

Washington Center

NEWS

FALL 2003

One Step at a Time: Small doable acts, worthwhile results

This year's 16th annual Washington Center conference title, and that of this newsletter, *One Step at a Time: Small Doable Acts, Worthwhile Results*, purposefully avoids abstract words associated with educational reform. Instead, a spark from the 2002 conference, *Practicing What We Stand For: Access, Equity and Significant Student Learning*, ignited this year's conversations. The articles in this newsletter, many of them written by conference presenters, reflect the spirit, hopefulness and determination that lead to small doable acts, which yield "worthwhile results"

In February 2003, the people who came from campuses around the state and country to join students, staff, faculty and administrators from this year's host institution, North Seattle Community College, expected to discuss substantive issues. We invited participants—as we now invite newsletter readers—to think about the complex issues of race, ethnicity, social class, gender and sexual orientation. This invitation, as well as our ongoing conversations with colleagues, continues to be intentional. We want to understand how interlocking systems of privilege and oppression work, acknowledge the differences among us—who benefits from unearned entitlements and who does not—and act on what we know. Marjorie Agosin and Bob Moses, gifted teachers and the conference's two keynoters, added immeasurably to our inquiry and resolve to act

If ever we need evidence that the effort to understand difficult issues *does* have an effect that extends beyond classroom, campus, community, and even country borders, we will find it in our students' work. In this regard, students from North Seattle's Coordinated Studies Program provide an exceptional example. Their facilitation of the Thursday evening book seminar demonstrates the way in which a difficult question—*how do we work for cultures of peace and justice?*—can be addressed with rigor, insight, and attentiveness to the views of others.

Throughout the conference, people went to the student-created *Wall of Personal Commitment* to post their own "small, doable acts" and to read the intentions of others. We hope you will find this issue of the newsletter as inspiring.

Participating Institutions: Antioch University, Bates Technical College, Bellevue Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Big Bend Community College, Cascadia Community College, Central Washington University, Centralia College, City University, Clark College, Clover Park Technical College, Columbia Basin College, Cornish School of the Arts, Eastern Washington University, Edmonds Community College, Everett Community College, Gonzaga University, Grays Harbor College, Green River Community College, Heritage College, Highline Community College, Lake Washington Technical College, Lower Columbia College, North Seattle Community College, Northwest Indian College, Olympic College, Pacific Lutheran University, Peninsula College, Pierce College, Renton Technical College, Saint Martin's College, Seattle Central Community College, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University, Shoreline Community College, Skagit Valley College, South Puget Sound Community College, South Seattle Community College, Spokane Community College, Spokane Falls Community College, Tacoma Community College, The Evergreen State College, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington, Walla Walla Community College, Washington State University, Wenatchee Valley College, Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Whitworth College, Yakima Valley Community College

About the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

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

“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

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 two support 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.

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Unexpected Benefits

An Interview with Ron LaFayette, President of North Seattle Community College

When asked to reflect on the impact that hosting the Washington Center Conference had on his campus, Ron Lafayette, President of North Seattle Community College, had the following to say:

At first we thought about the logistics and the extra burden the institution would have to face. But because our Integrated Studies program is such an important part of who we are and because our faculty really believe in it, we thought that having the conference here was a good fit. In addition the Washington Center folks we interacted with were so willing to consider any of the challenges and issues we might have and to accommodate those issues that the planning process went wonderfully.

As the conference approached, we started getting some real excitement around our campus particularly because of having such a well-known person, Bob Moses, come to the event. Of course, we were also aware of the scholar, Marjorie Agosin, but initially not to the same degree because we were not as familiar with her work.

When the conference day arrived, there was definitely lots of energy and excitement to be felt across our campus, especially because all areas of the college were involved in the planning. We felt privileged to be partners with the Washington Center; we felt proud to host the conference — even in the midst of getting the chairs set up, the signs posted, and everything else that needed to be organized.

The actual conference impacted our institution very broadly. Our Coordinated Studies students led the Thursday evening book seminar with Marjorie and participants from other colleges around the country. This stimulated a very powerful discussion not only because of her topic of social justice but also because of her wonderful way of presenting her thoughts and issues. I want to say that this student-led event had the broadest impact on our institution because our students played such a major part in it. That event was a demonstration of the kind of learning that we value here.

And then of course the conference itself—people coming from all over the country gave us the opportunity to show off our institution. Hearing people say positive things about how they were accommodated, the appearance of the institution, the quality of their interactions, that was wonderful. And certainly another highlight was when we all came together – students, and our faculty and staff, and this group of scholars from around the country listening to our two wonderful speakers.

Marjorie Agosin and Bob Moses were more than speakers – they were people who shared their real wisdom with us. Yes, we did have the formal scholarly presentations that we all love. But they went way beyond—they allowed us to engage with them. After the event, we all glowed for about a month just feeling the goodness of having that shared learning experience on our campus with people who are recognized scholars from around the country and being able to share it with the community. So this event acknowledged what we believe about ourselves and of course gave us a wonderful learning experience which we've used as a reference point many times during the year.

As this academic year comes to a close, for me as an educational leader the Washington Center conference is one of the high points in our participation in the greater mission of teaching and learning and so we're very proud of that.

After she left, Marjorie sent me a card which said, "I have returned home embraced by the northern star [NSCC's logo] of your school as well as by your vision. My experience at NSCC was one of the most powerful ones I have experienced as an educator and as a human being. The students in the Integrated Studies program are outstanding and compare to high levels of education." By the way, during the student-led seminars, she told some students that they exhibited a depth of knowledge and academic skills that demonstrated they were getting a better education at NSCC than students at many elite liberal arts colleges.

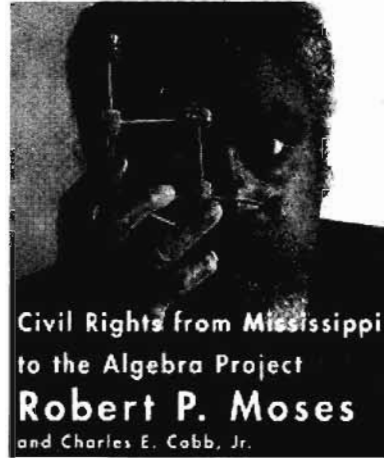
Receiving that card, which is really a reflection on the quality of teaching and learning that is going on in our college, is the source of the pride that I have to be a part of this institution. The event provided us with a mirror—somewhat unexpectedly—and that is why we're eager to stay engaged with the Washington Center initiatives.

Robert P. Moses

2003 Conference Keynote Speaker

A celebrated civil rights leader and key organizer in the early 1960s for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Bob Moses' work to organize Black voters in Mississippi has been the subject of films, books, articles and documentaries. Less known is his work as founder of the national math literacy program, the *Algebra Project*, where the methods he and others used as civil rights organizers are key to the Project's remarkable growth, from the volunteer efforts of one parent (Moses) in his daughter's classroom to a network of programs in 25 cities, serving more than 40,000 students. Co-author of *Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project*, Bob Moses currently teaches algebra to high school students in Jackson, Mississippi.

radical equations



Robert Moses, keynote speaker at the 2003 conference.

In the Spirit of Ella: The Algebra Project and the Organizing Tradition of the Civil Rights Movement

The following is a brief excerpt of Robert Moses' keynote address at the Washington Center's 2003 Annual Conference at North Seattle Community College:

For Black people to get the right to vote, the country's political structure had to shift and for Black people to get an education in this country there are also going to have to be some enormous changes in various structures and institutions in this country.

Sharecropper education began after the Civil War. It was LeRoy Percy in Greenville, Mississippi, who helped formulate this concept after the Civil War. The planters had land, but no labor and no cash. Freed slaves had labor but they had no land, also no cash. So the deal

was that there would be sharecropping and the planters would give freed slaves some of their land to raise a crop and then they would also provide them with what they called the "furnished" – some food and a place to live. And then at the end there would be a "settle" – how much did the crop make and how much money would the planter pay for that crop. What really was not on anybody's mind was that the sharecropper went to sharecropper education. You have a whole people who are only going to do a certain kind of work and so they only need a certain kind of education. The sort of education really tied to menial work.

We think of that as something that happened in the past, but just this last fall, the New York State Appellate Court ruled on an appeal from the District Federal

Court about whether the state should give more money to New York City schools. The Federal District Judge had argued that it should. But in a 4-1 decision, the Appellate Court argued that it didn't need to and their reasoning was that the state was required to provide a minimal education to its young people; they needed to be able to vote and serve on juries and they said that the state was already doing that and that an 8th grade education was sufficient for that. Furthermore, Judge Lerner, writing for the majority, said that there are a lot of low paying jobs and so there are a lot of people needed to fill those low paying jobs and they don't require more of an education – and this is sharecropper education. This is education tied to menial work. So, this issue is on the table across the country.

Bob Moses Day Celebration

Jackson, Mississippi

Michael J. Pfeifer
The Evergreen State College

I teach American history at The Evergreen State College. I traveled with an Evergreen colleague who teaches African-American literature, Babacar M'Baye, to Jackson, Mississippi, in early May for the *Mississippi Algebra Project Continuum Organization* (MAPCO)'s 4th Annual Bob Moses Day Celebration. The events were organized around the theme of using social activism to fight “sharecropper education,” the persisting attitudes and structures that limit educational and vocational opportunity for African-American and low-income youth. The central idea was succinctly expressed in a Friday morning assembly at Lanier High School, located in Jackson's inner city, as the “courage to change consciousness, culture, and the human condition.” Throughout the two days, a powerful sense of the heritage of African-American resistance to racism, and especially of the strategies and tradition of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi, grounded the consideration of young people's aspirations, educational reform, and social change.

I assisted Babacar in facilitating two workshops that mapped the relations between Africa and the Black Diaspora, particularly African-Americans. We went into two classrooms at Lanier High School for ninety minute sessions that helped students think about the connections between Africa and the African-American experience as reflected in the works of African-American writers. We showed about 25 minutes of a documentary on the black poet Langston Hughes, “Langston

Hughes Dreamkeeper,” and then had students work in small groups on important themes and images from the film. Students reflected meaningfully on Hughes's early struggles as a writer, particularly his difficulty convincing his family that he could make a career out of writing poetry. Students then named some African-American writers—and in so doing revealed an impressive awareness of the variety and contributions of black writers. Students also wrote poems in groups; in the first classroom we visited (that of Ms. Atkins) three male students who had been largely silent during class discussion wrote an exceptionally expressive poem on African-American identity and the historical struggle against racism in the South. In the second classroom the teacher, Mr. Blue, aided in helping students to think critically about images of Africa and images of African-Americans in the media. Nearly all students contributed substantially to this rich discussion.

What most struck Babacar and me in these high school classrooms were the significant results reaped from Lanier High School's commitment to educational achievement linked to a thorough-going vision of social change. The students were encouraged to use the heritage of the African-American struggle against racism in Mississippi as a prod to their individual career goals and to an analysis of social relations in Mississippi, the society in which they would be pursuing those goals. These connections were vivid and affirming for the students that we met.

In a daylong Saturday session that followed, participants in the Bob Moses Day Celebration shared stories, beginning with a reflection on their own maternal ancestry. High school students spoke first, of their aspirations and how adults could help them meet them. The young people mentioned a wide variety of career goals, including medicine, law, social work, and business. And they asked adults to help them to stay focused on their goals. Then older people spoke, describing their current work and how they became involved in “the movement” for social change. Many had been active in the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi and in movements for social justice in Mississippi since. (Hearing their stories in person, instead of reading them in history monographs, was awe-inspiring for long-time students of African-American history and southern history such as Babacar and myself!) Others present, including artists, performers, and educators, were drawn from around the country by Bob Moses' *Algebra Project* and spoke of their current work and how they had been drawn into it. The day fittingly closed with an Afro-Brazilian ritual, led by several Afro-Brazilian religious leaders in attendance, Valdina Oliveira Pinto and Valnizia Pereira Oliveira, that invoked and celebrated the work for social justice by our ancestors. In sum, we came away from Jackson with a strong sense of the value of community organizing and of the nurturing function of a history of activism and struggle in the pursuit of reform in educational and social institutions.

A Radical Idea—Or, how a civil rights leader inspired an interdisciplinary approach to learning quantitative concepts in real-world contexts

Karen Casto
Western Washington University

When Robert Moses was a young man in the early 1960s, he traveled from his home in the North to participate in voter registration drives in Mississippi. As an original member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the principal architect of the “freedom summer” of 1964, Moses had an historical impact on the civil rights movement. Twenty years after the events in Mississippi, however, Moses started the Algebra Project in order to help students of color achieve in another arena with great political implications: education.

As Moses explains it, “The lesson I draw from history ... is that the idea of citizenship now requires not only literacy in reading and writing but literacy in math and science. And the way we guarantee this necessary literacy is through education conceived of much more broadly than what goes on in classrooms.”

The work of Dr. Moses, and his book, *Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project* (2001), were the inspiration for a First-year Interest Group (FIG) cluster of courses taught Winter Quarter 2003, at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. This course cluster, titled *Radical Equations* after Moses’ book, paired an American history course (History

104) with a college algebra course (Math 102). Students co-enrolled in the history and math courses, plus a small seminar course that linked the course content. In addition to promoting students’ success in their math and history courses, the seminar included readings from Moses’ book and discussions of events in American History in which mathematics played a pivotal role.

Dr. Marc Richards, who taught the American history course, at first admitted he was “very skeptical whether a FIG pairing of Math 102 and History 104 could ever work ... There seemed too little common ground for ever using the connection to unravel the mysteries of learning that happens across academic disciplines,” he explained. “It was with blind faith that I entered the quarter.”



Left to right: Western Washington University students Kayce Nakamura, Nao Matsumoto, Thea Monday, Robert Moses, Jessica Evans, Stephen Bonnell, and FIG seminar instructor Karen Casto, at the Washington Center Conference in February.

“The lesson I draw from history ... is that the idea of citizenship now requires not only literacy in reading and writing but literacy in math and science. The way we guarantee this necessary literacy is through education conceived of much more broadly than what goes on in classrooms.”

Richards soon overcame his reticence. “Right from the beginning it all clicked ... they hooked me by putting Bob Moses and his book *Radical Equations* at the heart of the learning discovery process. [He] has long been one of my American heroes.”

One very tangible way that the FIG contributed to the History 104 classes, Richards said, was in the students’ group presentations. All students in the History 104 classes must work in groups and, “acting as expert historians” must lead one of the class periods on an assigned topic. It was decided that the FIG students would lead the session on the radical phase of the Civil Rights Movement.

“They absolutely aced the presentation,” Richards noted, explaining that the students were able to delve more deeply into the topic during their seminar. “They even included a mathematical analysis of increases in historical minority voting rights as part of

their attempt to prove whether the Civil Rights Movement had been a success or failure. It was very smart.”

In February 2003, *Radical Equations* students got a chance to meet Dr. Moses at the Washington Center’s annual conference. The students also presented a session along with cluster faculty, *Quantitative Literacy in a First-year Program: Applying Radical Equations*, which was focused on how quantitative reasoning can be taught within an interdisciplinary context. Dr. Moses, who delivered the conference keynote address, attended the session and met afterwards with the student participants.

Meeting Robert Moses, who has not only had a great impact on U.S. history, but who is still striving to help students become “math and science literate” in a real-world context, was powerful for the students. As one FIG student put it, “...the experience of learning about the Civil Rights Movement in both History 104 and in the FIG seminar, then getting to meet Robert

“Today... the most urgent social issue affecting poor people and people of color is economic access. In today’s world, economic access and full citizenship depend crucially on math and science literacy. I believe that the absence of math literacy in urban and rural communities throughout this country is an issue as urgent as the lack of registered Black voters in Mississippi was in 1961.

...I know how strange it can sound to say that math literacy—and algebra in particular—is the key to the future of disenfranchised communities, but that’s what I think, and believe with all my heart.” (Radical Equations, 2001)

Moses, one of the men who helped lead part of the Civil Rights Movement, was an extraordinary experience.”

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WWU’s Radical Equations course website: http://pandora.cii.wwwu.edu/radical_equations/

The Algebra Project Home Page: <http://www.algebra.org/index.html>



Thea Monday talks to Robert Moses about their program at WWU.

Creating the Quilt of Quantitative Literacy

Vauhn Wittman-Grahler, The Evergreen State College
Karen Harding, Pierce College Fort Steilacoom
Mary L. Russell, Pierce College Fort Steilacoom

As our society becomes more information dependent, and as technology becomes a part of everyday life there is an increased need for citizens to be quantitatively literate. We are bombarded daily by tables, charts, numbers, and graphs. We make financial and health care decisions based on statistics.

Despite the increasing importance of quantitative literacy to the citizenry, seventy-five percent of higher education math enrollments are in classes that are considered high-school level; and less than ten percent of college math enrollments are above the AP calculus level (Steen, 2002). The presence of under-prepared undergraduate students is supported by a National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) study that states that the average math performance of seventeen-year-olds has increased just one percent in twenty-five years and still remains at the “basic” level (NCES, 1997).

Low levels of math performance are also apparent at the local and state levels. According to Michele Johnson, President of Pierce College Fort Steilacoom in Lakewood, Washington, sixty-five percent of recent high school graduates who attend Pierce College need at least one developmental course and eighty-eight percent of these need at least one developmental math course (personal conversation, November 2002). Figure 1 on the next page, from the *Report of the June 2002 Think Tank, Recommendations, Actions, The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education*, clearly shows the weakness of Washington State students in mathematics. It also shows the racial disparity that exists

where success in mathematics is concerned. Approximately ten percent of African American students passed the tenth grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) math component compared to more than 40% of white students. Both scores are dismal but the racial disparity is shocking.

Another aspect of the deficiency in quantitative reasoning skills cannot be ignored: quantitative reasoning skills are often the door to economic access. Students who receive a bachelor degree that requires at least one quarter of calculus (e.g. architecture, business, engineering, computer science) earn significantly higher average starting salaries than students who earn a bachelor degree in a major that does not require higher-level math (English, anthropology, or sociology). Is this fair? No, but it *is* fact. Robert Moses (2001) spoke profoundly on the impact of poor math skills on African Americans in his book *Radical Equations, Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project*:

“What is central now is the need for economic access; the political process has been opened...but economic access, taking advantage of new technologies and economic opportunity demands as much effort as political struggle required in the 1960s . . . Math illiteracy is not unique to Blacks the way the denial of the right to vote in Mississippi was. But it affects Blacks and other minorities much, much more intensely, making them the designated serfs of the information age . . .”

Despite the importance of quantitative literacy to our lives, both to understand our

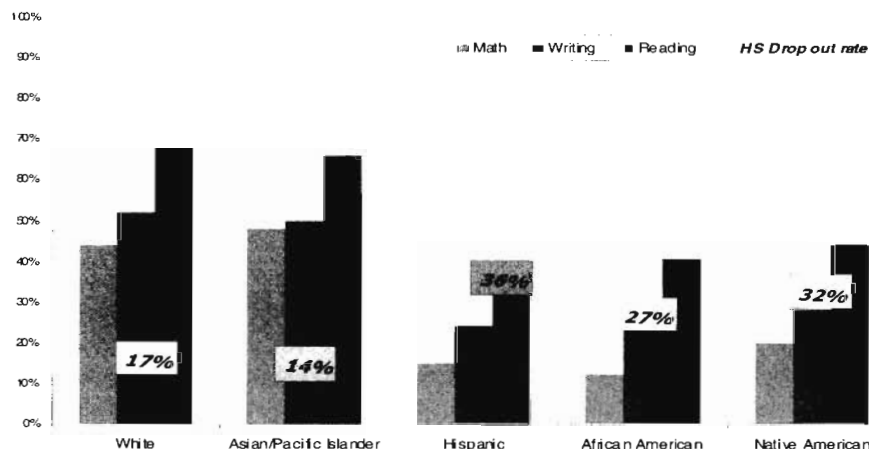
data-filled society, and as an avenue for economic access, mathematics is usually explained through the foggy window of a mathematics class disconnecting the math from the students’ real-life experiences and interests. While we would be the first to argue that more student-centered, context-based math classes are a good idea, they are not a panacea.

We believe that the key to developing a quantitatively literate citizenry is to show students the relevance of math in their content classes and throughout the curriculum. By bringing mathematics into content areas, students become aware of the importance of thinking quantitatively and can begin to lift the veil of fear that many of them wear around mathematics. While taking more math classes remains one of the doors to economic access, taking more math classes does not, necessarily, lead to quantitative literacy. Knowing how to do calculus does not make a person quantitatively literate. They may know more formulas and procedures, and hopefully understand some important concepts; but are they more able to function as a citizen? Do they understand the “richness” that quantitative literacy can provide them? Lynn Arthur Steen (2002) suggests not:

“Much of this (mathematical) richness occurs when patterns amenable to quantitative or logical analysis arise in other subjects - in history or agriculture, in carpentry or economics. For students to develop mathematical habits of mind, they need to see and do mathematics everywhere, not just in math class. As writing is now accepted as part of the entire curriculum, so should math.”

Figure 1

**High School Dropout Rates (1999 Estimate)
Superimposed on 10th Grade WASL Scores for 2000-01¹**
Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction



The benefits of quantitative literacy are broader than being able to balance your checkbook or knowing which size of detergent is the best buy. Quantitative literacy is a way of thinking and reasoning that cuts across all disciplines. It is the historian analyzing a document for authenticity, or the attorney carefully structuring an argument, or the social worker calculating the mileage he or she traveled to see a client, or the college administrator evaluating the cost/benefit of canceling a class. As information becomes more readily available the need to understand and evaluate that information becomes greater. Quantitative literacy is needed in everyday life as well as in the workplace. Should a menopausal woman use hormone replacement therapy? What are the risks of investing in the stock market? Can I understand my financial consultant when she or he explains how bonds work? What does a “yes” vote on a ballot initiative really mean? In a cooperative article written by the quantitative literacy design team in the book *Mathematics and Democracy, the case for Quantitative Literacy* (Steen, Ed., 2001), the case for a quantitatively literate society is well stated:

Quantitatively literate citizens need to know more than formulas and equations. They need a predisposition to look at the world through mathematical eyes, to see the benefits (and risks) of thinking

quantitatively about commonplace issues, and to approach complex problems with confidence in the value of careful reasoning. Quantitative literacy empowers people by giving them tools to think for themselves, to ask intelligent questions of experts, and to confront authority confidently. These are skills required to thrive in the modern world.

Because of our belief that a quantitatively literate citizenry is critical to a democracy and because of our belief that mathematics is best taught in context, our National Numeracy Network project team will spend the 2003-2004 school year mentoring individual faculty to increase the quantitative reasoning in their courses. We will work with individual faculty to increase their awareness of quantitative reasoning and to identify quantitative reasoning opportunities in their courses. We will help them to develop materials and assessments that will enhance the quantitative reasoning that is naturally present in the course content and help them to locate and use quantitative reasoning resources. Toward the end of the year, the mentored faculty members will be trained to mentor a new group of faculty for the 2004-2005 school year. This year, the mentored faculty members come from a variety of disciplines including psychology, early childhood education, anthropology, and criminal justice. Each of these faculty

members has a different vision of how quantitative reasoning can and should be incorporated into their courses. These differences were highlighted at a workshop we conducted for Pierce College faculty in May 2003. Three different psychology instructors came up with three different ways to increase the amount of quantitative reasoning in their classes: one faculty member wanted to incorporate a more rigorous treatment of statistics, another wanted to assess students’ ability to read tables and graphs, and the third wanted students to be able to chart behavior patterns that would lead to the identification of syndromes. Despite the differences between these approaches, each is a valid way of incorporating more quantitative reasoning into a psychology class.

There is no set path to developing a quantitatively literate citizenry. Nor is there a pre-determined approach to incorporating quantitative reasoning into non-math classes. In fact, the very definition of quantitative literacy is in its formative stages and is dynamic. Despite these complicating issues, the need for a quantitatively literate citizenry is apparent and the time is right for the journey to begin. The road to a quantitatively literate citizenry has been set before us by the rush of the information age. As educators, we have a unique role in shaping the future of our nation. It is our challenge and our responsibility to guide our students to a future that ensures that all people will have the competence and the confidence to fully participate in this great experiment called democracy.

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Women Writing After 9/11



Marjorie Agosin

A poet, writer, human rights activist, and Professor of Spanish at Wellesley College where she teaches in the interdisciplinary *Peace and Justice Studies* program, Marjorie Agosin is the descendent of European Jews who escaped the Holocaust and settled in Chile in 1939. In exile from Chile since Pinochet rose to power, her recent books include *A Cross and a Star: Memoirs of a Jewish Girl in Chile*; *Women, Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective*; and *The Alphabet in My Hands*. Founding editor of the journal *IA: intellectualaction* and past president of the Sisterhood is Global Institute, a coalition of women's rights organizations from 70 countries, she is the recipient of the United Nations Leadership Award for Human Rights and Gabriella Mistral Medal of Honor.

September 11th arrived Marjorie Agosin

*Here
where memories dwell with the past
where geography configures the soul
here in the south-the furthestmost south-
September 11th arrived
like a compassionless shadowless mirror
September 11th arrived
at the start of an unseasonal spring
the scent of violets still in the air*

*Incredulous-
September 11th arrived
in a morning like any other
the city awoke from its usual heat
the mountains echoed the children's
"good day"
the lovers intertwined their legs once more
like lethargic trees
and secure in their love
awoke*

*And suddenly the 11th arrived
the heavens turned into hell
the radio played hymns to a foreign land
the sirens screamed in a savage wind*

*a wounded president said
that a nation's people make justice
and history
that one day we would walk through
flowering groves
in springtime to come
It was noon
Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon
applauded happily
the viperous men in snakeskin
wagged their tongues*

*A palace went up in flames
as if in our dreams
and the young burned their notebooks of
poems
and the country once sweet as a rose
was transformed in the smoke's gloom
into the land of the absent*

*The 11th arrived here
the days became nights
and like New York
the women wailed
seeking their children*

*in the rubble
their feet sinking ever deeper
into the dry well of hate*

*The 11th arrived here
but unlike New York
everyone forgot
Chile was a small country by the sea
the dead were just Chilenos
according to the press
meanwhile we all whispered in secret
and cried out loud.*

*I too had an 11th
and although I knew who the enemy was
I refused to try to understand
a palace in flames
Pablo Neruda
dancing barefoot through the city.*

*I too had an 11th
and today I remember with you
a people in search of their star.*

Translated by Betty Jean Craige

Our Role as Educators

Lori Blewett
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The U.S. government has declared “victory” in Iraq and anti-war protesters are no longer in the news, but we are still living and teaching in a time of war. In this era of increased nationalism and mass violence, educators must give renewed attention to our responsibilities in relation to war and peace.

Twenty-five years after the Nazi’s began operating death camps, cultural theorist Theodore Adorno (1966/1998) wrote:

The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again. Its priority before any other requirement is such that I believe I need not and should not justify it....To justify it would be monstrous in the face of the monstrosity that took place. Yet the fact that one is so barely conscious of this demand and the questions it raises shows that the monstrosity has not penetrated people’s minds deeply, itself a symptom of the continuing potential for its recurrence as far as people’s conscious and unconscious is concerned. Every debate about the ideas of education is trivial and inconsequential compared to this single ideal: never again Auschwitz. It was the barbarism all education strives against. One speaks of the threat of a relapse into barbarism. But it is not a threat—Auschwitz was this relapse, and barbarism continues as long as the fundamental conditions that favor that relapse continue largely unchanged. That is the whole horror. The societal pressure still bears down, although the danger remains invisible nowadays. It drives people toward the unspeakable, which culminated on a world-historical scale in Auschwitz.

In his essay “Education After Auschwitz,” Adorno places other forms of mass violence, such as the use of atomic weapons, in the same historical category as genocide. When I think about “never again Auschwitz” I think about modern warfare which intentionally targets civilian infrastructure, I think about economic sanctions which led to the deaths of one and a half million Iraqi’s (before the recent war), I think about the U.S. military’s “shock and awe strategy” which one military spokesperson bragged would “leave no safe place in Baghdad,” and I think about the violence of 9-11.

The events of 9-11 reminded me how crucial it is that I use my role as a teacher to work for social justice and peace. The Adorno article underscores the fact that educators are not compelled to teach against violence because of their “liberal biases”; they are compelled to do so because the fundamental goal of education is to promote civil society. And the opposite of civil society is not the so called “uncivilized world” described by colonial anthropologists, but rather the barbarism of mass violence perpetuated directly and indirectly by the most technologically advanced societies of the world.

Our primary goal as educators is not to help give our country an economic edge over other countries, or to create knowledge for knowledge’s sake, or even to help our students get jobs or get into graduate school. Our primary goal is to prevent the barbarism of violence. Keeping this premise clearly in mind can be helpful when talking with students, administrators, and other faculty about whether or not it’s okay to raise

ethically sensitive issues in the classroom, or whether it’s okay to change a syllabus because of current events, or whether it’s okay to *not* remain silent.

Adorno states, “we must come to know the mechanisms that render people capable of such [barbarous] deeds, must reveal these mechanisms to them, and strive, by awakening a general awareness of those mechanisms, to prevent people from becoming so again.” Along with Adorno, sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, and others have attempted to identify factors that contribute to the perpetuation of mass violence. There are four factors that I think are particularly relevant to educators:

1. Lack of critical self-reflection by members of a population. When people are unable or unwilling to think critically, they are more likely to follow authority regardless of where it leads. Whenever we teach critical thinking, particularly when we encourage students to question the premises of their own society and inherited ideologies, we are giving them tools to stem the tide of barbarism.

2. Emotional coldness and lack of empathy for those outside one’s group. In a culture where the individual feels insignificant and where one must compete against others for the satisfaction of basic human needs, people seldom feel connected to anyone outside their immediate relationships. Emotional detachment is difficult to change, but it can be brought to students’ awareness and alternatives can be presented. Within a classroom, teachers can attempt to create a community of caring by

“Within a classroom, teachers can attempt to create a community of caring by collectively describing and practicing communication that values both individual and shared contributions and goals.”

collectively describing and practicing communication that values both individual and shared contributions and goals. The film *Bowling for Columbine* is a good resource for bringing to light the historical, political, and economic foundations of the culture of fear and violence in the U.S.

3. Repressed anxiety. The assumption that people should be tough and hard (a notion promoted by many academic disciplines and perpetuated by the whole process of academic competition) is a kind of machismo that also encourages emotional detachment. Machismo has been closely related to the sadistic treatment of others. Within our academic institutions, we need to create spaces where students and faculty can safely express emotions: whether they be fears about terrorism, or anger about war, or even anxiety about not doing well in school. When students see their classmates sent overseas they may be emotionally torn between wanting to support their friends and wanting to prevent violence against people in other countries. Faculty can help by initiating discussion about how the remaining students feel and how they can channel their feelings into action (such as writing to classmates to support them individually while engaging in efforts to end a war or prevent other wars in the future).

4. Disassociation between knowledge and its social uses. This disassociation is promoted by most academic disciplines, especially in the areas of science, technology, and business. We teach people how to build better explosives and better lasers, but we relegate questions about whether or not one *should* do so to separate, typically underfunded, elective courses in the humanities.

The consequences of the separation of knowledge from its social function are immense. Our current conflict with Iraq, for example, can be traced, in part, to this separation and emotional distancing. The Iraqi government purchased most of the materials it used to make chemical weapons from US companies with the consent of the US government. During the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George Bush senior, the US sold Iraq anthrax, nerve gas, West Nile fever germs, and botulism among other biological weapons. In 1988 Saddam Hussein ordered the gassing of the Kurdish town of Halabja, in which at least 5,000 men, women and children died. Although the atrocity shocked the world, within a month the U.S. had continued shipping components and materials of weapons of mass destruction to Baghdad (Mackay & Arbuthnot, 2002). Hundreds of highly-educated Americans must have been involved in the production and transfer of these materials. Some people spoke out against the sales, but shipments nonetheless continued for another four years, until just before the US invaded Iraq in 1992. This could not have happened without the intellectual disassociation, emotional isolationism, and lack of critical thinking described above.

There are, nonetheless, examples of individual and collective actions which have interrupted the status quo of mass violence. These too can be brought to students' attention. During Great Britain's recent preparations for war against Iraq, for example, two conscientious train engineers refused to transport military cargo to ships headed for the Middle East. Their actions helped spur on British and international anti-war efforts, much as the actions of a small

number of public resisters help to catalyze every movement for social change.

Inside the classroom, we can help students gain the confidence and skills necessary to question authority and refuse to go along with injustice. Outside the classroom, we can influence the culture of violence by publicly modeling the behaviors of critical thinking, empathy, and active resistance. Public statements and actions by faculty often encourage others to speak out. When students and community members feel they do not “know enough” to challenge the status quo, faculty initiated teach-ins, resolutions, lecture series, or other public forums can prompt public debate and resistance.

To create civilization in which there is never again the mass violence of Auschwitz, or September 11, or “shock and awe strategies,” or economic policies that make it impossible for people to meet their basic needs—to stem the tide of barbarism—this is the fundamental goal of education. It is a goal we must keep in mind not only during times of crisis, but at all times.

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Teaching for Critical Multiculturalism

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In the aftermath of 9/11, there was a flurry of community forums, usually with titles like “Understanding Islam.” Book sales on the topic of Islam skyrocketed, and universities suddenly listed numerous job openings for experts on Islam or Islamic culture. The underlying assumption behind this groping for knowledge, however, was hopelessly misguided: that in order to understand the horrifying tragedy of 9/11 and the roots of terrorism, we need only look more closely at Islamic religion and culture, and those who our president said, “hate our culture, our values, and our freedom.” In fact, we should have been looking closer to home, to decades of US foreign policy in the Middle East (and throughout the globe), to understand how people could be driven to carry out such horrifying and calculated acts of violence.

As an Arab American feminist scholar, educator, and activist, I often find myself working at the intersections of Middle East Studies, Feminist Studies, and American Ethnic Studies. After 9/11, the question of how we educate our students and communities about Arab and Islamic cultures, and their intertwining histories with European colonialism and US imperialism became all the more urgent. Yet our sudden visibility in times of political crisis points to some of the obstacles we face in making our voices and histories heard. First, within multicultural discourse and US racial categories, we are rendered racially invisible by our current classification as “white, non-European,” a category that does not fit the reality of our experiences. Arab and Middle Eastern groups have lobbied unsuccessfully for an alternative category. Still, our racial ambiguity within US society has left us politically disempowered and marginalized. Second, Arabs and Muslims face a particular kind of “political racism” as a result of the

US’s unquestioned support of Israel (Samhan 11-28). Political racism targets Arab-oriented political activity, particularly activity related to the Palestinian struggle for national rights.

Despite these obstacles, there is growing attention to Arab and Muslim realities both within the US and internationally. As an educator, I want students to understand the richness of Arab history and Arabs in America. I want them to understand that the process of entanglement between East and West, us and them, has a long history—rooted in a history of trade, conquest, colonialism, migration, and oil resources. I want them to be able to critique the pervasive stereotypes they see in the media, from films like *Aladdin* and *The Siege*. As a feminist, I want them to understand that Arab and Muslim women have a long history of struggle for women’s rights, that they are not the most oppressed women in the world, that they are active agents in their communities, working against the multiple oppressions of colonialism, racism, occupation, imperialist wars, sexism, classism, and religious sectarianism within their societies. And that many of these women embrace Islam as their cultural and spiritual tradition, even as they actively participate in challenging conservative interpretations of the holy texts and of Islamic laws. I want students to know that post-9/11 domestic policies, including racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims, deportations, and the general erosion of civil liberties, are not new, but merely an exacerbation of longstanding racist policies targeted against our communities. The violations we face under the USA Patriot Act are reminiscent of earlier historical moves to deport Arabs (Operation Boulder in 1970 under Nixon) up to the 1996 Counterterrorism Act that targets Arabs and Muslims

for their purported links to terrorist groups, based on secret evidence. Moreover, I want students to see the connections between the present vilification of Arabs and Muslims and a broader history of racist policies and political repression, including the Japanese internment and McCarthyism.

This is a complex task, but what I ask of other educators is to include Arab and Muslim American and Arab issues in your curriculum. To that end I have prepared a list of resources—texts, films, articles. Our issues can be taught in the context of women’s studies, American studies, multiculturalism, the law, religion, science (Arab contributions to science), psychology, etc. It is a process of humanizing us, giving us a face, a history, a culture, rather than rendering us invisible, or worse, “collateral damage.”

This kind of multiculturalism, the work we do in the classroom, is different from that which pervades our present political climate—what I call “phony multiculturalism.” When our leaders, like George Bush, join Muslims in their celebration of their most holy feasts, then pass laws that discriminate against Arabs and Muslims at home, and lead the drive to war against innocent Arabs and Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, we are witnessing a most cynical appropriation of multiculturalism. We need to take care that our multiculturalism is not merely inclusive of cultural and religious practices, but includes a real critique of power—power that makes dehumanizing wars justifiable.

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Media Stereotypes

Steet, Linda. *Veils and Daggers: A Century of National Geographic Images of the Arab World*. Temple UP, 2000. Steet offers insightful analysis of the discourses of Orientalism, patriarchy, and primitivism through *National Geographic's* representation of the Arab world. Drawing on cultural, feminist, and postcolonial criticism, Steet generates alternative readings that challenge the magazine's claim to objectivity. Her use of visual images and her clear explanation of theoretical concepts make this a valuable text for advanced undergraduate studies.

Edward Said on Orientalism. Dir. Sut Jhally, 1998, 40 minutes.

Edward Said's book *Orientalism* has been profoundly influential in a diverse range of disciplines since its publication in 1978. In this engaging (and lavishly illustrated) interview, he talks about the context within which the book was conceived, its main themes and how its original thesis relates to the contemporary understanding of the "the Orient." Said argues that the terrorists ruled by Islamic fundamentalism produce a deeply distorted image of the diversity and complexity of millions of Arab peoples. (\$75 rental/\$225 purchase (www.arabfilm.com))

Tales from Arab Detroit. Dir. Joan Mandell, 1995, Video 45 minutes.

When an Arab American community center brings an Egyptian poet to perform a 1000-year-old epic, sparks fly. The result is a familiar American tale: Parents trying to pass on cherished traditions and language, while their children are at home in a world of McDonald's and MTV. With mesmerizing imagery, humor, and warmth, *Tales From Arab Detroit* blends voices, poetry, song and dance into everyday stories of cultural conflict and resilience within the largest Arab community in North America. (Rental \$95/Purchase \$189 www.arabfilm.com)

Benaat Chicago (Daughters of Chicago): Growing up Arab and Female in Chicago. Video 30 min. 1996. Dirs. Jennifer Bing-Canar, Mary Zerkel, American Friends Service Committee, Chicago). Mothers and daughters on Chicago's southwest side, intergenerational issues, stereotypes and racism toward Arabs and Arab women, pride in their cultural heritage. This film is excellent to use with the essay by the directors, "Reading the Media and Myself: Experiences of Critical Media Literacy with Young Arab-American Women" in *Signs: Journal of women in Culture and Society*, 1998, vol. 23, no.3: 735-743. Especially useful for discussing images and media literacy among high school, college students, and potential teachers. (www.arabfilm.com)

Arab & Muslim Americans

Adeed, Patty and Pritchey G. Smith. "Arab Americans: Concepts and Materials" in *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies* (6th edition), James A. Banks, ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997). 22-page article surveys three waves of immigration, discusses Arab culture and values.

Akash, Munir and Khalad Mattawa, Eds. *Post-Gibran: Anthology of New Arab American Writing*. Syracuse UP, 2000.

This collection of previously unpublished poetry, drama, fiction, creative prose, and literary and cultural criticism features a range of writers, both seasoned and upcoming. Most of the contributors have been influenced by their ethnic and cultural background, current political events, and the American experience. This ambitious, richly illustrated volume is both a celebration of an ethnic experience and a window through which to view Arab American literature.

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Haddad, Yvonne and John Esposito. *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* (NY: Oxford UP, 2000). Islam is the fastest growing religion in the US, yet like all religious, Muslim Americans must confront a host of difficult questions concerning faith and national identity. This collection addresses issues of religious identity, legal issues, pressures of assimilation, and the contradictions between demanding equal rights and maintaining a distinctively separate identity.

Kadi, Joanna, ed. *Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists* (Boston: South End Press, 1994). Essays and poems by 40 women, examining issues of family, ethnicity, culture, politics and individuality. Explores both the joy and the pain in the Arab heritage; being Arab in America, being American in the Arab world; the effect of Middle East political conflicts on personal relationships in the U.S.; and personal experiences of discrimination. Challenges stereotyped perceptions of the relationships of Arab and Arab American women and men. Many of the essays are autobiographical, insightful, and eloquent.

Shakir, Evelyn. *Bint Arab: Arab and Arab American Women in the United States* (Praeger, 1997). From Christian peasant immigrants of the late 19th century to their assimilated granddaughters, rediscovering their ethnic heritage and fighting today's political battles, and the recent, mostly Muslim, immigrants. Corrects stereotypes of Arab women as passive and downtrodden; presents a diversity of articulate and spirited women in a complex cultural situation. Based on personal interviews, census records, and club minutes.

Suleiman, Michael, Ed. *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1999). This collection brings together 21 prominent scholars to take a look at the status of Arabs in North America. They examine Arab American history, Arabs in the legal system, racial constructions, youth and family, health and welfare, as well as Arab American identity, political activism, and attempts by Arab immigrants to achieve respect and recognition in their new homes.

Voices in Exile: Immigrants & the First Amendment. Dir. Joan Mandell, 1989, 30 minutes

This chilling documentary follows dramatic changes in immigration law through the deportation case of seven Palestinians and one Kenyan, targeted first as Communists and later as "alien terrorists." The ACLU and Center for Constitutional Rights take on the FBI, INS and Justice Department in a courtroom battle over whether non-citizen residents are entitled to First Amendment rights. This film is particularly relevant to the post-9/11 violations of civil rights faced by Arab and Muslim Americans. An update on this case, known as the LA-8 case, can be found at www.adc.org. (www.arabfilm.com)

Websites

American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, www.adc.org

Middle East Report, www.merip.org (See their special issue on *Arabs, Muslims and Race in America*, 224)

American Muslim Council, www.amonline.org

Valuing Every Voice: The Bilingual Education and Teaching Program at The Evergreen State College

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“Bilingual Education and Teaching” is an interdisciplinary, upper level program that was first taught at The Evergreen State College during the 1994-1995 academic year. Since then, it has been offered every other year. When I designed the program, I envisioned that it would become a great opportunity for students to integrate their foreign/second language skills into their future career plans. I did not predict that the program would actually become a constant exchange with our surrounding community and would expand my students’ and my own understanding of the role of education in our society.

The program is taught over two quarters. In the first quarter, students get introduced to several issues related to language diversity, bilingualism, and language minority communities in the US. The combination of theory and practice is essential for students to fully assimilate the program topics. The acquisition of a solid theoretical base prepares students for their work with different communities in the winter. They volunteer in local K-12 schools and organizations and get a firsthand experience to reflect upon learned theories and their own biases and limitations. The most rewarding

aspect of the program has been to see the growth in students’ understanding of the many intersections between language, minority communities, education, and power. Students gained invaluable knowledge and insights from their interaction with a diverse body of K-12 students and adult learners. I believe they come to appreciate the value of diversity in the struggle and the contributions of each member of minority communities. At the same time, students better understand their responsibility as future educators and active citizens to create a society attentive to every individual’s need, that views diversity as an asset and resource to enjoy and not as a problem to fix.

Small Doable Acts

In February 2002, seven students from the Bilingual Education Program prepared a panel presentation and a poster describing their learning experience for the Washington Center’s 16th annual conference. The title of the conference, “One step at a time: Small doable acts, worthwhile results,” resonated as a perfect description of our intent in the Bilingual Education program.

Students shared in this session their experience of bridging theory and practice.

They reflected about the value of “learning with” and not learning about, following a model that empowers them as future teachers and citizens and provides empowering consequences for the community with which they are working and from which they are learning.

Their central concept was precisely the idea of “empowerment” as defined by Jim Cummins in his latest book *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*:

“Within collaborative relations of power, “power” is not a fixed quantity but is generated through interaction with others. The more empowered one individual or group becomes, the more is generated for others to share, as is the case when two people love each other or when we really connect with children we are teaching. Within this context, the term empowerment can be defined as the collaborative creation of power. Students whose schooling experiences reflect collaborative relations of power participate confidently in instruction as a result of the fact that their sense of identity is being affirmed and extended

“They reflected about the value of ‘learning with’ and not learning about, following a model that empowers them as future teachers and citizens and provides empowering consequences for the community with which they are working and from which they are learning.”

in their interactions with educators. They also know that their voices will be heard and respected within the classroom. Schooling amplifies rather than silences their power of self-expression. (44)

Each student addressed different theoretical aspects of our interdisciplinary studies in language acquisition, bilingualism, minority language communities, US language policy and education. They emphasized the changes that took place in their own views of their society and educational system and highlighted their work and exchange with different minority communities. Here are their voices:

Rachel Kaster: *Critical Literacy*

“...learners are sociohistorical, creative and transformative beings and literacy is the process through which these learners can come to critically reflect on reality and take actions to change oppressive conditions. The ultimate goal of literacy is thus empowerment and social transformation.” (Walsh, *Literacy as praxis*, 15).

As an Evergreen student, I thought I understood the definition of collaborative learning, a process where both teacher and students work together to critically analyze the subject of intended study. But in reality, one definition cannot suffice for all situations of learning.

Until I started teaching ESL this year, I had not fully realized the political implications of learning when done collaboratively and critically. Using my experience as a guide, I am beginning to see

critical literacy as the process of empowerment in which students become critical learners and active citizens by questioning their reality. This is, in turn, the first step in the process of social change.

As a teacher of ESL, I know that many of my adult students come from varying backgrounds, some highly educated in their home country, and others illiterate in their native language and apprehensive to enter an academic environment. As a teacher of such a diverse group of students I see my time with the project as an adventure into cross-cultural communication and an examination of the teacher-student relationship. I now realize my role strictly as teacher of English to be a trivial one. I know that I am doing much more than transferring my knowledge of my native English language to my students who come to receive my ‘services’ as a teacher.

The organization where I teach ESL called Proyecto Cielo, which translates to Project Heaven, is comprised mostly of volunteers and students. The free English classes offered two evenings a week are open to all those in the community who wish to come. All of my students are Korean and Spanish speaking with the exception of one Russian speaking student. Often students come from traditional hierarchical educational systems where the teacher plays the active role and students are there to learn and not be heard. Students are also used to learning grammatical rules and practice drills where student interaction is minimal. Also, because we do not require registration and encourage students to come when they can, many students come sporadically so groups are diverse with varying levels of ability.

Because students come with different experiences in education and are not accustomed to being involved in curriculum planning our student-centered approach can be a challenge. Upon entering students complete a goal sheet describing what they hope to gain from the class. These goals are then incorporated into the curriculum. By allowing students space to give suggestions and input in their class they play an active role in their education. This student-centered approach assumes that a lesson cannot be truly meaningful to students if it is not based on their own personal needs and experiences.

Critical literacy can only take place when the teacher actively engages in the learning process with students. I also encourage my students to make connections between themselves and the lesson, which, in turn, adds to their personal sense of identity while building knowledge. But most importantly it is necessary for me to recognize that each student brings his or her own life experiences into the classroom and a cultural richness and resourcefulness that I can learn from and use as a basis for curriculum. This reciprocal relationship based on respect and understanding of where my students come from and what they wish to learn encourages us all to build a stronger identity within the context of U.S. culture.

At Cielo, through social interaction and a constant questioning of our objectives and roles, a community is formed, identities are being strengthened and awareness of citizenship is heightened all via the collaborative study of the English language. In our interactions, I see literacy happening in the conversations that take place before class begins, during class, while snacking on

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our apples slices during break time, while we congregate for community announcements, and after class as we all rush to leave for the evening, but somehow cannot stop saying ‘goodbye’, ‘thank you’, and ‘see you later’ with an incurable smile illustrating a genuine sense of accomplishment, excitement, and relief.

I am also learning that my role as the ‘teacher’ is reversed with that of my students. I am learning the meaning of critical literacy through all that they generously offer me in the classroom. They teach me how to benefit from my own education and life experiences and how to be an active ally and agent for social change.

Lauren Warren: *Biculturalism and ESL Classroom*

“Behavioral biculturalism refers to a person’s ability to participate in more than one culture depending in what the situation demands.... Attitudinal biculturalism is present when a person is able to evaluate their behavior in comparison to culturally distinct reference groups.” (Gutiérrez, *Bicultural Personality Development: A Process Model*, 96)

What can we acquire from our college experience that applies to our lives, affects our communities, and changes our world for the better? When I began my work in a multicultural ESL classroom, I was petrified. For the first time in my life I was the minority. Blonde hair, blue eyes and white, I was noticeably different from the children in the classroom. The task was to assist grades 1 through 6 in a classroom reflecting immigrant and refugee students from Korea,

Samoa, Panama, Mexico, China, Cambodia, Russia, and Vietnam.

The program I work in is considered ESL magnet design, which means second language learners from different schools within the district are transported to this central location, to work with an ESL specialist in a highly contextualized learning environment. “Contextualized learning environment” means the children are given large amounts of comprehensible input through pictures, actions, and audiovisual support.

English language learners are pulled out of their regularly scheduled content courses to engage in 2 to 2 1/2 hour sessions of intensive English support and assistance, while the mainstream students accelerate. So, not only are the students multicultural, developmentally at different stages, and potentially at risk of falling behind in their regular classroom, the ESL instructor is supposed to efficiently produce well-rounded, well-adjusted English proficient students in a limited amount of time. Some may intuitively believe this is an easy task, after all children pick up languages really fast, right? I have learned through theoretical and practical experiences, however, that second language learners may superficially appear to acquire language fast; however, research shows languages take 5-11 years to fully develop.

Needless to say I became a textbook junkie, reaching, grasping, clawing for any type of advice or instruction to work and address all of these issues. As I felt the bricks tumbling down and the walls closing in, one day I said the word basketball in Korean to

one of the young students and she brightened up and said, “YOU KOREAN, TOO!” Suddenly I didn’t have blonde hair or blue eyes or look distinctly different from the rest and I wasn’t petrified anymore.

Sometimes in order to respect others, we have to work at examining our own biases and work to rid ourselves of them. Respecting bilingualism and biculturalism may be striving to become bilingual or bicultural ourselves along with our students. Maybe not to the same extent and surely not within the same conditions, but teachers have a fundamental duty to set examples of understanding and respect for our children, which in turn will shape the communities we work and live in.

Small doable acts in an ESL class-room are simple: respect your students as individual treasures, as second language and culture learners, and encourage them to understand the intrinsic as well as the extrinsic values of education by inspiring and encouraging their own inquisitive minds and ideas.

The importance of biculturalism in an ESL classroom is not to assimilate but to integrate the students into a society where historically minorities have faced social disparities and inequalities in various social domains, based on covert and overt cultural differences. For students and teachers to successfully become bicultural in various learning contexts, cultural awareness is an important tool. Cultural awareness begins with self reflection and not self projection.

Rachel Mulry: *Class and education*
“In the words of one of the most well

“But most importantly it is necessary for me to recognize that each student brings his or her own life experiences into the classroom and a cultural richness and resourcefulness that I can learn from and use as a basis for curriculum.”

known promoters of children's critical literacy, Dr. Seuss, 'Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing's going to get better, it's not.'”

Small doable acts have become my salvation since they are potent antidotes to the overwhelming sense of powerlessness we all experience at times. Small doable acts can restore a sense of hopefulness when it seems all hope has been lost. Recently, I have been struggling to run an after school program for elementary school students from low income housing areas with high needs. Most afternoons, I was finding it difficult to identify even small things that I was doing that were worthwhile or might be making a difference.

Here I am, a middle class college student with no experience working with children from poverty trying to design a program to help “save” them. I am not trained to address the intense anger of a child whose mother has just been sent to jail or whose parents are divorcing. All I know are arts and crafts, games and science experiments. I do not know how to address the deep distrust of the school system of the child who yells to me “all teachers lie” as he runs across the playground away from my pleas that we just need to talk.

As I began to feel more and more hopeless about the good I was doing, I began to see the kids get more and more resistant to participating. Our attitudes were reflecting off each other. I was tired and they got restless and angry. They were grumpy and whiny and I got frustrated. And on top of it all I had to write a speech about how I was making a difference in my work through

small doable acts and empowering students by implementing what I had been studying.

So I started thinking about small doable acts and all the ways that I felt powerless to help. As I grappled with the positive aspects of my work, I began to realize that my first small doable act was being there every day with the children. Just showing up every day, providing a consistent structured afternoon with a snack, active play, homework help, and an activity is a small way in which I can help. I thought about all the times my planned “enrichment activities” fell apart because of disruptions from a frustrated, angry, sad, or just uninterested child and a lack of trained staff to provide for his or her needs. I realized that being there, listening, and validating his or her feelings even though I didn't know what to say or do was worth something.

Another important step I can take is to inform myself about issues of poverty in education. I can be mindful that students from poverty may not know the hidden rules of the middle class upon which our public education system is based. Although I struggle to apply what I've learned and frequently fail as I continue to judge based on the middle class norms of the school and my upbringing, I can keep trying to understand where my students are coming from. With this beginning awareness, I can at least be compassionate when their behavior differs from my expectations. As Ruby Payne (2001) says, “For our students to be successful, we must understand their hidden rules and teach them the rules that will make them successful at school and at work. We can neither excuse students nor scold them for not knowing; as educators we

must teach them and provide support, insistence, and expectations.”

I will not be able to undo the fact that our society lets these children fall through the cracks as they take money from the schools and the after school programs. I am not capable of changing the underlying set of values inherent in a system that consistently under-funds necessary programs designed to serve disadvantaged populations, resulting in under-trained staff, such as myself, struggling to provide appropriate services. I cannot change the fact that the schools continue to teach as if their students are all white middle class English monolinguals whose parents have time to be involved. I cannot change the fact that many people think that if these children could just get their homework in on time they would be able to succeed. I cannot make everyone see that the very system that labels these children “at risk” creates those risks.

There are many things that I cannot change, but I can show up and show that I care. I can continue to educate myself about issues of poverty through academic readings, but primarily I must learn by listening to the students. I can continue to be aware of the fact that they must navigate two or more sets of expectations and norms, often without guidance or support. And most importantly, I can remain hopeful by focusing on the small ways in which I am able to help bring about worthwhile results.

McKenna Gill: *Bilingual programs, learning from each other*

In effective bilingual programs, children learn English as well as the minority language, often Spanish, and become

biliterate bilingual individuals with the invaluable advantage of speaking more than one language. In such programs, there is also a positive social effect of integration because both English and minority –language children are learning together in the same classroom and from each other. I have the opportunity to volunteer in a first grade bilingual classroom in an elementary school in Shelton. Students are 70% English native speakers and an ever increasing 30% native Spanish speakers. The school is adopting a dual-language model to develop academic and language skills in both languages and produce biliterate bilingual individuals.

Spending time in this bilingual school is like a pop-up book for my present studies. Every book and expert we have read can be brought into my work in this classroom: the psychological aspects of being a bilingual child addressed in studies by Kenji Hakuta and Ellen Bialystock; the necessary background to understand better the history and situation of immigrant communities provided by McKay and Wong's *New Immigrants in the United States*; the political context of bilingual education detailed in Crawford's *Language Loyalties* and Krachen's and Cummin's theories on language acquisition and second language and bilingual development have also been indispensable in providing ideas to best serve second language learners. I have become part of a living laboratory of every theory, story and study that I have read about bilingual education.

From my observations in Shelton, I appreciate the benefits of dual language programs for young students. I see a sense of linguistic and cultural pride when the young Spanish-native students draw from their own knowledge to help the English-native peer or teacher to decipher vocabulary or read a book in Spanish. During English activities, the roles are reversed. This kind of exchange fosters mutual respect between both language groups that spreads to the playground and then to the community. These children no longer segregate themselves at recess as they did only a few years ago because of language and cultural differences. They study and play together

and soon they will work together.

These first graders have proven to me the age-old truth that teachers learn more from their students than they teach them. They have shown me that power is a social construct, and does not need to be distributed according to race or language dominance. They choose friends according to common interests, not according to ethnic and linguistic background. These children have also made me aware of the biases that I may be bringing into the classroom. I recall an instance where I spoke to a Hispanic child in Spanish and he looked up at me with frustration and said, "I don't understand Spanish." I was not aware that this child was English-dominant and later found out that about 25 % of the Hispanic students at this elementary school were English native and learning Spanish as a second language. I learned that assuming and prejudging are never going to be effective ways of evaluating a child's individual needs.

This experience has motivated me to continue studying and to become an elementary school teacher with my own classroom of linguistically diverse students. I want to be prepared to use all my education and experience to spend the rest of my life giving back to the same community that fosters my learning and contribute to the never-ending cycle of teaching and learning.

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The Gay-Straight Alliance at Whatcom Community College: A Student-Faculty Collaboration

Tara Prince-Hughes, Kathy Seibert and Bree Herndon
Whatcom Community College

At the 2003 Washington Center conference this spring, six Whatcom Community College students and I held a workshop on the “small, doable acts” that we, as members of the college’s Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), had undertaken in the two years of the group’s life. I have long respected the Washington Center’s commitment to including students in conference presentations, and my collaboration with students this year simply cemented my views. What follows are three reflections on our conference experience, from my perspective and that of two students, Bree Herndon and Kathy Seibert.

For me as a faculty member and adviser, bringing students to the Washington Center conference was especially meaningful, for it was at the same conference in February 2001 that I gained the courage to initiate the GSA. That year, I attended a session on homophobia and related issues; in a small group setting, I was able to share my fears as a newly hired instructor, wanting to do something to improve my campus climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students but not sure how my actions would be received. The encouragement of other participants inspired me, though, and I left resolved to start a support group for students. In a sense, attending that session was the first in a series of “small, doable acts,” for both the students and me.

During our work together on our campus, we have all grown on many levels. For me, collaborating with students has

provided the determination I need to face my own fears of homophobia among colleagues and administrators. I often remind myself that if I feel afraid to be open about my life with my female partner, then students – who are in a position of less power and privilege than I – must feel even more nervous about the costs of being out. By being out myself, I’ve found the support of faculty and administrators across the campus; this, in turn, has let students know whom they can trust as allies. Even more exciting has been the transformation I’ve seen among some of the students. Several of them joined the GSA as quiet, hesitant observers. Now they are budding leaders who stand up for themselves as LGBT people, trust their unique perspectives, and speak on panels at the college. Their courage has, at times, brought tears to my eyes: they are so much braver and self-possessed than I was at their age. Speaking together at the Washington Center conference, with its safe and supportive atmosphere, seemed like a wonderful way for us to continue our growth.

For our workshop, we decided to focus on the steps we’ve taken to educate people at Whatcom Community College about LGBT issues. We began by walking through several tools we use for educational panels: a video clip from Brian McNaught’s *Growing Up Gay and Lesbian*, information from the Safe Schools Coalition study, and a “Guess Who’s Straight” game to encourage playful discussion of stereotypes. During this part of our presentation, we discussed our objectives, our audience, and responses we’d

received at our panels. The rest of the session was devoted to discussing the educational climate at different schools, work done at other colleges and universities, and suggestions that participants had for our work. Several participants, including students from other colleges, gave us wonderful suggestions for developing our presentation.

After our session was over, we all branched out to experience the rest of the conference. During breaks between workshops, we talked about what we were all learning and compared ideas to take back to our campus. I think we all found inspiration in one way or another. For some students the conference confirmed their educational direction. For others it was a refreshing break from daily life, a place where they felt accepted and able to participate in conversations about diversity, justice, and teaching. We all raided the Evergreen bookstore, coming away with exciting, bargain-priced books that we exchanged and compared over lunch. A few students told me they were learning more in that short weekend than they had in some classes over an entire quarter. On the long drive back to Bellingham, we talked about how good it felt to be accepted and how hard it was to go back to a world where peers and even family reject us for our sexual orientation. Just like me, the students felt the exhilaration of emotional and intellectual expansion and experienced the same jarring transition back to the “real world,” where their lives are often a struggle. By sharing

ideas and experiences that weekend, we deepened our connection to each other.

My collaboration this year has further convinced me that any discussions of diversity, education, and excellence must include student voices. By bringing students into our workshops and forums, we not only enrich our own understanding of students' perspectives on their education, but we provide them access to conversations that usually go on behind closed doors. As professionals, we experience conferences as formative windows of personal growth, when we can set aside the daily stresses of academic life and focus on our deepest commitments. Students, who often rush from class to class and test to test, need those same windows to reflect and breathe. I look forward to next year's conference, when I can be educated by other students and perhaps even bring another group with me to share the process of learning.

Bree Herndon

The greatest benefit for the GSA members who attended the Washington Center conference was not necessarily what we were expecting. I think all of us were slightly scared that we had offended the group with our video [Brian McNaught's *Growing Up Gay and Lesbian*]. After the video presentation, many of the people present expressed frustration at the seemingly constant portrayal of the homosexual lifestyle as one fraught with everyday misery and oppression. I don't think any of us had realized that our presentation was geared primarily towards our own community and its needs and perhaps was not as accurate of a portrayal of *all* homosexuals as we might have thought. This was a great thing to have happened because, having realized the bias present in our workshop, we are now able to tailor it as needed to particular audiences if necessary.

As for the group who attended [our workshop], we were able to help point many of them in the right direction to begin making their own campuses and classrooms safe for LGBT students. We had a wonderful brainstorming session and generated some great ideas, including ideas for the GSA to

take back to WCC. We also had a raucous game of "Guess the Straight Person," where we learned that lesbians don't wear pink, shoes can have a sexual orientation, and straight men don't cross their legs.

The presentation I was part of with the GSA was a wonderful learning experience, both for us and the educators who attended. The GSA made some invaluable connections with educators from other community colleges around the state [and got] wonderful feedback on how to improve our presentation.

Kathy Seibert

It was a thrill for me to be walking around North Seattle Community College knowing that I was in the company of educators and students who are committed to making a difference. I loved the fact that two of the workshops I attended had students as part of the panels. Some were older students, like me, and I could tell by listening to them that their experiences on their respective campuses were as rewarding to them as mine are to me.

The Washington Center conference was the first time the GSA did a workshop off our campus. I was thrilled when I realized that the hard work we had put into creating it was going to spread further than I had dreamed possible. This was a glimpse into the future I envisioned for myself, the reason I decided to attend college: to educate people about things they fear or don't understand, of which sexual orientation is usually at the top of the list.

In our workshop we were preaching to not just the choir, but to the preachers, the people who have already been making a difference in their own communities. But because I believe we are all students and all teachers, I think we were able to pass some knowledge on to everyone. So many of the participants at our session have moved to the next level, a place where they are not as exposed to the fact that overt discrimination is still a fact of life in some parts of this state, not to mention this country. So while some of our workshop may have seemed like a step backward for them, for the area we live in it reaches out to people who are still in the beginning stages of learning about diversity. And thanks to the openness of the people in our workshop, we walked away knowing that with each day and each person we educate, we will move closer to the reality of having a community that honors diversity.

I told my GSA friends that this experience was a gift they would cherish. The energy and enthusiasm that are generated at events like this stay with you because of the people you talk with and the information you learn in the workshops. Indeed, even though I am writing this three months later, I can still feel the excitement as I recall the events of that weekend. The bottom line is we shape not only ourselves but the world around us when we take the time to reach out. Thank you for allowing us to do our small part to make positive changes in the world.

Stepping Out and Stepping Up: Exploring and Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Issues in Our Communities

October 24-25, 2003

Green River Community College

Registration forms available at:

www.greenriver.edu/diversity

See also:

NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel administrators) www.naspa.org

Crips in Class

Marie Marquart, Lynette Y. Romero and Joli Sandoz
The Evergreen State College

“Crips in Class,” our Washington Center conference presentation, grew out of our participation in *Disability and Chronic Illness: Psychosocial Aspects*, a four credit course offered through Evening-Weekend Studies at The Evergreen State College. We met several times to talk about our lives as people who work with chronically ill and disabled students, and/or as chronically ill or disabled people ourselves. The five questions around which we focused our conference presentation arose from these discussions, as those most central to our classroom experiences. In what follows, Joli first frames our discussion, and then we take turns addressing each question.

Universal Design of Instruction (UDI)

Lack of experience when I began teaching about chronic illness and disability (with a class about narratives of illness in 1999) led me into some sticky places. I hadn't considered that a course on illness would draw ill and disabled people, or that I would need to figure out on the fly how to teach across significant differences in communication practices, learning styles, and abilities to cognitively process spoken, written, and imaged information. After a couple of years of trying frantically to adapt learning activities and materials to individual students after the quarter began, I went looking for a better way.

The intent of the universal design of instruction (UDI) approach is to provide meaningful access to learning (not simply information) for every student, in part by designing learning activities and materials from inception with such access in mind. As

I've experimented and consulted with students about ways to accomplish this goal, my own effort and time directed to adaptive work have lessened considerably. And all of us, including students not officially designated “disabled,” have benefited. For example, our practice of reading out loud anything handed out in class that we will be using during that meeting certainly benefits learning disabled and visually impaired students, and slows down the flow of information for people affected by medications or illnesses which influence cognitive processing. It also pays dividends for not-disabled auditory learners, focuses class members on the task in hand, and reminds everyone that inclusiveness and paradigm shift are an important part of the lesson in courses centered on illness and disability.

I've found the following two websites most useful in working with universal design of instruction and learning:

Center for Applied Special Technology
[http://www.cast.org/udl/
UniversalDesignforLearning361.cfm](http://www.cast.org/udl/UniversalDesignforLearning361.cfm)

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities,
Internetworking, and Technology)
University of Washington
[http://www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/
Academics/instruction.html](http://www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/Academics/instruction.html)

Although we didn't plan “Crips in Class” this way, each of the questions surfacing from our preliminary discussions touched on UDI, very broadly defined. Access is a universal issue.

Marie Marquart

I am Marie Marquart, one of the three students who presented in the “Crips in Class” session at The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education 2003 conference with our instructor, Joli Sandoz. In our meetings before the conference, I experienced some of the small acts necessary for composing a group presentation. One of the small acts was the development of the five questions in anticipation of what information the attendees might want or need to further their interest in disabilities and chronic illnesses (CID) in the classroom.

The questions I chose to address here are:

1. What barriers did you, or the CID people you have worked with, overcome to become college students and to stay in college?
2. Speaking from a specific CID you know well enough to represent, how are the ways people with that CID take in, understand and remember information different from the majority of other students?
3. Are there big things that faculty might do to accommodate these learning needs?

As with the majority of students with a learning disability (LD), I am at all times confronted with the difficult task of acknowledging privately and/or publicly my learning disability. Most LD students entering college either have had experience dealing with the barriers of stigmatization and feel confident in this situation or are still wary of acts of oppression displayed in

attitudes and looks questioning whether or not they have the capacities to learn the class material.

My first attempts at receiving an education were shaded with rejection and prejudgments. I was asked to leave a business college after three weeks for they found that I did not have a GED or the skills to read, spell, and write at the twelfth-grade level. After attaining my GED, I tried again at a community college. They said, "We do not have the faculty or the resources to teach you at the level you are starting at," adding, "You will never make it to graduation." These academic encounters were my greatest weaknesses, but became my greatest strengths.

An individual with a learning disability must first have this problem defined, and then find a solution. Either an advocate or the individual's parents must help in finding the solution; it is nearly impossible for anyone to achieve academic success on their own. Impairment from a learning disability includes difficulty recognizing characters, time and space confusion, disorganization, and/or difficulty with comprehension. Once my problem, dyslexia, was defined, I became aware of one of the critical barriers associated with a learning disability: the time factor in learning a subject or task. Some instructors may view an individual's request for extra time as criticizing their teaching. In their classes, I am faced with the difficult and risky undertaking of inviting stigmatization and sharing personal inadequacy by disclosing my LD.

For both disabled and non-disabled students, staying in college takes everything. One additional problem for LD students is finding the needed resources, as in low to high technology equipment and assistance. More significant, though, is the essential conversion of material to be learned from a traditional linear teaching presentation to a multi-sensory approach. One of the results of this conversion is that to the instructor it looks as if students with LD are one or two weeks behind the scheduled agenda. In defense of others and myself with a learning

disability, being lazy is not the reason.

We must take the information presented in class and re-present it to ourselves in a format of multi-sensory experience. This multi-sensory learning style may require all of an individual's body and mind senses; some adaptations are physically tracing the word(s) with a finger for comprehension, enlarging words for better recognition, and sensing the word for an emotional meaning and connection, then merging that meaning into an object for visualization. For instance, if I was having a problem comprehending the word "leadership" I would break the word into sections and find an emotional connection with the first part: leader. The feelings I experienced as a little girl when I would watch my Dad, at his then current duty station, lead his troops in their weekend exercise drills gives me a familiarity with the sense of the word. Then adding the suffix "ship" to make the complete word "leadership" connected the visualization of my Dad, to the function, or position, or the ability to lead. Subsequently, when I read the word "leadership" I have not only the definition of the word, but an emotional connection and can visualize the meaning. This conversion process in total often results in doubling the learning time. Completing the writing and reading homework assignments demands different skills and techniques as well. With reading, some LD students, including myself, struggle with putting the sounds and letters together to decode words and must reread a sentence several times in order to comprehend the meaning.

Another decoding learning difficulty arises when I read long articles without the assistance of my computer-reading program; as a consequence of not being able to hear the word, I must sound it out. Once I understand all the words in a written sentence, I make sure the sentence itself makes sense and the meaning of the sentence supports the meaning of the paragraph; this process may, at times, apply to every sentence in an article, chapter, and/or book. A similar process takes place when writing a response to the readings. In writing, some

of the characteristics of a learning disability may involve disorganized thought patterns, poor word choices, misuse of words, and/or not being able to recognize writing mistakes.

The reading and writing process functions in a sequence: in order and one sequence at a time. In some extreme cases, an interruption may disorient LD individuals so that they would not be able to pick up where they left off. They are unable to comprehend starting in the middle of a sequence, and must begin the writing/reading process completely over. The process of starting over may result in all or some of the emotions leading to the feelings of humiliation, frustration, confusion, and isolation.

"Are there big things that faculty might do to accommodate these learning needs?" When I hear this question, my mind wants to scream, "No, there are not big things anyone can do!" However, there are many little things everyone and anyone can do to accommodate these learning needs. Creating a socially accepting environment, especially in the classroom, is one of the most essential small acts needed.

I had a positive experience while attending one of my first classes at The Evergreen State College. The instructor noticed I was having difficulty with my writing. Within our discussion, she expressed her concern and shared that even though she is a published author, she was still unsure of how to help. I specifically remember her words, which were, "I would like for us to teach each other, but I will wait for your lead." This was a turning point; the thought had never occurred to me, that I might have knowledge, experience, or a point of view that someone would want to learn. The other aspects of this conversation were her physical gestures and voice tones: they both expressed respect. Most individuals with a learning disability have learned to appraise a situation or task with prudence, using a high degree of awareness, intuitiveness, and insight regarding the individuals and the environment of the situation, employing the old adage, "A

picture is worth a thousand words.”

An example of when words and behaviors do not support each other is one common practice associated with the accessibility compliance statement some instructors add at the end of their class syllabus. As the instructors go over the required readings and expectations of the students, they make a caring statement about those who need special accommodations. They may say something like, “If you need help please see me during my office hours.” Unfortunately, many instructors do not use eye contact while making this statement. When caring statements are made but do not match physical behaviors or words written, it implies something is misaligned.

The above approach is different from an approach that invites sharing of a non-linear learning style. Another small act is adding an invitation—or challenge—to the non-disabled students to learn about and respect different learning styles. I must pose a question, “How can we genuinely implement universal design in the classroom without understanding and respecting the need for universal design?” If we are to make a change then all participants—faculty and students—need to engage in the small acts of creating an environment of openness, understanding, and sharing the need for universal design in our classrooms. The answer to the question, “*Are there big things that faculty might do to accommodate...*” can only be answered by evidence of these small doable acts.

Lynette Y. Romero

I am proud to be identified as one of the “Crips in Class” presenters. I am visually impaired and I use a white cane. My mobility instructors have told me that I have just enough vision to get myself in trouble, because when I feel acclimated to an environment I choose not to use my cane. It is an interesting situation because people can distinguish the fact that I have some vision, but they have no way of determining how much I don’t see. My experiences are vastly different than those having a “hidden” disability.

The first question I focused on was: *If someone said to you, “I don’t think CID people should ask for or receive special favors or accommodations in college,” what would your response be, speaking from your own experience as a person with CID or a person who had worked with CID students?*

I have experienced this situation numerous times in the past, and unfortunately, my response has not always taken the position I embrace today. I am grateful for the opportunity to give a proactive response versus a reactive response to this question.

I believe the first thing I would try to do is educate the person about the various types of disabilities that require accommodation for the student to succeed in a college setting. I would give examples of the barriers that students with CID face, and the auxiliary aids and accommodations needed to make the classroom accessible for them. I would explain that there are no “special favors” given; these services provide an equal ground or equal playing field for people with disabilities. Consider it our handicap, no different than the golfer who tees off at the handicap line. I would tell that person, if it were not for the technical support and the auxiliary aids that I have received as a person with a disability, I know that I would not be in college today. For me, providing an education for people with disabilities means that we will be able to support ourselves and become more independent. I would ask the person asking the question to consider the alternative, saying “I could live off my social security disability for the rest of my life and let YOU, the taxpayer support me, or I could take advantage of the rehabilitation programs available to me and persevere.”

I will never forget my first quarter back at college after a twenty five-year absence when this scenario first happened to me. I was still struggling with my adjustment and acceptance of my vision loss. In the rush of finding a good seat, with the best view of the board and the professor and next to my note-taker, another student plopped down

beside me and asked, “Why do you get a note-taker, and the rest of us don’t?” I realized at that point that the shallow inclusiveness required by law is often used to force normalization, creating the image that we are a “melting pot” of identities. But unfortunately, as long as society continues to create separations between people who live with disabilities and those who don’t, equality can never really be achieved just by granting accommodations. Individual attitudes must also change. My understanding of truly inclusive education is that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. When the student made that remark to me, I lost my feeling of belonging in that classroom.

The last point I would make is to explain that providing auxiliary aids to students with disabilities is the law. There are two major pieces of legislation that impact the provision of services and accommodations for students with disabilities in a post-secondary institution. They are the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sections 501 and 505, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you would like to find out more about these laws, these are web sites that you can access:

American Disability Act
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

Office of Civil Rights Under the
Department of Education
www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/index.html

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Sections 501 and 505
www.eeoc.gov/laws/rehab.html

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and 1990
www.eeoc.gov/laws/rehab.html

The second question I addressed is also one I have had personal experience with: *Have you been in programs and courses in which CID was ignored or put down? How are class experiences and learning different when CID is an acknowledged part of the*

valid or acceptable “differences” in the classroom, and when it is not?

When a professor acknowledges the fact that I have a disability, I try not to internalize the implication that I am different from any other member in the classroom. I need to do this because I want to be considered equal to any other student in that classroom environment. Acknowledging a disability is a sensitive circumstance. It is important for the instructor to check with the student to make sure that they want to disclose the fact that they have a disability, simply because some students do not want their disabilities known to the other members of class. Protecting privacy is important and should be part of policies and procedures of the institution for the student’s confidentiality and constitutional rights. Unfortunately, in my case the instructor looked directly at my white cane and before asking my permission said, “I noticed you have a white cane, you must have special needs. Does anyone else in the class have special needs that need to be addressed?” By announcing my vision loss in this manner, the instructor literally took away my control, my power to present myself to my peers in the manner that I preferred. Full inclusion in this situation would have been letting me decide whether or not to disclose my disability to the group as a whole. Unfortunately, the instructor’s attitude reinforced the bias that people with disabilities are deviant from the normative part of society. If there was a universal method of acceptance or inclusion similar to the universal design of instruction model, and the instructor chose to use it, stigmas and stereotypes about people with disabilities would start to evaporate. An attitude of acceptance has a rippling affect that spreads throughout the classroom like a rock dropped in the middle of a pond.

Joli Sandoz

What specifically can faculty do to make CID people welcome in the classroom,

and an accepted part of the class community? First, I assume that at least 9 percent of the students in any class (the national figure among US postsecondary enrollees in 1999-2000¹) will be living with illness or disabilities that result in functional impairments, and that I will not know who they are. My personal observation has been that another 10 to 15 percent, or more, will be working with and around less intrusive conditions, or the CID of a family member.

I try to model openness to differences in learning styles, and to chronic illness and disability, in several ways: brief statements about universal design and Evergreen’s air quality policy (which asks that people not wear scented products on campus) are part of a letter I send to students before the first class session and part of my introductory talk at our first meeting; I make a general announcement several times in class specifically asking people with special learning needs to talk to me about what I can do to facilitate their learning; my attendance policy suggests that people not come to class when they are contagious, as members of the class (any class) may have compromised immune status. (Anyone who misses is, of course, required to initiate a conversation with me about providing evidence of learning in lieu of attendance). In addition, I do my best to make texts genuinely accessible to people who need to arrange for readers, scanning, etc., by making a detailed week-by-week reading and assignment plan available at least six weeks before the quarter begins.

Few chronically ill or disabled students of my acquaintance have had their experiences as CID people taken seriously in classrooms. (Or, quite often, ever in public before.) This is especially the case with students who acquired their conditions after high school. Because their voices are often ignored or silenced, it seems important to create an environment in which people living

with chronic illness or disability can choose to speak from their lives. Part of this involves communal exploration of the roles of emotion, risk-taking, and personal experience in learning, and of personal experience as an acceptable source in making general knowledge. This discussion also engages definitions of confidentiality, and the value of connecting concepts and theories (the general) to the personal (the particular). As faculty, I try to model acceptance of CID, and work to create opportunities for others to perform openness (at a minimum, suspension of disbelief). One of the ways I do this is by acknowledging public disclosures of illness or disability during class discussions, and – if no one else does – by voicing illness and disability issues when diversities and differences are being listed or addressed. My required reading and film lists for any course or program include materials by people who openly claim illness or disability speaking from their own experience.

Always, one question remains: Whose responsibility is it to learn? We at Evergreen rely on the Access Services office to arrange for needed technology and accommodations requiring expenditures. As a classroom teacher, I can’t go very far beyond what I’ve outlined above, except in the way I pace and pitch specific learning activities. Diluting the difficulty and complexity of academic content is out of the question (and students have rarely asked for that). I do, however, take care to be clear about how what we are addressing each day fits with overall themes of the course; to plan a variety of content engagement approaches for each class meeting; to conduct frequent and varied assessments of concept comprehension; and to summarize key points often. Not-ill or -disabled students tend to find these “learning aids” just as useful as do the others. Inclusive teaching is about small, doable practices that foster learning, which is what we’re all trying to do, together.

¹National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, Nat’l Center for Education Statistics, US Dept of Education. “Profile of Undergraduates in US Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1999-2000.” Executive summary available at <http://nces.ed.gov/das/epubs/2002168/profile1.asp>. Accessed May 26, 2003.

Visible Border Crossers

Catherine Crain-Thoreson and Debora Pontillo
Cascadia College

Dear Debora,

It was such an honor and privilege to teach with you. I learned so much – so much about you and your personal geography and so much about my own. We worked, struggled, laughed, and cried together and when all was said and done, I feel we are much closer and a much more powerful team on our campus.

Here is the geography of my experience last quarter. We planned the class together, combining classes we had taught before: my piece was Education 105: Intro to Education, your piece was Sociology 150: Multicultural Communication. Together the learning community became “Education for Social Justice.” Our planning for the class went very smoothly – we worked well together and picked readings and assignments from our repertoire of previous experience. We also created some new things – our final project, for example, was a new creation, coming from a synergy of ideas we had each used before. We asked the students to work at a community partnership site, keep a journal, do a research project (in teams) on a social justice issue coming out of their site work, develop a social action project (in teams), and document and reflect on these experiences.

As the quarter started, I was impressed by your use of “Theatre of the Oppressed” activities and we used these each week to get students on their feet, moving and engaging in physical representations of some of the issues that our classwork raised. I was also impressed by your presence in the classroom – you are a powerful person and bring so much of yourself to your teaching. Slowly but surely, we moved from “comfortable” to “uncomfortable” territory for many of the students, and I’ll admit, for me as well – beginning to discuss issues of racism, classism, sexism, not from an historical perspective, but from a perspective of how power and privilege play out in the world we currently inhabit. You and I worked as a powerful team: you as a woman of color, I as an ally – but someone who has rarely been a victim of oppression, and has walked with privilege most of my life.

We began to notice ways that power and privilege were sometimes obstacles in our own communication and functioning as co-teachers. For example, students who were not comfortable approaching or confronting you, would only visit me during office hours, perhaps hoping for a sympathetic ear as they were challenged to confront their own power and privilege. You and I spoke of this but it was hard for me to see or hear. Nevertheless, I respected you and your perception and we began holding office hours together most days to interrupt these patterns.

I also noticed that we had different ways of teaching about issues of diversity. Given that I am not a person of color, most of my teaching about issues of diversity and education is not based in personal experience, but rather on what I have learned from books, videos, and observations. Our passions and interests overlapped to a great extent, but we had different lenses on the issues. I would often bring in a video, or a mini-lecture with charts and graphs, for example, showing drop-out rates of students of color. You would then add your perspective to my presentations, providing first person narratives from yourself or others to help students understand the emotional experience of oppression. Sometimes, I felt that my contributions were rather dry and sterile in comparison to the “real life” lens that you provided.

Our styles of communication and working were also different, more so than I had expected, given that we’ve worked as colleagues for 3 years. I tended to come to class with a fairly strict plan of what we would do. I found you to be more spontaneous – willing to modify the plan on the spur of the moment to respond to the energy of the moment and the needs of the students. There were days when I was uncomfortable with this, and felt that my contribution was pushed to the side. I began to chafe internally and feel marginalized. We spoke of this a few times, but it was sore subject and our conversations often led to hurt feelings and misunderstandings. We also had different systems of grading and were trying to merge our two approaches. I remember one day when I gave

you some instructions, and it came across as patronizing. You responded that I was treating you as if you didn't have a brain in your head and I began to cry. We hugged and talked for a long time and I tried to reflect on how I was communicating with you and improve. I interrogated myself about whether I was judging you as not being as "organized" as I was.

At a certain point about half way through the quarter, I remember feeling very tense and perhaps somewhat jealous of how the students responded to you with such amazing love and respect – you command attention in a way that I never will – and it occurred to me how much I have to learn from you. I decided to stop struggling for control, and instead just to relax and enjoy being in the space with you and the students. I tried to follow your lead and respond to the students instead of bringing in a rigid plan for the day. Our communication improved and we were able to speak honestly to each other about how we felt. We still had our struggles from time to time, but the energy had shifted and we were much more in tune with each other.

In a way, our struggles matched what was going on with our students. Although we did not completely unmask about the challenges we faced working together across our different life experiences and cultural styles, we shared some of this with students from time to time. And the class was changing. Where we had been met with a great deal of resistance, about midway through the quarter, the energy shifted for many of them as well. Most students became very engaged and seemed to be changing their perspectives in some very deep ways. I feel fortunate to have been a witness to this and to have shared in the experience. There were days in class where students cried at the injustices they had personally witnessed in their off-campus work. Students were really beginning to care about social justice. Their lives were changing.

The last day of class, we sat in a circle and each of us spoke about what the class had meant to us personally. I was moved to tears by the fact that some of the students who had initially carried a façade of being callow, hard hearted, and resistant to the messages of our class, broke down and cried about how our class had changed their lives. I have never, in all my years of teaching, felt so good about what happened in a class. And I think that our struggles played a substantial role in enabling students to engage in a similar struggle and meet this challenge.

Thank you Debora, for staying the course with me – for pushing me and challenging me, for giving me the space to do the work I needed and wanted to do, and for your amazing unconditional love and forgiveness.

What I take away:

A much deeper understanding of power and privilege and how it plays out in my life and the lives around me. A much deeper understanding that when we plan learning communities, we need to have a clear vision of the different lenses we bring. It's not enough to just divide up the content – we may address the same content but bring different ways of knowing to that content. I need to interrogate myself carefully to make sure that I don't subtly suggest that one way of knowing is superior to another. A much deeper understanding of some of my own control issues and how they can get in my way when working closely with others. A much deeper understanding of transformative educational experiences and how serendipitous and ephemeral they can be. I learned to stay open to possibilities and to chance happenings. A fundamental re-affirming of my own belief in the power of love and keeping an open heart. We never gave up – even when we were hurting and angry, we continued to engage with one another and to believe in the possibility of successfully negotiating these border crossings.



Dear Catherine:

**“Today we say enough; no longer will we live on bended knees”
(A quote from a postcard of the Zapatistas from Chiapas, Mexico)**

how can i speak to this experience...to the boundaries, to the barriers, to the border lands...disrupting, contesting...how can you teach with me in a way that does not replicate colonial relationships? how can i teach with you and not blame you and mark you white...how does one teach one's lived experience and not have that marginalized and relegated to the realm of emotion...i challenge you to see my lived experience as theoretical production, theory as a mode of resistance from my specific location or position...and how do i teach from a blood space, a bone space...i crave to remain unmasked, raw, heart exposed....and i look at you and i am reminded of entitlement, privilege seeping deep. i envied your ability to put your experience at the center in every situation... i saw in you the reasons why my presence in academia is without rest...yet we came together...promising, as adrienne rich says, to go that long hard way together... when we committed to the creation of this learning community i am not sure we envisioned the depths to which

this would push us against each other's reality... i remember telling you we would have to do together what we were asking our students to do...to negotiate the space of our differences...education for social justice...how we pushed against each other...attempting to create a space to make meaning of the multiple spaces of oppressions across our different race, culture, ethnicity and class place...through my tears you seemed so far away...our lived experience so far away from each other's...it would have been so much easier to rest on the surface and yet for me and you impossible...and where did i struggle?? i struggled to trust ...i struggled to believe you would stay during the times of discomfort when you could so easily walk away and your place in this world would not be changed....i witnessed you contract... white liberalism tasted sour against my xicana/india tongue...

and my belly is swollen, ready to give birth, all that i learned, germinating pushing against pelvis...waiting for the moment... embryonic fluid, rich clear milk of my body...release from these plump tissues what knowing has been constructed...i will hold it to my breasts... nurtured on the lives of my ancestors...i cannot and could not turn away and the deeper we worked the deeper our students engaged...i was witnessing a miracle and the power of education.

i have learned to find the crack in the armoring of my heart...i have learned to forgive...i have learned that i am not as assimilated as i thought...i learned that we must build strong partnerships, become strong allies if we are to create a culture of peace and nonviolence. ...and that it has to begin with us, you and me...for the seventh generation...i realize that my intensity is razor sharp and bone deep and i learned that people like me do not normally find themselves in the position i now walk...my presence and voice a constant reminder... and yes i live with a sense of urgency..this urgency born in a remembrance of my life before academia and my people's lives bending, as Gloria Anzaldua says, under the hot sun...how dare i dream...how dare i not dream...i feel you were not prepared for all of who i am and my dear friend i thank you for not going away, or at least for coming back...and i thank you for coming to understand that bigger than you or me is the struggle for justice, for liberation, for democracy... my commitment to the struggle does not mean i disrespect you in any manner, what it means is i will not compromise my commitment to the struggle for the liberation of my people and all people for your or my comfort...

i remember the day i read from the narratives of the wounded knee massacre...i had to pause, tears burning against the reality and the students many also unable to deny tears...they made the link in that moment... from the narrative which spoke to soldiers cutting the wombs out of las mujeres indias to the india teacher sitting in front of them...whom they had grown to love...in that moment they knew it was my/our/their wombs, it was my/ours/their humanity... i thank you for giving us the space to go to those depths...i know this required a lot of trust from you ...and i thank you for going that long hard way with me...you had to carry the weight/burden of a history of genocide, oppression, rape, hunger, torture against my people and other peoples of color that i placed on you...

for my wounds are so close to the surface, the scabs oozing and when we collided i bled again, so easily and it was not you but what you represented to my lived experience...in order to work as intimately as this required i had to forgive, i had to forgive 500 years and not forget... gracias...for our struggle has carved out a space in my heart and in our students' hearts that can not be erased or made invisible...and this is how we change, poco a poco, in small ENORMOUS doable acts...

I offer this reflection with love and respect for my teaching partner who had the courage and heart to go "that long hard way together," and to our courageous students who went with us. They are leaders towards a new vision where peace and democracy are a reality and possibility for all.

"An honorable human relationship - that is, one in which two people have the right to use the word 'love' - is a process, delicate, violent, often terrifying to both persons involved, a process of refining the truths they can tell each other.

It is important to do this because it breaks down human self delusion and isolation.

It is important to do this because in so doing we do justice to our own complexity.

It is important to do this because we can count on so few people to go that hard way with us."

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Fostering Critical Engagement in Online Discussions: The Washington State University Study

Barbara Monroe
Washington State University

Woody Allen once said that 99 percent of success is just showing up. That certainly seemed to apply to “sit-and-git” classes centered on textbooks and lectures. But with online learning there’s no place to hide. Or so we used to think. The signature tool of online learning—the asynchronous, threaded discussion—has often been praised for increased student participation rates, measured in terms of sheer numbers: numbers of students participating and numbers of contributions per student. In online discussions, students participate by posting, or they are conspicuously absent.

But quantitative participation rates don’t tell the whole story. As more courses incorporate online discussion components, and as more institutions develop distance-learning programs, we are finding that students may participate in threaded discussions, but they may not be critically engaged. Students may make only the minimal number of required postings, and then those postings will often be prosaic or monologic. Typically, these students will make their contributions and never return to the discussion. Contrary to conventional wisdom, then, it is indeed possible to hide out online.

While students’ prior educational experience and expectations certainly play a role in how they engage in online discussions, I want to focus on the relationship between online pedagogy and critical engagement. “Critical engagement” differs from simply “student engagement,” which is variously defined as student interest, time-on-task and class preparedness, or intellectual challenge (Light, 2001). By critical engagement, I mean all these definitions of student engagement, plus critical thinking, as outlined by the Critical Thinking Rubric developed at Washington State University (WSU). This rubric also plays a defining role in getting students to engage online, a point I will return to in just a moment.

What pedagogical factors foster critical engagement? That is the central research question of a qualitative study on threaded discussions recently launched at WSU. Although early findings are not yet conclusive, three factors have already emerged as crucial: assignment prompt; facilitation, and evaluation criteria.

Assignment

The assignment or discussion prompt that seeds a threaded discussion needs to be open-

ended, or what Joanne Kurfiss (1988) calls “an ill-structured problem.” While the well-structured problem has a right answer, an ill-structured problem does not, generating instead arguable propositions that need to be defended, elaborated on, modified, and so forth. Students have to combine declarative knowledge (the “facts” or foundational knowledge of a discipline) and procedural knowledge, which requires applying declarative knowledge to a problem. This kind of application motivates learners because it shows them why declarative knowledge is important.

A well-structured problem, say, in a course on Nazi Germany, might ask students to discuss why the Weimer Republic failed in pre-Nazi Germany, leading to the rise of Nazism. An ill-structured problem, on the other hand, would ask students to decide if democracy could fail again, leading to a rise in nationalistic politics and imperialistic policies in the United States or elsewhere in the world today. The two assignments will elicit very different responses online. For the first, students are being asked to show they know the material in the textbook—declarative knowledge—and they will likely respond with long, content-rich but monologic posts, not unlike the kind of

“In online discussions, students participate by posting, or they are conspicuously absent.”

answer they might produce on a paper test in an on-site course. For the second assignment prompt, however, students will have to think critically, selecting information from the textbook that might be relevant to their arguments, even as they make connections between then and now. Further, they will have to modify and elaborate on their positions as the discussion proceeds. With the open-ended, ill-structured problem, students can't just do their homework and be done with it. They have to attend to their words for the duration of the discussion. Recursiveness and interactivity are thus built into the assignment.

Facilitation

Facilitation is also crucial to students' critical engagement online. The role of facilitator may be played by either the instructor or a student, although the default should always be the instructor. Facilitation must also be of a certain kind. “Capping” (summing up) or evaluating students' responses can kill discussion just as surely as not participating at all. Often, instructors' postings sound suspiciously like end comments they might write at the end of students' papers, with praise, criticism, and a parting pat on the back: “Good post!” Such postings shut down discussion, as students read these comments as final evaluations. Rhetorical touches—such as differentiated subject lines, playful sarcasm, repositioning the assignment prompt—invite student engagement, if not always critical engagement. Asking questions, seeking elaboration, drawing different connections, digging up implicit assumptions—these are facilitation strategies that foster increased interaction, requiring students to think again and to think more deeply.

Evaluation Criteria

Early findings from the WSU Threaded Discussion Study also suggest that evaluation criteria need to assess students' contributions qualitatively, not quantitatively. The typical directions for online threaded discussions—“make one initial post and two replies to others' initial posts”—actually hinder critical engagement. The common practice of requiring all students to make initial posts invites redundancy and banality; it also starts too many parallel conversations, dispersing the discussion and multiplying the information on-screen needlessly. And insofar as a course seeks students' critical engagement, the Critical Thinking Rubric developed at WSU, or versions thereof, would be most appropriate. The directions for participating and the criteria used for evaluating should be distinctly different, but at the same time, they work together to support critical engagement.

Here is an example from my own policy statement that I use for my own courses, both hybrid and distance:

Expectations for Threaded Discussion Participation

We collaborate and construct knowledge together to achieve the course objectives primarily through Threaded Discussions (TD) based on selected readings and keyed into the course's line of inquiry. Although these are not evaluated quantitatively, the expectation is that each of us will make several postings for each TD, which will be open and active for one week. Here are some tips for making these discussions highly interactive, intellectually stimulating, and, ultimately, critically engaging:

- Post in a timely fashion. Read and post every day over the week or two that a discussion is in progress.
- When you post, start a new thread if your topic or point is indeed a new topic or point. If it isn't, post your remarks within another person's thread that is similar to your original point. Don't just agree, however; go ahead and extend, elaborate, give examples, draw comparisons, make connection to your own lived experiences.
- For each posting—including a Reply—write a new Subject Line which captures the gist of what you want to say. You may also want to make your Subject Lines catchy or humorous, although you don't have to.
- Indicate paragraphing by skipping a line between ideas. Avoid excessively large “chunks” of text online for the sake of readability. At the same time, don't break up your text willy-nilly. Your paragraphing should reflect breaks in ideas or represents sub-points.
- Don't be afraid to disagree and to challenge each other, but always be civil. Don't insult others or dismiss their views. When you realize that you heartily disagree, a good strategy is to be an active listener: that is, summarize what you “hear” others saying—without being sarcastic.
- Use emoticons (little smiley faces and versions thereof) if you think your remarks will be taken the wrong way—that is, in a hurtful, dismissive, or insulting way.

Evaluation of Threaded Discussion

I will grade only two TDs all semester, each worth 15 points each. Which two is a mystery, although the later ones, rather than the early ones, will more likely be graded. How will you know if you're doing well enough on these TDs before I grade one? Follow my lead. I'll be participating in the same way that I expect you to.

The *evaluation criteria* (adapted from WSU's Critical Thinking Rubric <http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/ctr.htm>) has three dimensions (see box at right):

Of the three pedagogical features crucial to critical engagement, the last—evaluation criteria—may prove to be the most important. Of course, getting students to critically engage in a course is not just a problem we encounter online. It is one we confront in every writing assignment, in every oral class discussion, in every student project. Certainly, prior schooling experiences have conditioned students' expectations of how and what they are supposed to be learning, and we are not going to change those expectations overnight. But we can begin by making our own expectations, as well as our evaluation criteria, explicit. Then we have to practice what we preach, modeling civil, civic, and critical engagement as a habit of mind, not a matter of facts.

References

The Critical Thinking Rubric. Washington State University, <http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/ctr.htm>. Retrieved May 21, 2003.

Kurfiss, Joanne. *Critical Thinking: Theory, Research, Practice, and Possibilities*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education, 1988.

Light, Richard J. *Making the most of college: Students speak their minds*. Harvard University Press, 2001.

1. Makes substantive contribution to the discussion

substantial = 3

- encourages further interaction by challenging, offering, or requesting further elaboration
- offers thoughtful and substantive analysis of the issue and/or other posts
- identifies the main issue and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the issue
- identifies not only the basic issue, but recognizes the nuances of the issue

scant = 1

- tends to consist of non-substantive comments such as "I agree"
- summarizes rather than analyzes source material and/or other posts
- is confused or identifies a different or irrelevant issue
- misrepresents the issue or other posts

2. Presents the STUDENT'S OWN perspective and position relative to OTHER salient perspectives and positions

substantial = 3

- includes references to other posts
- demonstrates a willingness to listen to and consider other viewpoints
- identifies and explains one's own position and/or choices to the problem, drawing from experience and information not available from assigned sources
- draws explicit critical distinctions among perspectives and positions

scant = 1

- is self-contained with little or no reference to other posts or sources
- tends to espouse personal opinions and does not demonstrate a willingness to engage in a critical examination of alternative views
- addresses a single source or view of the argument and fails to clarify the established or presented position relative to one's own
- fails to establish other critical distinctions among perspectives and positions

3. Identifies and assesses the quality of supporting data/evidence and provides additional data/evidence related to the issue.

substantial = 3

- examines the evidence and its source; questions its accuracy, precision, relevance, completeness
- recognizes cause and effect and addresses existing or potential consequences or implications that may logically follow
- surfaces value judgments embedded in assertions and supporting data/evidence

scant = 1

- merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth, or denies evidence without adequate justification
- confuses associations and correlations with cause and effect or make other logical fallacies; fails to surface value judgments embedded in assertions and supporting data/evidence

Revision in a Collaborative Mode

Kay Tronsen and Tony Schmidt
Washington State University

One of the unique features of the Freshman Seminar Program at Washington State University is the emphasis on collaborative peer facilitation in the seminars and collaborative leadership within the program itself. With over fifty undergraduate and graduate students involved, this emphasis creates an unusual amount of energy as well as offering many perspectives, but it takes patience and commitment to achieve anything. Nowhere is this energy and perspective more clear than our work on the critical thinking rubric.

Our seminars¹ emphasize research and critical thinking which culminates in a web-based presentation of the students' research in a final project. This final project is evaluated by a group of facilitators (graduate and undergraduate), shared-course faculty, librarians, and staff using our adaptation of the critical thinking rubric. Our rubric was adapted from the Critical Thinking Project at WSU—a FIPSE CT grant-funded effort to encourage use of this assessment tool across disciplines. Since our seminar projects are multimedia in scope, we wanted our rubric to reflect these multimedia elements. (See Figure 1)

Concerns about the rubric arose during biweekly meetings that all facilitators can choose to attend called Open Forum. As implied by the title, facilitators have the opportunity to raise any issue for discussion. The critical thinking rubric became the focus of two semesters of discussion and work.

What have we learned from the process?

Collaboration around an assessment tool like a critical-thinking rubric takes time but offers many opportunities for conversations that really “get at” what we want our students to be able to take away from our seminars. We found ourselves engaged in ongoing discussions, both casual and formal, in and outside of structured meetings, about critical thinking and how we talk about critical thinking among undergraduates, graduates, and administrators. Our work on the rubric has led to more awareness and explicit attempts to integrate the rubric into daily classes and assignments (see figure 2), more explicit discussions of what the critical thinking elements are and mean, more attention to the language used in the rubric and in the project assignment itself, and an increased awareness of what we want to accomplish in Freshman Seminar.

The obstacles to collaborative leadership can be daunting. Collaboration takes time as the lead facilitator must gain a sense of the process – when to move things along, when to be quiet and let discussions develop naturally. Scheduling also becomes an adversary of effective collaboration. Because of busy work and class schedules, finding a time to meet can be difficult.

While obstacles can be expected, one unexpected reality of such collaboration is that it never stays in its defined box. While the focus has been the rubric, it has led us to other collaborations around program issues and ideas like an on-line interactive rubric that will demonstrate each rubric element in an actual Freshman Seminar Project, a new project in process!

It has been an asset to have undergraduates, graduate and doctoral students, and staff give their own perspectives.

- Molly Simasko, Peer Facilitator

There is an amazing quality to the kind of collaborative work I've seen done in Freshman Seminar this past year. The value of the experiences and knowledge that everyone brings to the program can't be overstated. They are our means to improvement and strength.

- Kay Tronsen, Freshman Seminar Coordinator

Discussions transform from simple revisions into learning points in which our facilitators reflect and improve on how they communicate evaluation criteria to first-year students. I feel privileged we can allow for this kind of professional development.

- Tony Schmidt, Assistant Freshman Seminar and Hypernaut Coordinator

Figure 1
Original Critical Thinking Rubric (10 point, absolute scale)

1) PURPOSE: Identifies and summarizes the problem/question at issue and suggests why people should care.	
<i>1 Scant</i>	<i>10 Substantially</i>
<p>Does not identify and summarize the problem, is confused about the question at issue, or identifies a different problem or issue from the focus of the project.</p> <p>The questions/topic is overly familiar, not one connected to issues relevant to the researchers, the academic community, and others.</p> <p>Project shows little or no critical thinking; repeats common assumptions and generalizations.</p>	<p>Identifies not only the main problem but other issues that cause or are connected to the problem in important ways. Explains the “big picture” that surrounds the issue.</p> <p>Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but indicates why it is important to the audience.</p> <p>Approaches the topic with originality and critical analysis, raising thought-provoking questions and insights.</p>

Figure 2
Revised Rubric with similar focus on purpose/question at issue

<i>2 Emerging</i>	<i>4 Developing</i>	<i>6 Mastering</i>
<p>Does not identify and summarize the problem or identifies a different problem unrelated to the issue.</p> <p>Does not address the significance of the problem; merely presents the information about the issue.</p> <p>Approach to the problem is mundane and does not create interest for the audience.</p> <p>Visuals and/or multimedia elements merely illustrate and/or distract audience from identifying the problem.</p>	<p>Introduces and summarizes the main and the underlying aspects.</p> <p>Explains why the problem is significant to the audience. Goes beyond simply presenting information.</p> <p>Visuals and/or multimedia elements draw in audience without distracting viewer from central issue.</p>	

Figure 3
Adaptation of rubric to use as part of project assignment: Brainstorming a topic, locating the central question

<p>Introduces and summarizes the main problem and the underlying aspects.</p> <p>Explains why the problem is significant to the audience. Goes beyond simply presenting information.</p> <p>Visuals and/or multimedia elements draw in audience without distracting viewer from central issue.</p>	<p>What is your topic? What is your research question? What issues are related to your topic? How are these issues related to the topic and research question?</p> <p>What is the purpose of the project? What underlying assumptions do you hope to uncover? What makes your topic relevant to a wide audience?</p> <p>What do other people already know about this topic? How are you going to stay away from just reporting known facts? Does your thesis include all relevant viewpoints, including your own?</p> <p>Are the majority of images vital to the viewer’s understanding of the problem?</p> <p>Do the images provide a visual perspective of the argument?</p>
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¹ We typically offer from 19 to 26 sections of Freshman Seminar each semester which are led by two undergraduate peer facilitators. The peer facilitators are placed in groups of five or so, and these clusters are led by graduate facilitators. The five graduate facilitators, in turn, are part of a more formalized collaborative leadership group, which includes the Freshman Seminar Coordinator and other administrative personnel from the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

Moving Beyond Text and Talk: The Tableau Performance Method

Heather Dorsey and Mark Pedelty
General College, University of Minnesota

“Typical tableaus indicate that high school is compulsory, while college is voluntary; high school life is externally disciplined, whereas college life is self-directed; high school is about the transmission of information from teacher-experts to passive student-learners, while college is more about student and teachers working as co-learners, scholars all. Other tableaus have dealt with gender, cliques, and related issues.”

Unspoken dynamics often exert more influence in the classroom than that which is spoken. Antagonistic inter-group relations, math anxieties, racial issues, clashing class-based expectations, or gender discriminations can remain hidden below the surface, perhaps unknown to the instructor beyond a vague sense that something is “wrong” in the class. Because we mainly teach first year students in a developmental context, we are particularly concerned with the students’ unarticulated conceptions of college-level learning, ideas about education that often fuel self-defeating behaviors. We developed a simple performance method to bring these ideas and expectations to the surface, where they can become part of an active discussion and negotiation over what sort of learning should take place.

One of the goals of an entry-level college course is to teach students how to learn in college. However, students enter with their own understandings of what a class should be, largely derived from years of experience in K-12 settings. Naturally, the first year students’ conceptions of what a class is and should be often differ greatly from the instructors’. It is in that disconnect that some students get lost, failing to make the high-school-to-college transition. Often, these same conceptions and misconceptions impeded the students’ success in high school as well, making it doubly important for us to deal with them early in the college career.

Our goal here is to outline a simple performance exercise that has helped us bring covert classroom conceptions to the surface. We will use the high-school-to-college transition example introduced above. However, this method can be used to address many other issues, and is particularly useful for dealing with problems that resist simple text-and-talk strategies.

The Tableau Method

Students are divided into groups of 4-6. They are asked to come up with one important difference between high school and college learning (10 minutes). Next, they are asked to develop two tableaus illustrating that difference. A tableau is a set of poses, a human ‘snapshot’ that clearly illustrates a point. We use a few social realist paintings like the “Last Supper” to explain what a tableau is.

They first sketch the tableau on a piece of paper, writing down their cast of characters as they go (10 minutes). Each student needs to take on a particular role in the tableau (e.g., talkative student, attentive instructor, boring instructor, etc.). Next, the groups are given about twenty minutes to rehearse their tableaus, and told that each character must be able to explain his or her role clearly to the class.

Each group presents their high school tableau. After they strike their poses, we take a photo to record the act. We then ask the

audience to guess what the tableau is meant to illustrate. Then, each character is pulled out of the tableau, one at a time, and asked to explain who they are, what they are doing in the scene, their relationship to the other characters, and anything else we should know for their performance to achieve its intended goals. The process is repeated with the college tableau.

Rather than fully discuss the issues raised in the tableaux that same day, we put off the wrap-up discussion until the next class meeting. We use a digital camera, so that the images can be easily download and projected as part of a PowerPoint presentation. At the start of the next class meeting we show the tableau photos to the class. Like the performance exercise itself, the photos help further objectify the issues, safely placing the issues on the table for discussion. That way it is less likely that a specific participant—student, teacher, or other—will feel like they are being directly criticized. These are actors playing roles, not students criticizing peers or instructors.

As opposed to many performance exercises, skit-level humor is welcome here, because it can cut the edge of potentially dangerous topics and lead to very serious conversations about learning experiences, desires, and expectations. Also, it is about students teaching each other how to act, rather than instructors imposing a disciplinary model. That is important when dealing with students who are “stuck” in a high school mode. Any disciplinary act on the part of the instructor merely reifies the student’s view that teachers are disciplinary agents “making them be there,” a belief system many students associate with high school, rightly or wrongly. The students who find their college learning experience diminished by peers who are still acting “high school” appreciate the opportunity to set a more adult tone for learning. They can also serve as models for independent and self-motivated learning to those students who have let inertia, rather than proactive academic interests, lead them to college.

Typical tableaux indicate that high school is compulsory, while college is

voluntary, high school life is externally disciplined, whereas college life is self-directed, high school is about the transmission of information from teacher-experts to passive student-learners, while college is more about student and teachers working as co-learners, scholars all. Other tableaux have dealt with gender, cliques, and related issues. Although students often draw simple good vs. bad dichotomies between college and high school, the images have nonetheless led to productive discussion and may present an ideal of what college learning should be like.

Using the photos, we ask students if the images they have created correspond to their lived experience. The ensuing discussion has led to important breakthroughs in terms of classroom comportment and student engagement. This is particularly important for classes where students are asked to do things they may not have encountered in high school. In our case it means non-actors are asked to learn about and perform seemingly difficult texts, including Shakespearean drama. This exercise is partly an attempt to accelerate the maturation process. Our assumption is that students can individually and collectively learn less if they continue to operate under negative conceptions of what constitutes learning. Likewise, our teaching improves when we come to understand students’ experiences, interests, and expectations. It is not always easy to see ourselves performed by students, but it is always instructive.

Although our primary concern is with the high school-to-college transition, the tableau performance method can be used for other purposes as well. Like Augusto Boal’s Forum Theater (1979, 2002) and Jonathan Fox’s Playback Theater (1994), the tableau method helps a group identify and deal with important issues that are often hard to articulate in other ways. Unlike those methods, the tableau approach can be completed in a relatively short period of time, without the need for trained performance facilitators. Static tableaux are much easier to design and perform than improvisational movement and dialogue. By the end of the semester, our students are able to do the

latter. However, it is important to deal with classroom dynamics very early on in the course, before they are fully comfortable as performers.

Based on what we have observed in the classroom and in conference workshops, the tableau method appears to be working. Our photos present clear evidence of the quality of student participation. Student remarks on class evaluations have also been very positive, such as one student who stated that “this class brought issues alive.” This is the goal. Classrooms are always performance spaces. It is useful to take that which is performed subconsciously and act it out in a more conscious fashion. This way our behaviors and mindsets can be critically reexamined, challenged, and modified, if necessary. That is the heart of learning.

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Creating a Reflective Space: The Teaching and Learning Academy at Western Washington University

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The Teaching-Learning Academy (TLA) at Western Washington University is a campus-wide forum for faculty, student affairs personnel, classified staff, administrators, and students. The TLA meets informally, and regularly, to *study* issues related to teaching and learning. This year, the object of study has been general education, in broad terms, and our General Education Task Force's draft recommendations, in particular. Currently, the TLA has about 95 active members, fifty of whom are faculty and twenty are students. The total membership represents thirty-five academic departments and units from across the University. In addition to meeting biweekly in four study groups at various times, the TLA also sponsors other campus-wide events, such as a recent all-faculty forum on general education reform.

Students in the TLA participate as part of course expectations for University 397, "Learning Reconsidered," a 3-credit elective seminar in which participants read, write, and talk about their own education and its relationship to the learning environment at Western. Class and TLA study group discussions are informed by an anthology of readings on higher education, entitled *You Are Here*, edited by Russel Durst. In addition to discussing and writing about these readings and participating in biweekly TLA

study groups, students in the course also conduct individual interviews, write reflective essays, and discuss case stories from the *Critical Moments* casebook.

Scholarship of teaching and learning

In the language of current educational jargon, TLA participants work at "the scholarship of teaching and learning" which assumes that teaching and learning are complex processes that are not easily observed, measured, or improved and are ones that require scholarly study. In other words, the nexus between teaching and learning is viewed as a legitimate site of inquiry that needs a scholarly community and infrastructure to support its investigation of teaching-learning problems – along with occasions for a public exchange of ideas, habits of peer review, and professional rewards. From this perspective, teaching is viewed as an expansive enterprise (not confined to the classroom or only to regular faculty) that involves not merely methods or techniques, but also research into the lived experiences of our students. The scholarship of teaching and learning is distinguished from scholarship in the discipline of education because it is approached as an aspect of individual practice. Instead of third-party researchers studying the practice of others, this is work undertaken by individuals studying and *theorizing* their own practices. This kind of

investigation also alters the role of students "making them more active agents in shaping and examining the processes of teaching and learning...as co-investigators and agents, rather than as objects" (qtd. in Hutchings 8).

In the language of ideology, the TLA is about *praxis*: practice informed by theory and theory refined by practice. In order to shape and change our world, we need to *understand* what we are doing. In this way, the TLA embodies the notion of praxis, for it seeks to promote an ongoing venue for theorizing practice in an effort to liberate individual and collective change.

Student Voice Section

Here's what PJ Redmond (senior, Political Science), who serves as a TLA and learning class co-facilitator, has to say about the power dynamics from a student perspective: "TLA engages participants across differences by offering an outlet to those with little or no voice. As a student, I find it difficult to express myself to a professor or administrator, regardless of topic, if there is little to promote our dialogue. As a Black male, it's even harder for me to voice concerns. TLA breaks down our institutional hierarchies by providing all participants with an intimate atmosphere and equal ground. By participating regularly, we recognize that each member has a voice, and it is our

“The nexus between teaching and learning is viewed as a legitimate site of inquiry that needs a scholarly community and infrastructure to support its investigation of teaching-learning problems....”

responsibility to accept and respect that voice. Without this kind of talk, a healthy and meaningful relationship between these groups is almost impossible to achieve. TLA conversations acknowledge that the university is not only a place of scholarly education, but also an institution where growth, maturation, and development are essential. If social development is a prerequisite for an effective learning community, multiple venues of dialogue need to be implemented to promote this development. The TLA is a means to this end by creating a collective conscious out of individuals - allowing all voices to converge as one. A barrier to programs similar to the TLA is the administrative hierarchy prevalent in all institutions of higher education. The TLA helps to breakdown these hierarchies and address problems communally instead of individually.”

A reflective space, a shared language

So why does Western have a TLA? In a time of limited resources, how can we justify creating and developing such a structure? Perhaps the TLA exists because never has it been so challenging to create spaces in our busy lives for reflecting on our practices. Many faculty members (especially in lower division general education courses) talk about the increasing number of students in their classes, along with increasing workload issues outside of teaching. Many students talk about the challenges they face in working two or three jobs (often not to pay for ski trips but for rising tuition) at the same time that they struggle to find time and energy to engage with their courses. And in an age of technological access, we all are able to move more quickly and do more than

ever before. But the accelerated pace does not seem to enable us to open up more places for reflecting on where we're going so quickly.

Perhaps the impulse behind the TLA is the need to have some kind of shared language in order to communicate. As Kegan and Lahey (2001) acknowledge in their study, *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way we Work*, “work settings are language communities,” so we need to ask if there is a mother tongue. In order to understand each other across differences, we need to talk together. Otherwise, we end up developing specialized dialects that preclude us from communicating effectively when we need to. In higher education, where the structural and intellectual boundaries of our disciplines and departments tend to isolate us from each other, it seems particularly critical that we have some kind of institutional commons where we can come together to establish a shared language.

Jeff Purdue, Library faculty and an active TLA member, describes the kind of critical talk that he needs to sustain his teaching: “When I was in graduate school and teaching for the first time (freshman composition classes), my fellow graduate students and I would gather every week or so at 5:00 Friday afternoons to talk about teaching. We'd take turns choosing an article that addressed something we were dealing with in our classrooms. These articles served as springboards for discussion about our own classroom practices. These discussions helped us to think about our own teaching in a critical way and to learn something of what others had thought about the issues that mattered to us. Since most of us were first-

generation college students, and since we were teaching in a highly diverse university, our discussions were often focused on the myriad ways in which class, race, and gender impacted our lives both as teachers and students. I always expected that there would be a lot of opportunities for similar kinds of discussions once I became a member of the faculty. For whatever reason, this level of collegiality has been difficult to achieve. The TLA has played the role of enabling the kinds of discussions I describe above. It allows faculty to come together informally to explore the scholarship of teaching and learning in a way that is rejuvenating. And best of all, it goes beyond simply being a forum for faculty to have discussions, since students play such an important role in the TLA. We are able to explore our commonalities across institutional (and other) divisions; and for me, some of this exploration has included considerations of class, race, and gender and their impact on our lives as scholars, teachers, and learners. The TLA reminds me of why I entered academe in the first place.”

Kathy Patrick, a course and TLA co-facilitator, describes how both individual and collective interests can be served by this kind of institutional learning community IF each voice is heard and honored: “Participating in a learning community is really an exploration of self although the goal is ultimately to speak with one voice or sing the same tune. That's what I have found in my learning community experience as a facilitator for a TLA study group. The group met every other week to discuss changes to the University's general education requirements. To be truly representative of the University community, the group counted

“The key to any learning community and to this group in particular was that despite different levels of understanding and experience, the people who participated in this group met as peers.”

among its members faculty, students, staff, and administrators. The key to any learning community and to this group in particular was that despite different levels of understanding and experience, the people who participated in this group met as peers. Each opinion was heard, treated with respect and recognized as valuable.”

A culture of peace and justice, a space for hope

While our focus the past two years has been on general education, perhaps the real motive for the TLA is not really any particular reform effort, but rather the revitalization of our whole institutional learning culture. As Robert Holyer (2002) contends, “the renewal of faculty culture may be more central to the vitality and success of general education than the current and long-standing focus on the curriculum.” TLA participants say that the

dialogue nourishes them and gives them energy to keep on keeping on.

Or perhaps the real imperative for having a TLA responds to our global context where whole nations have learned *not* to talk through differences, but rather to strike out and eradicate those differences. As conversations at the 2003 Washington Center Conference suggested (especially those inspired by Marjorie Agosin’s poetry), more and more of us in higher education are hoping to create cultures of peace and justice. The TLA represents one kind of learning community that is working to enact such a desire. Maybe we’re desperate for a place simply to *believe* in the power of reasoned discourse. Could it be that we simply need to carve out what David Harvey (2002) calls a “space for hope”? Maybe the whole point of the TLA talk is *just* that: the talk.

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Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL)

CASTL represents a major initiative of The Carnegie Foundation. Launched in 1998, the program builds on a conception of teaching as scholarly work proposed in the 1990 report, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, by former Carnegie Foundation President Ernest Boyer, and on the 1997 follow-up publication, *Scholarship Assessed*, by Charles Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene Maeroff.

www.carnegiefoundation.org/CASTL/index.htm

Putting an Asset-Based Perspective into Practice: The Collaborative Learning and Instruction Center at South Seattle Community College

Shash Woods
South Seattle Community College

“As an example of an out-of-class experience that students are having that really make a difference for them, I remember in my interviews with some community college students when we asked, “Where does real learning take place?” someone said, “the patio areas.” And I inquired a little bit about that, and what was going on in the patio areas was very interesting. I mean, students were helping each other with, for example, math problems, and as they did so, they said, “You know, I really understand this. I thought that I didn’t, but in explaining it to my friend, I realized that I knew this!” They were sharing their stories about problems that they were having in classes. This was the time that was social as well as academic. So the patio areas, outside of the classroom, became some of the most important places that they could be ...”

Laura Rendon, Researcher, from audiotape: *Voices of Transition*

CLIC is a patio area. The name Collaborative Learning and Instruction Center is a mouthful, so around campus it goes by the acronym CLIC, which happily also evokes the image of turning on a light, snapping the fingers, being struck by that Aha! moment. The intention of CLIC is to be a paradigm change, a work in progress where staff and students mutually create an innovative, effective, hospitable environment for community college learning.

In order to understand what CLIC can do, it’s worth looking literally at CLIC as a consciously prepared physical space, a sort of Montessori environment for adults. As you walk into CLIC’s entrance hallway, you see the banner “Student Showcase” along one wall; below it a variety of informal exhibits rotate through: student paintings, study skills collages, digital portraits of student senators. As the hall opens out to the main study room, a round table set with photos of various CLIC students working and playing and a box of little table-top planet Earth flags, useful for non-verbally hailing a tutor, briefly stops students on the way in. CLIC is a project of Student Success Services (SSS), a TRIO program at South Seattle Community College. The purpose of TRIO is to assist first-generation, low-income, and/or disabled students meet their educational goals. Even though more than 80% of SSCC’s 8000+ students can meet TRIO guidelines, SSS can serve only a fraction of them due to the limits of grant funding. So the 185 eligible SSS participants, usually about 40 a day, must pause at the table and sign in on their way into CLIC. If they glance up, they can identify staff helpers through the photos of the four part-time tutors and two full-time advisors, who cover 30 hours of open lab time weekly.

The CLIC environment is light, airy, and spacious enough for 30 students to study comfortably around five tables, eight computers, two couches. A more private phone/desk/computer office branches off to the side. The furniture is deliberately arranged to encourage informal face-to-face and group gatherings. The couches, set in an “L”, invite students to lean in head-to-head for club meetings, to munch lunch while leafing through a magazine, to nab the quick nap between classes.

Along another wall, hot water and tea bags wait beside mini-carrots and a candy bowl. Behind the coffee pot are posted community and cultural event notices, culled from the UW MOSAIC listserv and other non-traditional sources, aimed toward the various cultures and ages of CLIC students. Posters around the room feature northwest Native American

art, a saying from Zimbabwe: "If you can walk, you can dance; If you can talk, you can sing," a roster of notable Asian-Americans, a Vietnamese lunar calendar, Alice Walker cradling a seedling as she lowers it into the earth. An old-fashioned typewriter for filling out forms and addressing envelopes sits strategically below two bulletin boards. One features scholarships pre-selected for timeliness (deadlines within the month) and probability of successful application based on targeted CLIC demographics. The other announces small-group field trips to 4-year universities, showcasing regional schools and emphasizing financial aid deadlines. A fish tank and two big rubbery plants soften the edges of the room and live at their own pace, modeling survival beyond the frenzy of finals week.

In addition to the bulletin boards, information-rich resources in CLIC include: a chart of tutor schedules & skill strengths, a system of book-marked web sites on ESL grammar, chemistry, FAFSA, INS, IRS, etc. on each computer, a shelf of dictionaries, writing handbooks, math textbooks, two drawers of application materials and information on Washington state four-year colleges, a drawer of handout copies on resume writing, factoring, verb tenses, test anxiety, math English, and more. Visiting speakers bring information to CLIC. *Fields of Opportunity* brings people of color who are accomplished in various professional fields to talk about their specialties and the paths that took them there. An annual workshop with immigration lawyers provides an overview of current naturalization and civil liberties law, combining it with free one-on-one consultation.

The important counter-balance to the large number of information resources available in CLIC and the wide variety of choices they imply, is the creation of an inclusive and non-threatening human environment where educational risks can be taken relatively safely. The humane facilitation of learning interactions in CLIC, the creation of dialogue at all levels, is extremely important. As bell hooks (1994) notes in *Teaching to Transgress*, "Despite

the contemporary focus on multiculturalism in our society, particularly in education, there is not nearly enough practical discussion of ways classroom settings can be transformed so that the learning experience is inclusive." She continues, "Working with a critical pedagogy based on my understanding of Freire's teaching, I enter the classroom with the assumption that we must build 'community' in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor."

Creating effective learning communities, similar to those described by hooks, has often been hobbled by a false dichotomy between the rigorous and the nurturing in our descriptions of quality education. As a community college professor explains on the audiotape *Voices of Transition*: "...there doesn't need to be a conflict.... It's not about compromising standards... We know how students learn, and we know that they learn at different rates, and being responsive to those differences is simply good education. It's not coddling, it's not spoon-feeding, it's taking advantage of what we know about how students learn; in fact to do otherwise is to compromise standards." To create a rigorous academic environment in CLIC that is simultaneously nurturing and inclusive, we are intentionally changing the paradigm from an over-focus on barriers to focus on attributes and assets.

"Each time a person uses his or her capacity, the community is stronger and the person more powerful. That is why strong communities are basically places where the capacities of local residents are identified, valued and used. Weak communities are places that fail, for whatever reason, to mobilize the skills, capacities and talents of their residents or members."

"If a community development process is to be asset-based and internally focused, then it will be in very important ways "relationship driven." Thus, one of the central challenges for asset-based community developers is to constantly build and rebuild the relationships..."

Building Communities from the Inside Out,
John P. Kretzmann & John L. McKnight

Every student comes to CLIC with strengths both as an individual and as a member of a home cultural group. SSS sees its multicultural student body as its natural constituency and as a source of power. We do not want students to "check their cultures at the door," thus depriving themselves of their foundation identities, and the college of the critical insights of a pluralistic population. Historically, however, many cultural groups have been viewed as outside of, and therefore underserved by, Western academic culture. Stephen Brookfield personalizes this problem when he says that finding a new home in the intense critical-thinking world of the academy can be extremely disorienting, particularly to college freshmen, who have feelings of "impostership." An imposter is a negative self-image, not an "asset-based" identity. Students who feel themselves to be imposters find it hard to develop the stamina to persist. CLIC counteracts this culture shock by connecting students back to terrain they know, while supporting forays into the unknown. CLIC is cozy with physical references to many cultures (posters, fabrics, events, languages), as well as artifacts of generic U.S. home-life, (couch in CLIC; couch at home; coffee-maker in CLIC, coffee-maker at home.) The diverse and multilingual tutoring staff has been educated in Asia, Africa, and Europe as well as the United States. Students on South's campus, themselves among the most diverse in the state, can see their own faces, experiences and aspirations reflected in the CLIC tutors. CLIC is designed to appreciate a multiplicity of family and world knowledge, to ameliorate the stress of the strange, and thus make it possible for new students to make the risk-taking choices necessary to enter the academic world as true players.

On the individual level, first generation, low-income, and disabled students, (TRIO's constituency) and students of color are often viewed in academia through a deficit-based lens. They are seen as people who come to the institution with a lack of basic skills, lack of money, lack of knowledge of academic culture, burdened with children, the need to work, families uncomprehending or wary of the world of academic success. Framed this

way, the student is the problem, the institution the solution. But, as Vincent Tinto points out, although student "attributes" and "the situations they face" are usually beyond the resources or expertise of the institution to address, colleges persist in fussing over these factors, rather than turning the mirror on themselves and doing the hard, time-consuming work of reshaping academia to be responsive to students as they are.

This perspective actually presents a failure of institutional vision on a number of levels: First, it could be described as dysfunctional and irresponsible for higher education to continuously swat at factors outside its control, while ignoring its inherent vocation as designer and sustainer of effective educational environments. Secondly, as Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) further point out, "It is clear that every individual has needs or deficiencies. It is also clear that every individual has gifts and capacities. ... The glass is half full and it is half empty. ... However, the part of people that builds powerful communities is in the capacity part of its members." Human learning is by definition a social event: we grow and pass on our collective knowledge. People who want to participate in the human learning saga but are defined once they arrive as the sum of their deficiencies don't care to learn from those labeling them that way, and they don't stick around. Viewing students from an asset-based, rather than deficit-based perspective is the humane and practical way to create educational community. This philosophy is the foundation of our work in CLIC.

Students in CLIC are not just passive consumers of a one-on-one tutor/student pair educational package that has been pre-arranged for them. Instead, upon entering CLIC the student must use one of the "Earth" flags to hail a tutor, or go sit down next to someone, or whisper or yell out for help, depending on temperament. Creating a situation in which students must explicitly decide who to study with (self/other/friend/staff) is a conscious aspect of the design of CLIC. By making student choice the driver in creating intellectual teams, CLIC models what successful students really do as they

grow to comprehend their own learning styles and goals and seek out resources to fulfill them. After practicing in CLIC's welcoming intellectual environment, students later apply these enhanced skills in more ambiguous venues, such as instructor office hours.

CLIC provides for as many possible social combinations of learning opportunities as students may demand. Paid professional tutors are the backbone of CLIC, but they are only one type of learning resource. Students work quietly on their own, coming and going independently. Friends meet to study together in pairs. Folks who weren't friends last quarter, who may have just eyeballed each other across the room in CLIC, now find themselves in the same class with, thank God, somebody they recognize, and they return to CLIC as a trio to manage their own study buddy relationship. Potential study groups, meeting twice a week for an hour each time, and facilitated by a tutor, are cobbled together by the CLIC coordinator from rummaging through class lists. These study groups have had mixed success. Usually formed around developmental math and English classes, about one in three will actually go. Tutors also originate their own study groups by keeping their ears to the ground, listening for the wails of desperate students: Chemistry has been particularly in demand this year. This variety of approaches responds to student initiative, learning, and cultural styles.

While CLIC tutors are selected for expert content knowledge, the most important skills for successful tutoring in this environment are respect and good communication. Within trusted relationships, students will more freely direct their own learning. Students are

asked to define and limit the help they want, i.e. by showing specific math problems that are already complete but somehow not right, or essays that have been written but remain in draft form. Tutors strive to work in quick sessions (i.e. 5 - 10 minutes). Using good listening skills, they emphasize insightful problem-posing and model pertinent study skills that the student can then apply and practice independently

An eavesdropper on a sample interaction with a student might hear the tutor ask what problem the student wants to solve, in what time frame, followed by a challenge to them to paraphrase or refer back to the assignment to make sure the work is on track and the goal clear. Only after such solid preliminaries is content work begun. Then the tutor looks over the work, compares it back to rules, hints, vocabulary, examples in the text where that's helpful, and asks leading questions, probing for the student's own prior knowledge and direction, to help guide the work the next step forward. When the particular problem is solved, or on its way there, the tutor moves on, encouraging the student to continue to apply the concepts discussed on their own, and certainly to ask

An Overview for CLIC Tutors

Golden Rule

Make it a good place to be

Silver Rule

Reach out / Hold back
Accept
Affirm
Encourage

Bronze Rule

Enter the student's world, but step lightly.
You respond. You ask.
They produce. They decide.

*Mark Newman
English instructor and CLIC tutor*

again if they run into trouble.

"CLIC is my house. I come in, make my tea and work hard."
Mehabub Abajawy, student

CLIC is an asset-based learning community, a different educational model. There are three aspects to creating this environment. One is broadly sowing resources in a variety of formats so that the conditions exist for truly informed choice. The second is designing an atmosphere of respect in which students are viewed as capable and gifted. Finally, there is planned structuring of diverse opportunities for connection in which learning is generated through relationships. CLIC belongs to the students: you can eat, nap, and meet your friends here; you can also work hard and be focused. A learning life is made up of both pleasure and sweat, risk and retreat, and in CLIC you will be welcomed and treated respectfully throughout your journey. A deeper outcome of CLIC is that hopefully, in such an environment, a pattern of internalized entitlement that feeds stamina, ambition, and advocacy will take hold within each student. Despite the moniker "public education," today's community college student population does not often come to our door with this sense of entitlement, and in too many colleges, is not greeted that way either. So CLIC helps a student say, "Yes, I'm here to get my education. Yes, I and my financial aid are paying these people, so they are at some level accountable to me. Yes, education is a group endeavor and I am part of this clan. Yes, I deserve to be here and partake of these resources, giving and taking in the world-wide intellectual tribe."

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Becoming a "Public Homespace": The Homeless Women's Project at Antioch University Seattle

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At times we begin a project having no idea of how it will unfold, what impact it may have or what the outcome will be. We're reminded of the proverbial metaphor: dropping a stone in a pond and watching the ripples expand in ever widening circles, moving around obstacles with fluid grace. In many respects this describes our experience of starting the Homeless Women's Education Project at Antioch University Seattle.

Without quite anticipating it we have found a way to create what Mary Belenky calls a "public homespace" for homeless and formerly homeless women who live in our downtown Seattle neighborhood. In her work on community-based education for low-income women, Mary Belenky (1996) describes these public homeplaces as "informal educational settings," and "public spaces which nurture the development of voice among people silenced at the margins of society." We like this phrase, "public homespace." It captures the spirit of our effort to provide a day program for homeless women over the past five years; it resonates with our experience of the natural evolution and the positive outcomes that have occurred when we invited the women, one morning each week, into the university.

The Homeless Women's Education Project developed in response to an expressed need in the community for additional day services for homeless women. In the summer of 1998 an ad-hoc group of faculty, students, staff, and alums gathered to consider what might be done, and developed a proposal for a one-morning-a-week program. A supportive academic dean shepherded the proposal through to administrative approval. Two community

groups have collaborated with the project since its inception: WHEEL (Women's Housing Equity and Equality League), a grassroots organization of homeless women which has assisted with publicity and sometimes supplied volunteers, and the Sisters Project, which brought expertise in working with homeless women. The project welcomes both homeless and formerly homeless women, so that women can maintain this base of support through the transition into permanent housing. Student volunteers, along with faculty, staff, and alumni have been a mainstay of the program. Two years ago we also began offering service learning opportunities for students.

Though the project has evolved over the last five years, certain aspects have remained constant. We open every Thursday morning at 8:30 am, provide a healthy breakfast, offer access to the computer lab, facilitate art projects, and offer other learning opportunities such as a women's studies film series, discussion groups on contemporary issues, a writing group, and GED tutoring. Antioch faculty, students, and staff contribute food for the breakfast, and clothing for a small clothing bank as well as volunteer assistance with the program. This project, bridging within the university's walls the gap between campus and community, has had a significant impact on both the homeless women and those within the university.

The Homeless Women

By being a consistent presence in the homeless community, we have seen the women participants develop "literacies," a concept developed by Giroux (1988) which he defines in the following way: "To be literate is to be free, to be present and active in the struggle for reclaiming one's voice, history

and future." The multiple literacies these women are developing are gained through authentic relationships where meaningful connections and interchanges are experienced.¹

This foundation makes additional learning possible. In order for these relationships to develop, and they take time, the women need to be treated with respect, allowed to manage their own time, and follow their own interests.² One participant said, "I watch the teachers and I'm learning how to be in the world. I watch you and your professionalism."

The women benefit from participating in the project in simple yet profound ways. We have seen women collaborate on projects such as preparing for an arts and crafts show, engage in discussion with those who have very different world views, move from being unable to speak because of a recent battering to helping another find their way to the program and introducing them to the staff. They have written and read their poetry, learned new computer programs, composed songs and written letters to their state legislators about housing issues. These competencies or literacies are what we hope we "teach" the women who join the project, be it for one morning or for several years. As the women develop these skills, as they become more self confident and competent, as they become "literate" in living their unique and important lives, we too become literate in understanding the importance of authentic relationships.

The Students

For students with little experience with the homeless, a primary dimension of their learning involves the dispelling of stereotypes and misconceptions concerning

homeless people. Students report that through their contact and connections with the participants these misconceptions and beliefs fell away. As one student put it, "I can't imagine how many stereotypes I had of homeless people that I don't have anymore I know from hearing their stories that it could be me It's not too far away for many people, especially women." Some noted that they were more likely to take the step of working with the homeless since the project was located within the university.

Other students have used the project to launch more intense involvements. For example, one student, after completing her service learning work, became a year-long volunteer at another project for homeless women where she offered a highly successful, on-going writing group. An art therapy student volunteer found a job using her art therapy skills with homeless women after completing her MA.

Faculty and Staff

When, in a recent questionnaire, we asked involved faculty and staff to identify the reasons for their participation with the project, the largest number of responses identified values—both Antioch's and their own.³ One faculty member said, "I feel this project is representative of Antioch's mission and philosophy and I wanted to be a part of it," while another said, "I participated simply because I'm a firm believer in 'giving back' to the community." Others focused on the contributions to the women: "This support gives these women hope." Still others noted the community-building impact on the campus: "The program was something that unified Antioch; as a newcomer to this campus it was one small way to participate."

Faculty and staff identified changes in

¹ See Corbin Lewars, *Seeing the Invisible, Hearing the Silenced: A Narrative Exploration of Homeless Women's Multiple Literacies through a Community Education Program*. M.A. thesis, Graduate Programs in Education, Antioch University Seattle, 2000 for further discussion of multiple literacies in programs for the homeless.

² The Sisters Project introduced us to the work on the significance of relationships for healing from the Stone Center, Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College. For example, see Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver, *The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.

“As the women develop these skills, as they become more self confident and competent, as they become ‘literate’ in living their unique and important lives, we too become literate in understanding the importance of authentic relationships.”

attitudes as a significant impact of the program on the Antioch community. One faculty member said: “I am personally more comfortable in interaction with homeless women and have more respect both for the challenges they face and their adaptive strategies, and in a real sense, I realize more what I share in common with them as a woman and as a human being.” Others noted changes in students: “I have seen students become involved and bring their learnings and experience to class.” Another commented, “There were visible changes through the women’s presence. Frankly those mornings would be times that I felt rather proud to be associated with this university I was further pleased to know that the women were involved in ‘learning’ while at the university.”

Some of these outcomes, particularly about changed attitudes toward the homeless, parallel the experiences of student volunteers. In this way, faculty may gain increased appreciation for the impact of service learning as they find themselves gaining new perspectives and insights from encounters engendered by the presence of homeless women in our midst.

We discovered a reservoir of support for this program on the campus and a desire to know more and participate more, as well as an interest in the development of other community service projects; welcome news to us!

This project has not been without its

challenges. While we wanted to be welcoming, boundaries were important, as the university was not prepared to become a full-scale, drop-in center for homeless women. While we wanted to be of service, most of us had little experience with the homeless, and there were concerns about what we might encounter. However, with support and training from our collaborating organizations, clear boundary-setting, and, with time, increased familiarity with the women on the part of the university community, we found our way through the challenges.

In summary, we have found it possible to have an impact on students, the campus at large, and the community through a small scale, volunteer and donation-based program for homeless women. Strong commitments from key people—including academic deans, some faculty and staff who come at 7:00 am to set up the room and welcome the women—and widespread assistance from many members of the campus community have made it possible. This is truly a work of the heart for many members of the Antioch community.

And, perhaps this bridge we have created between homeless women and the university across which both can travel, find one another and enter into dialogue will deepen our bonds of connection to one another, and through that connectedness, will in some small way strengthen our commitments to creating a more just and humane society.

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³Antioch has a long tradition of commitment to community service. Antiochians are fond of quoting the College’s first president and noted abolitionist Horace Mann, who, during his tenure in the 1850s, once said, “Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.”

Inaugurating an International Scholar-in-Residence Program: Bellevue Community College

Diane Douglas
Bellevue Community College

As part of a broad institutional commitment to reinvigorate its liberal arts core, Bellevue Community College opened a new Center for Liberal Arts in February 2002. A founding faculty/staff task force was assigned to guide the Center's development, and I was named its executive director. In considering how and where to begin our work, this founding group determined that the Center must hit the ground running. We wished to affect the entire campus community as quickly as possible in order to win faculty and student buy-in. While we recognized the need to develop a vision statement, structure and long-term plans, we reasoned that the wisdom to accomplish that should come, at least in part, from our experiences of an experimental first year of practice. We decided to prototype model programs based on current opportunities, and our research, experience and values of what constitutes a strong liberal arts education.

At the same time as these deliberations occurred, the mother of a BCC alum brought an enticing opportunity to our door step. She knew a distinguished Tibetan educator who wanted to come to the United States on sabbatical and wondered whether BCC might be interested in hosting him as a visiting scholar. We made contact with him *immediately, and after learning more* about his skills and background, offered him a position as our first international scholar-in-residence under the aegis of the Center for Liberal Arts. We didn't know it at the time, but this initiative was to become the flagship program for the Center's inaugural year.

In 1959, four-year old Nawang Dorjee and his parents fled Tibet as the Chinese government's incursions into their country threatened their culture, freedom and personal safety. Dorjee's parents died crossing the border from Tibet into India in their journey to find refuge alongside their countrymen and the Dalai Lama. Dorjee was raised in an orphanage set up by the exiled Tibetan community in Dharmasala for the many destitute children who shared his fate. He was educated in schools established for these refugees by the Indian government. An excellent student, Dorjee progressed to university and in 1991, as a Fulbright scholar, completed a master's degree in educational policy and planning at Harvard University. He then returned to India to work as an educator and advocate on behalf of children just like himself. He became Director of Education for Tibetan Children's Village, the very agency that helped him in early childhood. Headquartered in Dharamsala with several branches throughout India, TCV is the largest supporter and educator of exiled Tibetan children and new refugees serving over 14,000 children from infancy through grade 12.

In the spring preceding Dorjee's arrival at BCC, we deliberated about how best to utilize his expertise and structure his time. We knew we wanted to create opportunities for breadth—to have as many students and faculty as possible interact with him. We also wanted to allow for a greater depth of experience for those who desired to immerse themselves in Tibetan culture, history, identity and education. We wanted to provide

the chance for our faculty and staff to get to know him and for him to feel a part of the BCC community. Finally, we wanted to share his expertise and experience with our broader community.

To accommodate these multiple priorities, we devised a nontraditional teaching schedule. Instead of the three-course load normally taught by full-time BCC faculty, Dorjee taught only one class per quarter—an introduction to Buddhism and modern Tibetan history and culture. A second third of his teaching time was spent visiting classes across disciplines and across campus and leading a faculty/staff learning community. The final third of his teaching time was devoted to outreach—guest lectures in high schools, colleges and universities and civic organizations, participation in academic conferences and preparing talks for broadcast on BCC's radio and cable television stations.

Our program goals and assessment strategies were based on these priorities. We were ambitious. We hoped to increase students' global awareness and multicultural understanding, promote interdisciplinary study and encourage students to reflect on their own ethical values and the links between their learning in the classroom and life decisions. We also set forth expectations for the program to stimulate new working/learning groups of faculty and staff and new outreach partnerships with our community.

At year's end, the residency met all of these goals and created positive impacts

beyond our plans and expectations. It exceeded its quantitative targets for student, faculty and community participation. Students' formal assessments of their experiences in Dorjee's classes were reflective and personal. They recognized and appreciated the opportunity to learn about Tibet and Buddhism from an insider. They repeatedly wrote about how learning in Dorjee's classes was transformational in terms of their own ideas and perspectives. For faculty, over the course of the year, Dorjee's presence provided many informal and formal opportunities to compare cross-cultural pedagogies and the values that support them. We examined our own practices in the light of Dorjee's questions, insights and shared teachings. The residency did create new bridges for outreach to sister educational institutions and to the general community which, we believe, will have lasting benefit. Perhaps the most profound program impact was the sense of community that was built around this very special person and opportunity—not a small thing on a non-residential campus.

Planning is now underway to continue and strengthen the international scholar-in-residence program at BCC during 2003-04. The college has committed residential housing for the program, and we received an award from the Fulbright Scholar Program to provide partial funding. A faculty selection committee invited a Nigerian scholar in marine agricultural economics to succeed Dorjee. She will teach courses relevant to BCC's three major interdisciplinary departments—environmental studies, international studies and ethnic and cultural studies. We are also planning to incorporate service learning as a new program element in the upcoming year.

BCC welcomes inquiries about its scholar-in-residence program from colleges and universities interested in guest lectures or partnerships. For additional information about this program or other initiatives of the BCC Center for Liberal Arts, please see www.bcc.ctc.edu/liberalarts or contact Diane Douglas at ddouglas@bcc.ctc.edu or 425-564-2550.

Contributions of Immigrants in Education: A Report on Shoreline Community College's FIPSE Project

Alexandra Hepburn, Victoria Lauber and Katherine Hunt
Shoreline Community College

Immigration has been around for a long time, but there is a growing realization that the faces and voices of our communities are becoming increasingly diverse, and that the changes represent significant challenges as well as opportunities for us all. It should not be surprising, then, that there seems to be a new wave of interest in the subject, and a growing awareness that there is a great deal more to learn and understand about immigrant and refugee experiences and the implications for our educational institutions and communities.

In October 2000, Shoreline Community College received a three-year grant from the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education, in the U.S. Department of Education. The original proposal grew out of the recognition that, like many suburban districts, the cities of Shoreline and Lake Forest Park have undergone rapid and dramatic growth and change over the past twenty years. The minority population has changed from one percent to over twenty percent, with a significant number of new immigrants from Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and recently, Africa.

The mission of our project, entitled *Faces of Our Community: Connecting Through Story*, is to use the transformative power of education to expand the opportunities available to immigrants and refugees, and to promote recognition of their contributions to our campus and community. The intent is to build on what immigrant and refugee students know about their cultures, histories, and languages, in order to reposition them as resources and experts in the cultural information that all of us need to create a successfully diverse society. Because this approach emphasizes the strengths and contributions that immigrants and refugees bring, we have focused on the development of *professional and educational opportunities where value is placed on knowledge and skills related to diversity* in society and the workplace.

As we near the end of our project, we are facing the challenge of sharing what we have learned. It is certainly possible to talk about some of the concrete "small steps"

we have taken, despite the complexity of the project as a whole. We will describe some of those steps in what follows, within the framework of a “model” that evolved to help us articulate the scope of our work. But we also feel it is important to explore something much larger and less tangible, namely, our growing realization that our integrative model seemed to reveal or disclose a background of assumptions and tensions that were already present. We will return to this idea after presenting some specific aspects of the project.

Dimensions of Potential Transformation

In many ways, it would have been easier to narrow our focus to one particular area. In this case, the natural choice would have been curriculum, because of the way that the original grant proposal was framed. But it quickly became clear that we were dealing with an integrative, systemic arena, and that efforts focusing on one aspect while ignoring the others would have very limited success and impact. As we grappled with the overwhelming scope of what we were facing, the *Faces of Our Community* visual model began to unfold.



What follows is a description of the dimensions that called for our attention, and some of the small steps that we took within each area.

Listening and Learning

We felt that it was crucial to place ourselves in the position of learners at the outset. Not only did we need to research the current census data and some of the vast literature on immigration, we also wanted to hear firsthand accounts of the experiences of contemporary immigrants and refugees. Without these authentic voices, it is a matter

of “us” (the experts/academics) talking about “them.” This only serves to distance us from their lived experiences, and reinforces the idea that “they” present a “problem” to be solved on our campuses and in our communities. As a consequence, we have placed a high value on *listening* to their stories and hearing what they have to teach us about their communities.

Interviews

One of the ways we have done this is through interviewing people who have been generous enough to share their stories so that others can better understand their experiences. While students have conducted some interviews in project-related classes, the more formal interviews have been conducted by our Research Assistant, Andrew Cho, who is completing a master’s degree in Sociology and Race Relations at the University of Washington. The transcripts of these interviews are being edited into the form of narratives, which will become available for use as curriculum materials.

Summer Dialogues

As part of our 2001 workshop, *Summer Dialogues: The Immigrant Experience*, we invited members of various ethnic/immigrant communities to share their experiences in a panel format. (Videotapes of these Dialogues are available for loan.)

Community “Meriendas”/Teas

From time to time we have hosted a “merienda” or tea with community leaders and members from particular immigrant/refugee communities, in order to learn more about the experiences of those who live in our local communities.

Educating and Increasing Awareness

In order to expand the opportunities available to immigrants and refugees, we have discovered that it is essential to increase general awareness of their unique experiences and the issues they face both on campus and in the community. In a sense, we are facing in two directions at once: on the one hand, we have worked on creating new educational offerings for immigrants

and refugees that are more reflective and appreciative of their experiences and support them in meeting their educational and professional goals; on the other hand, this requires that mainstream educators gain a deeper understanding of immigrant and refugee experiences, histories, dreams, etc. This understanding, we believe, involves making a shift from the typically strong emphasis on the challenges and barriers they face to include a new focus on the gifts and contributions brought by these new Americans.

Some of our activities have included the following:

Professional Development

Our initial effort involved about ten faculty in a five-session Curriculum Seminar, meeting once a month. Participants were working towards the design of new courses or towards infusing some of this curriculum content and pedagogical principles into their existing courses. The seminar included readings and discussion focused on specific topics relevant to immigrant and refugee experience, within the general framework of “Borders and Boundaries.” These themes include sociocultural and psychological forces affecting English Language Learners, historical perspectives, identity issues, and issues facing immigrant and refugee women. In addition to having conversations about curriculum content, we found it crucial to discuss pedagogy. We are endeavoring to increase our awareness of the less obvious aspects of the teaching/learning situation that may be inclusive/exclusive, empowering/disempowering for immigrant and refugee students.

This year the Curriculum Seminar is being incorporated into the multicultural Curriculum Transformation Project sponsored by the Shoreline Community College Multicultural Diversity Education Center. Faculty now have the opportunity to approach the study of immigrant experiences within the larger multicultural framework – an approach that makes more sense as a long-term professional development strategy.

“Any educational efforts involving immigrant and refugee students must begin by addressing the numerous barriers that they face; curriculum development in the absence of this dimension is meaningless.”

Curriculum Development

Several new courses have been developed as part of this project. The first, entitled *An American Tale: Across the Ocean of Dreams*, was originally developed as a special Humanities /Social Science course, examining the issues of power and privilege within the United States while focusing on the local communities of Shoreline and Lake Forest Park. Students gathered and studied both oral and written stories of various groups in the area, studied the impact of recent local and national changes in demographics, and conducted fieldwork by mapping various aspects of the community. Student response was very enthusiastic. We are currently working towards having this course institutionalized as a Sociology class.

A new *History of American Immigration* course surveys immigration to the United States from the era of colonization to the present. Students examine the process of immigration and adaptation to life in the United States, as well as reaction to immigrants by native-born Americans. Finally, *Communicating Across Differences* is a Speech Communication class where the focus is on intercultural communication, centered on the themes of cultural, racial, class, and gender differences in U.S. society; immigrant and refugee issues figure prominently.

We have also collaborated in developing bridge programs to build relevant skills and maximize the chances of retention and success in Professional-Technical programs. This strategy emphasizes the use of “bridge classes” from ESL into specific programs, with the teaching of English in applied contexts (e.g. medical terminology for health

care). Bridges also need to be created through particular fields such as health care or business, so that students can gain skills at successive career levels and have access to employment while they are advancing. Part of our contribution has been to develop curriculum around cultural competence and cultural brokering.

Campus and Community Presentations

Numerous presentations and panels have been part of our educational efforts. For instance, we offered a community dialogue entitled *Understanding September 11: Voices from Our Community*, which included the voices of immigrants and refugees impacted by these events and their aftermath. Other campus presentations have included a student panel, a professional development workshop, and an Immigration Information Session with an immigration lawyer. Presentations to various community organizations have also been an important aspect of the educational outreach efforts, because of our overall interest in promoting welcoming communities.

Faces and Voices Project

Sometimes the best outcomes are unanticipated: this one was not part of our original grant project, but has provided a valuable resource for educating and increasing awareness.

During spring quarter 2002 at Shoreline Community College, seven immigrant and refugee students offered to share their stories and images of their lives because they felt it was important for more people to understand the unique experiences – their strengths as well as the challenges they face. Amanda Koster, a professional photographer who

initially approached us with the idea for this project, accompanied the students in various activities of their choice over the quarter, using her photographs to record a “visual diary” of their lives in the local community. Andrew Cho, our research assistant, interviewed the students on several occasions and recorded their stories. Throughout the process the students were considered collaborators, and they received college credit for their participation.

The photographs and biographies of the students, along with the text of selected quotes from their interviews, have been on display in the College Gallery as well as in several venues in the community. Another outgrowth has been the creation of a multimedia CD, formatted as a Power Point presentation, and featuring the images and stories from the *Faces and Voices* Project. The CD introduces the project and incorporates photographic images, the students’ biographies read by the students (partially in their own languages), music selected by the students from their culture, and selected quotes that illustrate a number of significant themes in their stories – themes that are common to the stories of many immigrants and refugees. These include the immigration story, life in the United States, culture and community, family, and educational aspirations.

Bridging Campus and Community

One of the keys to the educational success of immigrants and refugees is the educational institution’s commitment to cultivating relationships with these potential students and their communities. Our community teas were one avenue for this work. Linkages with the community as a whole are also a critical

“One of the keys to the educational success of immigrants and refugees is the educational institution’s commitment to cultivating relationships with these potential students and their communities.”

aspect of this work, in terms of increasing awareness and creating partnerships. We convened a Community Advisory Group and nurtured relationships with the Shoreline School District as well as various community service organizations.

Promoting Student Success

Any educational efforts involving immigrant and refugee students must begin by addressing the numerous barriers that they face; curriculum development in the absence of this dimension is meaningless. We undertook some work in this direction by convening a team from various parts of the college to consider the unique needs of immigrant and refugee in relation to student services. This team consists of staff from Advising and Counseling, the Multicultural Education/Diversity Center, the Women’s Center, Student Programs, Enrollment Services, the Library, and Safety and Security.

One aspect of this work has to do with looking at all of the intangibles that make a difference in terms of feeling welcomed, supported and valued on campus. As a nonnative English speaker, can I read the application materials? Is my language visible anywhere? How do I find out about my options? How do I find my way around campus? Who will help me to plan my courses, set goals, and transition from the ESL program into other college programs? Where do I feel welcome on campus, and where can I get together with people who speak my language? Who acknowledges my need to schedule classes around work and child care? Who recognizes the everyday challenges I face as an immigrant or refugee? Who recognizes me for *all* of who I really am?

These are some of the issues that received attention:

Language

Basic student materials such as those needed for a welcome packet, admission, and registration have been translated and adapted for immigrant and refugee students.

Orientations

Orientation programs have been designed by the Immigrant Student Advisor for entry into the ESL program, for transitioning from lower level to upper level ESL classes, and out of ESL into regular college classes.

Counseling and Student Services

The Immigrant Student Advisor has worked with other staff to create personal linkages to counselors, the Women’s Center, and the Multicultural/Diversity Education Center, by bringing representatives to ESL classes and introducing them to students.

Library

A librarian who has special responsibility for the ESL section has collaborated to enrich the resource materials available; she has also been included in orientations.

Student Programs

Attention has been paid to recruiting immigrant and refugee students into leadership development programs, etc., although in general we find that they are often employed and do not have the time to participate in campus life. There are numerous student clubs, such as the Vietnamese Club, the Muslim Students Club, and Mi Grupo, which attract many international students as well as some immigrant students.

Collaboration with the ESL program

This is an ongoing aspect of our work and touches on many areas such as recruitment, the most effective scheduling and location of ESL classes to meet community needs, and assessing the needs of ESL students themselves.

Staff training

We have connected the Human Resources Department with one of our contacts in the community to provide a training for classified staff on effective ways of interacting with nonnative English speakers.

Asking the Deeper Questions

In each of these four areas of potential transformation, deeper questions emerged. We began to have the sense that the process was unearthing some of the fundamental myths that underlie our educational institutions. Our hope in this brief discussion is to make these myths explicit, so that we can continue to explore how they may be operating on our own campuses.

The focus on *listening and learning* led us to the first question: “Who is willing to listen and learn in our institution and community?” We discovered three myths that may limit this willingness:

The Myth of Academic Expertise

In the academic world we assume that we are the experts, and are generally more inclined to privilege knowledge that has been accumulated through our expert lenses and methodologies. To what degree does this limit our willingness to ask immigrants and refugees (among others) about their experiences, challenges, and resources, to hear and value what they have to tell us?

“In the academic world we assume that we are the experts, and are generally more inclined to privilege knowledge that has been accumulated through our expert lenses and methodologies.”

The Myth of Fixed Models of Knowledge

In a related vein, our educational system has strong assumptions about what constitutes knowledge, and we are often more comfortable in territories where there are fixed models and formulas. In the arenas of multicultural education and ethnic identity, for instance, there are some models that are familiar to many, but they are primarily oriented towards the experience of the American-born. Immigrant experiences significantly stretch the boundaries of these models. Who is willing to step into this fluid and complex territory, especially when efforts are still being made to win more widespread acceptance for the existing models?

The Myth of Knowledge Neutrality

A long intellectual history stands behind this concept of knowledge as objective and value-neutral. When we listen to the stories of anyone whose voice has been excluded from the accepted canons, we run headlong into the reality of power and privilege. In the case of immigrants, it is important to add additional categories – i.e. English-speaking, American-born to the list of those recognized within the system of power and privilege (such as whites, males, heterosexuals). Whose knowledge will “count” and be included?

As we engaged with the second focus on *educating and increasing awareness*, a new question began to emerge: “Who is the ‘we’?” This question, spoken by a faculty member who is an immigrant, points to the challenge of locating immigrants and refugees in the multicultural conversation. We observed that immigrant and refugee

experiences and issues are often not well understood, and that immigrants and refugees have not been widely recognized as occupying a unique place in our existing frameworks of diversity and multicultural education and on our campuses.

This situation is changing slowly, but we feel it is essential to acknowledge the difficulties inherent in the process and the ways in which we are being asked to stretch our existing categories and allegiances. These are some of the myths that surfaced:

The Myth of the Five Groups

One way of mapping the territory of ethnic diversity references the five major groups: Euro-American, African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American. This ethno-racial pentagon has very little real meaning: its emergence followed the antidiscrimination and affirmative action policies of the federal government, and it essentially served the purpose of facilitating the administrative collection of data (Hollinger, 1998). The groupings overlook many complexities of identity and belonging, including national origin, language, and racial diversity. Immigrants and refugees cross all of these groups except Native American; they also bridge between people of color (a majority of the immigrants and refugees since 1965) and Caucasians (since many contemporary immigrants and refugees are Eastern European). However, their experiences differ from those of American-born people in significant ways, and their ongoing ties to places, histories, and cultures beyond our borders seem to make a purely national perspective inadequate.

The Myth of the Sameness of Experience

This formulation of the myth points to many of the same issues just mentioned, but also emphasizes the immense diversity of experiences among immigrants and refugees. The differences stem from the culture and history of their country of origin, urban or rural residence, educational level, socioeconomic status prior to emigrating, the circumstances of their departure and those of their arrival, gender, age, racial and ethnic identity, language, length of time in this country, etc. In addition, refugees have often had uniquely traumatic experiences, and undocumented immigrants face their own unique challenges. First there needs to be an understanding that immigrant and refugee issues differ from those of the American-born; then it is important to become aware of the vast diversity among immigrants and refugees themselves. It is erroneous to speak of “*the* immigrant experience.”

The Myth of Assimilation

This myth assumes that immigrants will eventually assimilate into the dominant American culture (“as they always have”), and furthermore, that this assimilation is desirable. Briefly, there is much evidence that assimilation was never the unilinear, simple process that it has been made out to be. In addition, the 1965 changes in immigration policy have led to much greater diversity among immigrants, and far more immigrants are people of color. In a racialized society, this means that there are barriers that make assimilation even less likely. Even in terms of acculturation—a more meaningful term—much contemporary research suggests that the healthiest outcome is the capacity to maintain a fluid, bicultural,

“We see a tremendous value in shifting the paradigm to include an emphasis on strengths and contributions.”

bilingual identity. Selective acculturation, in which immigrants maintain ties with their homelands and home cultures as they learn the ways of American culture, seems to be the most promising pattern even for the second generation.

From the work in *bridging between campus and community* emerged the following questions: “What role does an educational institution play in serving the needs of its community? Who constitutes this community or communities?” In relation to *promoting student success*, we repeatedly returned to these questions: “How do we and our institutions need to transform ourselves in order to promote access and success for immigrant and refugee students? How can their strengths help us to change?” We will not have the opportunity to pursue these questions here, but they are well worth serious consideration.

One of our most significant lessons is based on the experience of immigrants and refugees. The tendency has been to focus exclusively on the ways in which “they need our help” to cope with problems and barriers. There are very real barriers that require serious attention, but we see a tremendous value in shifting the paradigm to include an emphasis on strengths and contributions. Because immigrants and refugees are inherently positioned at the margins, “in between” cultures, languages, identities, and homes, they are also positioned to develop the resourceful capacity to negotiate shifting boundaries and multiple identities. This capacity does not emerge without costs, in terms of stress, grief, and uncertainty, but it also represents an invaluable skill. We need

to recognize and build upon these kinds of assets:

“In the global era, the tenets of unilineal acculturation are no longer relevant. Today there are clear and unequivocal advantages to being able to operate in multiple cultural codes. . . . There are social, economic, cognitive and aesthetic advantages to being able to transverse cultural spaces. Immigrant[s] are posed to maximize that unique advantage. While many view these . . . cultural—including linguistic—skills as a threat, we see them as precious assets to be cultivated” (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 160).

If we want to work towards authentic inclusion of immigrants and refugees in our communities and on our campuses, we too will be called upon to engage in continuous re-evaluation and transformation of our meaning frameworks, assumptions, and practices. The demand, as we see it, is not simply for a new formula or structure, but for new meta-level capacities for flexibility and fluidity, for ongoing learning and negotiation of change. These are the strengths of immigrants and refugees, who seem particularly well-situated for this role as challengers of the status quo in light of their “in between” position at the borders and boundaries of many established categories.

This is a rapidly changing world, in which global interconnections are increasingly calling into question our assumptions about sovereign nation-states, singular citizenship, borders and boundaries, identity and belonging. Our campuses

necessarily reflect these larger issues, and we hope that they can also play a leadership role in developing new frameworks of understanding, dialogue, and action – even if, as educators open to these changes, we may not be able to offer the comfort of certain knowledge, expert status, or fixed models.

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The Washington Center's Curriculum Planning Retreats

Sharilyn Howell
Washington Center



Mary Malins, Mary Sitterley and Vera Brankovan plan with Gillies Malnarich of the Washington Center their new coordinated studies program. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

In a small mountain lodge in the Snoqualmie National Forest, 59 faculty and staff gather together with one thing in mind: planning an integrated course at their campus for the upcoming school year. A faculty group from Clarion University in Pennsylvania, a team from Long Beach City College in Los Angeles, California, and a group from a Seattle high school join faculty and staff from six Washington colleges for the Washington Center's two-day Curriculum Planning Retreat.

The Curriculum Planning Retreat is held every spring at Rainbow Lodge in North Bend. Because of the popularity of the event and the small capacity of the lodge, the Washington Center, who has organized this retreat for nearly two decades, now books two retreats at the Lodge during the spring quarter.¹

After exploring the beautiful grounds, everyone meets in the main room for the first session of the day on designing a learning community. This introductory session is a fun brainstorming activity designed for people to get to know one another while inventing a new course around topics or ideas that bridge disciplines. Often planning conversations start with what students will learn, and these conversations are usually based in existing courses. But the purpose of this exercise is to invent a new curriculum around topics that *meld* disciplines.

As faculty huddle together in their small groups, their challenge is to come up with a theme, imagine what they want students to know and learn, and do this within an hour.² No easy task, considering some of them are from different campuses, their backgrounds and disciplines are different, and they may not even know each other. But in no time at all, the room is resonating with the chatter, serious discussions, and laughter of a dozen different groups discussing their themes and key activities. Part of their assignment is to make a poster with the title of their group's new learning commu-

nity, the major concepts and learning activities, key learnings for students, and possible embedded disciplines or courses.

After an hour, the teams paste their summary posters on the walls for all to see. With posters in place, the teams report out on their ideas for courses they have just generated. What at first seemed like a daunting and impossible task turns out, for many, to be the beginnings of next year's classes. One team, combining English 101 and Political Communications, creates a course entitled *Rewriting War: Exploring the Multiple Truths of the Vietnam War*. Another team's title was *Who Built America? Do the Right Thing* was the title of a course with an emphasis on ethics combining Environmental Science, History 104 (American History), and Communications 101 (Public Speaking). *Words that Matter in My World* was the result of one group whose disciplines were as varied as journalism, geology, sociology, and rhetoric/communications.

The excitement is contagious, and after a break, some teams scatter to different parts of the lodge to plan next year's interdisciplinary learning communities, while others stay on in the main room for another brainstorming session on integrating learning through a process called "designing down."

At the end of the two days, with approximately twelve hours of planning behind them, teams report that they are well on their way toward reaching their vision of connecting their disciplines and offering meaningful academic experiences for students. They also have a major portion of their planning done for next year's learning community.

Curriculum Planning Retreats in 2004 are scheduled for January 30 in Spokane, and April 15-16 and 29-30 at Rainbow Lodge. Watch the Washington Center website: www.evergreen.edu/washcenter for registration information.

¹ We also participate in a curriculum planning day in eastern Washington organized by learning community coordinators.

² See *Designing a Learning Community in an Hour* on our website at www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/lhour.htm.

What Have We Learned?

Using the Curriculum Planning Retreat to Reflect on What We Learned

Jenny McFarland
Edmonds Community College

Thomas Murphy (Anthropology) and I (Biology) taught in a 10 credit Coordinated Studies class last winter quarter (2003). Our class, *On Becoming Human* combined introductory coursework in physical anthropology and biology around the theme of human origins. We worked closely together in the months before co-teaching this class and intensively collaborated daily throughout the quarter. The shared work that we enjoyed, and grew from, came (as usual) to an abrupt halt as soon as the quarter was over. This, I believe, is an all-too common experience.



Faculty from Shoreline Community College work on integrating student learning at the Curriculum Planning Retreat. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

Knowing that we would not continue working so closely together, we consciously planned to stretch the boundaries of the “curriculum planning” retreat and crash the party at Rainbow Lodge this spring. Emily and Gillies were both encouraging and supportive. We arrived early Thursday morning at the retreat in the woods, laden with unread student comments, student self-evaluations, course materials dropped after final grades were assigned, and unexamined perceptions about how the class had gone.

One theme that emerged from the students’ anonymous, end-of-the quarter comments was the perception that I (the biologist) was picking on Tom (the anthropologist). In this learning community we attempted to model the similarities and the differences between the ways that our two

disciplines approach the same data. The fields of biology and anthropology approach the enquiry into human origins in very similar ways; however, there are differences in the ways that scholars in these fields draw conclusions from data and sometimes different criteria for what constitutes strong evidence. I would sometimes take issue with something Tom said, and we tried to frame this in the context of how the two fields sometimes clash.

Clearly we did not do a good enough job. Although some students clearly appreciated “the contrast of the two perspectives,” several were not as comfortable with this. As one student wrote, “I recommend if there is some kind of disagreement, talk about it after class; not in the middle of lecture.” We now know to

work more explicitly with students to show them the benefits of respectful disagreements, expose them more to the real conflicts that exist between scientists, and have them think critically about the necessity of this type of dialogue in science.

The retreat gave us the gift of uninterrupted, thoughtful time together. We sat with student comments between us and read silently, laughed, sighed, and read aloud the irresistible insights, discussed the reoccurring critical themes, and shared our personal reactions gleaned from our students’ candid voices. We walked and talked a few short miles of trail at the base of Mt. Si and returned to the deck at the lodge to assess our course, share our concerns (and our overwhelming successes) with kibitzers, and plan for the next time we will offer this class.

This was indeed a gift. This is valuable and necessary reflective work which would not have happened without this retreat. We would not have given ourselves this same time, without the opportunity to physically and intellectually retreat from our daily lives. We are grateful to the Washington Center for welcoming us. We encourage others to take advantage of the “curriculum planning” retreats for the process of critical reflection on recently completed learning community courses. Let’s add “curriculum reflection & assessment” as an ongoing focus!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

November 20-21, 2003

Mathematics Consortium
Rainbow Lodge
North Bend, WA

January 30, 2004

Curriculum Planning Retreat-East
Spokane Falls Community College
Spokane, WA

February 12-13, 2004

Campus Equity and Engagement Retreat
Dumas Bay Retreat Center
Federal Way, WA

April 15-16, 2004

Curriculum Planning Retreat
Rainbow Lodge
North Bend, WA

April 29-30, 2004

Curriculum Planning Retreat
Rainbow Lodge
North Bend, WA

May 20-22, 2004

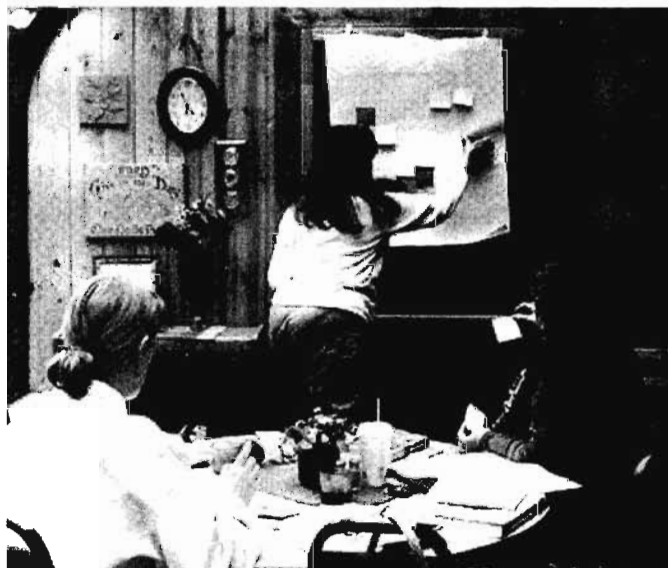
National Learning Communities Conference
Double Tree Hotel, SeaTac Airport
Seattle, WA

June 22-27, 2004

The 6th Annual Learning Communities
Residential Institute
The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA
[http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/
AnnouncementandCallforApps2004.pdf](http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/AnnouncementandCallforApps2004.pdf)

August 10-13, 2004

Quantitative Literacy Across the Curriculum
Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat Center
Leavenworth, WA



Seattle Central Community College faculty discover their related themes, issues and concepts while planning their program at the Curriculum Planning Retreat. (Photo: Sharilyn Howell)

Other Events

October 29-31, 2003

Faculty and Staff of Color Conference
In Challenging Times: Affirming Cultural Diversity
Bellingham, Washington
<http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/staffofcolor.asp>

December 5, 2003

Writing Pedagogy Forum
Hearing Our Students' Voices: Multiple Literacies and the Use of Literacy Autobiographies Across the Curriculum
University of Washington, Bothell

May 5-7, 2004

Pacific Northwest Higher Education
Assessment Conference
Vancouver, WA

May 6-7, 2004

WADE/CRLA
Vancouver, WA

Current event information is available on our website: www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/events/htm

Event Descriptions

Fall Math Consortium

Making Connections: Mathematics in the Disciplines

November 20-21, 2003

Rainbow Lodge Retreat Center, North Bend, WA

This year's retreat kicks off with a field excursion to the Raging River to collect stream discharge data using the TI CBL and TI-83 calculator, and learn about stream habitat and hydrology. Other highlights include a presentation by Nick Maxwell, a marketing statistician at Eddie Bauer. Nick has taught statistics, psychology and research methodology at the University of Washington, Bothell. While at UW, he wrote a textbook on statistics entitled *Data Matters*, published in 2003. Nick will discuss the need for mathematics education, and statistics education in particular, in a liberal arts curriculum, with a focus on reaching students in programs that don't typically include mathematics.

Campus Equity and Engagement Planning Retreat

February 12-13, 2004

Dumas Bay Retreat Centre, Federal Way, WA

We will use the *Framework for Diversity Assessment and Planning*, developed by a team of consultants, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges staff, and Washington state CTC multicultural directors in consultation with administrators, institutional researchers and assessment liaisons. This framework encourages campus planning that starts with data - on access, student achievement/goal attainment, hiring and retaining staff of color, instruction and student services, and campus climate, as well as an audit of current diversity programs, activities, services and systems. Other sessions focus on higher ed policy issues, inclusive pedagogy, and critical moments.

18th Annual Curriculum Planning Retreats

April 15-16 or April 29-30, 2004

Rainbow Lodge, North Bend, WA

The Curriculum Planning Retreats 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 courses. The grounding for workshops is a commitment to create curriculum that engages students and faculty, leading to learning that lasts.

Writing Pedagogy Forum

Hearing Our Students' Voices: Multiple Literacies and the Use of Literacy Autobiographies Across the Curriculum

December 5, 2003

University of Washington, Bothell

The fall quarter meeting of the Writing Pedagogy Forum will focus on hearing, valuing, integrating, and building on the experiences and literacies our students possess when they arrive at our institutions and in our classrooms. Academic literacy is often new and foreign to students. In order to assist them as they become fluent in this new literacy, we need to acknowledge the literacies with which they come to us. We need to situate academic literacy as culturally specific rather than normative or superior. One approach is to use autobiography and personal narrative to help students explore what they know, a common form of writing composition classes and in reflective writing that examines metacognition. This workshop will offer examples of its use in history, mathematics, nursing and education as well.

National Learning Communities Summer Institute Announcement and call for applications 6th Annual Summer Institute on Learning Communities

June 22 - 27, 2004

The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington

Application deadline: December 5, 2003

In the past decade, the learning community approach has kindled the imagination of large numbers of faculty members and administrators. Learning communities are strategies that purposely restructure the curriculum to thematically link or cluster courses and enroll a common group of students. These curriculum reform initiatives vary greatly—from loosely connected course-clusters all the way to team-taught programs of highly integrated, interdisciplinary study. Yet they share common intentions: to rearrange the curricular time and space of both students and faculty to foster community, coherence and connections among courses, active and collaborative learning and more sustained intellectual interaction among learners and teachers. Twenty institutions will be selected for this year's institute.

See www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/events.htm for registration fees and other information.

National Learning Communities Project Opportunities

Learning Communities have captured the imagination of large numbers of faculty, staff and administrators. Learning Communities are being implemented on over 500 campuses in the U.S. The curriculum reform initiatives vary greatly, from loosely connected course clusters to fully team-taught programs of highly integrated, interdisciplinary study. Yet they share common intentions: to rearrange the curricular time of students and faculty to foster community, coherence and connections among courses, active and collaborative learning, and more sustained intellectual interaction among learners and teachers. The Washington Center's National Learning Communities Project aims to share expertise about learning communities and strengthen practice across the U.S. and Canada.

National Learning Communities Project Conference on Learning Communities and Reforming Undergraduate Education

May 20-22, 2004
at the Double Tree Hotel, SeaTac Airport
Seattle, Washington

This conference culminates a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts to the National Learning Communities Project. This conference will feature the most up-to-date information on learning community theory and practice. In addition to invited sessions, we invite proposals for sessions in six conference pathways: educating for democratic pluralism; situating learning communities in places that matter; using learning communities to build and sustain partnerships; connecting reform efforts in undergraduate education; organizing for sustainability; and learning community assessment.

Detailed information on the Call for Proposals is available on our website at:
<http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu>

Proposal submission deadline: October 20, 2003

Conference registration: begins January 1, 2004

The Sixth Annual Learning Communities Residential Institute for Campus Teams

June 22-27, 2004
at The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington

The Sixth Annual Learning Communities Institute will serve campus teams (of 5-8 people) at any stage of learning community development. The institute will focus on learning community theory and practice, emphasizing ways to shape programs to serve learners and learning; curricular design and strategies for fostering a sense of community; promising pedagogies; assessment; and implementation in the context of sustainable organizational renewal.

Application forms available at
<http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu> and at
www.evergreen.edu/washcenter

Application forms: available September 1, 2003

Deadline to apply: December 5, 2003

Notification date: January 30, 2004

Terry Tempest Williams

National Learning Communities Conference Keynote Speaker

Terry Tempest Williams grew up within sight of the Great Salt Lake in Salt Lake City, Utah. She says simply, "I write through my biases of gender, geography, and culture. I am a woman whose ideas have been shaped by the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau, these ideas are then filtered through the prism of my culture and my culture is Mormon. The tenets of family and community which I see at the heart of that culture are then articulated through story." How we as a culture engage in civic life raises political questions, but what Williams has come to understand in trying to solve environmental issues is that it is not just a political process, but a spiritual one. As a writer, Williams seeks to see the world whole, with all its paradoxes, humor, and complexity. Her art form is storytelling where one remembers what it means to be human.



Terry Tempest Williams, author of *RED*, Vintage Books, October 2002. (Photo: Ann P. Tempest)

Williams is perhaps best known for her book *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. In *Refuge* she chronicles the epic rise of Great Salt Lake and the flooding of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in 1983, alongside her mother's diagnosis with ovarian cancer, believed to be caused by radioactive fallout from the nuclear tests in the Nevada desert in the 1950's and 60's. *Refuge* is now regarded as a classic in American Nature Writing, a testament to loss and the earth's healing grace. The *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, "There has never been a book like *Refuge*. . . . utterly original."

Her most recent book, *Red: Patience and Passion in the Desert* traces her lifelong love of and commitment to the desert, inspiring a soulful return to "wild mercy" and the spiritual and political commitment of preserving the fragile redrock wilderness of southern Utah.

Not only was Williams identified as someone likely to make "a considerable impact on the political, economic, and environmental issues facing the western states this decade," she has testified before the U.S. Congress twice regarding the environmental links associated with cancer, and has been a strong advocate for America's Redrock Wilderness Act. She is currently on the advisory board of the National Parks and Conservation Association, The Nature Conservancy, and the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

Her other books include a collection of essays, *An Unspoken Hunger; Leap; Desert Quartet: An Erotic Landscape; Coyote's Canyon;* and *Pieces of White Shell: A Journey to Navajoland*. She is also the author of two children's books: *The Secret Language of Snow* and *Between Cattails*.

Terry Tempest Williams' work has been widely anthologized, having also appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *Outside*, *Audubon*, and *The New England Review*, among other national and international publications.

**Registration for the National Learning Communities Conference in
Seattle, Washington, begins January 1, 2004.**

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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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