Every time students work on a “quiz” or “test” online, their Study Plan is generated with exercises that will help them learn the material that they missed on the quiz or test (it may just be a homework assignment, but it needs to be assigned online as a quiz or test to generate the Study Plan). This helps the students focus their attention on the material that they don't understand.

On the other hand, several disadvantages in adopting this classroom technology include: students not practicing their writing skills; cheating on the online homework (it is algorithmic and therefore the student can ask for new exercises until the same one reappears); software glitches (sometimes the software marks as wrong a correct answer); and the program can become a crutch for the students (always being able to ask for help and not working through the problems on their own first). These drawbacks are similar to problems encountered with textbook homework. For example, a student may copy another person's homework, or write down the answers from the back of the book. The advantages certainly outweigh the disadvantages. In my own classes I have found that the best way to counteract these disadvantages is to have frequent in-class quizzes and to discuss these disadvantages with the students. They soon realize that cheating usually works against them.

In conclusion, as an instructor who has participated in and promoted the online homework process, I believe the transition is a positive, productive and valuable progression. While instructors cannot be completely replaced by using this technology, their teaching and classroom management can certainly improve by embracing it. We can still correspond with our students through paper quizzes and tests. Consequently, since our manual grading is greatly reduced, we can then invest more constructive time on teaching and presenting the material. Finally, research has revealed that the usage of technology within the classroom environment produces higher retention rates and successful completion of the course (Speckler, 2008).

A COORDINATOR'S POINT OF VIEW

With the considerable number of different instructors teaching the general education math classes, this online technology adds more consistency in the courses. For instance, a coordinated course is set up with homework and chapter tests for the instructors to use. Accordingly, we can monitor the pacing of the instructors' courses based on the assignments given, while also maintaining some quality control on ensuring that each student is taught the same material in each section. Furthermore, homework, tests and final exams are graded exactly the same way, contributing to uniformity and fairness of grading.

This web-based software is enabling users to develop more online classes and create some self-paced courses. Additionally, the successful implementation of MyMathLab has led to our embracing another software package, MyMathTest. The new platform will improve our placement of students and provide a review for students who have not attended school in several years. It is evident that the technology enhancements are endless.

CONCLUSION

We have recently started our exciting journey of applying online homework and technology here at Roosevelt. Nonetheless, there is a balance that should be achieved and

maintained between online material and pencil and paper work that the students need to do. After the first semester, we took an anonymous survey that revealed most students did prefer the online homework. Of course, you will always have some that prefer no homework at all, but we feel this was encouraging feedback. We believe that a classroom that embraces technology leads to increased productivity at the instructor, student, and coordinator positions. With the use of technology prevalent today at every level of education, it is clear that we need to continue to promote and support the use of online work in our classrooms.

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The Sustainable City: Developing an Interdisciplinary, Team-Taught, Hybrid Course

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In Spring 2009, the College of Professional Studies piloted a seminar entitled BGS 394: "The Sustainable City," developed and team-taught by Carl Zimring and Michael Bryson, colleagues with backgrounds in environmental history, environmental literature, and urban ecology. The seminar explored the myriad environmental, social, and scientific dimensions of sustainability in urban regions. Using the Chicago metropolitan area as a learning laboratory, the course took a multidisciplinary approach to urban ecology, waste management, green design, climate change, urban planning, parklands, water systems, environmental justice, ecological restoration, and urban agriculture. Its first iteration introduced Roosevelt University adult undergraduates (most of whom had no background in science or environmental studies) to the study of the Chicago metropolitan area's natural and social environment.

One notable aspect of our seminar was its mix of technological, traditional, and field-based learning experiences, which might well be summarized by the phrase "from Blackboard to Bubbly Creek." We describe here how the course combined Blackboard-based interaction, online resources ranging from films about urban agriculture to maps of the Chicago area's wetlands, traditional in-class lecture and discussion, and several field trip experiences in the city and suburbs. In addition, we briefly evaluate the potential of urban sustainability as an organizing theme for general

educational goals within the Professional and Liberal Studies undergraduate program for adult students.

DEFINING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Urban sustainability encompasses many factors. The overriding goal of sustainability is to establish a way of living, of conducting business, and of protecting environments from the local to the global that will benefit generations who will live years, decades, and centuries into the future. Meeting this goal requires approaches that utilize the natural sciences, social sciences, policy, and creative thought. Within such a context, the city is viewed as an integrated series of systems that manage energy, water, goods, services, and wastes; a sustainable system approach does so without depleting resources or otherwise damaging the environment (Douglass & Zoghlin, 1994; Drakakis-Smith, 1995; Sachs, 1993).

PLANNING “THE SUSTAINABLE CITY”

We enjoyed an embarrassing amount of riches regarding possible themes and opportunities for an urban sustainability course in Chicago. One question was that of disciplinary focus: because so many social and natural sciences are relevant to the study of urban sustainability, what balance of disciplinary approaches would be appropriate?

A second dilemma had to do with the case studies explored. In a metropolitan area with so many examples of functioning and non-functioning systems, what cases were most vital to this course, and to what extent should we focus on them? The latter question would loom large; in actually teaching the course, we realized that our one week on water, for example, could easily be expanded to be a course in its own right.

Third, since the course was designed as a hybrid of in-class meetings, field trips, and online discussion, we needed to determine what materials would be presented in each of those formats — and how the formats might work together.

In organizing the syllabus for the course, we decided that scheduling the field trips was our top priority. These meetings required the most advanced planning, yet also provided the additional benefit of locking in times in the schedule to focus on particular themes. This decision necessitated a modular set of readings, allowing us to narrow down the type of textbook and additional readings we would offer. To a large extent, then, the shape and structure of our syllabus was created through planning the field trips in Fall 2008.

We then selected a textbook, the second edition of *The Sustainable Urban Development Reader* (Wheeler & Beatley, 2009). Aside from being brand-new, the text was broken up into modules and was broadly interdisciplinary, ranging from checklists of LEED certification for buildings to science fiction ruminations on the ideal community. We subsequently added short readings and websites to augment the main text.

The weekly rhythm of the class involved conducting lectures and leading large seminar discussions each Tuesday in person, then posting a series of discussion questions to stimulate online dialogue in Blackboard the rest of the week. Field trips were usually held on occasional Saturdays; students were required to attend at least two and write up reflection pieces on the experience that also incorporated relevant course readings. Students also developed a relevant research project that was produced in stages over the course of the semester, ideally incorporating themes from the readings and field trips in addition to outside research (Bryson & Zimring, 2009b).

FROM BLACKBOARD TO BUBBLY CREEK

“The Sustainable City” was a technology-intensive seminar in every respect, a logical result of its hybrid format. All course materials — from the basic syllabus to an extensive bibliography of print and online resources to detailed research guides — were accessible both from our Blackboard site as well as the freestanding course website (Bryson & Zimring, 2009c). Videos, interactive maps, virtual building tours, and other multimedia sources complemented traditional print-based readings and figured prominently in our many PowerPoint presentations for on-campus class sessions.

One noteworthy integration of technology into the seminar was the Library Resource Paper, which required students to identify, cite, and briefly annotate several sources relating to a topic of their choosing in specific Roosevelt University catalogs, databases, and other resources (Bryson & Zimring, 2009a). This assignment was supported by our course librarian, Jennifer Lau-Bond, who also developed a customized “LibGuide” library resource page for our seminar (Lau-Bond, 2009). The assignment emphasized the use of peer-reviewed sources as preferable to Google-based research, and helped generate topic choices and working bibliographies for students’ forthcoming research projects.

The course’s field trips were not only diverting and instructive breaks in the weekly rhythm of the course, but also were carefully integrated with the seminar’s schedule and written assignments. A brief description of three trips illuminates the variety of disciplinary approaches and themes in the course.

During the second week of the semester, students had a choice of seeing a Van Jones lecture at the Museum of Science and Industry or participating in the Chicago Wilderness-sponsored “Wild Things” conference at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Jones highlighted the central role economics and job creation have in efforts to forge a more sustainable and just society, through his linkage of the “green economy” and environmental justice. “Wild Things” introduced students to a wide range of sustainability, urban ecology, and conservation topics (e.g., biodiversity and wetland restoration), which anticipated upcoming weekly themes as well as inspired possible research topics.

Our final trip on May 2 — a canoe trip down Bubbly Creek led by the organization Friends of the Chicago River — brought to life the challenges and opportunities of restoring vitality to a long-abused (and infamous — Upton Sinclair identified it as a “great open sewer” for Chicago’s slaughterhouses a century ago) waterway in the context of a fun and unique urban outdoor adventure (Sinclair, 1906).

SUSTAINABILITY, INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING, AND GENERAL EDUCATION

“The Sustainable City” exemplifies how the analytic methods of the social and natural sciences can be integrated to shed light on issues related to urban sustainability. Topics such as environmental history and urban ecology, sustainable development and landscape transformations, recycling and waste management, and ecosystem restoration are best examined not in isolation from one another, but in combination and through the lenses of history, policymaking, biology, and ecology.

This approach influenced every aspect of the seminar’s design, including the team-teaching format, the selection of weekly reading/discussion topics, the choice of field trips, and the various writing assignments. One pedagogical challenge, in particular -- the fact that students would be taking the course for either social science or natural science credit within their general education sequence -- turned into an opportunity for us to develop new online materials to guide students through the entire research process, from selecting a topic to crafting a proposal to writing a research paper (Bryson & Zimring, 2009b).

More broadly, the seminar served as an incubator for ideas about how the theme of sustainability can enrich undergraduate general education, inspire curriculum initiatives in urban environmental studies, provide opportunities for service learning, and connect city and suburban students to local environmental concerns within the urban landscape. Future iterations of the course can integrate service-learning experiences, especially given the centrality of environmental justice to the seminar’s topics and overall spirit. This could involve providing research and/or manual labor for urban farming operations, a project being pioneered by our colleague Maris Cooke in the Evelyn T. Stone College of Professional Studies.

Student response to the course theme of sustainability was so positive that we are in the initial phases of developing a “Sustainability Studies” program that would focus on the urban environment. Such an initiative would align with the increased prominence of sustainability in institutions of higher education, which not only are aiming to make their campus operations more ecologically sound but also are integrating sustainability throughout the college curriculum (Webster & Dautremont-Smith, 2008).

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Walking the Tightrope: Maintaining the Balance between Authority and Approachability

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In recent years, authority in the classroom has changed. It has shifted from a traditional model of authority in which instructors acted like disciplinarians, to a more progressive definition, known as professional authority, in which the teacher is conceptualized as a guide (Pace, 2003).

The balance between authority and approachability is fundamental to enriching a classroom environment. Tiene and Buck (1987) stated that an instructor's authority in the classroom is a critical aspect of their role; however, they also argued that an instructor's authoritarian mentality can be detrimental to creating a positive classroom environment and can undermine the ultimate goal of student learning. Instructor authority is necessary for fostering a positive classroom experience for students as it permits clear boundaries to be established, creates rules for conduct in the classroom, provides instructors with legitimacy and confidence in their roles, and indicates students can trust that they will learn and receive guidance. In the study of authoritarian attitudes among instructors, Rosenshine and Furst (1971) found instructor concern for students was positively correlated with student learning.

Although there is a substantial amount of research on classroom authority, minimal literature exists on balancing authority with approachability. In the following sections, we will describe several of the challenges to maintaining this balance and suggest best practice approaches for instructors to implement to counteract these obstacles.

CHALLENGE OF RESPECT

Developing and maintaining respect in the classroom affects an instructor's ability to balance authority and approachability. Students who do not respect their instructors will challenge them in myriad ways. Class time is then spent arguing over assignments, deadlines, and grading systems rather than covering the material. Conversely, students who do not feel respected by their instructors or other students are unlikely to share their views or concerns for fear of criticism. In such classrooms, discussions are often superficial and students do not benefit from exposure to different perspectives. Furthermore, an overt lack of students' respect for each other demonstrates the instructor is either unable to control students or does not care that students are disrespected.

In order to create an environment in which learning is paramount, respect must be gained and modeled by the instructor's consistent and professional behavior. Developing classroom policies that are clearly outlined in the course syllabus and strictly followed allows the instructor to be fair, thereby earning students' respect. Therefore, great thought should go into the development of policies prior to the start of each course, including for anticipated problems (e.g., instituting a late policy for homework). This precludes the need to make exceptions when student emergencies arise, resulting in consistent treatment towards all students. In addition, policies requiring students to be respectful of the instructor and each other is also recommended. For instance, mandating students' punctual arrival prevents lecture interruptions. Any changes to policies during the semester should be avoided, as this sets the stage for students to challenge the instructor's authority. However, if the instructor determines a policy change is necessary, it should apply to all students.

Instructors should also model respectful behavior. This is accomplished by giving each student the opportunity to participate in discussions and by validating all viewpoints. Instructors also model respectful behavior by addressing students' disrespectful behavior in a calm and professional manner. For instance, to a student who responds "Who cares?" to a question posed by the instructor, an instructor could respectfully respond, "Although you may feel indifferent, it is important to respect other views." Instructors can also demonstrate respect for multiple viewpoints by presenting various perspectives on each topic. Furthermore, instructors can monitor the level of respect in the classroom by videotaping and reviewing a class session.

CHALLENGE OF EXPERIENCE

Another common challenge is the students' perception of the knowledge and experience of the instructor. Students' perceptions of their instructors can affect their learning. Students may perceive instructors in ways ranging from a seasoned expert to an incompetent novice. If instructors are viewed as unreliable sources or as the only acceptable sources of information, students may not be invested in learning.

Instructors must maintain a balance between being knowledgeable while remaining open to alternative perspectives. Therefore, it may be helpful to gain other sources of "expert" knowledge, from outside experts in the field or students themselves (Raney, 2003). Guest lecturers and students may provide more in-depth information on specialized topics than instructors. For example, in a cultural diversity class, instructors could invite guest lecturers to discuss various cultures or ask students to share a personal cultural tradition. Finally, instructors should encourage student input, questions, and debate (Raney, 2003); this would enhance student interest and participation.

Similarly, allowing students to share their ideas and opinions fosters approachability. Students are the "experts" on how they learn best. Thus, using student-rating forms to determine effective teaching techniques demonstrates that instructors are committed to students' learning. Furthermore, peer and mentor feedback can provide insight into instructors' classroom strengths and challenges (Intrator, 2006). For instance, the instructor may spend too much time lecturing, while discounting student input, which would decrease approachability and student interest.

Another best practice involves conveying confidence and thorough preparation. Instructors need to be self-confident in order to gain the confidence of students. Confidence is gained through preparation and practice. According to Intrator (2006), students respond better to instructors who are self-confident, organized, and practiced in the material and provoke interest. Furthermore, professional and personal experiences relevant to course material enhance instructor credibility by demonstrating practical knowledge and experience.

CHALLENGE OF IDENTIFICATION

Another challenge instructors may face is the tendency to over-identify with their students. This can occur in numerous circumstances; for example, when a student encounters a situation similar to one that an instructor once experienced. Many instructors want to identify with students to a certain extent because of an intrinsic need to be understanding and compassionate.

However, overly identifying with students may become problematic when it undermines classroom policies. When the instructor becomes too compassionate or understanding, the original classroom rules and regulations may disappear. Additionally, instructors may be accused of demonstrating favoritism towards certain students if they identify with students' situations too much.

Instructors can apply the following best practices to prevent over identification with students. As mentioned previously, it is imperative for instructors to remain consistent with all policies and treat all students in the same manner. However, instructors can express compassion towards students through using basic empathy and social skills. Instructors can accomplish this by allowing students to tell their stories, empathizing with difficult situations, and gently reminding students that course policies will be upheld. While listening to a student's story, instructors should maintain clear boundaries to ensure students do not view instructors as friends. Lastly, it is also important for instructors to monitor their behavior to ensure they do not over-identify with students. This can be done via peer consultation or through consulting an experienced mentor.

SUMMARY

Instructor authority is necessary to foster a positive classroom experience for students. Achieving a balance between authority and approachability while demonstrating concern for students can be a challenge. We discussed several challenges to maintaining this balance as well as best practices for counteracting these difficulties. Instructors can apply these suggestions to gain credibility as a respectful, knowledgeable resource, who establishes clear boundaries in order to balance authority and approachability.

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Plagiarism and the Use of Blackboard's "TurnItIn"

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I was absolutely shocked when I put some of Sarah's writing in quotations in the search engine and up popped the website from where she had taken the words. Why? I thought. She seemed like such a good student who often spoke up in class. Why would someone do that in college? Sure, I had seen cheating in the high school, often by students who did not know what they were doing, but Sarah seemed to be smart, just not smart enough to write the words that she had submitted in her paper.

Plagiarism is defined as the unlawful use of the ideas and words of others, while academic dishonesty is anything else. Different authors rate plagiarism as occurring with anywhere between 10 percent and 29 percent (Carroll & Appleton, 2001). Though some students don't know that they are doing wrong, others react to the stress of their situation. Interestingly, however, some maintain that everyone in America cheats in some way (Callahan, 2004). Callahan points to the drive for money and power that all Americans feel they have a right to, aka the American dream. Additionally, the watchdogs are sleeping. We, as university professionals, are the watchdogs. We should not be sleeping.

There are several general types of plagiarism. Accidental plagiarism occurs when students do not know that what they are doing is wrong. They are unaware that they must paraphrase or cite the ideas of others (Nadelson, 2007). This can often take the form of a patchwork in which students take three to seven words of the author they are reading and put their own words in between. Additionally, students often practice cut and paste plagiarism when they copy and paste entire sections from online articles or websites (Carey & Zeck, 2003). Another Internet-related problem exists in students' use of online paper mills in which students can download prewritten papers or hire someone to write a unique paper for them for as little as \$10 a page (Embleton & Helfer, 2007). Another type of plagiarism is self plagiarism where students resurrect work that they themselves have completed but turned in for other courses (Thompson, 2006). All forms of plagiarism are unacceptable.

There are many things that we can do as instructors to help prevent plagiarism. When we are planning, we can make sure that we switch or change assignments regularly. This keeps students from sharing their papers with each other. Additionally, it has been shown that having a strong, clear statement in the syllabus is very important because policies can vary from professor to professor. For example, at Roosevelt University, much of the extent to which the student who plagiarizes is punished is up to the policy of the instructor.

During the course, it is helpful to teach students how to paraphrase and cite (Landau, Druen, & Arcuri, 2002). Additionally, it can be good to save student writing samples that they produce in class to get an idea about the individual voice of each of the students. It is also a good idea to produce student building blocks for each assignment so that they are not faced with the last minute task of producing an entire assignment but have produced smaller aspects of it throughout the semester (Embleton & Helfer, 2007). Having students give presentations based on their writing also encourages honesty because it is more difficult to speak in front of a group of people about something that you have not produced.

As instructors, we should note the last minute questions of students, as these can pinpoint cheaters who were not prepared to do the assignment (Embleton & Helfer, 2007). We should also require that students submit their writing to a plagiarism checker such as "TurnItIn," which is available to many college instructors through their Blackboard websites. With TurnItIn, instructors can have their students submit their writing and receive a rating of percentage of plagiarized content.

TurnItIn is remarkably easy to use. Instructors simply set up a TurnItIn assignment under one of their Blackboard tabs. Instructors can choose whether or not students see the results of the scan and whether or not the paper is made part of the permanent TurnItIn archive. When introducing the process to students, it is advisable for instructors to demonstrate how to find the place to upload the paper and have a statement in the syllabus requiring students to upload them. Most students see the value of the program when the procedure is presented to students as part of their ongoing process in improving their writing.

After students upload their papers, instructors can view the generated originality report from their control panel in Blackboard. They are also able to grade and comment on the paper there. The originality reports are color-coded with blue and green being acceptable, with up to a rating of 10 percent unoriginality; higher percentages gain a yellow, orange, or red rating. Instructors can exclude quoted portions from the rating as well as the bibliography. This often lowers the overall percentage of unoriginality, but in cases of severe plagiarism, it has little effect.

Many students and professors have expressed satisfaction with TurnItIn. Instructors like the security of knowing that papers have been quickly and efficiently checked against the Internet, while students enjoy knowing that their papers are protected from plagiarists by the paper depository. Critics have cited this paper depository as problematic with copyright law due to the fact that it saves a copy in its repository. In fact, recently a judge upheld TurnItIn's right to archive papers stating that it fell under fair use practices.

Though TurnItIn is an excellent way of identifying plagiarism, there are other lower tech ways of combating the problem. Certainly, we as instructors, after reading student papers for a period of time and with our knowledge of our given fields, are often able to identify portions of papers that

do not seem original. Whether it is a sense that the written word does not match student in-class performance, the use of British spellings by a student who is obviously American, or a disjointed paper that doesn't make sense when read, instructors are in tune to the expected achievement of their students. When the warning bells go off, it is a simple matter of putting suspected phrases of about five words into quotation marks and then entering the phrase in a search engine such as Google. Very often, this produces links to the sources the student might have plagiarized.

After the plagiarist is identified, there are multiple options for the professor. Roosevelt University provides great resources in its websites at: www.roosevelt.edu/plagiarism/default.htm and www.roosevelt.edu/current/judicial/academic-dishonesty.htm. Ultimately, punishment is up to the instructor given the severity of the offense. Students do have the right to appeal only the instructor's judgment, not the grade or the punishment. Punishments for academic dishonesty at Roosevelt University include assignment failure, course failure, or expulsion from the university. It is important for the instructor to report the case of plagiarism to both their college and the Office of Student Services. This prevents the student from being able to plagiarize again. We are doing all students a favor when we do this because we are respecting their work.

It was May 2009 when I watched Sarah cross the stage during graduation. To say that I had mixed feelings was indeed putting it mildly. Had she learned from being caught? I certainly had. Her actions had caused me to examine not only my own practice but to include instruction about paraphrasing and plagiarism in my own courses, as well as a much stronger statement in my syllabus. I am forever changed by the experience. I can only hope that she is, too.

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Peer Coaching: A Collaborative Approach to Personal and Professional Development for Quality Teaching and More

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Are you an individual who is seeking to improve what you know and are able to do? Are you tired of professional development that does not apply to you? Develop your own agenda of what you want to learn through personal staff development. Consider peer coaching as a process to help you reach your potential based on your interests and needs.

Tiger Woods has a coach – would you like one, too?

A report issued by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) "focused on teachers and the quality of teaching as the core of student performance." By improving professional practices, student learning also improves.

WHAT IS PEER COACHING?

Peer coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace (Robbins, 1991). It is a collaborative approach to improving the personal and professional growth of the individual and developing professional learning communities.

PEER COACHING IS FOCUSED INQUIRY

Peer coaching is a process by which college teachers can look more deeply into their practice of teaching in the classroom. Although a teacher may want to know more about teaching and learning and effective practices, it is difficult to determine where to begin the inquiry. Teachers can begin to ask questions about how learning takes place in their classrooms. Some questions could possibly be:

1. How do I know that my students are learning?
2. Are my assessment techniques valid?
3. Is my method of delivery helping students to learn more efficiently?
4. Is there a learning theory that I would like to apply to my classroom to improve teaching and learning?
5. Are the students satisfied with their learning?
6. Is there more that they would like to do?
7. Is there more that they would like me to do?

Peer coaching can lead to action research through educational inquiry and wonderings. Collaboration can lead to a more extensive inquiry about one's practices.

WHY USE PEER COACHING?

One reason to try peer coaching is to reflect on current practices; expand, refine and build new skills; and share ideas (Robbins, 1991). One area of exploration might be classroom instruction. As an instructor works in the classroom with his/her students, there are often questions about effective learning. How do you know the students are learning? What evidence do you have? It is important to assess whether students are learning and to determine the best approach to improve learning. While involved in the delivery of the lesson, the teacher does not have time to reflect on how the students are learning but rather is focused on what they are learning. The use of final assessments through testing or a project may not show the process of learning and how to alter practices to better meet the student needs for success. It only shows the end result, which may not be a true representation of student learning.

Often, most of the time is involved in planning and delivering the lesson with a focus on the product that is delivered. If an instructor is interested in improving student learning, working collaboratively with another instructor and exploring best practices can provide insight in how students are receiving the information, whether there is sufficient real time assessment, and what evidence can be documented to determine the level of learning taking place in the classroom. This process would apply to all colleges at the university.

HOW DOES PEER COACHING APPLY TO YOU?

The purpose of peer coaching is collaborating with another professional to reach your full potential in one or more of the following areas:

- Educational practices: Share best practices with colleagues to enhance instruction.
- Professional practices: Share problem solving and decision making by building skills.
- Research: Action research conducted with another colleague resulting in publication or presentation.
- Online teaching: Share with other online professionals what works and how to utilize this media for improved instruction and communication.

Workshops as well as individualized peer coaching are offered through the Center for Teaching and Learning at Roosevelt University to help departments and individuals embark on the process for growth through individual professional development.

CONCLUSION

Often we attend professional development workshops to improve our knowledge and skills. Handouts are then filed and without follow up on the activity, teachers return to their classrooms frustrated and revert to what they have always done in terms of teaching practices. Fullan (in Leggett & Hoyle, 1987) states, “the absence of follow-up after workshops is the greatest single problem in contemporary professional development.”

Engaging in the peer coaching model allows for professional conversations and follow-up between colleagues interested in professional growth through personal staff development.

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Strategies for Presenting Controversial Issues in the Classroom

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Students often have idealistic and sometimes unrealistic expectations of their teachers. College instructors must widen students' horizons, challenge and engage them, and help them cultivate their own talents each week with nothing but their own academic background, PowerPoint, and a cup of coffee on which to rely. What students often fail to realize is that as educators, we have our own expectations and fears that we bring to the classroom. Some of us have an extensive pedagogical background, and others began teaching in graduate school when we were handed a syllabus, a textbook, and sent on our way. Either way, teaching a new course, especially one with controversial content, can be anxiety provoking. As most of us are not Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society* or Michelle Pfeiffer in *Dangerous Minds*, we struggle with how to present controversial class material: How do I present both sides of the argument? If we debate this topic during lecture, will I be able to maintain control

of the discussion? How do I encourage my students to trust and have an honest conversation? Although valid concerns, they are not insurmountable and are addressed by the guidelines offered below.

The cardinal rule for teaching contentious material is to develop rapport with your students before the controversy begins. It does not matter whether your lecture hall has 20 students or 300, establishing rapport is critical and possible (Benson, Cohen, & Buskist, 2005). Save some time during the first lecture to introduce yourself. Talk about how you discovered the field you are teaching, why you are passionate about it, and any interesting twists and turns your career has taken. If your classroom is small, make an effort to learn each student's name on the first day. If it is a large class, take pictures of your students in small groups and label them, or ask students to give their name when they come to ask you questions after class. Providing information about yourself and attempting to learn about your students creates the foundation for trust necessary for honest conversations.

Part of developing rapport with students is preparing them for course content and setting expectations about classroom conduct. If your course will involve viewing materials or reading literature that some might find sensitive or offensive, a statement to that effect should be included in the syllabus. This allows students who do not wish to explore these concepts to drop the course, switch sections, or prepare mentally for what lies ahead. Set guidelines for classroom conduct by either stating your own preferences, or developing a list through a discussion with the class. Either way, students will perform better if they know what you expect of them. If the content you present might be emotionally or intellectually challenging, know the resources that your institution provides for students, and their location, such as the counseling center, academic support center, and writing center. In other words, be prepared.

Course preparation should start well before the first day of class; teaching controversial topics requires careful consideration of one's own biases as well as overall course objectives. Over-preparation and reflection upon one's own thoughts and emotions about a topic can be useful. To enhance students' learning experience, it is vital that instructors be aware of opposing views. Being prepared to discuss multiple standpoints will create a classroom environment that encourages students to ask questions and express their own ideas. In addition to preparing multiple points of view, one of our goals in the classroom, regardless of the curriculum, is to promote an environment that values the sharing of individual experiences in respectful and thought-provoking ways: How does one present controversial issues and encourage critical thinking without offending students from diverse backgrounds? How does one promote the expression of multiple views in a sensitive and unbiased way?

One way to present controversial material in the classroom is through team-teaching a course in which instructors from different departments co-lead lectures. Many programs, for instance Women's and Gender Studies, can be taught from a variety of academic disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology,

history). Though this is an underutilized technique, data from one survey indicated that students reported team-led courses were more interesting, and that they learned more than in other courses (Hammer & Giordano, 2001). Moreover, this allows instructors to receive feedback from their co-teacher and ensures that the presentation of material is well balanced. As most department chairs may be reluctant to pay more than one instructor to teach a course, an alternative that achieves essentially the same goal is to bring in guest lecturers to share an opposing view and firsthand experiences that the instructor lacks, or supplement a discussion with real-world applications. The presence of multiple perspectives in the classroom fosters respect for individuality and promotes student reflection.

Beyond establishing rapport and course preparation, how can an instructor guide sensitive conversations throughout the semester? Teachers need to have a repertoire of approaches to avoid animosity and lead a productive discussion. Three roles an instructor may decide to utilize are neutrality, devil's advocate, and making one's personal opinions explicit. *Neutrality* entails making sure that all viewpoints are considered, whether popular or not, in a supportive environment. Neutrality is often used in courses for first and second year students whose discussion skills may not be adequately developed; this is a structured and teacher-directed approach (Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004). Playing *devil's advocate* involves shifting from one side of the issue to the other, depending on which side is weaker. The instructor can model effective debate practice and show how to expose weaknesses in opposing views. Playing devil's advocate is especially effective when the majority of students share the same view on an issue based on popular opinion instead of research (Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004; Payne & Gainey, 2000). In addition, *making one's personal opinions explicit* consists of stating one's own opinion while treating the students' views with respect. This technique shows the students that it is possible to consider alternatives to one's viewpoint.

During debates about controversial issues, instructors should avoid using their position of power to overshadow the students. Rather, instructors should provide a supportive classroom environment. Reflexive comments illustrate the instructor's thoughts and experiences of a particular issue. Empathic comments can also be used to provide a supportive classroom. For example, instead of using "why?" as a follow up question, which could elicit defensiveness from a student, try saying, "how come?" An instructor should remember that challenge is necessary, but support is equally necessary (Payne & Gainey, 2000). Instructors must balance guiding and dominating the conversation; students should have the illusion of control, but the instructor must moderate skillfully. As the instructor, one is "on stage," and one's words and actions are being watched; therefore, the instructor should model good behavior and discussion practices for the students.

Establishing rapport, carefully preparing courses, and using

effective discussion strategies are vital to presenting sensitive topics in the classroom. Concrete planning will decrease instructor anxiety about the course material and increase students' learning and participation. Exposing students to multiple viewpoints and presenting information in an unbiased manner allows students to generate their own thoughts, cultivate their own views, and critically reflect on important issues. With a firm grasp of these techniques, one can elevate students' classroom experiences and become the type of instructor that influences his or her students' personal, academic, and professional development for years to come.

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