Washington Center

NEWS

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Practicing What We Stand For:

Access, Equity and Significant Student Learning

This issue of Washington Center News grew out of work presented at Washington Center's 15th annual conference, *Practicing What We Stand For: Access, Equity and Significant Student Learning.* Given the conference theme, we were hardly surprised when conference sessions reflected a deep and active commitment to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

In *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990), Ernest L. Boyer asks "Is it possible to define the work of faculty in ways that reflect more realistically the full range of academic and civic mandates?" He goes on to say that the tired debate about teaching versus research should be laid to rest. Instead, the honorable term of 'scholarship' should be given a far broader meaning that encompasses "the full scope of academic work" *including* teaching. We think you will find evidence of what Boyer wants us to fully appreciate about one another's *scholarly work as teachers* in this issue's articles, many of which wrestle with the 'hows' of practicing 'what' we stand for, from concerns about who is and isn't present in our classrooms to the equitable presentation and construction of knowledge.

What we stand for

In *Sankofa and Students' Voices: Engaged Learning, Activism and the Public Good*, Washington Center reports on a new feature at last year's conference, the student book seminar, where Allan Johnson met with students to discuss his book, *Privilege Power, and Difference.*

We asked the chair of this seminar, Evergreen-Tacoma faculty member Willie Parson, to share excerpts from his recent five-year teaching portfolio that capture the passion, knowledge-in-action, and humility of an expert practitioner and scholar of teaching.

The 'hows' of practice and who is present

Struck by who was not in her Pierce College Fort Steilacoom calculus classes, Vauhn Wittman-Grahler met with women and non-Asian students of color from her developmental and college-level math classes to find out what needed to be done to increase their numbers in the calculus math sequence. *Math is for Everyone!* describes a project based on these students' ideas.

In *Climbing Out of the Well,* Liz Campbell, Minnie Collins, and Greg Hinckley report on an 18 credit learning community for Seattle Central Community College students that meets on the University of Washington campus. The program breaks new ground on several fronts including these two institutions' response to student transfer concerns.

Laura Purkey, a faculty member at North Seattle Community College, describes a new tutoring curriculum in *Developmental Students Experience Success in a Community College Writing Center.* More directive than usual tutoring practices, the new curriculum works for students and tutors alike.

Who is present in our classrooms includes being present in the curriculum. *Toward Wholeness in Tribal Science Education* documents why traditional knowledge must become an essential component of environmental science education, and the difficulties of realizing this in practice. The context is Northwest Indian College's natural resource management program

taught by NWIC and Western Washington University faculty.

Who makes meaning?

In *Making Student Self-Assessment Work,* Robin Jeffers from Bellevue Community College explains how she moves students from pro forma self-assessment done to placate the teacher to student self-assessment that is criterion-based, exacting, and deeply honest.

Carmen Hoover and Heather Crandall, teachers at a community college and a university, discuss the approach they use to develop students' abilities to reach their own well-considered conclusions in *Teaching Critical Thinking from a Critical Pedagogy Stance.*

In *Tackling the FIG Challenge: Using Developmental Theory and Pop Culture to Engage First Year Students,* Ann Carlson and Karen Casto report on a problem-based learning project that challenges Western Washington University students' conceptions of knowledge and learning.

Toby Smith reflects on a classroom experiment at Fairhaven College in *The Limits of Individualism: Studying Anarchism with Anarchist Pedagogy,* where student reaction to her efforts to integrate theory and practice continues to be unexpected and unsettling.

In *Bridging Literature and Science with Sex,* Barbara Griest-Devora and Don Lucas from Northwest Vista College in San Antonio, Texas, describe the pedagogy that fosters active, self-directed learning in an interdisciplinary course.

Arthur Keene, in *Learning By Doing: Applied Anthropology and Praxis,* summarizes recent projects and related student learning associated with an evolving four-year partnership between poor rural black communities and students enrolled in community service learning courses at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Equity and the democratization of knowledge

In *Introducing Global Studies,* Wei Djao examines the opportunities for student learning when world events, global issues and concerns of other societies, especially non-Western societies—Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America—are explored and analyzed from local/indigenous perspectives and assumptions.

Anne Fischel and Lin Nelson, in *Local Knowledge in the Age of Globalization,* reflect on their experience in a community-based learning program, which Evergreen-Olympia faculty and students did not want to become "an academic drive-by...with nothing given back to the community." How people define and live in community, interpret and analyze their reality, and come to do politically engaged work became focal points for a growing realization that knowledge abides in communities.

Good reading to you all. We hope you find much to think and talk about with your colleagues in this issue of Washington Center News; we certainly do.

Sankofa and Students' Voices: Engaged Learning, Activism and the Public Good

Gillies Malnarich
Washington Center

There's an aspect of cynicism and bitterness when talking about the ability to affect change. I learned there is a method by which we can nurture our own sense of agency. GOOD STUFF.
-From a seminar participant

On a Thursday evening in February 2002, the Commons at the Tacoma Campus of The Evergreen State College in Washington State is packed with people, mostly students. Those who arrive directly from work eat dinner. A few children play at the back of the room. A stunning batik cloth covers the speakers' table; carved, beaded statutes of the Sankofa bird, the TESC-Tacoma's adopted symbol, watch over each end of the table; African baskets and Dale Chihuly glass adorn the stage. The Commons is abuzz with animated conversations. So, why the excitement and what is so special about this gathering?

Unlike other seminars held on campus, this student book seminar opens a conference in higher education. The occasion is the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education's 15th annual conference, *Practicing What We Stand For: Access, Equity and Significant Student Learning*. The free event, billed as the Thursday Night Student Book Seminar, is open to students who have read *Privilege, Power and Difference* and want to discuss Allan Johnson's ideas with other students and the author. Johnson is just as keen to meet the students; he wants to find out what they think about his ideas, insights that he will share with conference participants on Friday morning during his keynote address.

When Dr. Willie Parson, member of the TESC-Tacoma faculty, rings the brass school bell and the evening is officially underway, we discover that among the 200 people present, fourteen institutions are represented. The furthest away is the University of Massachusetts, Boston; the other institutions are closer to home and the mix of participants is memorable: people

Allan Johnson answers a question at the book seminar at the 2002 conference. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

Students discuss Allan Johnson's book at the book seminar. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

are enrolled in graduate, undergraduate, and developmental education programs at public, private, 2- or 4- year institutions. A few are friends of students; some faculty are present as guests of their students. People from TESC-Tacoma's upper division undergraduate evening program and the Tacoma Community College bridge program are in the majority. The crowd is intergenerational, visibly diverse, with whites in the minority. Everyone present has read *Privilege, Power and Difference* and dozens of worn, marked-up copies are in people's hands.

Introductions are brief. We are here to discuss ideas that matter in the world and the implications for action. People are welcomed by Dr. Joye Hardiman, the Executive Director of Evergreen-Tacoma, where the campus motto, "enter to learn, depart to serve", underscores a commitment to purposeful education; Evergreen Tacoma graduates are expected to serve their communities as leaders and educators, the privilege of higher education tied to the responsibility to serve the public good. Dr. Willie Parson on behalf of the TESC-Tacoma campus, the host institution for Washington Center's 2002 conference, describes why they chose Johnson's book as one of the core texts for their year-long, interdisciplinary program *Environmental Justice and Power*: "We've asked our students as we have asked our faculty to explore environmental equity issues within the context of studying migration dynamics, looking at decision making both at the individual level and decision making as done in the lives of the institutions we recognize in our society …we recognize that all of us as individuals in this society, regardless of our backgrounds, are impacted on some level by notions of privilege and power and difference. And those impacts can be very good or very bad, depending on who we are. We knew that we were going to look at power relationships in terms of the practice of scientific research and social science research conducted in this country."

Allan Johnson explains why he chose to tackle the problem of why inequities exist, directing participants' attention to patterns of exclusion, rejection, privilege, harassment, discrimination and violence that are everywhere in society. He invites us to address the trouble we're in using the same kind of accessible and inviting language that introduces what he refers to as his little book: "We all know that a great deal of trouble surrounds issues of difference in this society, trouble relating to gender and race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social class. A huge store of knowledge, from scientific research to passionate memoirs, documents this trouble and leaves no doubt that it causes enormous amounts of injustice and unnecessary suffering." How might we both individually and collectively break the paralysis that perpetuates the trouble and its human consequences?

Johnson's book and students' response

After the half hour of opening comments, people are eager to seminar. A few minutes before 7:30 pm, the audience of 200 has turned into 19 seminar circles of 10 or sometimes 12 participants. If you did not grow up surrounded by books but discovered their power when you first went to college or university, to see the same book, and this particular book, in dozens and dozens of hands is a powerful image. Led by Tacoma student facilitators, the seminar circles focus on Johnson's theoretical framework—the trouble we're in—and then on what he thinks we should do about it, the "small doable acts" that make a difference. Wherever we look, people in the seminar circles lean forward in their chairs, listening. People speak in turn. So why don't the conversations become charged, blaming, defensive exchanges?

Johnson is not interested in figuring out who is the most oppressed or tallying up individual privileges; he may top the list. In case anyone wonders, he reveals that he is a white, heterosexual, middle-class, and middle-aged professional male. He knows about (unearned) entitlements; he appreciates that when he speaks people regard his voice as more authoritative than other voices regardless of what he knows and says. Later when an African-American student asks him whether he thinks standardized tests are equitable, Johnson replies, hey, they sure work for me. (He continues, more seriously, to underscore their built-in sociocultural biases.)

" Johnson wants to talk to the millions of ordinary people who know that inequities exist, who want to be part of the solution, but by their silence and invisibility allow the trouble to continue. "

A sociologist who currently teaches at Hartford College for Women at the University of Connecticut, Allan Johnson wants us to pay attention to the social construction of differences. His theoretical and conceptual framework, grounded in everyday experience, examines patterns and systems of privilege and oppression. He wants us to use words like race, class, gender, and privilege as tools for analysis. Words act as magnifying lenses, Johnson tells one seminar circle who want to know how to use words as tools. Johnson wants to talk to the millions of ordinary people who know that inequities exist, who want to be part of the solution, but by their silence and invisibility allow the trouble to continue. "Removing what silences them and stands in their way can tap an enormous potential of energy for change", he writes. His sociological analysis intentionally moves individuals away from guilt and blame toward critical consciousness and social responsibility. He challenges myths about how change happens and calls on people to break from behaviors that follow the paths of least resistance and reinforce privilege. He believes that the more we pay attention to privilege and oppression, the more we'll see opportunities to do something about them. They are all over the place, he writes, you don't have to mount an expedition; commit yourself to small humble doable acts beginning with your own behavior.

As Johnson moves from circle to circle, and then leads the open dialogue that follows, the conversation is personally engaging, publicly meaningful. But, what are students learning? Before students leave, we ask if they will note down 'significant learning' on an index card. What follows are excerpts from those cards:

- It is harder than expected for people to talk about; normally very vocal people had little or nothing to say.
- White people are especially ignorant about power, privilege and difference.
- I believe that it is important to know that as a black woman I have a voice. I need to use my voice to help exact change to this notion of power, privilege and difference.
- I learned that people of all race, color etc. can come together and civilly talk about issues that affect our lives.
- Knowledge and recognition of the problem is the beginning of solving the problem.
- I am compelled to speak up, if anything's ever going to change.
- Personal conviction needs to turn into collective action to change "the" system.
- We have got to use our words, take the risk, commit to change.
- Affirm the power of grass roots organizing; continue to educate ourselves and model our risk-taking behavior to our children.
- This is a huge problem that can be dealt with. Our seminar was a productive, supportive, eye-opening exchange of ideas that left me with a hopeful feeling about the power of dialogue.

Sankofa, a Ghanaian word, literally means "go back and fetch it" or, in the context of this book seminar and the conference, bring what really matters to the fore. As we read through the stack of blue cards, Allan Johnson is probably right about most of us. We care about other people; we want to eliminate inequities. The group that met together on this evening has been moved by his argument from a place of despair and blame towards one of hope and social responsibility. In this wildly diverse group of people, we find a common yearning for social justice and for learning that engenders hope and calls on us to act. The next morning when Allan Johnson begins his plenary keynote address, he will use the word 'gift' to describe the evening's conversations.

Allan Johnson's Introduction to the Student Book Seminar

"I go all over the country speaking about issues of privilege and one of the things I like best about it is I get to spend time with colleagues who share a commitment to doing this kind of work and trying to make a difference. But to me, by far, the best thing is to be in a room full of students. And I can tell already, in the short time I have been here, this is no usual room of students. So I am very glad to be here.

I have been asked to say a few things to set the tone of our conversation, so that is what I am going to do. I think you can always tell what the issues are that threaten the future of a society by looking not at what everyone is arguing about, but by looking at what everyone is even afraid to bring up for discussion. Privilege is such a topic in this society. If there is any one thing that has the potential to tear this nation apart or bring it down in ruin, it is privilege, and the arrogance, and blindness, and oppression that go with it. But we are drowning in a tide of denial and silence that make it impossible to have the types of conversations we need to have to do anything about it. As an example, for probably 25 years I have been working on the problem of men's violence, especially men's violence against women. Time and time again, I have found it is almost taboo to talk about *men's* violence in this society, a taboo that makes it almost impossible to do anything about it. Some years ago, the governor of my state made an enlightened move to create a commission to study violence against women and, of course, in naming the commission he left out the word 'men.' This was part of the problem, as if violence against women just sort of happens, like bad luck, but nobody actually does it.

Then a colleague of mine told me during the summer that this commission is taking testimony and that I might want to go down there and testify. Well, I had never testified before a legislative review board. So I went down there and I had basically three things to say to them and wanted them to consider:

The first thing was simply to point out the fact that we live in a patriarchal society—one that is male-dominated, male-centered, male-identified, and organized around and obsessively controlled by those whose gender is masculine. That was number one.

And number two, one gender group, 'men' is perpetrating an ongoing epidemic of violence and harassment directed at the subordinate group 'women.' I said I wanted them to consider that it might be a good idea that the state of Connecticut should designate some resources to examine the connection between number one and number two.

Well, they were impressed and I was surprised. And they were so impressed that a sub committee of this commission invited me back to talk about what we should do. And I am always going for the modest thing, to start small and try to do something you could actually do. So the first thing I said was that they could become the first government commission to actually acknowledge in a report that we are in fact actually living in a patriarchal society, and that there might be something problematic about that, that we need to look at. I said, now, that is pretty modest. That's like saying the sun does come up every morning. There was this murmur that went around the table,

and it was not a murmur of appreciation. They thanked me for my input. Their final report made no mention of patriarchy.

Some years later, I was invited by the commissioner of public health in Connecticut, who was trying to do something that was very enlightened, to meet with her. She was trying to figure out a way to frame violence against women as a public health issue so she could get some resources to help her office and department to bring to bear against this violence. And so there were about four or five of us who met regularly to talk about this. And I said again, you know, if we are going to talk about men's violence against women, then we at least need to acknowledge that men are a part of the problem itself. Murmurs around the table…we can't do that…well why not? People will get mad. And the people that will get mad are the legislators that control the money. So we had a huge press conference after months and months of meetings. And at that press conference, there was no mention of patriarchy and no mention of men.

So third example, last example, some years later, the Executive Director of a local battered women's shelter that I had done some work with had nominated me to be on their board and I was interviewed by two women who were on the board of this battered women's shelter. They declined to bring me on the board. And the reason for that was that when they asked me what I had to contribute, I told them I had some ways of thinking about the problem that could get us closer to the cause of this. We have to acknowledge the fact that someone is doing this violence against women and there is a

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large pattern here. And you cannot point to the pattern with out using the word 'men.' And I am not on the board yet. And to me, this is like the most obvious thing in the world. To me this is like going to the doctor and saying to the doctor "I want you to figure out what is wrong with me, I want you to heal me, but I don't want you to touch me and I don't want you to ask me any questions." That is what we are trying to do. I think that is what we are trying to do around the issue of men's violence. And that is certainly what we are trying to do around the issue of privilege. Let's some how make this bad stuff go away, without making anyone, especially white people, especially men, especially heterosexuals, without making anyone feel uncomfortable. That is what we are trying to do, which is why we are not doing very well.

The work that I am doing in the world is about trying to find ways to break this deafening silence. I do it because I do not want my grandchildren and great grandchildren to live in a world where every day functioning of the world depends on

massive amounts of injustice and unnecessary suffering. I do it because I believe Edwin Burke was right when he wrote, "the only thing that evil needs to triumph is that good people do nothing." I do it because as someone from the time he was born, I was someone who had access to every major form of privilege this society offers. I feel an obligation to use that

privilege in every way I can invent to combat that privilege. And I do it because I think that this is what life requires of me as a human being. I will be part of the problem no matter what. But if I am to be a part of the solution, I have to do something. So here we are, with a few hours anyway, and with the opportunity to break the silence together. I am ready if you are. Thank you.

Allan Johnson listens in on one of the discussions at the student-led book seminar. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

In Retrospect: 1996-2001

Excerpt from a faculty five year self-evaluation

Willie L. Parson
The Evergreen State College-Tacoma

Exhaust the little moment. Soon it dies.
And be it gash or gold it will not come
Again in this identical disguise.
                    Gwendolyn Brooks, 1949

Teaching at Evergreen is, for me, very much a matter of exhausting the little moment and watching for its resurrection as the inevitable "Aha!" that accompanies profound discovery and apprehension by students. Or that becomes resurrected as a new gem of an idea for a program or class. In these last five years I have exhausted many little moments and have seen them return in pleasing ways. I have watched my colleagues exhaust little moments as well and I believe the return to them has been just as pleasing. Oftentimes I have shared these moments with one or two of my colleagues in classes we have done together.

The progression of programs—Millennium Studies (1996-97), Power Studies (1997-98), The Art of Leadership (1998-99), Transition Studies (1999-00) and Urban Studies: Institutional Dynamics (2000-01)—was inspiring and produced many unique collaborations for classes. In 1996-97's Millennium Studies program Pete Bohmer and I taught *Political Economic Context of Social and Scientific Change: Civil War to Present*. We used Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and some appropriate handout articles to focus attention on various constructions of race and racism. Essential to our work with the students was the fact of situating our studies in an historical and political analysis of the economic and scientific forces and factors lending to the construction of race and racism and the emergence of significant social and political movements dating from the civil war to combat these constructions.

Power Studies (1997-98) presented me with three very successful collaborations—with Luversa Sullivan on *Science and Technology Studies* in the fall, with visiting faculty member Leslie Lass in the winter on *Literacy, Science and the Power of the Imagined*, and with Artee Young in the spring on *Research Ethics in Social Services, Public Health and Science*.

In addition I also taught another laboratory science class in the spring entitled *Chemical and Biological Analysis*. Luversa and I examined extant technologies in our class and also took a forward look at emerging technologies. We were, at some level, prescient in our presentations to the students as we both imagined and regularly discussed technologies that have only recently begun to emerge. Having worked with Luversa for several years before in situations removed from Evergreen, I knew that we thought much alike on many things. I also discovered in this class that we both have an appreciation for technology—though she clearly has the technological expertise and saavy that I long for—that sees it as an extension of the eye and ear, the hand and the mind. Thus we had great fun helping students move beyond technology for technology's sake. By the end of the quarter they were actively recognizing the many possibilities for harnessing technology to serve a variety of causes, some academic, some professional, some social, some personal. Their conceptions of the possibilities were wonderful, sometimes daring and innovative, and always creative.

Teaching *Literacy, Science and the Power of the Imagined* with Leslie Lass afforded me the opportunity to return to my very first "academic love"— literature. We used literature, in the form of both autobiography and fiction, to examine literacy in our society. We wanted to focus on both reading literacy and science literacy, so we chose literature that combined authors' gifts for storytelling with their interests in science and nature. This class proved to be an exceptional one. We had our students design literacy programs for K-12 students that reflected the merger of science, literature and writing. Many exhausting moments gave birth to exceptional projects. I learned much about how deeply those students cared about literacy. Much of this learning came as I watched some of them shed tears while they wrestled with literacy issues faced by many in our society, and as they discovered that a passion for something as distant to them as science can be revealed in good literature.

Artee and I designed a great class for professionals in the form of *Research Ethics in Social Services, Public Health and Science.* Our motivation for designing and teaching this class came out of our mutual recognition that some of our students were misguided and proceeding on dangerous courses in their assumptions about how to do research in some of the helping professions. We therefore sought to present a course focusing on the ethics of research and the professional responsibilities of the researcher. This course proved to be an eye-opener for most of our students. They began to recognize their own unchecked biases, discriminatory behavior, lower professional standards and possibilities for ethical misconduct in their work.

The Art of Leadership (1998-99) was a wonderful program. I worked with Eddy Brown and Gilda Sheppard in the fall on *Our Selves: Sources, Experiences, Visions.* This class in autobiographical writing was designed so that students could discover through writing their own memoirs, their leadership styles, qualities and abilities. In order to help them find a suitable framework for that discovery, we had them focus their writing around a triad of experiences or qualities of being. The triad was the person in a social context, the cognizant being, and the person of vision and action. Although I had often heard Eddy talk about writing as a process, I began to see how he approached the teaching of writing as a process in this class. This was an essential part of my professional development that quarter. From Gilda I learned how to help students frame their experiences as they sought to weave explanatory fabrics for the parts of their lives covered in their memoirs. She also helped me see how to use the abstract camera of the mind for composing and rendering significant snapshots of memory and nostalgic moments. Thus I was better able to help students work on their memoirs with these new tools I had gained from my colleagues.

A legislative simulation was the centerpiece of the work the students did in their studies in *Leadership Systems: The Legislative Process* with Duke, Artee and me in the winter quarter. This class was highly informative concerning the workings of the legislative process in Washington State. It was also a fun class filled with moments of drama, intrigue, excitement, political hostilities, oppositional politics and so forth—much as one expects where politics, policy making, law, media and lobbying intersect. The students got into character very quickly and the rest of the quarter was very much fast-forward, with little or no rewind or instant replay.

Aesthetics with Artee in the spring was a second opportunity in the last two years to do literature rather exclusively, only this time with the intent of using literature to teach aesthetics. We were interested in teaching aesthetics because of the all-campus projects the students were doing, namely producing television content aimed at highlighting solutions to selected social problems in urban communities. In the *Aesthetics* class Artee and I used a variety of cross-cultural authors. We had our students examine these authors' writings with an eye toward uncovering each author's cultural values and beliefs and her/his aesthetic sensibilities as revealed in her/his use of language and imagery. This class was truly exceptional and gave me a new way of thinking about and using literature. Aesthetics has always been an interest of mine, but I had never extended my notions about aesthetics much beyond visual representational forms and media. This opportunity to do this extention through literature was therefore one whose fruits will last a long time.

In the spring quarter I also continued my mission to embed science even more deeply into the ongoing curriculum in Tacoma by teaching a class in microbiology. I used this class to help students not only learn science concepts and laboratory science methods, but to also help them understand and appreciate how microbiology and microorganisms impact their lives and the lives of their families and communities. Thus in addition to learning about microbiological infections and disease, they also learned about the economic significance of nonpathogenic microorganisms, viz., microorganisms used in food production and pharmaceutical product development.

Transition Studies: Historical, Theoretical and Pragmatic Perspectives (1999-00) was, in retrospect, a fascinating program because of the value it had for so many of our students who were undergoing professional, personal and communal transitions that year. For reasons I still do not understand we had an inordinate number of students involved in varying levels of transition experiences. Among these were things such as changing jobs, dealing with family loss, preparing for graduate or professional programs, migrating from previously debilitating life circumstances and the like. Even a year after this program was over, I could still hear students telling others about its significance for them.

Gilda and I taught *Bearing Witness: Generations and Change* in the fall. This class was this year's edition of the autobiographical writing class. We were interested in having students write memoirs that reflected their witnessing and documenting generational continuity and change. We used five autobiographical texts representing African American and cross-cultural authors. We also used the nascent film, "The Yard People," produced and directed by Joye Hardiman and Gilda Sheppard. Our students were highly invested in examining a variety of primary and secondary sources of information, including family artifacts, to help them craft their personal narratives. The course was a gift for me. Gilda once again helped me hone my skills in interrogating and framing personal experiences, family relationships and community affiliations. Most importantly, I learned from her the value of periodically examining generational change and perpetuating intergenerational dialogue.

In the spring quarter I decided to look at transitions from a biological perspective by designing and teaching a

course I called *The Social and Natural History of Age(ing)*. My intent was to have students develop a comprehensive understanding of the natural history of the aging process. I wanted them to begin to raise important questions about various biological, social and behavioral determinants of health in our society. I also wanted them to understand the variety of problems attending ageism in our society, and become more aware of the processes of psychological and social adaptation to the various natural cycles of our lives. I experimented with the idea of an electronic casebook. I had my students conduct a case study of an age(ing) problem and keep their research and writing (including the required final paper) in an electronic casebook. The experiment was highly successful, at least from my perspective. Most students welcomed this novel (for them) approach to research, record-keeping and writing—grumblings coming mainly from the few who were not comfortable working with computers. Each student submitted written pieces to me on diskettes throughout the quarter and submitted their entire quarter's output on a final diskette at the end of the quarter. I did all my editing of their work electronically as well. I was more than pleased with the absence of boxes of journals and loose papers. For the first time in a long time, I made it through the quarter without losing one student's work.

In 2000-2001 I had the pleasure of working with two new colleagues (Barbara Laners and Tyrus Smith) in classes in the program, *Urban Studies: Institutional Dynamics*. The fall quarter was an especially delightful one because the class that Barbara and I designed and taught, *Urban Public Policy*, coincided with the presidential election season. Had the presidential election not been tainted by the Florida fiasco, chads and all, the class may not have been as charged as it was. Barbara and I wanted to have our students study public policy formation and implementation, particularly public policy impacting urban communities. Thus we had the students review the constitution, examine the court systems in the United States and look at policy formula-

tion with questions of for whom? by whom?, whose agenda? ever present in their analyses. We also had them study political philosophy and political discourse. The Florida fiasco provided a nice counterpoint to our assignment on surveying voter preferences. This assignment was also valuable to our students as an exercise in quantitative reasoning. We had them do statistical analyses of their findings. Barbara, an astute lawyer with the most fantastic ability to recall American history, was truly an inspiring colleague for me. I learned so much more about law and about many historical events that have helped shape American jurisprudence. As much as I fancy myself a student of American history, Barbara helped me gain new appreciation for its importance in all aspects of our curriculum in Tacoma.

Winter quarter was very important because Gilda and I worked together in the class, *Out of Silence: Critical Issues in Public Health* and had the opportunity to put into motion some ideas for global health studies. Working from scientific and sociological perspectives, we designed this class to have students examine media representations of public health issues. We especially emphasized the pandemic HIV-AIDS problem and sought to expose and explode the silence that enshrouds communities and individuals where HIV-AIDS is concerned. To those ends our students developed an amazing array of education-oriented materials for increasing AIDS awareness across many audiences, from children to senior citizens. As usual, I learned many more techniques of media production and design by studying Gilda's approach. Even more so, Gilda helped me to gain a better understanding of the sociological aspects of public health generally and of HIV-AIDS particularly.

Tyrus and I taught *Quantitative and Qualitative Dynamics of Environmental Change* in the spring. This class featured statistical analysis as the prominent focus, using environmental and human physiological studies as the sources of data for statistical analyses the students conducted. Tyrus was highly instrumental in helping me come up to snuff quickly on statistics. I had not

taught a statistics-based class since 1996-97. This was also my first opportunity to work directly with another natural scientist since 1984. This collaboration was indeed wonderful and we prepared our students well for research and for quantitative reasoning using statistics.

…These five years have been very meaningful for all the reasons implied in the foregoing narrative. But they have been very meaningful from the standpoint of other activities in which I have been involved.

…In matters of public/community service I have at various times worked with middle school teachers on science projects, on Black History projects, and so forth. I assisted the Pierce County Aids Foundation with its annual talent show for youth, and responded to just about every other call for my professional services and advice on community projects. I serve on the institutional review board for research at the Weyerhaeuser Technology Center. Some of this public/community service work satisfies my desire to expand the scope of my professional life into arenas normally not a part of my teaching domain. In each case I get to meet new people and cultivate new insights on a number of things. This work is always very fulfilling and rounds out each year.

In summary, as I gaze back over the period of these last five years I find much to be thankful for and just as much to be hopeful for in regard to the future. I continue to be inspired and stimulated by my colleagues. I continue to find the students here thirsty enough to demand the best that I have to offer, even though the teaching does not get any easier...

Willie Parson teaches at The Evergreen State College, Tacoma campus in Tacoma, Washington.

Math is for Everyone!

Vauhn Wittman-Grahler
Pierce College Fort Steilacoom

Winter quarter 2001 I taught a calculus II class at Pierce College Fort Steilacoom. One hundred percent of the students in the class identified as white males. Spring quarter of that year I taught a calculus III class that consisted of the same white males I had in winter quarter and one Asian male. Shocking statistics considering that I teach at one of the most racially diverse community colleges in Washington State. The Student Population Profile report for Pierce College Fort Steilacoom, Fall Quarter 2000, indicated that over 20% of the students identified as non-Asian students of color, and almost 60% of the students profiled were women. Why were there so few women and non-Asian students of color in my calculus classes? This wasn't the case in all my classes. My developmental math classes averaged about 75% non-Asian students of color and about the same percentage of the students were women. It was this discrepancy that prompted me to create a three-quarter developmental math course aimed at increasing the number of women and non-Asian students of color in the calculus sequence at Pierce College Fort Steilacoom.

When a student enters Pierce College they take a math placement test that determines their entry-level math class. Most students test into a developmental (below college level) class. Many of them will need to take three or four quarters of math before they can get into a college-level math class or complete their quantitative reasoning course requirement for their Associate Degree. The discussion about the reasonable-ness of this arrangement is important and one that several groups in Washington State are pursuing. However, fundamental changes in curriculum take time – this project is aimed at helping students,

currently in the system, to survive their math "experience" and thrive.

The project design is based on discussions with women and non-Asian students of color who were in my developmental and college-level math classes during the 2001-2002 academic year. The students were adamant about two things in my class that helped them succeed and they proposed two changes in the course format that they felt would greatly increase their chance for future success.

The aspects of the course students wanted to keep were in-class group discussions of homework, along with other group activities, and an emphasis on contextual presentation of information. One student commented, "If I had known that I wouldn't have had to go through everything alone, I wouldn't have been so afraid to take math. Even though we had to take tests by ourselves, learning was really a team effort." Another student stated, "Math never made sense to me when it was just a bunch of numbers and formulas. But now that I see what math can do – it's really cool!" In addition, the student groups provided a network for each student in case of absences and a resource of at least three people to help them get through difficulties. By explaining concepts and procedures to others in the group discussions, each student gained a deeper understanding of the mathematics. Since students were expected to begin class by discussing their homework with the group, it was necessary for them to complete their assignments on time. This peer accountability proved to be a great motivator.

The two changes students suggested were for class sessions to be

longer than fifty minutes and for the class to stay together with the same instructor through-out the entire developmental math sequence. The establishment of a cohort to complete the developmental math sequence was especially important to the women. One woman's comments were similar to many that I heard, "It took me half the quarter to get brave enough to show somebody else my work and now we're all going to be split up."

These suggestions will be implemented in next year's project. The class will meet in a block schedule, Monday and Wednesday for one hour and forty minutes and on Friday for fifty minutes. And, we will keep the cohort together for the entire academic year with the same instructor. The students will be those who tested into our two lowest level classes, arithmetic or pre-algebra, and who expressed a desire to pursue a career in a field that requires at least one quarter of calculus. By the end of the three-quarter project the students will have completed intermediate algebra and be ready for college level math. They will meet the same outcomes as students in "traditional" math classes but there will be a daily use of groups and context-based instruction. In addition to the requests made by students, the project courses will also discuss studying and test-taking strategies, group process, learning/teaching styles, and other germane topics. Our intent is to provide students with an enriching and supportive experience in developmental mathematics.

If we are successful and the number of women and non-Asian students of color in the calculus classes increases, then we may look at implementing the project college wide. In order for this

project to be successful, I feel strongly that it cannot be teacher dependent. As part of this project, notebooks that contain context-based lesson plans, projects, group activities, etc will be prepared to facilitate the adaptation of this model by other instructors.

Once the fear of mathematics is replaced by enthusiasm, opportunities in medicine, business, architecture, engineering, science, and mathematics will become available to all students at Pierce College Fort Steilacoom.

Vauhn Wittman-Grahler teaches math at Pierce College Fort Steilacoom in Lakewood, Washington.

Announcing a Washington Center Summer Institute *Sponsored by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) Professional Enhancement Program (PREP), funded by the National Science Foundation (grant DUE-0089005) and the National Numeracy Network (with support from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation):*

Quantitative Literacy Across the Curriculum: Everybody's Project
August 3 - 8, 2003, at Sleeping Lady Conference Center, Leavenworth, WA

Registration fee: $100, limited to 40 participants (includes meals and lodging)
Register through the MAA web site at http://www.maa.org/pfdev/prep/prep.html.

This workshop is designed for institutions that have made quantitative literacy a priority and are now in the process of changing their curriculum or instituting new requirements to meet that goal. Workshop participants will adapt and create QL materials appropriate for their own courses and students, drawing on materials developed across the country. In addition, participants will develop strategies for assessing the effectiveness of the curricular changes they are promoting. The workshop is designed to model good pedagogical practice, with sessions built around the interests and needs of the teams attending and ample opportunities for workshop participants to shape sessions and work on their own projects in collaboration with other teams and with facilitators. Participants should apply as a team of 2 to 4 people from a single institution. Each team should include at least one mathematician and one non-mathematician.

Workshops include:
- *QL and Math Reform: (Emily Decker Lardner and Gillies Malnarich, Washington Center)* Workshop participants will develop common ground by considering the claims made in *Mathematics and Democracy* about the need for citizens to develop QL skills, and comparing these arguments with those put forward by Robert Moses in *Radical Equations.*
- *QL in the world: (Rob Cole, The Evergreen State College)* Participants will examine articles from current newspapers to discover for themselves the kinds of QL problems we face as citizens. The goal of the exercise is not only to ground discussion of QL in the world at large, but also to brainstorm strategies for connecting QL projects in the curriculum with QL problems in the world.
- *QL In Contexts that Matter to Students: (Caren Diefenderfer, Hollins University)* In 2001 Hollins University implemented a two-part Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Across the Curriculum program consisting of a QR Basic Skills requirement and a QR Applied Skills requirement. The goal is for all Hollins graduates to appreciate how quantitative skills apply to their chosen field of study in the liberal arts curriculum. This session introduces sample QR projects and assignments from a variety of disciplines including biology, history, math and theatre and gives teams time to work on adapting these materials for their settings.
- *Practicing Pedagogy: Involving Faculty in QL Learning and Teaching: (Jerry Johnson, University of Nevada, Reno)* Successful involvement of math and especially non-math faculty is key to QL programs. In this session we will start by discussing the kinds of collaborative practices that support student learning in QL across the curriculum, and then we will examine the ways faculty can develop the 'expertise' to teach in interdisciplinary ways.
- *Applying Simple Mathematics to Complex Problems: QL Across the Curriculum: (Judith Moran, Trinity College)* Trinity College has made institutional commitments to embedding QL across the curriculum. In this workshop, participants will be invited to try out modified versions of QL projects from a range of disciplines and interdisciplinary persepectives.
- *Assessing Student Learning in QL Across the Curriculum (Sue Mente, Alverno College)* Alverno College is an ability based women's college that primarily serves urban students — 38% minority. Given the student population, meaningful, accessible mathematics is an important issue. As part of graduation requirements, students must demonstrate QL in a discipline course. This session will focus on ways to assess the development of QL for students over time.
- **Proposed:** *QL in K-12 (Washington State Mathematics Council, Kim Rheinlander & Dorothy Wallace, Dartmouth College and Bob McInstosh, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction)* – a chance to meet and talk with 20 Washington high school teachers!

Climbing Out of the Well

Liz Campbell, Minnie A. Collins, and Greg Hinckley
Seattle Central Community College

"Outnumbered, isolated and unsupported" are anxieties that students at Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) express about transferring to 4-year universities, especially the University of Washington (UW). Sara Hebel reported these students' preconceptions in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* article, "From Seattle Central Community College, the View of the Big University" (A36-37). What students wanted was "communality, a network of human relationships that created a sense of belonging and connection" to the UW (Bass 110-111).

Responding to student transfer concerns, faculty and administrators at SCCC and the UW initiated the project called "Climbing out of the Well," an 18 credit learning community for SCCC students. The site of this one-quarter project was the UW campus. Our objectives were three-fold: (1) to develop a prototype interdisciplinary curriculum which met Associate of Arts degree requirements and fulfilled transferable credits; (2) to acclimate SCCC students to the UW by giving them access to the same resources and privileges as UW students; and (3) to evaluate the project's effectiveness. Both the location for the project and the linkage of disciplines included in the learning community were innovative.

Linking faculty in the math/science division with humanities and social sciences has always been a challenge in learning communities. Perceptions that math/sciences are content-heavy curricula and that learning communities do not allow faculty to cover all of their material create barriers to interdisciplinary teaching. Changing this perspective was the team's first challenge. After weeks of planning, the team agreed to offer Biology 100, a non-majors biology class that fulfills A.A. graduation requirements for a lab science. Linked to biology are Sociology 150, an Introduction to Sociology, English Composition 101/102, and Humanities 105, Intercultural Communications. Connecting these disciplines were three primary questions: How do biology and sociology hold the perceived world together? What are common patterns of social activities in living organisms and third, how do we become sociologically mindful in order to change our world? For example, the class saw the video, *Cane Toads,* in which ecologists brought in toads from Hawaii in order to eat the beetles that were destroying Australia's cane crop. Rather than helping, toads adapted to the environment, reproduced, and ate everything except beetles. Residents accepted them as pets and enjoyed their friendly singing. Students enjoyed the irony but quickly observed common behaviors, wrote hypotheses and predicted outcomes to this ecosystem and its community.

In addition to relevant curriculum, students and faculty were excited about meeting on the UW campus and having access to their facilities. The UW wanted SCCC transfer students to have rich experiences in order to help them decide to select the UW. Consequently, students received ID cards for library privileges and computer access. UW counselors and transfer advisors came to our class and were accessible after class to answer questions. Student ambassadors discussed the positives and negatives of their transfer experiences. SCCC students met in a renovated high technology classroom in Mary Gates Hall, the center of the campus. In this same hall, UW gave SCCC faculty office space, seminar rooms and technical classroom support. Our students were developing a sense of communality. They felt special about attending the "U" that welcomed them and ideally wanted our students to enroll had there been space available.

As the project progressed, more students climbed to the top of the well and saw different views of the "big university." They enjoyed the big campus that offered beautiful buildings, landscaping, and activities that exceeded their community college options – meeting under shade trees at seminar time, eating at the Hub, and discovering the abundance of resources in the libraries. Several activities demonstrated parallels between human society and nature not possible on the SCCC campus. On campus walks during breaks, students studied patterns in structure and diversity of plant life and compared them with patterns in human interactions. Walks to the green house to observe rare plants were regular learning experiences. After eleven weeks, a majority of the students did not see themselves as isolated or unsupported. Many felt comfortable and were ready to make plans to transfer when they completed their associates' degree.

Beyond anecdotal evidence, the UW Office of Educations Assessment and SCCC faculty developed a survey to measure the project's effectiveness. Responses from 92 percent of the students were positive. Ninety-four percent said that the learning community was intellectually stimulating; 85.1 percent used the libraries and 35.2 percent were excited to transfer. The UW and SCCC both benefited from this project as students, faculty, administrator and staff also built communality.

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Liz Campbell teaches science and math; Minnie A. Collins teaches English; and Greg Hinckley teaches sociology at Seattle Central Community College.

Faculty teams plan their curriculum together at the 2002 Curriculum Planning Retreat (Photo: Martin Kane)

The 17th Annual Western Washington Curriculum Planning Retreat

For faculty working together on learning community curriculum planning for 2003-2004

At Rainbow Lodge Retreat Center near North Bend, Washington

Two dates to choose from: April 24-25 or May 8-9, 2003

The annual Washington Center Curriculum Planning Retreats (CPRs) are designed for faculty teams who anticipate working together in a learning community of one sort or another—from coordinated studies programs, to clustered courses, to linked or paired classes. The retreats are structured so that teams can choose to participate in workshops or plan on their own with visits from experienced learning community practitioners. Just the opening and closing sessions are required of all participants. The grounding for all the workshops at the retreat is a commitment to create curriculum that engages students and faculty, leading to learning that lasts. Core workshops at both retreats include:

- So You're Starting a Learning Community: Models and Methods 101
- Designing Integrated Curricula for Learning that Lasts
- Assignments as Assessments of Student Learning
- The Why and How of Seminars
- Engaging Diverse Learners

The **April** retreat will have additional sessions focused on supporting under-prepared students. The **May** retreat will have an added focus on reflective practice for faculty involved in learning communities and other reform efforts.

For complete information, go to the Washington Center's website: www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/events.htm

Register early! Our CPRs fill up quickly.

Registration rates
In-state participants
$85 w/lodging;
$65 w/out lodging

Out-of-state participants
$100 w/lodging;
$85 w/out lodging

Developmental Students Experience Success in a Community College Writing Center

Laura Purkey
North Seattle Community College

The students in the developmental English program at North Seattle Community College reflect the populations of most community colleges across the state. Within the same classroom, we are likely to encounter immigrant students for whom English is not a native language, but who have lived in this country for many years; international students who have been here anywhere from two days to two years; and native speakers of English who have been placed into developmental English for a myriad of reasons—poor study skills, difficulty with language, lack of educational support, learning disabilities, and so on.

This diversity presents serious challenges as we attempt to reach all of our students. With this in mind, the English department, in the mid-90s, began to require developmental students to take a 2-credit course (ENG 080) requiring two hours of tutoring per week in our writing center, with the intention of providing support for classroom work. Because many of these students lack study skills, time management, and initiative, nearly half of them were not completing ENG 080. We realized that we needed to create a curriculum for this course that would provide the structure these students needed as well as embrace the characteristics of a writing center—one-on-one interaction, conversation as a learning tool, and individualized instruction based on each student's needs.

The curriculum was designed with our course outlines in mind. Students purchase a packet that includes roughly 25 activities in four categories: reading, vocabulary, global writing skills, and sentence-level writing skills. Students are asked to work on the activities from their course packet under a tutor's guidance. For example, one vocabulary activity asks students to find unfamiliar words in a class reading and use context clues to determine the words' meanings. The tutor then helps the students see if their predictions were correct. Activities in the global writing section consist of questions a tutor can ask to help students look more closely at various elements of their essays—thesis, transitions, introductions, conclusions, and so on. The activities are all designed to encourage discussion between tutor and student, and are versatile enough that they can be used multiple times for different essay assignments.

Since we introduced the curriculum to students in the fall of 2000, the number of students who pass ENG 080 has increased by roughly 30%. We also have a great deal of anecdotal evidence of the curriculum's success—many students and tutors alike speak of how the tutoring sessions have become more focused and useful, relating directly to class assignments and supporting students in the process.

As someone who has tutored in several writing centers and is interested in writing center theory, my initial concerns about this curriculum were that it might compromise the writing center's non-authoritative role in student learning, that it might be too directive. The writing center has always been a place where tutors facilitate and guide students without holding the same level of authority as an instructor. This often allows students to feel more comfortable making mistakes and trying new ideas. I was concerned that introducing a curriculum with specific "assignments" may make the writing center too much like a classroom. But the reality was that these developmental students *needed* more direction.

There have been many positive results of this curriculum for ENG 080 students. It reinforces the connection between the writing center and our developmental English program, keeping tutors informed about what's going on in the classroom, and showing students that someone other than their teacher cares that they learn these specific skills. The students using this curriculum learn to rely on themselves more, as the skills used in the writing center begin to translate to their own study practices. Because they now have something specific to work on every time they come to the writing center, they make the most of their tutoring sessions.

The practical result of this new curriculum is that students in developmental English courses are getting the support they need to be successful in their courses. As a teacher of developmental English and a writing center enthusiast, I am excited to see the writing center working for developmental students in this way. A recent study on retention at our college found that students who visit our writing center have a 30% higher retention rate than those who do not. The ENG 080 students will not only be helped in their developmental English classes, but they will also be more likely to continue their education. Clearly, a writing center curriculum may not be necessary or appropriate for more advanced, self-motivated students. But it can make a huge difference for students who are *on their way* to being advanced and self-motivated. It provides a foundation for success.

Laura Purkey teaches English at North Seattle Community College in Seattle, Washington.

Carol Hamilton, Laura Purkey, and Jim Harnish, faculty from North Seattle Community College, participate in the student-led seminar. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

Toward Wholeness in Tribal Science Education

Phillip H. Duran, Roberto Gonzalez-Plaza, Sharon Kinley and Ted Williams
Northwest Indian College

Gigi Berardi and Lynn Robbins
Western Washington University

In 1980, spiritual leader J. Krishnamurti and renowned physicist David Bohm engaged in extended, in-depth dialogues that began by questioning whether humanity took the wrong turn five or six thousand years ago, leading to the division, conflict and destruction that exists today. They soon reached agreement and then asked how one can cleanse the mind of the "accumulation of time," allowing humanity to change fundamentally and start anew along a virtuous, unselfish course.

In the context of what is happening to the Earth, indigenous peoples do not doubt that we are on the wrong path. From lands long occupied, they have been observing the global indicators that conventional paradigms about our relationship to the environment monitor, the declining condition of the biosphere and the climate changes that can be expected to continue for decades to come.

The tribes of the Western Hemisphere, in particular, have experienced profound changes. The vastly different ideologies of westward-moving immigrants clashed with traditional ways based on the sacred relationship between the land and the people. The technologies introduced by settlers were designed for their benefit, while the tribes witnessed severe degradation to their ecological and social systems.

The global problems resulting from the desecration of Mother Earth are embodied in the prophetic words of Chief Seattle: "Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves."

Our anthropocentric language, such as "the environment" and "natural resource," expresses a paradigm of exploitation rather than one of stewardship and relationship. The land, water, and air upon which life depends have become agents of death.

In the late 1980s, indigenous spiritual leaders from the Western Hemisphere began to gather to exchange their knowledge, stories, and prophecies. At the *Cry of the Earth Conference* in 1993, delegations of these elders appeared before the United Nations to share some of their prophecies and to call upon world leaders to change direction. Today, they are calling for the return to ancestral instruction and wisdom.

In colleges and universities, efforts relevant to caring for the natural world fall under the category of environmental science education. At Northwest Indian College (NWIC), we offer a natural resources management program leading to a two-year degree based on curriculum delivered within a learning community that gives students the opportunity to examine indigenous and Western paradigms. As a Tribal College, NWIC is in an excellent position to build structures that meet the special needs of tribal students, strengthen tribal identity, and support tribal self-determination, while delivering academic excellence compatible with Indian ways.

Even so, creating a new wholeness in tribal science education is a gigantic task for several reasons. First, science is influenced by the ideologies of the Western world and is prominently viewed as the only knowledge that describes reality coherently. Even at a tribal college, it can take tremendous effort to communicate differences in paradigms and explain the validity of indigenous ways. We face the challenge of designing tribally-oriented science curricula that appropriately include concepts widely held in Indian country such as: everything has spirit; all things are related; constant motion and flux; space/ place frame of reference (rather than temporal); all matter as vibrating energy; preeminence of natural law; renewal; wholeness; cyclical patterns (rather than linear).

Second, we try to keep our curriculum current with changes occurring in science, particularly the present trends that indicate a convergence with indigenous ways of understanding the Universe. More Western scientists are looking in this direction to address environmental issues. Bohm strongly advocated that science itself demands a new, non-fragmentary worldview because the present approach that analyzes the world into independently existing parts does not work well in modern physics. There is an increasing recognition of the existence of whole, complex systems and subsystems at work in the natural world. It is our hope that science education of the future will be based on this complexity, which is more aligned with ancestral wisdom.

Third, our experience in a small tribal college indicates that Indian students constantly face socio-economic barriers totally unrelated to their ability to learn. Due to a history of under-funding and neglect the vast majority of students from reservations need remedial and developmental work, as well as a strong support system within the learning community.

Fourth, we believe science programs should derive their essence from the personal tribal identity of the students, from faculty and the community together embracing principles of non-coercion and non-abandonment, and from deliberate non-linear learning. Graduates should be self-reliant, psychologically independent human beings who work for the welfare of their communities.

Finally, we try to honor the specific culture of the place where learning occurs and to incorporate the knowledge and perspectives that indigenous peoples have guarded for countless generations.

Traditional knowledge is the result of observation and practice over long periods of time, usually occurring in the same place, and is often expressed through culture.

Learning involves the whole human being; and, as Pueblo educator and author Gregory Cajete further clarifies, culture and learning are intricately related.

Phillip H. Duran has directed the TENRM Program. Roberto Gonzalez-Plaza, Sharon Kinley, and Ted Williams are faculty at Northwest Indian College in Bellingham, Washington.

Gigi Berardi and Lynn Robbins teach at Huxley College at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

Making Student Self-Assessment Work

Robin Jeffers
Bellevue Community College

Two discoveries started me tinkering with student self-assessment. First, a colleague interviewed my students, asking how they decide what section of an evaluation rubric most accurately describes their paper. What they said wasn't what I expected:

- "I usually just give myself an average grade so that I'm not too off when I get my final grade."
- "If I had a tie between B and C I choose B because I want the higher grade and I'm afraid that choosing C might influence the instructor."
- "I also know I do a certain kind of level. If B/C, I would choose B. If A/B, I would choose B. B is easiest to choose. You don't have to improve anything and you don't have to prove exceptional quality."

This isn't assessment; it's a game whose goal is successfully manipulating the instructor. Even though I'd told students I wouldn't look at their evaluations until I'd graded the paper, they didn't believe me. As a result, they weren't looking at the rubric's descriptors, just the grade at the top of the category.

Next, I heard first-year students from Alverno College[1], where self-assessment is endemic. They clearly were not playing this game. Instead, they described their strengths and weaknesses as learners, accepted responsibility for their own learning, and explained how self-assessment got them to that point.

After hearing these young women, I could no longer accept my own students' behavior. While they probably could reach the same level of understanding, they clearly hadn't. As it turns out though, given the chance, they do achieve—far better than I had hoped. This article is about both the self-assessments and how I know they work.

The Self-Assessments
Based on my own experiences, there are four key ingredients in teaching self-assessment:
- Offer a variety of assessments
- Make assessments clearly address evaluation criteria
- Overtly value self-assessment
- Build trust in the self-assessment process

Offer a variety of assessments

Technique-specific assessments
For everything I evaluate, students learn how to do it and how to assess what they've done.

Robin Jeffers and her students answer questions at the 2002 conference. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

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[1] Alverno is a four-year, liberal arts, independent, Catholic college for women, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and an international leader in "ability-based education", where explicit expectations for student learning is tied to an approach that emphasizes learning the abilities needed to put knowledge to use.

They also have to fit the work into the whole course sequence:
- Have they used all the techniques they've learned so far?
- What are their goals for the next assignment?
- How are they doing at meeting the course goals?

"Norming" of student and teacher evaluation standards
These exercises show students that they can, if they choose to, figure out what grade they've earned without the teacher telling them:
- Students order a few sample pieces of work from strongest to weakest. Ideally, two of the samples are strong, but of these, one doesn't fit the assignment requirements. Students can then be directed to base their ranking on those requirements.
- Students determine a grade for their own work after I've graded it but before they've seen the grade. They use some of the self-assessment tools they already know but probably forgot to use before they turned in the work. Virtually all students either choose the grade I gave them or are within a plus or minus of it.

Self-assessment assessments
These ask the students to examine their changing attitudes about self-assessment.

A final overview assessment
This is a fairly traditional portfolio assessment, with one addition. Students include work from throughout the term to illustrate their growth—where they were at the beginning and middle, and where they are now. They also must "consider the value of self-assessment as a learning tool."

Make assessments clearly address evaluation criteria
Here's how I've worked out one technique-specific assessment sequence.

Evaluation criterion as it appears in an essay assignment
Explanations of evidence show how evidence validates claim.

Student self-assessment
- For all evidence sequences, label claim, evidence, and explanation of evidence.
- Does each evidence sequence clearly address the claim made in the topic sentence? How can you tell that?
- What has the labeling revealed about your mastery/understanding of the evidence sequence?

Evaluation rubric (teacher's assessment)

	Well done	**Acceptable**	**Needs improvement**
Proof	Specific claims, "why" explained	General claims	Claims do not support thesis/topic sentence
	Evidence specific and appropriate to claim		Evidence general or inappropriate to claim
	Relationship of evidence to claim fully explained	Relationship of evidence to claim ineffectively or general explained	Relationship of evidence to claim not explained

Overtly value self-assessment

In my course, major self-assessments count for about 40% of the total grade. I award the points for completeness, not for accuracy of assessment. Students understand that, as one student has said, "as long as you appear to be honestly thinking about your work and apply your comments to the paper, you get full points." I stress that this is a completion grade and if students want full points, they have to address all parts of the assessment task. For those who don't produce much, deducting a few points (say 5 out of a possible 25 if the assessment is really brief) usually solves the problem.

Build trust in the self-assessment process

Trust involves convincing students that there's no way self-assessing will lower their grade in the class. Thus, my students know they won't get punished (fewer points) on the self-assessment if they don't see their own weaknesses. Since they are new at this, my job is to train them, not to expect that they can do it immediately. They also know that if they point out a weakness in a piece of work, that won't affect the grade. As I tell them regularly, I never read the self-assessment until I've graded the work. Their growing willingness over the quarter to point out weaknesses suggests that they believe me.

Evidence of Learning

So how do I know the students aren't playing the "influence the teacher" game anymore? For one, when my colleague interviewed another group of students, those kinds of remarks had disappeared. Instead, students said things like

- "I don't ever worry that I influence Robin . . . because she has said she doesn't read the self-assessment until after she grades the paper. In any case she would probably see those things anyway and, if anything, I get to defend why I did some things and the self-assessment gives me an opportunity to do that."
- "Self-assessment is grading your own work, seeing where you are having problems and how you are going about fixing it based on the tools she gave us."
- "Self-assessment is helpful because you write out and you can actually see what you are doing. It's kind of like mathematics. You write it out, you get to see your problem, and you solve it."

That isn't quite enough though. The folks at Alverno claim that self-assessment both produces "learning that lasts" and provides evidence of that learning. However, knowing what to look for—well, that's a journey in itself. Much of what students say in their self-assessments uses vocabulary I've taught them and comments on things I've told them to look for. When a student writes that the evidence sequence is "the infinitely changeable slots which variables may be plugged into," I have two reactions. I'm absolutely sure that he understands, that this is evidence of learning. But I have also to admit that even though he understands the tool better now, he's telling me something I told him first.

However, even if that kind of evidence may not be reliable, something else is happening. A student responding to the question of why the teacher has her self-assess says, "If you can realize the patterns of mistakes you make then you are able to see them down the road." Now I never told students to look for patterns—I'd never even thought about that. Another student comments, "I worked very hard on using just the right words to cover my ideas as well as cater to the evidence." Again, I never talked to the class about this. These students are building their own knowledge, and that's the evidence of learning I'm looking for.

Even if I hadn't begun seeing these kinds of comments, I would have kept on with the assessments simply because they give students control of their own learning. In one instance, a student talks in his portfolio assessment about a sequence of events: He'd located a problem in his essay and commented on it in the self-assessment. When I graded the essay, I confirmed his own assessment and complimented him on it. In the portfolio, he writes that he "could put his pride aside and objectively see the essay for what it is . . . but more importantly see where the essay and the author need to go, to become a better writer." He'd achieved what I think is my ultimate goal for self-assessment: to have the students say what I would say about their essay, but say it before I get the chance to. Beyond that, what's worth pursuing is his pride in being able to take responsibility. I wouldn't give that up for anything.

Robin Jeffers is an English instrustor and faculty coordinator, Outcomes Assessment Committee, Bellevue Community College, Bellevue, Washington.

Teaching Critical Thinking from a Critical Pedagogy Stance

Carmen Hoover, Olympic College-Shelton
Heather Crandall, Washington State University

We are old friends who have both ended up as teachers. We teach in two settings, a community college and a university. We have training in two areas, English and Communication. Despite all of the differences, we both face similar sets of constraints and difficulties that probably have to do with the education system in general. We like to sit around the kitchen table and talk about all that is right and wrong in the world which invariably turns into discussion on how to teach critical thinking to students and how to teach from a critical pedagogy orientation.

We consider our work to be good teachers, at least for now. We want to tackle the difficult subjects, such as race, and we want to find the tools and the courage to work against the grain of some of the most deeply held American mythologies, such as capitalism being equivalent to democracy, and the idea that we live in a meritocracy.

We needed more information so we decided to interview other teachers about classroom practices that work and to interview students about their perceptions of teaching and learning. Recognizing our unique positions as important sources of varied information, we explicitly set out to compare the differences between the community college and the university classroom.

As we see it, our challenge is to provide thought provoking resources for authentic learning experiences while meeting institutional goals (acculturating to the academy, preparing for the job market, and training for communication skills in other disciplines) as well as more "universal" goals of education (personal development that is linked to community, citizenship, and sustainability). In this, we find the discussion of the overlap between critical thinking and critical pedagogy.

Critical thinking often seems employed in a fragmented and unnecessarily depoliticized way, and we understand that students, in general, feel propagandized by critical pedagogy. While we personally agree with the assumptions of critical pedagogy, we are interested in creating conditions where, through rigorous analysis using the tools of critical thinking, students can reach well-considered conclusions that we may or may not agree with.

This focus on process has led us to an interest in the introduction of "objective" information, especially that which is not discipline related. We hope to stretch the limits of critical thinking to include the analysis of assumptions outside of individual disciplines. By offering a wide array of statistical information (about the rich/poor gap, harassment of gays, drug use by white Americans, or starvation rates of children worldwide, etc.), we can open up the analysis to larger cultural/economic assumptions that usually affect seemingly unrelated disciplines.

The difficult subjects are still difficult. It's easy to rationalize working around them. Our work is to be effective teachers—to teach useful material that helps students grow without alienating them or demanding that they adopt our worldviews.

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Tackling the FIG Challenge: Using Developmental Theory and Pop Culture to Engage First-year Students

Ann Carlson and Karen Casto
Western Washington University

The first year of college poses some serious challenges for students and educators alike. Those of you who work with entering first-year students are all too aware of the conundrum inherent in designing learning experiences for them that both facilitate their transition into college, yet seem like "real" college work. What's more, an increasing majority of us want to offer a more academically significant First-year Interest Group (FIG) experience, one that will help students begin to develop the higher order thinking and deep learning approaches that are so prized in college.

While it's true such challenges are daunting, they're not insurmountable. At Western Washington University, we tackled the "FIG challenge" with help from two disparate sources: intellectual development theory, and a popular cultural icon, the Sasquatch.

By way of background, FIGs at Western comprise clusters of three courses (two large lecture courses and a small seminar) bridged by a common theme. One of the clusters in the Fall 2001 FIGs program, *The Logic of Life*, linked an introductory logic course with an introductory biology course. For this seminar, we designed a problem-based learning project, one which we hoped students would enjoy, and when all was said and done, help them be more intellectually prepared to "do" college. Our overarching question was: Could a FIG seminar curriculum be created that would foster first year students' intellectual development?

Developmental theory: Where our first-year students "are at"

Many entering students come to college having acquired surface approaches to learning that do not work well in a university atmosphere. According to MacGregor (1993), students often arrive at college "expecting to accumulate–or in Paolo Freire's term, 'bank,' –knowledge given to them by textbooks and teachers" (p. 36).

William Perry (1970/1998, 1981) was the first researcher to systematically examine and document the intellectual changes that take place during students' college years. According to the much replicated Perry Scheme of Intellectual Development, students move developmentally from a *dualistic* view of knowledge to an understanding that synthesizes ideas and themes, is self-reflective, and takes into account different frames of reference.

Our project kept these issues of the first-year student in mind. Further, it was specifically designed to encourage students to move away from their dualistic (or absolutist) thinking and to take a more relativist view of knowledge and learning.

Enter the Sasquatch

Sasquatch (a.k.a. *Bigfoot*) was chosen as a topic for study because of the great amount of information readily available on the Internet (a favorite information source for beginning college students), because it is a controversial topic,

and because there are ardent supporters on each side of the argument about whether it is a real creature.

At first glance it might seem that the existence of the mysterious Sasquatch – despite its appeal for students – is a poor choice for a "real life" inquiry project. Upon deeper examination, however, students are often surprised to learn that some respected scientists have reasonable, meaningful evidence that the creature exists. Sasquatch was also chosen because it is an example of an *ill-structured problem*, which is defined as "those which are the object of ongoing controversy, even among qualified experts" (Wood, Kitchener, & Jensen, 2002, p. 278). Ill-structured problems are often used to assess intellectual development (Wood, Kitchener, & Jensen, 2002); but, in this case, the Sasquatch problem was used to encourage it.

Students were assigned to one of two groups based on whether or not they believed Sasquatch was a real animal. To further stimulate their thinking in new ways, they were assigned to groups that would argue for positions in opposition to their initial beliefs. A third group was asked to create a taxonomic classification for Sasquatch based on the most credible evidence they could find. Four students were asked to assume the role of either a biology or logic "inspector," acting as peer reviewers of students' findings. A computer-mediated software program was used to assist students in their collaborative "knowledge-building" process. Our assessment of student learning

for the project included the Measure of Intellectual Development (MID), survey data, and student comments.

Findings

Survey Data

In the initial survey, 11 out of 21 students took a relativist position (being unsure, believing, or disbelieving only a little bit) in Sasquatch's existence, while 10 students took an absolute position (were absolutely sure Sasquatch was a real animal or were absolutely sure it was not a real animal). After the project was completed, however, survey results indicated that 14 students were less sure there was a right or wrong answer to the Sasquatch question, and took a relativist position; only 7 took an absolute position on whether Sasquatch was a real animal. Even though the students clearly believed that the point of the exercise was to come to a surer conclusion about whether or not Sasquatch was a real animal, they still showed this attitude shift toward being more unsure (see Figure 1). These results are also congruent with the MID scores the students obtained after the project (see discussion below), which showed they had moved toward a less certain, more relativistic view of knowledge, and thus exhibited an advance in their intellectual development.

The Measure of Intellectual Development (MID)

The MID reflective essay prompts were used to assess whether the students' intellectual development advanced during the eleven weeks of the quarter. The MID is based on the Perry Scheme, and "is a particularly appropriate framework to use, both for assessing and for understanding collaborative learning" (Moore, 1999, p. 5).

When all the students' scores (N=18) were evaluated, 16 of the 18 students' scores increased from the pre-test to the post-test. According to Bill Moore, whose Center for the Study of Intellectual Development scored the MID essays, "the fact that such a large percentage of students showed some positive movement is . . . a solid, and unusual, finding" (Moore, 2002b).

Conclusions

There's no panacea that we know of for creating a FIG seminar experience that guarantees both student learning and academic success. However, using an engaging ill-structured problem such as the existence of Sasquatch, coupled with a solid grounding in developmental theory, can help us begin to conquer some of the more overwhelming challenges faced by both first-year students and the designers of their programs.

Copies of the full study are available online at:
http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/casto/ promoting_intellectual_development.pdf

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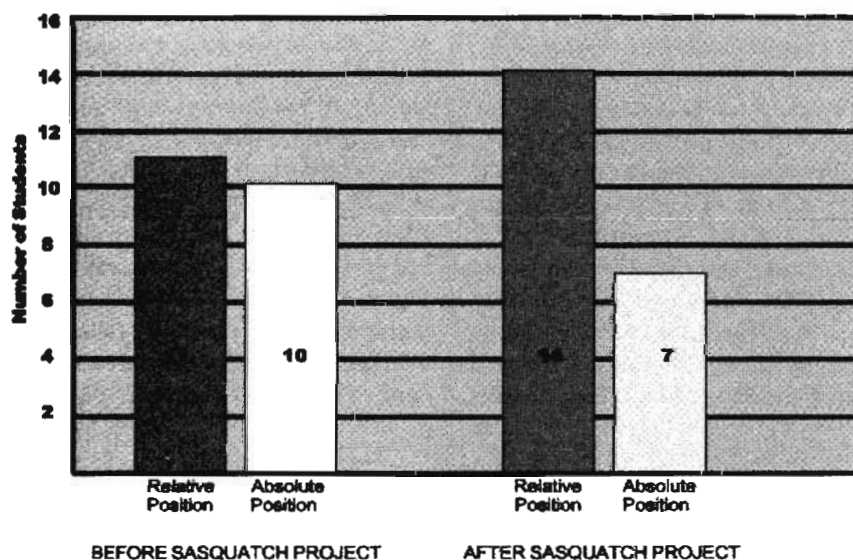
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Figure 1— Student Beliefs in Sasquatch before and after the project.

The Limits of Individualism: Studying Anarchism with Anarchist Pedagogy

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I teach the history of alternative political ideas. In the most individualistic country in the world, I find the teaching of collectivist politics to be a struggle. In our system, there is a structurally irreconcilable contradiction between private aggrandizement and the common good. However, students believe that we can achieve social justice by negotiating our differences through a fair process. Some students are attracted by collectivist ideologies. However, students often approach these ideas as consumers and fail to appreciate the profound shift in personal identity, understanding of community, and demonstrable commitment to others that collectivist ideologies presume.

One such collectivist approach is Anarchism. In the year of the World Trade Organization (WTO) demonstrations in Seattle, Anarchism became a popular fashion among young people. Self-declared Anarchists from Eugene attracted national attention. They evoked a collectivist social imaginary of optimism and community and appeared to be "doing something" about the WTO. I had students doing independent studies on Anarchism and their final public presentation was very well attended. Anarchism was also the single most requested course at Fairhaven that year. And so I decided to teach a course on Anarchism.

The seminar was at the 300 level and filled immediately with twenty students. My goals were threefold. I wanted to introduce them to a highly misrepresented political theory that primarily promotes the well being of the community while respecting the autonomy and will of the individual. As well, theoretical readings would help improve analytical skills generally. And finally, I wanted to bring up the question of whether individualism is so ingrained in American culture, that it is a major stumbling block to achieving an egalitarian society based on cooperation.

I approached this class with Anarchist pedagogy. On the first day I read a one-sentence definition of Anarchism, which emphasized its cooperative character. To illustrate this point, the course would not only be about Anarchism but it would be the very experience of it. The students would cooperate to construct the content, pedagogy, and work for the course. The only immediate lecture I gave was to explain that while Anarchism celebrates free will, the individual is always responsible to the collective good. The Anarchist individual is not the same rational self-maximizer of liberal thought. Therefore, I told them, they would have to listen to the needs of others. They listened to me. They took notes. Would they like a syllabus, I asked. Two students

said yes; they needed at least a loose syllabus in order to plan their quarter and manage their time. Immediately after these students expressed this need, another student said, no, they did not need a syllabus and could make the course up as they went along. I reiterated my lecture on the requirement within Anarchism to be sensitive to the needs of others. Would they like to read about the history of Anarchism, I asked. Most students said yes. They wanted to know the theory, the main figures, and when people had tried to actualize Anarchist principles. But other students answered no, history and theory are boring. I reiterated my lecture on the need to listen to others and the importance of the balance between individual will and social necessity within Anarchism. And so the quarter progressed.

I asked from beginning to end, are we capable of Anarchism? Are we capable of putting a self-imposed leash on our own individualism? Can we attend the needs of others while maintaining our autonomy and will? (These questions go beyond Anarchist political thought; they speak to the spirit of a humane, just society. The Anarchy class was just one way to explore these ideas.) Several of the students considered themselves Anarchists or fellow/sister travelers. Ironically, it turned out to be the most authoritarian classroom I have ever

been in. For all the freedom possible in this class, the students chose to stay in the classroom and discuss readings. On the one day an "action" was initiated by two students, it fizzled out and reinforced existing conflicts.

In the end they put on an amazing daylong teach-in that was well organized, informative, and well attended. Throughout the quarter I had taken detailed notes on the readings and discussions we undertook. On the last day of the quarter I gave out a "reverse syllabus" detailing the work done in the class during the quarter. It looked just like any ordinary syllabus for an ordinary class handed out by a professor on the first day of class.

In spite of the successful teach-in, I still considered the class disappointing because we had failed to actualize one of the most basic principles in the Anarchist tradition—mutual aid. In the course evaluations students blamed the class dysfunction on others and criticized the course for not having enough structure. However, in the year since, the Anarchism course has entered Fairhaven folklore. Some of the students in that course have come to understand its real lesson: that the terrain between cooperation and individualism is mined with contradictions and frustrations, and that Anarchism is not defined by the absence of a leader, but by the presence of its citizens.

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Bridging Literature and Science with Sex

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In this article we describe a method for teaching an interdisciplinary human sexuality course, based on the content and format of our course, *Making Sexual Sense*. Although we present details of our teaching method as it concerns literature, psychology, and human sexuality, this method may be used in a variety of disciplines and content areas. Thus, anyone seeking to learn the "workings" of an interdisciplinary course bringing together seemingly unrelated topics such as literature and science may find this account a worthwhile read.

Why Teach Human Sexuality from an Interdisciplinary Perspective?

The better question may be why *not* teach human sexuality from an interdisciplinary perspective. It is uncontroversial to say that sexuality is one of the bases of human behavior. Human sexuality courses may be found in history, English, psychology, sociology, anthropology, humanities, theology, and biology departments in many of the major colleges and universities around the world. Each of these departments places a different and important perspective on the teaching of human sexuality. However, the "truth" of what human sexuality *is* or *may be* can only be found in some combination of these perspectives. An interdisciplinary course allows for more of these perspectives to be explored, analyzed, or debated. Although many of the "single-discipline" courses teaching human sexuality address alternate perspectives, they also have the natural biases of their disciplines to overcome. An interdisciplinary course—by nature—overcomes these biases by bringing instructors and students from the alternate perspectives together, the very structure creating a forum for teachers and learners to *communicate* their respective disciplines' experiences and ideas about human sexuality.

Administration

When Northwest Vista College (NVC) opened its doors in the Fall of 1998, it embraced student-centered, collaborative teaching and learning as part of the vision that would direct a new college. This spirit leant itself to the creation of *Making Sexual Sense*, which combines the disciplines of English and psychology. Students are required to take both the English and psychology components of our course, and they receive three hours credit for each component for a total of six hours semester credit. To facilitate the transfer of *Making Sexual Sense* to other colleges and universities, it is on the registration books as being composed of English 2370: Sexuality in Literature (a sophomore-level topics in literature course) and Psychology 2306: Human Sexuality (a sophomore-level social sciences course).

Making Sexual Sense meets for two three-hour class periods each week during a 16-week semester. Our course

allows for 40 students (typical courses at NVC have 24 students) and both instructors remain actively engaged in the classroom for the entire class period. (As instructors, we receive six hours of teaching credit.)

Content—Reading List

Before enrolling, students are informed that *Making Sexual Sense* is a reading intensive course, and we included the following works:

Aristophanes. *Lysistrata.* Dover.
Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room.* Delta.
Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening: Norton Critical Edition.* Norton.
Cisneros, Sandra. *Loose Woman.* Vintage.
Cleland, John. *Fanny Hill.* Penguin.
Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water for Chocolate.* Anchor.
Roth, Philip. *Portnoy's Complaint.* Vintage.
Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple.* Mass Market.
Neruda, Pablo. Selected poems
Nabakov, Vladimir. Selections from *Lolita.*
Vatsyayana. Selections from the *Kama Sutra.*
de Sade, Marquis. Selections.
Joyce, James. Selections from *Ulysses.*

The readings were selected for their: (a) content, as it relates to topics within human sexuality, and (b) ability to bridge the gap between literature and science. *The Awakening*, for example, addresses early feminism, gender concerns, and societal conventions of 19th century America. While reading *Giovanni's Room*, the class discussed tolerance and the ramifications of sexual orientation and gender construction, both in America and Europe. Specifically, the students dealt with perceptions of homosexuality during the 1950s and how the scientific research, sparked by the Kinsey reports, influenced the thinking of the time.

The Color Purple lent itself well to our discussions of rape and incest, and the affects of intolerance on the individual. We also discussed the use of language as it relates to sexuality, including alternative modes of discourse, euphemisms, and voice. These concepts were continued with our perusal of Cisneros' *Loose Woman* and other contemporary poems. Our study of language and sexuality also encompassed *Fanny Hill* to stimulate discussion on society's definition of pornography and erotica, and we worked to develop historic and even legal contexts for these terms (i.e., obscenity laws). The work also reveals many sexual stereotypes that become solidified in more contemporary examples of pornography.

Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* (often called the *masturbation manifesto*) complimented our study of Sigmund Freud and early psychoanalytic theory. The structure of this novel follows and even parodies several writings by Freud, and the students were able to trace the intentional Freudian influence, including the fictional portrayal of one man's version of the Oedipal Complex. Our students also looked at the cultural ramifications of sexual and Jewish identity.

Additionally, scientific works were required reading. These included chapter readings from a textbook (King, Bruce M. *Human Sexuality Today*, 4th edition. Prentice Hall); articles from an edited, interdisciplinary book (Davidson, J. Kenneth, & Moore, Nelwyn, B. *Speaking of Sexuality.* Roxbury); and primary references (e.g., Freud's *The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life*; Masters and Johnson's *Human Sexual Response*).

Format—Teaching and Learning Styles

Reading, writing, and discussion make for a powerful psychical combination when their shared content is human sexuality. Therefore, open discussions were had on the first day of class on the issues of transference, counter-transference, and the potential emotional turmoil (e.g., depression and anger) that are associated with coming to novel understandings of personal concepts and beliefs.

As instructors, we worked to weave our disciplines together seamlessly. Thus, students were hardly ever aware of the sometimes arbitrary labels of "literature" or "science" associated with content. Each class period used a variety of teaching and learning styles, including: Socratic"-ing"; active listening; critiquing; assessing; collaborative learning; short-term and base groups; survey researching; historical retrospecting; writing; reading; and presenting. Students earned a single course grade based on self-, peer, and instructor assessment on each of these styles.

The key to all these styles of teaching and learning was that they were relatively **active** for both teachers and learners alike. For example:

Socratic "-ing"

Unlike lecturing which mostly involves a focus on the content presented, Socratic "-ing" involves presenting information with discussion questions built throughout the presentation. The differences between lecturing and Socratic"-ing" become perfectly clear with the students' active engagement in commenting, answering, and questioning during Socratic "-ing" presentations.

Collaborative Learning

One example of this style is that every *Making Sexual Sense* class period began with a question: "What was the most important thing that *you think* we learned during the previous class period?" Afterward, the students would get into two-person groups for discussion. Each dyad was called upon to share with the class their findings. One rule: The small groups could not repeat what any of the previous groups shared. Hence, every hand went up to be the first group to share—even in a college class!

Survey Researching

Throughout the semester, students were put into two to three person groups to survey the college on a variety of sexual

> "An interdisciplinary course—by nature—overcomes these biases by bringing instructors and students from the alternate perspectives together, the very structure creating a forum for teachers and learners to communicate their respective disciplines' experiences and ideas."

questions to get a "feel" for what the layperson thinks. Some of the questions used in our course included: "Why do you think people behave sexually?" "How do you think people should behave sexually?" "Do you think sexual orientation is nature or nurture based?" The answers to these questions were tallied and then discussed relative to their respondents' demographics.

Historical Retrospecting

At several times during the semester, we presented *Making Sexual Sense* as if we were living during a particular period in history. For example, when addressing Kate Chopin's *The Awakening,* which is set during the Victorian age, we discussed the science of sexuality—not as we know about it today—but as we knew about it during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Males had a limited number of sperm and were likely to die if too much was lost (Semen Theory); Females had **no** libido and were incapable of orgasm. If they showed any signs of their sexuality, it was obviously a sign of pathology (Wandering Womb hypothesis). Teaching the literature and science of the Victorian Age, during the context of the time, made for great inquiry, dissonance and learning.

Writing

Students had several different writing opportunities throughout the semester, including the writing of introspections. Students wrote four introspections (spaced evenly throughout the semester) on their own definition of human sexuality. The main point of the

introspections was for the students to learn something more about themselves. The students were instructed to **not** try and teach the instructors about themselves; instead, they were instructed to teach themselves about themselves. In the introspections, students used Wilhelm Wundt's introspective methods of "looking inward" to ask and answer questions like: "Who am I relative to sexuality?" "How do significant others influence my sexuality?" Other students employed Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic techniques such as dream analysis and humor interpretation to look inward and define who they were sexually. And still other students used William James' Functionalistic techniques concerned with measuring what humans "do." To that end, they asked: "So what do I and others do relative to sexuality?"

Note: Barbara (bgriestd@accd.edu) and Don (dlucas@accd.edu) would like to hear any comments or questions you may have about *Making Sexual Sense* or any other interdisciplinary courses you are teaching or planning on teaching that combine literature and science.

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Participants at the 2002 conference discuss a text at Don Lucas' and Barbara Griest-Devora's concurrent session. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

Learning by Doing:
Applied Anthropology and Praxis

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For the last four years UMass-Amherst students in the community service learning courses *Grassroots Community Development* (Anthropology 397H) and *Leadership and Activism* (Anthropology 397A) have been partnering with poor rural black communities on Virginia's Eastern Shore in a variety of community development projects. Students in these two courses spend their spring break week in Virginia working on construction, community beautification, and youth mentoring projects as one aspect of understanding how grassroots' organizations work. Students engage in a week of intensive interaction in which all stakeholders –students, faculty and community members – become teachers and learners. Students do considerable preparation for their work in the field so they can work effectively and ethically in a community that is not their own.

One aim of our work in Virginia has been to promote an interest in education in communities where the high school dropout rate is the highest in the state and where very few black students who do graduate go on to college. Two years ago we began discussions with the community of New Road, Virginia, an African American enclave within the municipality of Exmore, on how we might expand and deepen our partnership. From these discussions two new programs were launched. The New Road Heritage Summer Camp is a collaboration among students from UMass, Boston College and Suffolk University and The New Road Community Development Group (NRCDG). Together we run three weeks of free day camp in New Road for children aged 4-15. New Road has no organized summer activities or services for

youth and indeed really has no safe play space. The camp provides safe, organized, and supervised activities, a free lunch, and important mentoring for the youth of the community.

At the suggestion of the NRCDG, students in the *Grassroots* course designed and implemented in 2001 the Reverse Spring Break (RSB) program, which brings 10 teenagers from New Road and neighboring Cape Charles to spend a week on the UMass campus. During that week the visitors attended classes, received academic counseling, toured the region and most importantly, spent a lot of time in the company of African American college students. This connection with "students who look like us" was an essential component of transforming the way these young people think about their education and their life choices.

This year, The New England Center for Research in Higher Education (NERCHE) funded a pilot partnership between the New Road Community and UMass students to develop an enrichment curriculum to be implemented at the New Road Summer Camp. UMass student researchers visited New Road last summer and interviewed parents, children, community leaders and camp staff to get ideas about what would be effective in a camp curriculum. Parents were especially interested in conventional tutoring – things that would enhance fundamental skills in literacy and numeracy. Children were not interested in anything that seemed like school. The research team returned to UMass and arrived at the idea of stealth-enrichment, that is, building learning and

especially learning about African-American heritage, into fun, recreational activities. The plan was to take conventional camp activities like art, drama, music, story hour and dance and imbue them with heritage content. In order to do this, UMass students approached instructors of UMass classes in multi-cultural education and African American studies and asked if they would, in turn, allow their students to develop curricular modules for the camp.

It should be evident that these projects transcend the bounds of the traditional classroom and the limits of a 14-week semester. Many students elect to take the two classes in sequence, that is, to stay involved for two years, and, of course, the work they do is built on the foundation of the work done by the students who preceded them. The work gives students first-hand experience at doing applied anthropology. More importantly they are engaged in effective praxis, linking thought to action as they partner with people from outside the university to make change in the world.

Arthur Keene teaches anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Introducing Global Studies: Historical Concerns and Local Perspectives

Wei Djao
North Seattle Community College

The twentieth century ended with much touting of the global economy and the new world order in the mass media. Courses in Global Studies also began to appear in academia. Yet many such courses are hardly different from those in International Relations or International Studies established since the end of the World War II. These courses, as they are taught in this country, are very often U.S.-centered. This means that exploration and analysis of world events, global issues, and concerns of other societies, especially those of non-Western societies – Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America – are predominantly from U.S. perspectives and assumptions.

Global Studies is essentially different from the conventional International Studies. In Global Studies we study world events, concerns and trends from local/ indigenous assumptions and perspectives, especially those of peoples and societies that were colonized or dominated by other nations in the last few centuries. This presupposes that Global Studies is based on historical reality rather than on purely abstract relations.

An important topic in Global Studies is the investigation of the global economic system and its impact on the economies and cultures of all peoples and societies.

Fallacy of the "Tradition vs. Modernity" Dichotomy

With the onset of the Cold War in mid-twentieth century, social scientists began to theorize about the "modernization" of "traditional societies."[1] According to this theory of modernization, societies of the "Third World" are traditional and become modern when they acquire Western technology, values and consumer behavior. The term "Third World" itself is simply a reification of something that is not real, a residual category for all those societies not belonging to either camp headed by the then two superpowers: the United States of America and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

In the modernization theory of social change, there is no precise definition of "tradition," "modernity" or "development." The theory is not based on any history of the contact between Western and non-Western societies, or the histories of the latter societies before their contact with the Western powers. In place of careful generalizations based on actual events and real cultures, several assumptions are made in modernization theory. First, the cultures of all "traditional societies" are seen as unchanging and static for centuries or even thousands of years until they were exposed to the West. These cultures – characterized by encompassing fatalism, extended family structure, "backward" technology, lack of innovation, lack of communication links, submission of women, etc. – are also seen as unsuitable for "modernization". Second, the histories of the "traditional societies" before exposure to Western influence are viewed as unimportant and inconsequential; in fact, they can all be described as "people with no history"[2]. Third, people of "traditional societies" – whether they are in Zimbabwe, Tajikistan, Jamaica, Brazil, China or anywhere in the "Third World" – are more or less the same, especially in the one important aspect of being unwilling to change their traditions. Fourth, people of "traditional societies" are doomed to "backwardness" and poverty unless they become modern. Modern (essentially Western) culture has these attributes: an individualistic achievement orientation, advanced technology, innovation, nuclear family structure, efficient communication links, sense of control over own destiny, gender equality, and so forth.

The lists of descriptors of "traditional" or "modern" cultures contain a curious mix of things, drawn from material culture, ideal culture, individual psychology and social arrangements. The descriptors of either "traditional" or "modern" culture become exaggerated, turning people and cultures into stereotypes and caricatures.

While making these assumptions, the proponents of modernization theory fail to notice the complexity and diversity within each "traditional society". They pay scant attention to the phenomena that prior to contact with the West many societies were stable, self-sufficient, and relatively prosperous. The historical events of invasion, colonization, and degradation of the "traditional societies" by external powers are trivialized or ignored altogether. The continuing impact of the legacy of colonial exploitation of the "traditional societies" for the benefit of the external powers – and the consequent dependence of the former on the latter in the contemporary global economy – are disregarded. The power inequalities between rich societies and post-colonial societies in the processes of globalization are given little attention.

> "It is necessary that students learn in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary Global Studies to think critically about events and issues in historical contexts and from local perspectives – whatever the peoples or societies involved may be."

Defining Global Studies

Even though modernization theory and the false dichotomy of *tradition* and *modernity* have been academically discredited, the popular media exposes students and the public daily to such simplistic and ideologically tinted explanations of world problems or events in "foreign" exotic countries. To counter these pseudo-explanations, it is necessary that students learn in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary Global Studies to think critically about events and issues in historical contexts and from local perspectives – whatever the peoples or societies involved may be. It is important that they replace fuzzy a-historical mental models of modernization with historical accounts of the initial encounter by so-called Third World societies with globalization, usually in the form of colonization. In Global Studies students investigate the phenomenon that although colonial rule no longer exists in most parts of the world, the global economic system – based on the transnational practices of corporations, dominant nation-states, and world organizations (such as the World Bank, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, etc.) – continues and even intensifies inequalities among peoples and societies. Such transnational practices displace local subsistence economies and marginalize local practices. Furthermore, students examine why and how the cultures of the subordinate "Third World" societies continue to be misinterpreted, misrepresented and even maligned in the processes of the global economy.

Global Studies is often used by apologists of the global economy to defend and promote the "new world order", as shaped by the transnational corporations (TNC) and organizations they dominate such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. This kind of Global Studies often reports on the benefits to the TNC-dominated global economy as if they were benefits to whole societies or even the entire world while remaining largely silent on the costs borne by the primary producers, the consumers, and the environment. However, Global Studies, in the true sense of the term, ought to examine all aspects of the human world: nation-states; organizations; communities; men and women belonging to different societies, cultures, social classes, ethnicities, and religions; and, the planet itself.

While the scope of Global Studies is in fact the entire world, it is not feasible to study the globalization processes involving every society or people. It is sometimes more productive to focus on one society, one people or one region in relation to the development of the world economic system or one global trend. By limiting attention to only one society, people, or region, students have an opportunity to analyze, comprehend and draw out the implications of one case in-depth. Whatever the scope of analysis, the focus is on the relationships and transnational practices – political, economic, cultural or military – among individuals, groups, organizations and nation-states.

Many students who are learning Global Studies ask questions about what they could or should do about global inequalities and other problems common to the whole human race (for example, environmental degradation). Some may even hanker for easy answers and quick solutions. There are no simplistic action plans to intractable problems. However, in a truly didactic setting, students will understand that before framing an appropriate and feasible answer, they need to find out what the questions and issues are, in all their dimensions and complexity. Only then will they become informed and critical thinkers who can formulate responses. This is the purpose of Global Studies.

References
[1] There are modernization theorists in different disciplines: W.W. Rostow in economics; Samuel Huntington in political science; Peter Berger in sociology; and David C. McClelland and David G. Winter in psychology. Others have followed their example.

[2] See Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

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Local Knowledge
in the Age of Globalization

Anne Fischel and Lin Nelson
The Evergreen State College

Local Knowledge: Community, Media Activism and the Environment was a full-time, interdisciplinary program taught from fall 2001 to spring 2002. It was created for juniors and seniors, students we thought might be ready to take on the complexities of community-based learning. As teachers, citizens and community activists we hoped we too were ready to take on the challenges of straddling campus and community.

We started by asserting that the community base of knowledge must be acknowledged and supported. This has been the defining ethical, pedagogical and intellectual framework for our collective efforts. Mass culture, the cult of celebrity, dependence on remote authority and expertise, and a globalizing economy increasingly marginalize what "ordinary" people know and value. What is known, questioned or created at the local level in diverse communities around the world is too often commodified, trivialized or ignored.

Local Knowledge exemplified our best effort to fulfill our responsibilities as public intellectuals. Although Evergreen celebrates linking theory and practice, the actual practice of pedagogy tends to site learning and student projects in the solitary context of the classroom. We wanted to challenge this boundary, with all its implications. We do not believe students must wait until they graduate to contribute to community life. We designed a program in which students could explore perspectives, methodologies and tools useful to community-based work. We encouraged them to design projects, together with community partners, that made innovative contributions to the issues communities experience today.

Local Knowledge convened two weeks after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. We intended to build a global context for our research on community by gradually exploring the impacts of neoliberalism. But the attack, and the war which followed, challenged our ability to focus on the local. We responded by launching a "mediawatch" to examine constructions of the global crisis. Several of our students answered the challenge of integrating local and global realities by organizing teach-ins and facilitating public discussions about the war. This work was very important to our collective learning, since it explored responses to a global crisis that built on community perspectives and values.

Since September 11, the "crisis" has been linked to threats of terrorism. Yet our crisis is far more complex and profound. The communities we worked with face significant problems. Mill closures and falling wages, toxic dumping and destruction of environmental resources, corporate expansion and mergers, unregulated development, rising drug use, homeless people sleeping and panhandling in downtown—these were problems we learned about as we met our neighbors and developed our knowledge of the region.

These problems put the crisis of September 11 in a very different context. A social system founded on inequality, competition and social/environmental irresponsibility is inherently unstable. Our crisis is pervasive and systemic, affecting jobs and communities, our futures, our ways of defining the world and our place in it. This makes our work as educators linking campus and community even more important. It makes the question of how communities use their knowledge base to diagnose and solve problems even more urgent and compelling.

We expected students to take themselves seriously as citizen-learners. The students created community-based projects, mostly in teams, in collaboration with local organizations and individuals; several projects have continued past the official close of the program. We connected with community mentors who generously shared their experience of working toward more healthy, just communities. These included the Cold and Hungry Coalition, Garden Raised Bounty, Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, the Labor Education and Research Center at Evergreen, the Carpenters Union, South Puget Sound Environmental Education Coalition (SPEECH), Mason County Literacy, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). Our mentors took the students' work extremely seriously, and demonstrated this by making presentations in our classroom, listening closely to students' questions and critiques, and sometimes incorporating students' interests and projects into their own complex agendas.

We shaped our work in relationship to popular education and participatory research—the signal ideas being that knowledge should be democratically experienced and constructed, that people can use their experience of family, work, community and tradition as a basis for analyzing local and global conditions, and that they can collectively develop and articulate a vision of a more meaningful and just world. We explored the writings and

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efforts of Paulo Freire, Myles Horton and others at the Highlander Research and Education Center, Beverly Brown of the Jefferson Center in southern Oregon and Carol Minugh of the Gateway Project, an Evergreen-based project creating collaborative education for college students and incarcerated youth. We did not advocate one doctrine or approach; instead, we tried to articulate and critically assess our work in relation to others doing community-based education, research and advocacy.

Local Knowledge was based in Media Studies and Environmental Studies, but we drew from many fields—community/regional studies, labor studies, oral history, local history, research methods, corporate research, the politics of development and globalization. We learned about our neighboring communities of Olympia, Shelton, Centralia and Tacoma through research, field trips, and presentations. We wanted our emerging knowledge to be vivid, rich and particular. At the same time, we sought a sense of comparison, context and connectedness across communities. For this reason, we looked at more distant communities struggling with labor and environmental challenges. We studied the experiences of Mexican-American mining communities in Arizona and New Mexico, chronicled in Kingsolver's *Holding the Line*, and the pioneering film, "Salt of the Earth." We studied working class Woburn, Massachusetts by reading Brown and Mikkelson's *No Safe Place* and Harr's *A Civil Action*, and critiquing the Hollywood film based on Harr's book. These texts gave us the opportunity to consider gender, ethnic and power differentials within communities, critique "expert" authority, and consider

how communities can make use of resources offered by "outsiders." We looked critically at the meanings and boundaries of "the local." We did not want to romanticize community or uncritically accept "official" stories of community history and development. Communities can be isolated or isolating; they can compete in unhealthy ways with other communities near and far, and they can respond repressively and violently to internal challenges to existing power structures. Learning how people organize and educate themselves to respond to conditions of marginalization or systemic underdevelopment was an important part of our work.

We focused on how people experience and define themselves in community, how they value (or de-value) their lives and the lives of their neighbors, how they interpret and analyze their reality, and how they come to do politically engaged work—from challenging local authorities over official treatment of the homeless to creating public space to discuss the war in Afghanistan. As part of this effort we explored how stories are constructed. We challenged ourselves to be critically aware of "the politics and ethics of representation," the structuring of images and ideas communicated through mass/independent media, the arts, documentary film, text, research reporting and public presentation. The viewing of documentaries, including Sandra Osawa's "Off and On the Res' with Charlie Hill," Jessica Yu's "The Living Museum," Barbara Kopple's "American Dream" and Elizabeth Barrett's "Stranger with a Camera" allowed us to investigate the shaping of community stories and uses to which community images are put, and

consider how best to represent the communities we learned about and worked with.

Our program included weekly presentations, seminars, field trips and meetings with community mentors, workshops on video production, survey design and interviewing, panels on local media, NGO's, community fundraising, and alternative economic development, and sessions on library and archival research, community-based research, corporate research, and using government documents. In spring quarter students created interest groups to work on public writing, economic development, and the politics of travel. Early in the year students identified project ideas, located community partners and resources, researched the context and history of the issue that interested them, and began to develop documentation skills. As the projects developed over the year, they moved to the center of our collective learning. Here are 3 projects reflecting some of the students' interests and commitments:

The Brewery and Beyond

This project team set out to understand environmental and economic impacts of a local brewery, its place in the community, and its ownership and managerial profile (it is now owned by a transnational corporation). They did substantial environmental analysis, corporate research, and consultation with community advocates and business leaders. The project gradually broadened to incorporate exploration of the watershed, regional history and context, tribal stewardship and partnering with students from an alternative high school, working

> "These powerful streams of questioning and insight have become integral to the students' approaches to community work."

with the YMCA Earth Service Corps, who were exploring corporate impacts on the environment. The group was challenged by their project's breadth, and its many community connections and impacts. They helped the high school students use video cameras and make a public service announcement advocating attention to water quality. They made a draft of a documentary video bringing tribal perspectives to land use and stewardship. They testified at the City Council on the need to monitor the brewery's treatment plan as it disconnected from the sewage treatment plant. Group members are still working with PEER to complete their research and present it to the community.

The Shelton Group

Shelton, a timber town in Mason County, was the focus of student efforts to create community discussions about war, security, and civil rights following September 11. The project was a collaboration between 3 students, one of whom lives in Shelton, and staff members at Mason County Literacy which provides English instruction and assistance to immigrants. The Shelton Group now has a stable core of 15 members. The students made a video documenting community responses to September 11; they also held a teach-in and discussion of the war, developed a group value statement, connected with the local newspaper, held a Mother's Day peace vigil, and put together a newsletter. One student organizer wrote, "My challenge has been to let the process happen organically, while providing the structure needed to keep it from rotting." She added, "There has to be a passion great enough, a will to work extra hard, and a drive for people to sustain involvement. I feel that realizing one's

values can bring about such passions. But sometimes it is a long time between naming your values and acting upon them ... I hope to help people discover the broader systems of oppression which affect us locally, but bind us globally. We must communicate with each other to build bridges and enlist others for support."

Homelessness in Olympia

A team of five students made a video documenting the lives, perspectives and conditions facing unhoused persons in Olympia. From over 70 hours of raw footage and months of discussions with homeless advocates, business leaders and municipal officials, they made a feature-length documentary. This project, which began with the stated intention of "giving voice to the homeless" became a complex treatment of a community issue as different groups organized to define the problems and recruit community support for their perspectives. A central theme in the video was the organization of a "tent city" by homeless men and women who were shown meeting, planning, debating options and strategies, and negotiating with landowners and law enforcement officials. A draft of the documentary was shown at a public screening, followed by a discussion led by the organizer of the tent city. Reflecting on this experience, one of the filmmakers wrote, "our documentary has become about so much more than a couple of ordinances. We've been introduced to the greater economic problems the region faces, the debate about urban sprawl, gentrification, the pressures the City Council faces from all sides of the spectrum, and the national problem that is plaguing downtowns across America."

At year's end we asked the students to write a "Self-in-Context" statement about their work in community. One student wrote, "This year I saw a group of birds take off together and fly in a formation that swooped and dived ... human society has forgotten how to do this." She described popular education as a process of dialogue that continues until all are ready to "move together as a whole." Another student wrote of her deepened understanding of local history and community, "You can live here for years and yet not understand what it is you are living in. This is the difference between local knowledge and trivia, between trivia and history. Facts can be arranged in a way that invites participation or they can be dispensed loosely and without correlation." A third student wrote of her experience of working with the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, "my question, which reaches into an analysis of our nation's moral philosophy, is: whose responsibility is it to pay for the services that poor people can't afford, and why can't they afford them in the first place?" These, she argued, "are important questions that inform a movement I am slowly becoming a part of," and she added, "This movement is about debunking the myths of poverty and revealing the lies of exploitation from the viewpoints of those who experience this exploitation directly." These powerful streams of questioning and insight have become integral to the students' approaches to community work.

There are signs of appreciation from the community as well:

"Working with the three students from Evergreen's *Local Knowledge* program

allowed the teens of the Earth Service Corps access to the broader community, as well as providing the skills and video resources necessary for the students to take the issues important to them and create a PSA." - *Rochelle Gause, South Sound YMCA Earth Service Corps*

"Evergreen students can make incredible contributions to the community because of the time they give. Having them at public meetings to document, be recorders, and offset abridged public reports helps broaden the knowledge base. They can provide a freshness of perspective, seeking information, more broadly sometimes than community activists with their own focus." -*Chris Hawkins, Sustainable Community Roundtable*

Our students took on projects that were ambitious and difficult; their work was rigorous, intense and complicated. But teaching *Local Knowledge* wasn't always a heart-warming experience—not by a long shot. It's been a rough road, full of unexpected challenges. We had many needs and few resources, and were nagged by concerns that we were all in way over our heads. This makes for complex teacher-student relations, to say the least. The students struggled with confidence, team building, the ambiguities of community process, and questions about the right-ness of their projects. Our responses were often Rorschach tests for all that was unclear about their work. Perhaps with more experience we could better reassure them that uncertainty and discomfort are often part of the process of working in real-community settings. Still, we questioned whether we were preparing the students adequately, giving enough skills, information, and support.

Students' work can expose them to disturbing issues or even put them at risk. Several groups had our home phone numbers; we were "on call" for projects where personal safety might have been an issue.

We constantly risked reinventing projects that others had tried before us. The college has no structural means with which to stay connected to community mentors and groups, or document the project work of previous programs. *Local Knowledge* was

Anne Fischel and Lin Nelson tell participants at the 2002 conference about their interdisciplinary program at The Evergreen State College.

an "inter-divisional program", a collaboration between faculty from different curricular areas; it is not regularly offered by the college, and can't be, given our divisional commitments. Through the visionary kindness of several TESC staff, we were given a community resource room where we stored files and information. We also had a student aide who kept office hours in our resource room and lovingly cared for it. But there were few resources to document the work of this program, learn from its mistakes, build on its achievements, and support its continuation. We hope Evergreen will invest in support structures for programs like ours, including staffing, space, and effective mechanisms for tracking and documenting campus-community collaborations.

We promised each other and the students that *Local Knowledge* would not be an academic drive-by, insensitively "capturing" data, documents and images,

with nothing given back to the community. For the most part we fulfilled that promise. Yet we are haunted by the fact that the "time frame" for our work is basically academic time. At Evergreen, as at many institutions, we have a long way to go before our work is steadfast, continuous, and mature in its connection with community collaborators. We struggled to find a "community resting place" for our projects, but our process has not been flawless. We are among many across the county and the world who are interested in the democratization of knowledge. From the "Science Shops" in Dutch universities to the Policy Research Action Group in Chicago (a consortium of colleges and communities), there is growing recognition that knowledge abides in communities and collegial neighbors still have a lot to learn.

Note
For information about campus/community connections and community-based research, go to www.loka.org (The Loka Institute).

Lin Nelson teaches environmental studies and Anne Fischel teaches expressive arts in interdisciplinary programs at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.

About the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

We are for the academic success of *all* students.

We work at the local, regional and national levels with faculty members, staff, and administrators to share good practices and carry out collaborative projects aimed at improving undergraduate teaching and student learning. Through workshops and conferences, publications and technical assistance, the Center promotes inter-institutional and cross-disciplinary dialogue and projects aimed at enhancing the learning of all students.

The projects we organize favor interdisciplinary and collaborative learning, support the reform of mathematics and science teaching, and embrace developmental education as an essential component of higher education.

Our assumptions
Because we work within one educational system, three major assumptions inform our practice:
1) cross-disciplinary, inter-institutional, and system-wide collaborations need to be promoted; 2) good educational practices are scattered throughout the system and need to be recognized; and, 3) systemic long-term change results from small-scale, locally determined changes in practice.

Regular funding
In the 1987-89 biennium budget allocation, the Washington State Legislature established Washington Center as a public service center of The Evergreen State College, with a mandate to work with two and four-year higher education institutions and other educators throughout the state.

Consortium members and staff
Participating institutions include forty-four community and technical colleges, six public four-year institutions, one tribal college, and ten independent colleges. Our core staff includes two co-directors and one program coordinator; grants support any additional staff.

Guidelines for practice
We ground our work in the value of including many voices; projects have inter-institutional advisory committees and resource teams. We measure success by increased access to significant learning experiences for students, especially those under-represented in higher education.

Teaching and learning networks
The Center participates in many regional, national and international educational reform initiatives. Over 2500 people outside Washington State receive the Center's annual journal and we often serve as a broker for connecting people, projects, and resources.

Statewide and national initiatives
We raise grant funds for our projects. Recent funding has come from the National Council on Education in the Disciplines, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the PEW Charitable Trust, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education.

> *"By working together across traditional boundaries of educational politics we can maximize the benefits of sharing and adapting the best ideas from each arena."*
>
> Booth Gardner,
> Governor, State of
> Washington
>
> Excerpt from 1987 letter to Washington Center

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The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

■ Established in 1985 at Evergreen as an inter-institutional consortium, the Center focuses on low-cost, high-yield approaches to educational reform, emphasizing better utilization and sharing of existing resources through collaboration among member institutions. Established with funding from the Exxon and Ford Foundations, the Center is now supported by the Washington State Legislature.

■ Includes 50 participating institutions: all of the state's public four-year institutions, community colleges, technical colleges, one tribal college and ten independent colleges.

■ Supports and coordinates the development of interdisciplinary "learning community" programs, inter-institutional faculty exchanges, curriculum reform initiatives in science, mathematics and cultural pluralism, and offers conferences, seminars and technical assistance on effective approaches to teaching and learning.

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