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National Collegiate Honors Council

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honors in practice
HIP

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honors in practice

HTP

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

Journal Editors

Ada Long

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University of Alabama at Birmingham

JOURNAL EDITORS

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Cover image: "Measuring a culvert for passage of fish," NCHC's Partners in the Parks, Acadia, Maine, August 2009. Photograph by Joan Digby. Featured in photograph: Professor Greg Fahy (front), Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Maine at Augusta; students Kyle Robisch (middle), University of Florida, and Juste Gatari, University of Maine at Augusta.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Honors in Practice (*HIP*) accommodates the need and desire for articles about nuts-and-bolts issues, innovative practices in individual honors programs, and other honors topics of concern to the membership. *HIP* complements the semi-annual scholarly journal of the NCHC, *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* (*JNCHC*). Both journals employ a double-blind review system. *JNCHC* publishes scholarly essays that stress research in and on honors education. *HIP* publishes practical and descriptive essays: descriptions of successful honors courses, suggestions for out-of-class experiences, administrative issues, and other matters of use and/or interest to honors faculty, administrators, and students. Essays should present ideas and/or practices that will be useful to other honors administrators and faculty, not just descriptions of "what we do at our institution."

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu.

DEADLINE

HIP is published annually. The deadline for submissions is January 1.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. We accept material by e-mail attachment (preferred) or disk. We do not accept material by fax or hard copy.

2. If documentation is used, the documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author's primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is strongly preferred, and the editor will revise all internal citations in accordance with MLA guidelines.

3. There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.

4. Accepted essays are edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

DEDICATION

Donzell Lee

An outstanding musician, teacher, and leader, Donzell Lee has been an important asset to honors for over twenty-five years. Having received his B.Mus. from Xavier University of Louisiana, his M.A. from Stanford University, and his Ph.D. from Louisiana State University, Donzell joined the faculty of Alcorn State University in 1981 and remains there as Professor of Music. His career in honors began in 1984, when he assumed the position of Director of the Honors Curriculum Program at Alcorn State. Since that time he has been active in the National Association of African-American Honors Programs, the Southern Regional Honors Council, and the National Collegiate Honors Council. He was one of the founders of the NAAAHP and served as president from 1992 to 1994. In the SRHC, he served as vice president, conference program chair, and president in 1993-95. In the NCHC, he served in the full sequence of offices, including president, from 2000 through 2004. In all these organizations, his calm and inclusive leadership style has been invaluable. Throughout the past decade he has also taken responsibility for organizing Master Classes at the NCHC conferences and has remained a significant contributor to the success of not just honors conferences but honors education. A lovely bonus has been his many piano performances at conferences over the years, and one of my favorite memories of Donzell will always be seeing him arrive at SRHC conferences with many busloads of his wonderful students, all in their Alcorn State University jackets. We are happy to honor this exceptional educator, leader, and person by dedicating to him this issue of *Honors in Practice*.

Editor's Introduction

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The lead essay in this issue of *Honors in Practice* is one that most readers will want to keep close at hand. At the behest of the NCHC Publications Board, Emily C. Walshe of Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus, has contributed "Conducting Research in Honors," a set of clear, detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to do research in honors. While some readers will be familiar with this material already and others will struggle to keep up, the majority will find in this essay an invaluable tool and resource for doing research in general and honors research in particular. So go ahead and make room among the essential references on your bookshelf for this issue of *HIP*.

While Walshe's essay is targeted primarily at faculty in honors, the next three essays address particular issues related to student research. Nathan Hilberg, the faculty advisor for the *Pittsburgh Undergraduate Review*, answers the question "Is Originality an Appropriate Requirement for Undergraduate Publication?" He argues that, in evaluating undergraduate work and awarding institutional support, we need to distinguish between originality and "independent scholarly accomplishment." This distinction, he writes, goes beyond semantics and influences important decisions about students and the work they do, with originality being an invalid and inappropriate criterion for evaluating undergraduate research.

The other two essays that focus on student research provide suggestions about helping honors students complete their theses successfully. In "Individual Achievement in an Honors Research Community: Teaching Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development," Kaitlin A. Briggs of the University of Southern Maine describes her strategies for developing a research community in her honors thesis workshop. Basing her ideas on the work of Lev Vygotsky, she contends that individual progress is necessarily rooted in the multiple perspectives of communal discourse. She both describes and models a process that prepares students to move forward from a research community to a successful honors thesis.

A related goal with a different strategy is the subject of "Student-Guided Thesis Support Groups" by Jennifer Beard, Ryan D. Shelton, Amanda Stevens, George H. Swindell IV, and Raymond J. Green. The authors of this essay—the dean of the honors college at Texas A&M University-Commerce and four of the honors students there—give an account of a successful program of support groups that students designed and implemented in order to help each other through the process of writing their honors theses. The essay includes a

rationale and description of the program as well as excellent advice from the students about how to make such support groups work effectively.

The next set of essays focuses on curricular matters, starting with "More than a COIN Flip: Improving Honors Education with Real Time Simulations Based on Contemporary Events" by Kurt Hackemer of the University of South Dakota. Hackemer describes an extraordinary simulation-based course he taught on insurgencies and corresponding counterinsurgency (COIN) in Afghanistan. The course included standard texts, breaking news from around the world about events happening in Afghanistan, and a fictional news source called the Omniscient News Network (ONN) maintained by the instructor. The students used all these sources—and each other, through a continuous blog— to simulate tactics, decisions, betrayals, and armed conflicts in Afghanistan. Throughout the essay Hackemer provides suggestions on how teachers can adapt real-time simulations to other topics.

In "To Discuss or Not to Discuss: Integrating Pedagogies for Honors and Mathematics" by William Griffiths, Nancy Reichert, and L.R. Ritter, two math teachers and an honors director (Reichert) describe the inauguration of discussion-based classes in mathematics at Southern Polytechnic State University. Since math is often an especially hard topic to teach in a campus-wide honors program, this essay will be a useful source of ideas and information. While not all problems were resolved or questions answered, the new pedagogies described here increased interest among both faculty and students who, in most instances, were initially skeptical.

Like math, language courses can be hard to incorporate within an honors curriculum, but, in "French à la carte: Maintaining a Language Program on a Shoestring," Sheilagh Margaret Riordan describes a strategy she adopted for teaching French to fourteen students of all ranges and kinds of language background within the Harriet Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University. While few teachers, even in honors, would be willing to take on as many extra responsibilities for as little money as Riordan has done, she offers several good ideas that other honors educators could adopt, either in sum or in part, for honors courses like advanced languages or mathematics that enroll students of varying skill levels.

Honors contracts are the topic of the next essay, by Alyce DiLauro, Teron Meyers, and Laura Guertin of Penn State Brandywine, called "The Value of Extending the Honors Contract Beyond One Semester: A Case Study with Smithsonian Dinosaurs." Guertin begins the essay by suggesting the value of extending an honors contract project beyond the semester-long course to which it is attached. Two of her students then illustrate this value in their account of an audio-visual project on dinosaur specimens at the Smithsonian Institution that they first undertook in Guertin's course; they extended the project under her guidance for two more semesters, making it a significant achievement in research and digital media. Neither the students nor the instructor received extra credit other than intellectual satisfaction and accomplishment; some more

palpable means of encouraging such projects would be worthwhile to students and their teachers in honors.

Michael Cundall of Northwestern State University, in "Service Learning and Skunkworks in a Senior Honors Colloquium," recounts the experience, familiar to many in honors, of finding himself suddenly committed to pedagogies and projects that are entirely new to him and coming up fast. Fortunately, he rose to the occasion by having his students in a senior colloquium plan and implement a catered, day-long seminar that taught and demonstrated food production in a manner responsible and responsive to the local community of growers and consumers. This sudden-immersion experience introduced Cundall to what Paul Strong called "Honors as Skunkworks."

In "Beyond the Great Books: Increasing the Flexibility, Scope, and Appeal of an Honors Curriculum," Matthew C. Altman compares the new theme-based interdisciplinary honors curriculum at Central Washington University to the honors program's previous Great Books approach. The transition provides an interesting contrast of the two models that honors administrators may find useful in considering programmatic options. For CWU, the transition away from the Great Books created important benefits with few drawbacks.

The next two essays—both by multiple authors from different institutions—suggest ways to enhance programmatic effectiveness. Three former student representatives on the NCHC Board of Directors describe honors ambassadors programs at their undergraduate institutions. After explaining the benefits of ambassadors programs, they give a detailed account of these programs at West Virginia University, Hillsborough Community College, and Northern Arizona University. Despite differences in size, duties, and compensation, all three ambassadors programs benefit the ambassadors, the other students, the honors program or college, and the larger institution.

"Ad Tracking, Brand Equity Research, and . . . *Your Honors Program*?"—by William A. Ashton and Erzulie Mars of York College, CUNY; Barbara Ashton of Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY; and Renny Eapen of Chestnut Hill College—describes a method used at York College to determine what and how much the student population knew about the honors program. Based on the survey they conducted, the authors had the data they needed to change not just the way they promoted the program but also the program itself; they provide a model that honors directors, if they are trying to attract more students from their own institution, might find helpful.

The following three essays go beyond curricular and programmatic matters to encompass larger contexts for honors. In "From the White House to Our House: the Story of an Honors College Vegetable Garden," Michael Lund and Geoffrey Orth describe an exciting new project initiated by the Cormier Honors College for Citizen Scholars at Longwood University: a vegetable garden created and maintained by honors students and faculty. The garden is roughly the same dimensions as—and is modeled on—Michelle Obama's White House garden. The Longwood garden provides an opportunity to investigate local

history, politics, agriculture, civil rights, and economics, all the while providing focus and creating community in the honors college. Although new, this project provides a model that other honors administrators might well consider for their own programs.

Another series of initiatives that include community outreach are the subject of "Studies in Cyberspace: Honors, Professional Teacher Development, Curricular Development, and Systemic Change in Louisiana" by Brian C. Etheridge, Galen Turner, Heath Tims, and Christian A. Duncan. These initiatives involve study of the scientific, technical, political, economic, and ethical issues related to cyberspace. Cooperating with and supported by local and regional, public and private entities, honors faculty created a professional development workshop for high school teachers, a one-week residential camp for high school students, and a semester-long course for honors students. Among the many benefits of these initiatives, the authors point to the opportunity honors educators have to take their innovations beyond their program and institution into their local and regional cultures.

The next essay both describes and is a collaboration between Mimi Killinger, a faculty member, and Aya Mares, an honors student, at the University of Maine. "Fertile Ground: Reflections on Collaborative Student-Faculty Research in the Arts" describes the project the authors undertook together on art therapy, art activism, and art collectives. The essay demonstrates in both form and content the richly productive work that honors inspires at its best— outside the classroom, not for credit, and for the joy and excitement of learning together. Like the essays by Laura Guertin and Sheilagh Margaret Riordan, this one shows the magic that can happen when teachers and students move beyond requirements, credits, and academic structures to celebrate their love of learning for its own sake.

The final four essays in this issue of *HIP* are themselves focused on finality; they are backward looks at experiences in honors and also visions of the future. We print here a revised version of Lydia Lyons's presidential speech delivered at the NCHC annual conference in Washington, D.C. Although ending her presidency, Lyons, honors director at Hillsborough Community College, focused on the future in her speech. She used two sports metaphors—whitewater rafting and bicycling—to explain her vision of where the NCHC should be heading. Adapting to change, expanding our partnerships, achieving a voice in higher education, and keeping focused on our students are just some of the features of this vision.

"When It Comes Time Not to 'Jump the Shark': Stepping Down as Director" is Nick Flynn's look back at his experience of coming to the end of his honors experience. While Samuel Schuman published the probably definitive statement on "Ending in Honors" in last year's *HIP*, Flynn, the founding director at Angelo State University, provides an interesting perspective from someone who has been in honors a much shorter time. Those who are still in their first decade as honors directors or deans will find useful advice here on when and how to resign.

Catherine Irwin—in "Celebrating Twenty Years of Honors through Oral History: Making an Honors Program Video Documentary"—describes her experience making a twenty-minute video documentary of and for the University of La Verne Honors Program. She provides a model for using oral history to produce a video, which can serve a variety of purposes from documenting the program's history to enhancing the tenure and promotion files of honors faculty. Readers who are persuaded to attempt such a documentary of their own will find here an abundance of useful advice.

We conclude this issue of *Honors in Practice* with a piece by one of my favorite writers in the NCHC and beyond. In a moving contemplation of his long and distinguished career in honors at the University of Houston, Ted L. Estess tells a story about the pattern of his life, of all our lives—a story both existential and metaphysical about a future that seems (or is) both risky and random but that produces a past both coherent and meaningful. At any stage of our careers in honors, we can find wisdom in this story that mirrors the confusion and clarity of all our lives.

Research Matters

Conducting Research in Honors

EMILY C. WALSHE

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY, C. W. POST CAMPUS

INTRODUCTION

There's an old library story about oranges and peaches that goes like this: a guy bellies up to the reference desk looking for the book, *The Oranges and Peaches.* He's in a hurry. The librarian searches the catalog—fruitlessly—for the title. The man is incredulous. "I have to read it by Monday! It's a *classic*!" The librarian asks if he knows the author. He's indignant. "Charles-something-or-other!" With that, she goes to the shelves and plucks off Darwin's *On the Origins of Species.* "Yep, that's it," he says, "now, do you have the movie?"

It is the happy job of the reference librarian to assist researchers in making *reference to* the whole of recorded knowledge, in the myriad formats by which it is presented. In the library, communication accidents of the oranges and peaches variety happen all the time; but in the digital domain, the human ability to repair such accidents by means of adaptation is supplanted by prescriptive language and pre-programmed approximations.

In innumerable ways, the Internet environment is a major evolutionary development. The World Wide Web, in branching patterns of common descent, has given way to a kind of mechanical consciousness to which researchers—of all ages, abilities, and proclivities—are apt to become either unwittingly submissive or utterly defiant.

This essay will provide a framework for effective research in honors in and out of the library, with tips and tricks along the way. It will introduce the common characteristics of knowledge organization systems; highlight the library resources that feature honors scholarship and open-source repositories that aggregate scholarly material; introduce a toolbox for accessing the NCHC *e-sources* that allow for collaboration and exchange; and briefly discuss changes in the fair use covenant for teaching and scholarship that the millennial age brings.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATION SYSTEMS

Before stepping foot in the library (or setting mouse upon its homepage), a researcher needs to understand the common characteristics of knowledge organization systems. These systems are mechanisms for organizing information and are at the heart of every library and information portal. Their common characteristics are: *term lists, classification schedules, relationship lists,* and *abstracts and indexes.*

TERM LISTS

A term list is a list of headings, words, or phrases (often called *keywords* or *descriptors*) used in a classification scheme. Term lists sometimes present themselves in drop-down menu boxes from search-input windows. Examples of term lists include authority files, dictionaries, glossaries, and gazetteers.

CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULES

A classification schedule is the complete plan *and content* of a library's catalog system, which organizes knowledge artifacts by a process of division and grouping in similarity. Academic and research institutions use the Library of Congress (LC) classification schedule.

RELATIONSHIP LISTS

A relationship list organizes and presents information so that the user perceives it as a set. A relational index shows the relationship between works by the use of symbols; and a relational database interconnects all items of data, allowing researchers to use one item of data to search in related fields.

Examples of relationship lists for academic research are the Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH) list, which provides sets of controlled terminology; or content-specific thesauri, which show the relationship of terms based on concepts.

ABSTRACTS AND INDEXES

An abstract is a summary of a document's content, used to assist the researcher in determining a document's relevance to an inquiry. In bibliographic records for books, the "abstracted" information is commonly listed as *Contents* notes. An index is a finding aid to information on a specific topic and is often an alphabetical list of items contained in a book, document, or computer file. The practice of abstracting and indexing (A&I) developed as an outgrowth of traditional bibliography and in response to a "born-digital" boom in the production of journal literature.

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND OPEN-SOURCE REPOSITORIES

An academic library is a high-tech gateway to the ever-expansive universe of recorded knowledge. For many, it serves as a one-stop-shop for authoritative, non-biased, scholarly exchange. The density of collections, agility of librarians, and extensiveness of services and global consortia all conspire to make the academic library a potent partner in research.

Access to a library's vast collections is best achieved by using the online catalog. For most academic libraries, the catalog functions as the centralized finding aid for all collections, regardless of format (print or non-print) or

residency (physical within the library or ephemeral across the Web). Relative to honors education, researchers can use the common characteristics of knowledge organization systems to effectively navigate immense library collections.

CATALOG SEARCHING

Catalog platforms vary by institution, but a good rule of thumb is to approach the library catalog using a **general keyword** search, where your natural language query will be mapped to a term list apposite of the discipline in which you are searching. From the full bibliographic record, you can then broaden or narrow the scope of your search by linking to various term or relationship lists (subject headings, series, or added author entries), as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Full Catalog Record, Bibliographic Description. *Library Catalog*
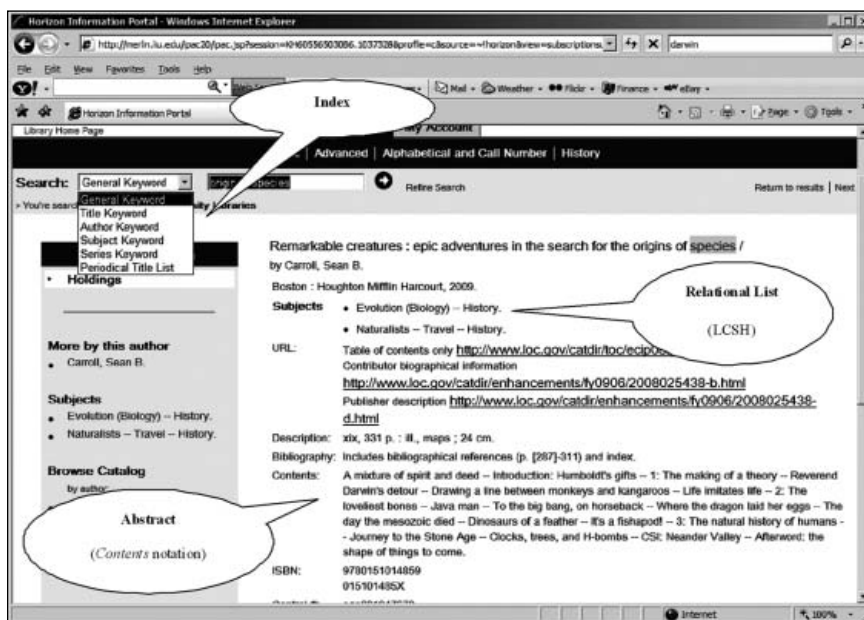
In the holdings data area, a researcher is directed to the book's LC (Library of Congress) classification (Figure 1.2); this appears as the **call number**. The call number is an alphanumeric code used to identify and locate a book. Often appended to the spine of the book, it corresponds to the physical residency of the title on the bookshelves.

Figure 1.2: Full Catalog Record, Holdings Data. *Library Catalog*
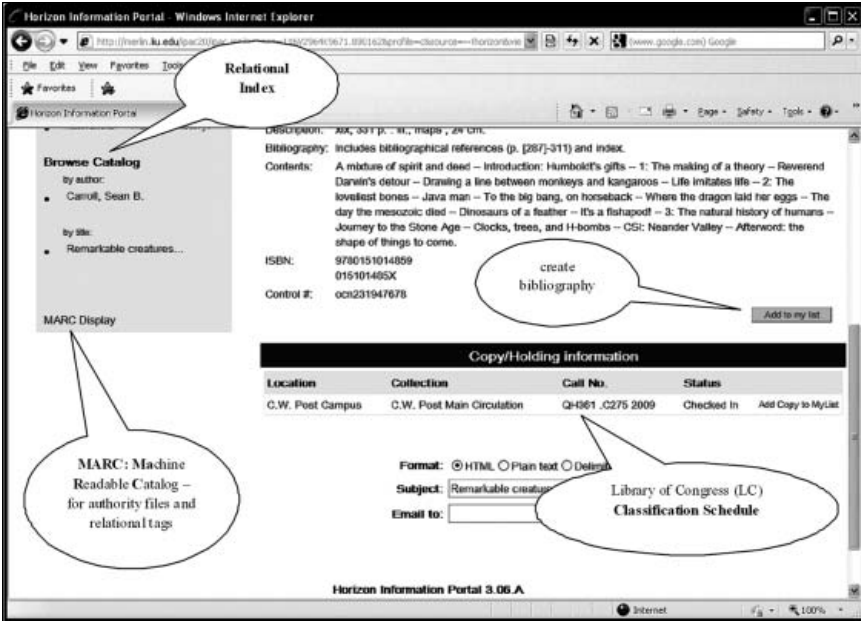
CITATION SEARCHING AND BROWSING THE BOOK STACKS

A conventional research strategy for locating primary and secondary information is to follow bibliographic citations from a known or relevant source. A similar tactic is browsing the book stacks for groupings of related titles. Here is where a dense classification schema comes into play.

For browsing among the book shelves, you'll find honors-related discourse in the **LB** (*Library of Congress* classification for **Theory and Practice of Education**) sections ranging from **1025–1050.75** (Teaching, Principles and Practice) to **2300–2430** (Higher Education) to **3602–3640** (School Life, Student Manners and Customs).

Because of its broad, interdisciplinary nature, honors-related research is scattered all across the monographic universe, sometimes residing in areas of other academic or professional rigor. Content-specific research related to honors education will often find its primary classification among like-titles in that discipline (for example, *Science—Study and Teaching [Higher]* would be classed in **Q 181**). Best practice involves searching the library catalog first for cross-classifications.

FINDING JOURNAL ARTICLES

Online databases provide subject access to journal literature within a specific discipline. There are two major types of databases: *bibliographic* and *full-text.*

with variant spellings. For example, **defen?e** finds both *defense* (American) and *defence* (British). Multiple question marks in succession stand for the equal number of characters. For example, **psych????y** matches either *psychology* or *psychiatry* but not *psychotherapy.*

! An **exclamation point** (!) stands for one or no characters and is used when you want to match the singular and plural of a word, but not other forms. For example, **product!** matches *product* and *products* but not *productive* or *productivity.* The exclamation point can also be used inside a word to gather words with variant spellings. For example, **colo!r** matches both *color* (American) and *colour* (British).

Logical (or Boolean) Operators

Named after the nineteenth-century British mathematician George Boole, logical (or Boolean) operators create relationships between search terms; between a term and a result set; and between two result sets. They allow you to find the result of the intersection of two search terms or result sets; the combination of two terms or result sets; or the exclusion of a term or result set from a search. There are three logical operators:

AND   Specifies that **both words** on either side of the operator must occur in the part of a record you are searching for that record to match. For example, *species and descent* finds only those records in which *both* the word *species* and the word *descent* occur.

OR   Specifies that **one or the other or both** of the words on either side of the operator must occur in the part of a record you are searching for that record to match. For example, *Darwin or oranges* finds records in which *either* the word *Darwin* or the word *oranges* or both occur.

NOT   Specifies that the word **before** the operator must occur but the word **after** the operator must not occur for a record to match. For example, *selection not artificial* finds all records in which the word *selection* occurs *except* the ones in which the word *artificial* also occurs.

Term Nesting

When searching a subject comprised of two or more terms, it is useful to nest your terms in "quotation marks." This tells the computer to treat multiple terms as one term unit. For example, if you are searching for literature on *natural selection*, you would input this search as *"natural selection,"* thus yielding entries where the terms *natural* and *selection* are in direct (n) proximity rather than retrieving everything where the words *natural* and *selection* appear in distant approximation within a single record (n1–n100+).

Search Order for Operators

Database search systems follow a particular order of evaluation when there are two or more operators in a search expression. First, *wildcards* are evaluated. Next come *proximity operators*, which are tightly bound to the words on either side of them. Finally, the *logical operators* are evaluated: first *not* and *and*, followed by *or.*

You can change the evaluation order of the logical operators by using *nesting operators* (parentheses). When you nest terms, the search system performs the operation within parentheses first and then merges the result set with the part of the entry outside the parentheses.

For example, the search expression *oranges or peaches and Darwin* specifies that you want to find records that contain either the word *oranges* or both the words *peaches* and *Darwin.* This expression is equivalent to the expression *oranges or (peaches and Darwin).* The search expression *(oranges or peaches) and Darwin* specifies that you want to find records that contain either or both of the words *oranges* or *peaches* and that also contain the word *Darwin.*

Periodical Databases

Currently, NCHC publications are indexed, abstracted, and available full-text in two major academic subscription databases:[1]

1. Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (ISSN: 1559-0151)
   from 09/22/2001 to present in *Academic OneFile* (Gale Cengage Learning)
   from 09/01/2008 to present in *Education Research Complete* (EBSCO)

2. Honors In Practice (ISSN: 1559-0143)
   from 01/01/2005 to present in *Academic OneFile* (Gale Cengage Learning)
   from 06/01/2008 to present in *Education Research Complete* (EBSCO)

From your university library webpage, you can navigate to these utilities via the online catalog or a directory of online databases.

ACADEMIC ONEFILE

Academic OneFile is Gale Reference's premier database for peer-reviewed, full-text articles from the world's leading academic journals and reference sources. It provides an authoritative and comprehensive taxonomy to research in the social sciences, technology, medicine, literature, and the arts. Millions of articles (from 1980 to the present, updated daily) are made available in both PDF and HTML full-text with no restrictions.

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[1] In late 2009, a licensing agreement was signed with the H.W. Wilson Company for the integration of NCHC publications into the following WilsonWeb databases: Education Full Text; OmniFile Mega Full Text and OmniFile Select. Access to NCHC publications through these databases will be available in spring 2010.

Here, NCHC scholarship shares a home with a vast array of periodicals, including contextually-relevant titles such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Times Higher Education (UK)*, *Phi Kappa Phi Forum*, *Research in Higher Education*, *Planning for Higher Education*, and *Community College Week*.

Using Academic OneFile

1. Go to the home page of your library. If you are searching from an off-campus location, make sure to first consult your library circulation department to ensure that you have remote access privileges to the database.

2. Find the option for Online Databases.

3. Search for *Academic OneFile*. If an alphabetical index of databases is available, search under *A*.

Search (Fig. 2.1)

Figure 2.1: Basic Search, *Academic OneFile*
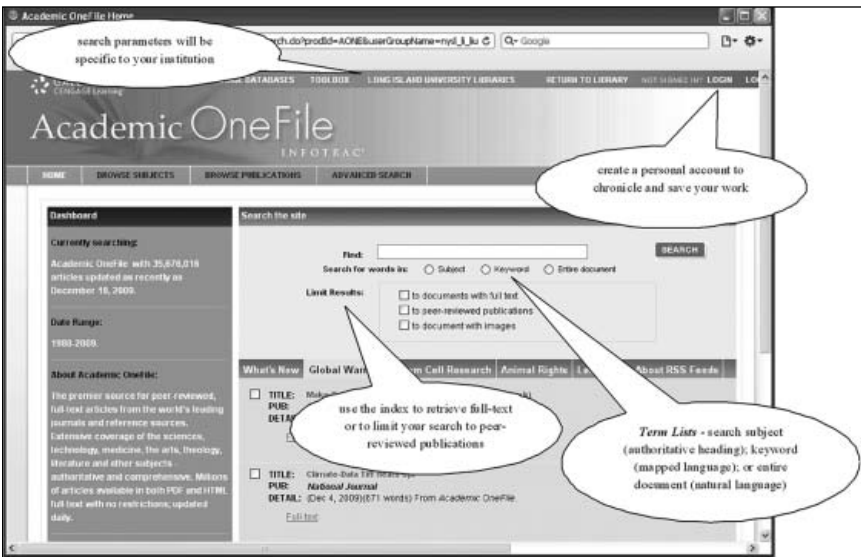
Publication Search (Fig. 2.2)

To limit your search to *JNCHC* or *HIP* publications, go **BROWSE PUBLICATIONS** from the search type bar and type the title in the search window on the left frame:

Figure 2.2: Browse Publications, *Academic OneFile*
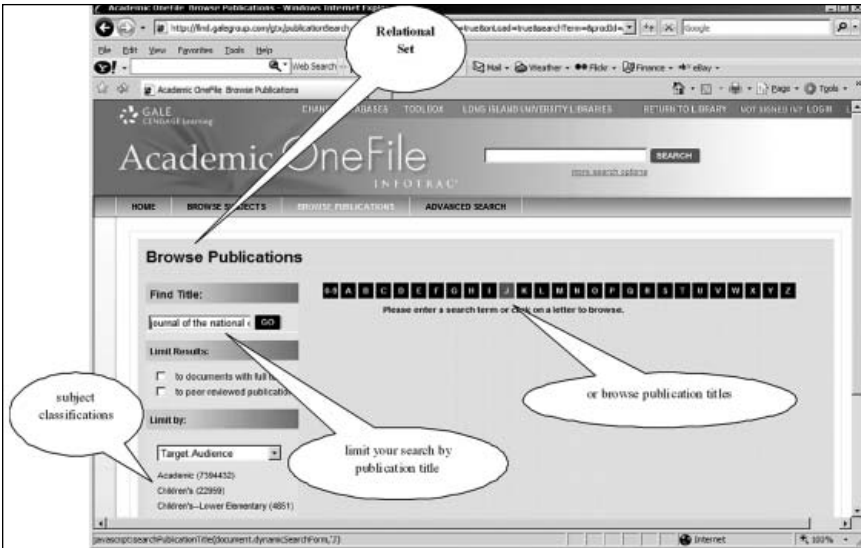
Advanced Search (Figs. 2.3–4)

To perform an advanced search, do the following:

1. Click **Advanced Search** from the *search type bar.*

2. Enter your search term(s) in the top-most input box.

3. Select an *index* from the drop-down menu (some indexes may be *browsed*).

4. Optionally, select a *logical operator (AND, OR, NOT)*, enter additional search term(s), and select an index. To search on multiple indexes, select a logical operator at the far right to connect each index you're searching. The AND operator is used by default, but you may select OR or NOT. To search more indexes, click the **Add a row** link.

5. Optionally, *enter one or more search limits* to narrow your search results using the fields found below the search input boxes.

6. Click the **Search** button.

7. Click **Reset** to clear the form or start over.

Figure 2.3: Advanced Search, Screen One. *Academic OneFile*
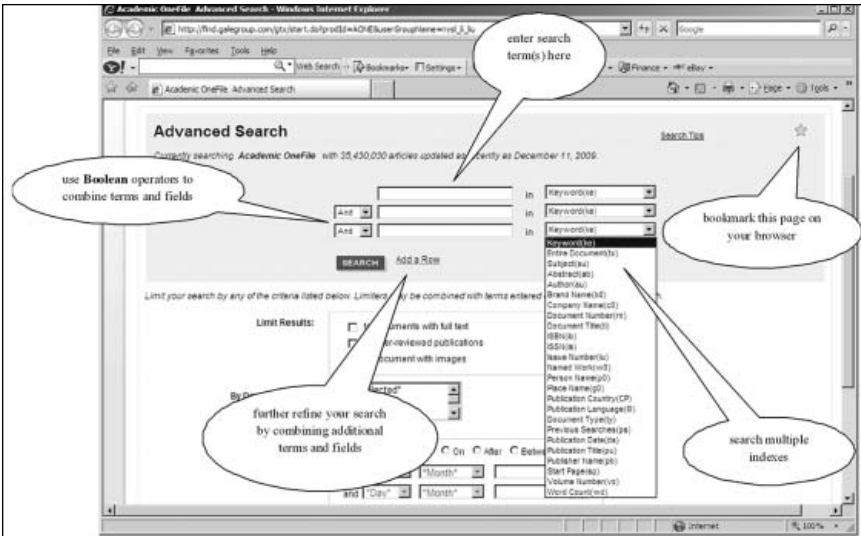
Figure 2.4: Advanced Search, Screen Two. *Academic OneFile*
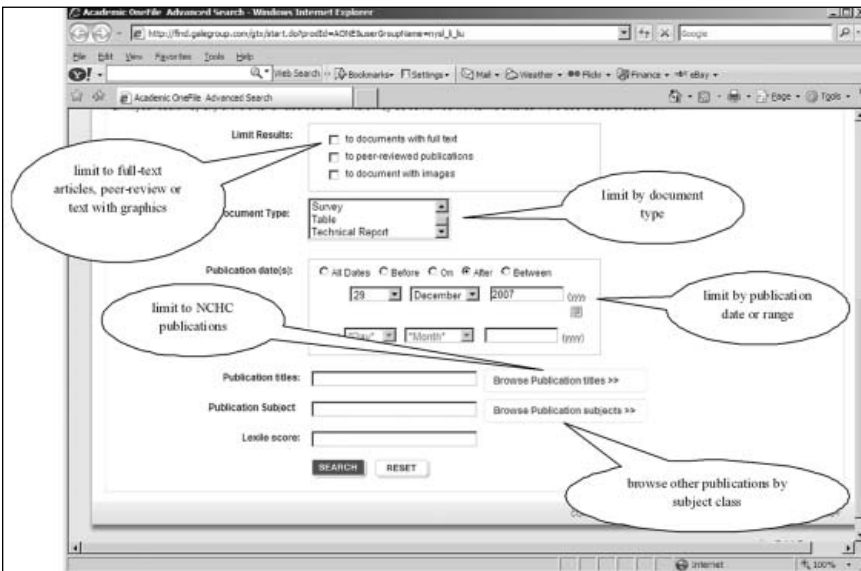
Browse by Subject Class (Fig. 2.5)

You can execute a search based on a single or multiple subject classifica-tion(s). Click on **Browse Publication subjects** to access the subject master list (* tip: you'll find *Education* under the *Social Sciences* tab).

Figure 2.5: Browse Publication Subjects, *Academic OneFile*
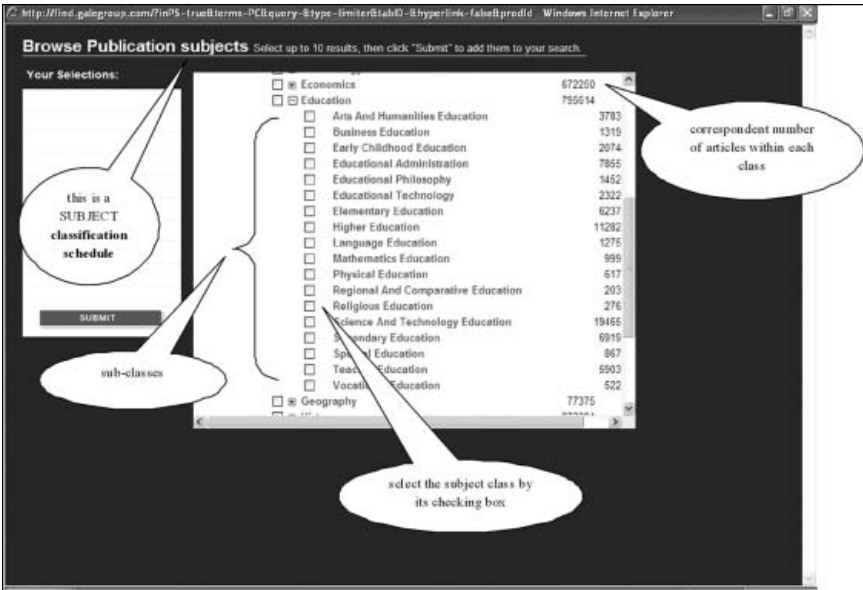
Select up to ten subject areas for simultaneous searching by checking the box to the left of the entry. The numbers to the right of each subject class correspond to the number of articles indexed with that subject tag.

Results List (Fig. 2.6)

Figure 2.6: Search Results, *Academic OneFile*
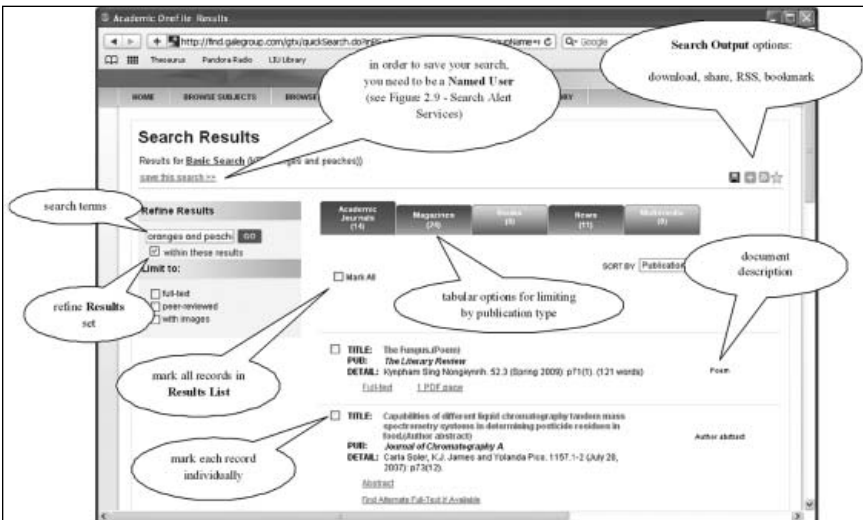
Search Output

After you have performed your search and harvested relevant information, you can capture your research (both bibliography and full-text) in a variety of ways.

From a Single Bibliographic Record

Figure 2.7: Search Output, Single Record. *Academic OneFile*
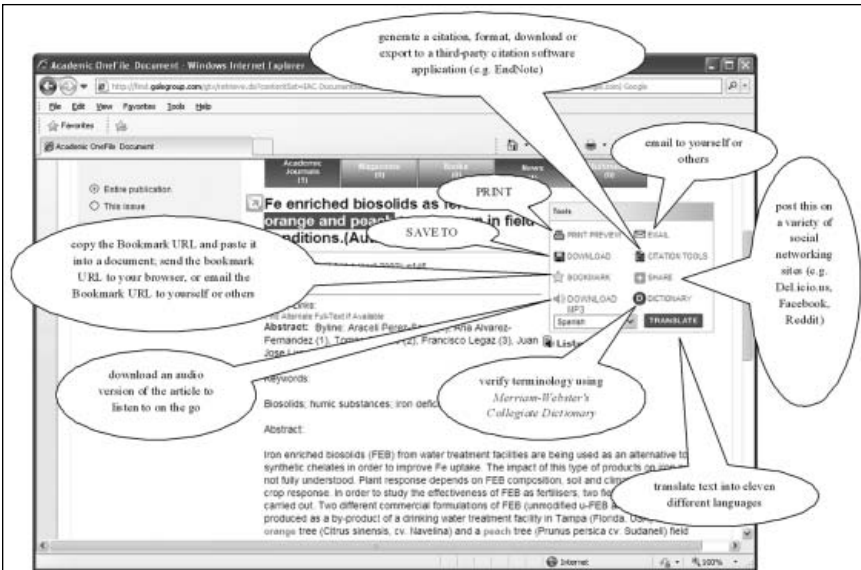
From a Multiple Record List (creating bibliography)

From the **Search Results** list, you can mark articles to create bibliographies and export citations and/or full-text (Fig. 2.8). The **Search Results**, too, will often feature open-source material (such as video and podcasts) to complement traditional bibliography.

Figure 2.8: Search Output, Multiple Records. *Academic OneFile*
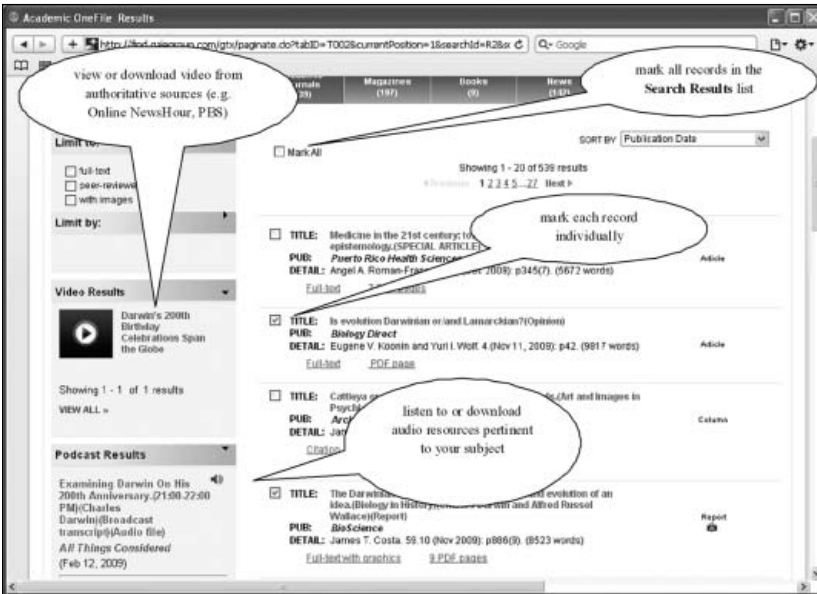
Search Alert Service and RSS Feed (Fig. 2.9)

When researching a topic where currency is vital, or while working on an agenda that is longitudinal in nature, it is beneficial to establish a user account with the database to chronicle and save your searches. **Search Alert Services** and **RSS** (**R**eally **S**imple **S**yndication) **feed**s automatically run searches according to your prescribed search criteria and periodically deliver research results directly to your Inbox.

From your **Search Results** list, or from the **Issues** page, you can request notification when new content that matches your search criteria is added to the database. You may choose to have the system check for new content on a daily, weekly or monthly basis and send you an email message in html format when updates are found. Or you may subscribe to an RSS feed through Gale Reference and have content delivered directly to your Inbox.

How to Set up an Email Search Alert

1. Perform a search for the information of which you want to receive alerts. You may use any type of search criteria, including search limiters.

2. On the **Results** list, click the **Create a Search Alert** link: Create a Search Alert

3. To receive alert emails, enter your email address in the **Mail to** field (only one email address allowed).

4. Use the default **Alert Name** or enter your own text (e.g. *Oranges Research*).

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Figure 2.9: Search Alert Service/RSS Feed, *Academic OneFile*
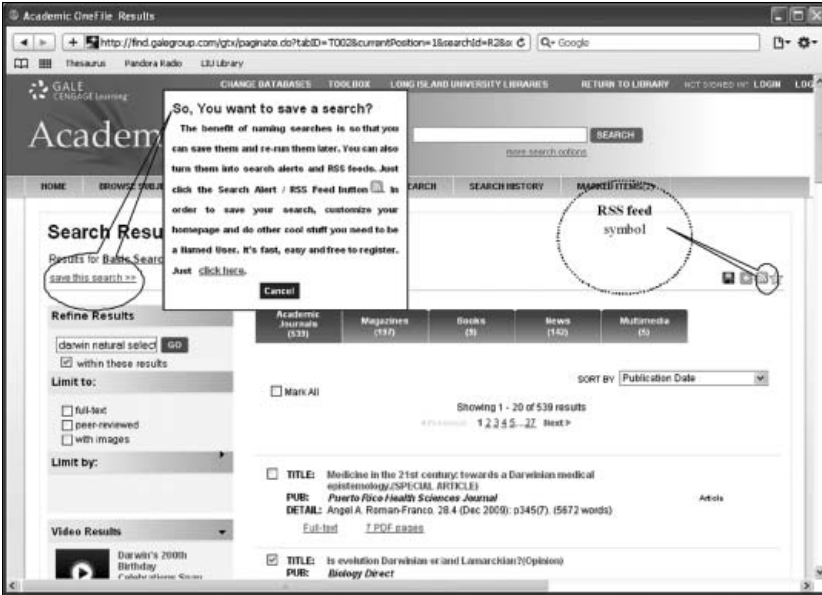
5. Select the **Frequency** in which you want the system to check for new content based on your search criteria: Daily, Weekly, or Monthly.

6. Click the **Save** button to submit your request.

You will be sent an email message to confirm that your request has been received. Then the system will check for new content based on the frequency you have selected. The alert email will contain individual links up to the first 20 new content items, plus a link to the full **Results** set. All emails will contain a link allowing you to opt out of the alert.

How to Subscribe to an RSS Search Alert Feed

To subscribe to the RSS feed (alerting you of new content in the database), do the following:

1. Perform a search for the information for which you want to receive alerts. You may use any type of search criteria, including search limiters.

2. On the **Results** list, click the **Create a Search** Alert link: Create a Search Alert

3. To subscribe to the RSS feed, copy the **Feed URL** and paste it into the software you use as your RSS reader or news aggregator (e.g. *Microsoft Outlook*).

4. Click the **Close** when you have finished.

EDUCATION RESEARCH COMPLETE

Education Research Complete is EBSCO's (**E**lton **B**ryson **S**tephens **Co**mpany) definitive resource for education research. International in scope and spanning over 100 years, coverage includes all levels of education, from early childhood to higher education, and all educational specialties, such as multilingual education, health education, and testing. Millions of articles (from 1906 to present, updated daily) are made available in both PDF and HTML full-text with no restrictions.

Here, NCHC scholarship finds its niche within a diverse range of titles including: *Higher Education Quarterly* (UK), *Innovative Higher Education* (Netherlands), *International Journal of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education*, *Quality in Higher Education* (Lithuania), *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *Christian Higher Education*, *South African Journal of Higher Education* (South Africa), and *Higher Education Management & Policy* (France).

Using Education Research Complete

1. Go to the home page of your library. If you are searching from an off-campus location, make sure to first consult your library circulation department to ensure that you have remote access privileges to the database.

2. Find the option for Online Databases.

3. Search for *Education Research Complete*. If an alphabetical index of databases is available, search under *E*. If a subject list of databases is available, search under *Education*.

Search

The **Basic Search** (Fig. 3.1) lets you create a search with limiters, expanders, and Boolean operators. To perform a basic search, do the following:

1. Enter your search terms in the **Find** field on the **Basic Search** screen.

2. Click the **Search Options** link if you would like to use any of the optional limiters or expanders. To close the **Search Options**, click the link again.

3. Select a specific **Search mode**, such as **Find all of my search terms** or **SmartText Searching**.

4. Apply **Limiters** such as **Full Text** or **Publication type**; or use search options that expand your search, such as **Apply related words**.

5. Click the **Search** button. The **Results List** displays.

Figure 3.1: Basic Search, *Education Research Complete*
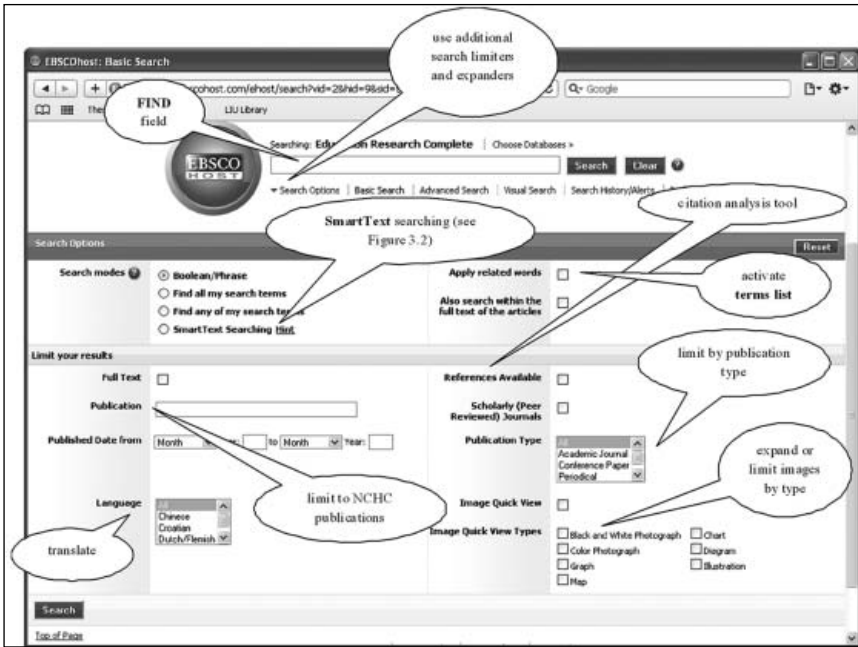
SmartText Searching (Fig. 3.2)

Figure 3.2: SmartText Searching, *Education Research Complete*
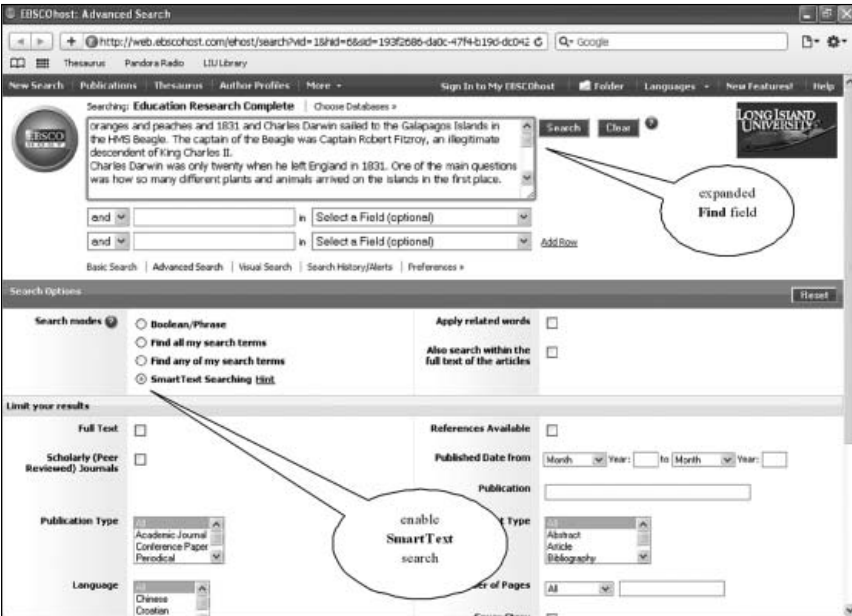
You can copy and paste chunks of text (up to 5000 characters including spaces) into your search window by using the **SmartText** search option. When you click the **SmartText Searching** radio button, the **Find** field grows to allow for an expanded use of search text.

Type your search terms, or copy and paste text from an article (or other source) into the **Find** field, select any other limiters or expanders, and click **Search**.

Advanced Search (Figs. 3.3–4)

To perform an advanced search, do the following:

1. Click the **Advanced Search** link below the **Find** field.

2. Enter your search terms in the first **Find** field on the **Advanced Search** screen.

3. Choose the search field from the optional **Select a Field** drop-down list (for example, search in only the **Subject Terms** field of the citation).

4. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for the second set of **Find** fields.

5. Select a Boolean operator (AND, OR, NOT) to combine the two **Find** field entries.

6. You can enter another Boolean operator, keyword, and search field in the third set of fields.

Figure 3.3: Advanced Search, *Education Research Complete*

Figure 3.4: Search Index, Advanced Search. *Education Research Complete*
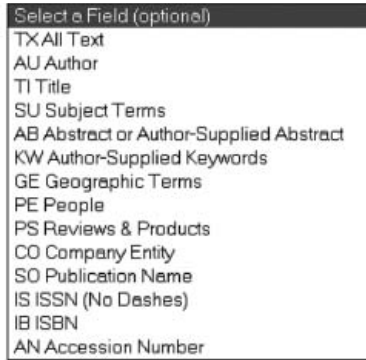
7. If you need additional rows, click the **Add Row** link (up to 12 rows can be displayed). To delete a row, click the **Remove Row** link.

8. Select from the available **Search Options**:

   • Search modes—Use specific *search modes*, such as **Find all of my search terms**, or **SmartText Searching**, or use search options that expand your search such as **Apply related words.**

   • Limit your results—such as **Full Text** or **Publication type**.

   • Special Limiters—Apply limiters specific to this database.

9. Click the **Search** button. The **Result List** displays.

Publication Search (Figs. 3.5–6)

The **Publications** authority file (an example of a **term list**) lists the titles included in the database by publication name. You can browse the list of publications or perform a search on one or more publications within a specific database. To browse a **Publications** authority file:

1. Click the **Publications** link (or hierarchical **Journal** link) at the top of the screen.

2. The **Publications** authority file appears, with the beginning of the list (alphabetically) displayed.

3. On the **Publications Screen**, enter your search terms in the **Browse** for field.

To enter search terms, select a search type by clicking the radio button next to:

• **Alphabetical**—Find journals beginning with the letters entered. Results are displayed in alphabetical order.

Figure 3.5: Publications Search, *Education Research Complete*
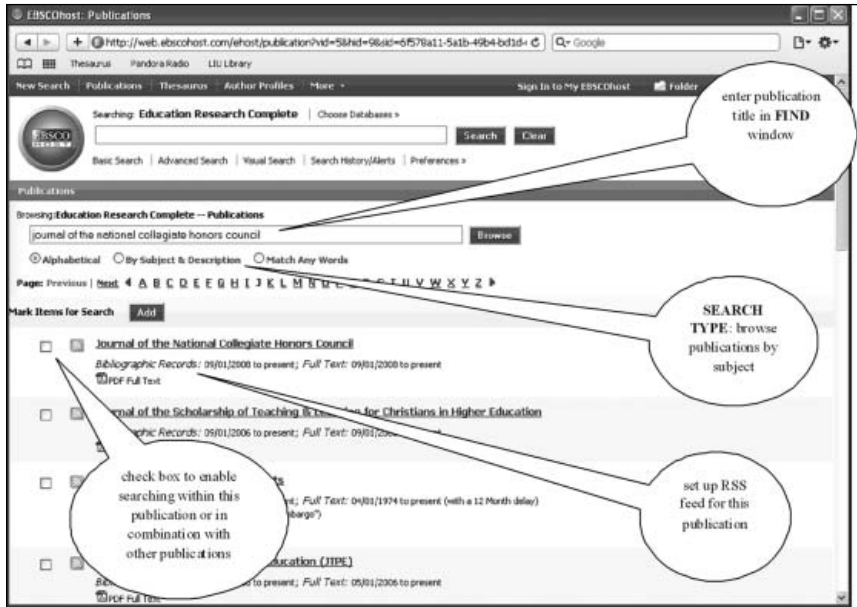
- **By Subject & Description**—Simultaneously search the subject, description, and title fields of a journal.

- **Match Any Words**—Find publications containing one or more of your terms. Results are displayed in an order of relevance.

You can enter all or part of a publication name, for example, *Journal of Collegiate H.* Click **Browse** to view your terms as they appear in the authority file. A **Publication Title List** is displayed.

Marking Items in a Publications Search

You can use the **Mark Items for Search** feature to search several publications at the same time or to combine publication names with other search terms. To search for several publications simultaneously, do the following:

1. With the **Publication Result List** displayed, mark the check boxes to the left of the publications you want to search (below **Mark Items for Search**).

2. Click **Add**. The publications you selected are placed in the **Find** field on the search screen (these are combined with *or*).

3. To search within those publications, click **Search**.

4. To revise your search, you can add more terms in the **Find** field and click **Search**.

Figure 3.6: Publications Authority File for *JNCHC, Education Research Complete*
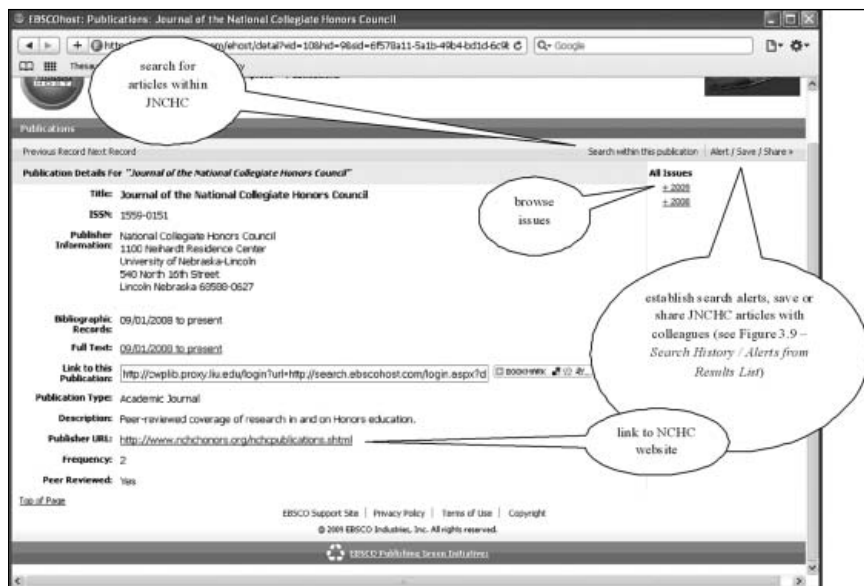
*Tip: For a description of the journal or publication, click the hyperlinked **Publication Name**. The information found in the **Publication Details** may include: the title, ISSN, publisher information (name, address, publisher URL), title history, bibliographic record and full text coverage, publication type, the subject and/or a description of the journal, and whether the journal is peer-reviewed. For NCHC journals, this record contains an active link to the organization's website.

Visual Search (Fig. 3.7)

Education Research Complete enables users to save their results in an interactive, visual map. You can change the style of the **Result List** at any time by selecting either **Block** style or **Column** style from the **Display Style** menu. Your search results are displayed in columns. To follow a path, click on the subject (or publication) name. Your results are then narrowed further.

Results Sorting Options in Visual Search

To see different ways to group, sort, or filter your search, click any of the buttons above the **Result List** at any time in your search. Use the **Collect Articles** area to "drag-and-drop" articles that you are interested in viewing.

You will need to collect the items that you want to save to your folder. Unless removed, these collected items will remain there for the duration of your search session.

Figure 3.7: Visual Search, *Education Research Complete*
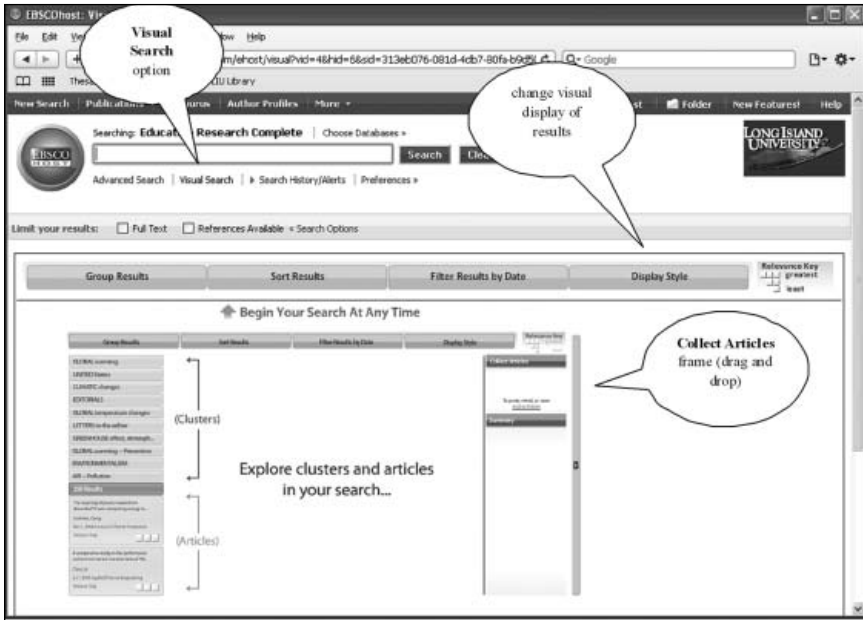
Citation Analysis

This database also provides the ability to browse references. When you run a **Basic** or **Advanced Keyword** search, any **Cited References** (Figs. 3.8–9) or **Times Cited** links that are available are presented with your search results:

- **Cited References**—If you click the **Cited References** hyperlink on a **Result**, the **Cited References** screen presents a list of records cited in your original article.

- **Related Records**—If you select one or more references and click the **Related Records** button, the **Related Records** screen presents a list of records related to your original article. These records are sorted by relevance, based on the greatest number of shared references.

- **Times Cited in this database**—If you click the **Times Cited** hyperlink on a **Result,** the **Citing Articles** screen presents a list of records that cite your original article.

Cited References and **Times Cited** hyperlinks are also displayed on the article detail page:

Records with **Cited References** and **Times Cited** links can be saved *to* the folder. However, linking to **Cited References** or **Citing Articles** lists is not available *from* the folder.

Figure 3.8: Cited References in Results List, *Education Research Complete*
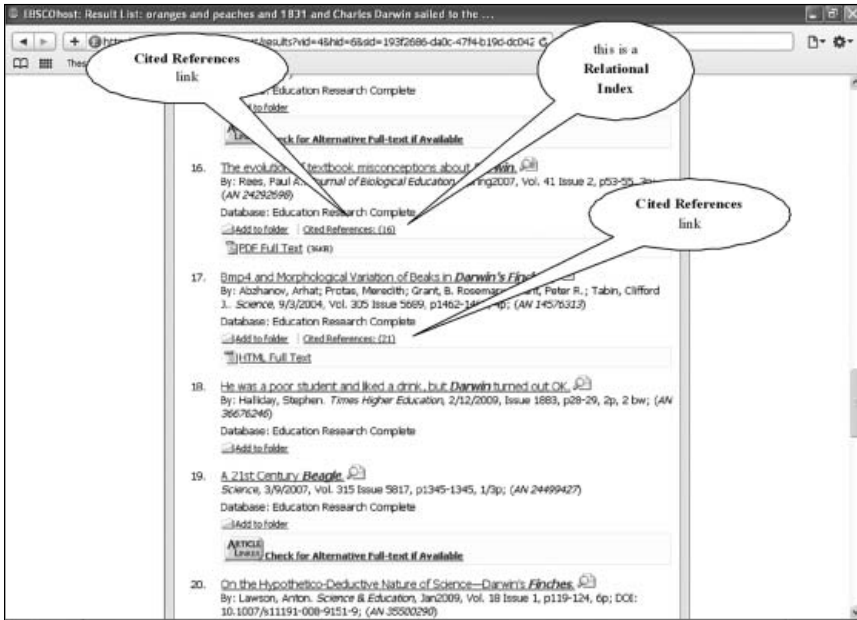
Figure 3.9: Cited References from Article Link, *Education Research Complete*
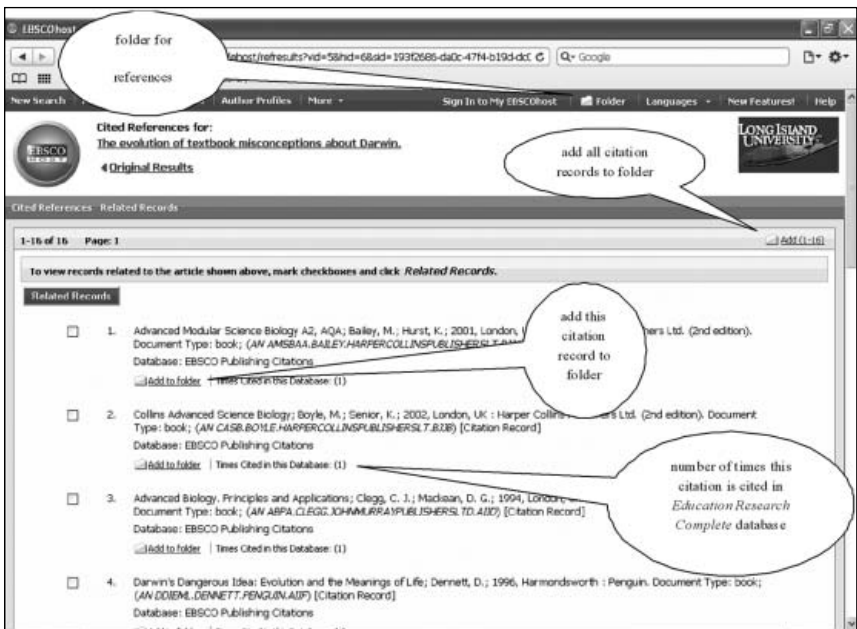
Search Results

Search results can be citations, full text articles, document summaries, or abstracts and can include links to full text. The **Result List** screen (Fig. 3.10) has three columns—**Narrow your results**, **All Results**, and **Limit your results**. You can hide or show the different areas by clicking the control arrows near the top of your results. Your library administrator decides whether the subject clusters (**Narrow your results** area) displays:

Figure 3.10: Results List, *Education Research Complete*
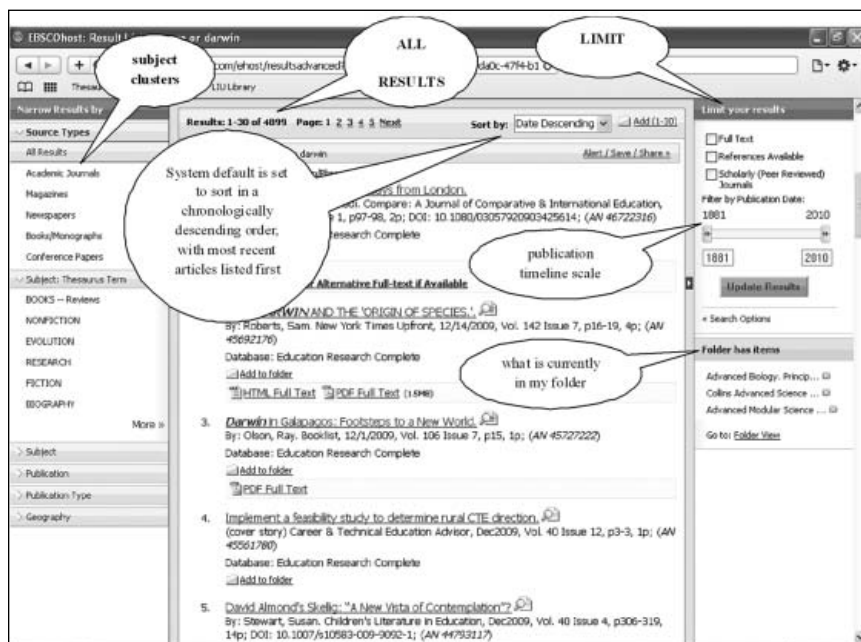
Narrow Results By

You can narrow by source type, subject, journal, author, and more. This feature, also known as "clustering," is helpful if you want to discover the major subject groups for your topic without having to browse multiple pages of results or checking individual articles for relevance. To narrow your results, click a hyperlinked term in the **Narrow Results by** column. A new **Result List**, limited to the chosen term, is displayed and a new list of terms appears in the left-hand column.

All Results

The articles that were found display in the center of the **Result List** screen.

- The **article title** link takes you to the citation information and/or the full text. Place your mouse over the **Preview** icon 🖻 to view the **Abstract**.

- The **HTML Full Text** link takes you directly to the full text of the article.

- The **PDF Full Text** link takes you to a PDF version of the full text. The PDF will open in the Adobe Reader.

- To save an article to the **Folder**, click the **Add to Folder** link to the right of the **Relevancy** indicator, or inside the **Article Preview** that you hover over with your mouse.

- The **Relevancy** indicator ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ tells you how relevant the article is based on your search criteria.

Limit Your Results

You can limit your search results by **full-text**, **references** availability, **peer-review** or **date**, using a sliding timeline scale.

Create an Account

Creating a personalized **My EBSCO*host*** account allows researchers to save, organize, share, and manipulate data in different ways. An account also enables special features such as **Notetaking**, which permits users to take notes on articles and save them to their **My EBSCO*host*** folder for later viewing, and **Search Alerts**, in which researchers save searches as **Alerts** and have **EBSCO*host*** run them automatically and email new content.

Notetaking (Fig. 3.11)

To use the **Notetaking** feature, do the following:

1. From the citation or full-text display on which you would like to leave a note, click on the **Notes** 🖳 icon in the toolbar:

2. The **Create Note** window appears. The article citation information will appear in the **Context** area.

3. Enter a title for your note and your text in the **Note** field. When finished entering your note, click the **Save** button.

4. The **Note** is saved to the folder and is accessible from the **Folder Items** area in the **Related Information** column on the right. Click the **Folder Notes View** link to view your notes in the **EBSCO*host* folder**.

Figure 3.11: Notetaking Feature from Citation Page, *Education Research Complete*
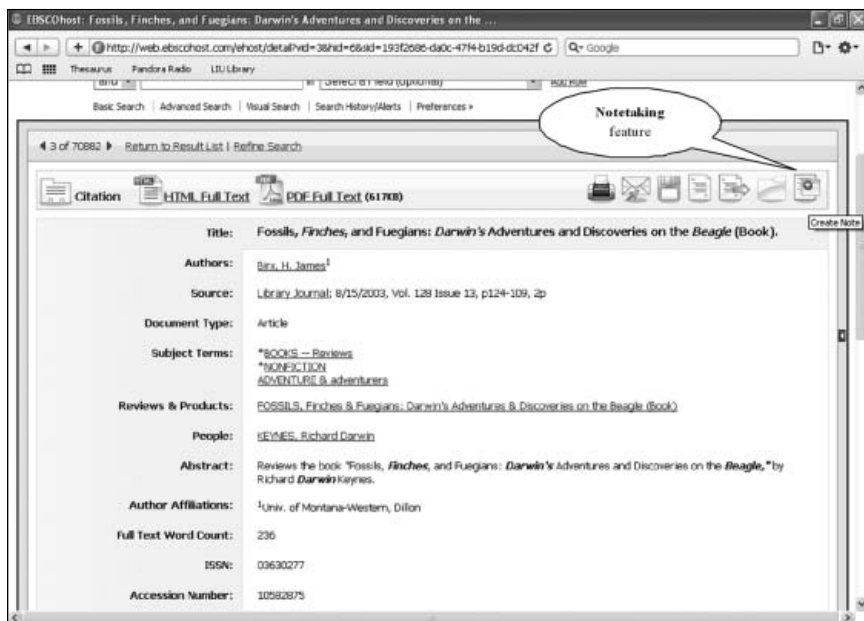
5. From inside the **EBSCO*host* folder**, your note is available by clicking **Notes** in the menu on the left side. To save your note beyond this session, sign in to your **My EBSCO*host*** folder.

6. From inside the **EBSCO*host* folder**, your note is available by clicking **Notes** in the menu on the left side. To save your note beyond this session, sign in to your **My EBSCO*host*** folder.

Search Alerts (Figs. 3.12–14)

There are two ways to save your search as an alert. To save your search as an alert from the **Alert/Save/Share** link:

1. Run a search and view your search results.

2. Click the **Alert/Save/Share** link and select **Create an alert** from the resulting pop-up menu. The **Create Alert** window will appear over the **Results** list:

3. If you have not done so already, you will be prompted to create an **Account**. Click the **Sign in** link in the alert window to first create, and then sign into, your **My EBSCO*host*** folder.

4. Set your **Alert** parameters and email properties and click **Save Alert**.

Figure 3.12: Search History/Alerts from Results List, *Education Research Complete*
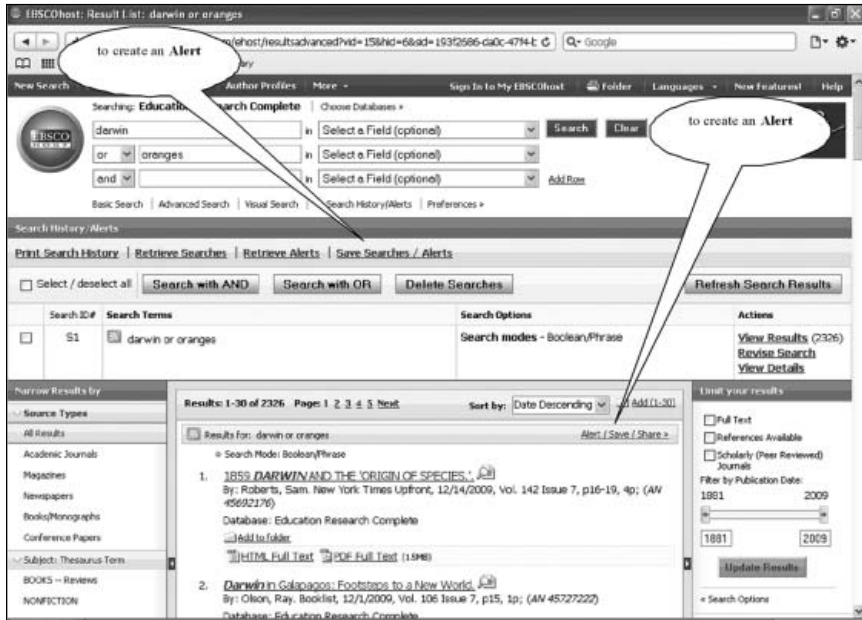
Figure 3.13: Search Alert, Screen One. *Education Research Complete*
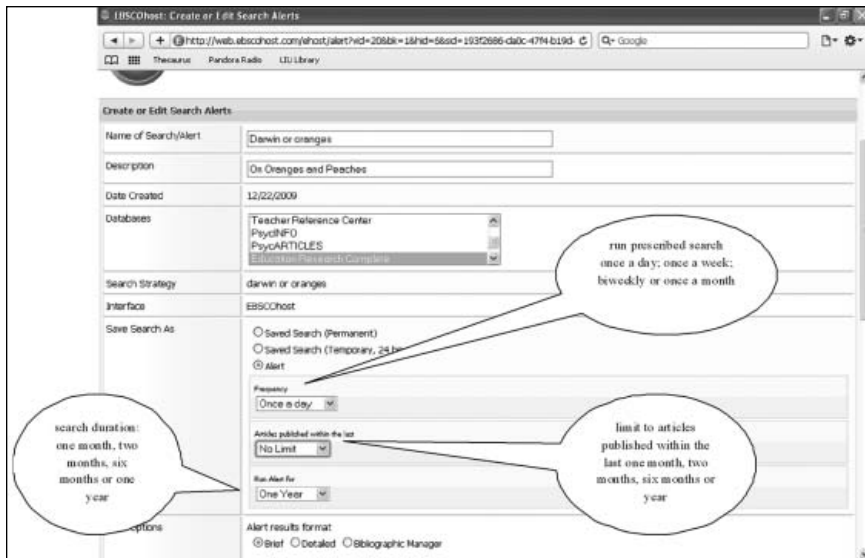
Figure 3.14: Search Alert, Screen Two. *Education Research Complete*
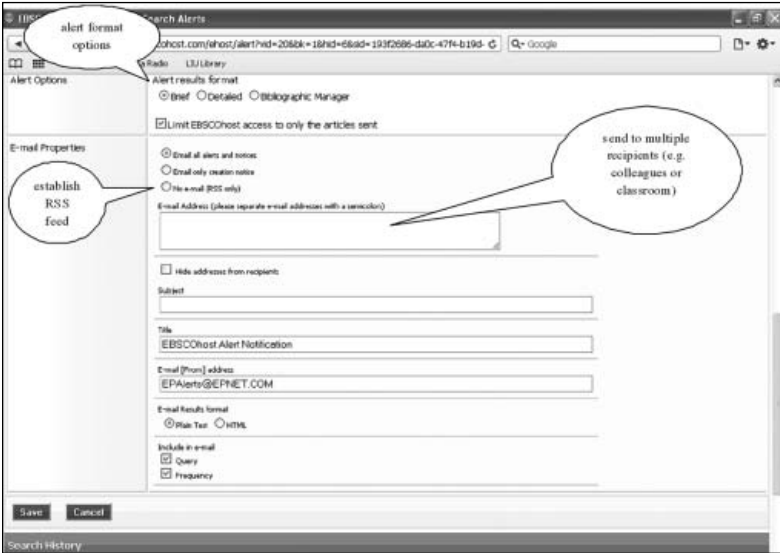
Search Output

Printing (Fig. 3.15)

To print an article, do the following:

1. From the article, click **Print**.

2. Accept, or change, the defaults and click **Print**. The article is displayed in your browser window. Click the **Print** icon on the browser toolbar.

3. To return to the article or citation, click **Back**.

Figure 3.15: Print Screen, *Education Research Complete*
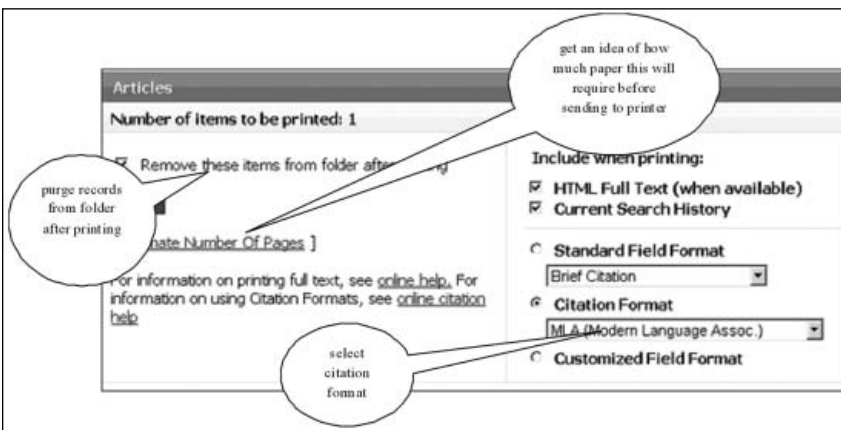
Advanced Printing

- When you are in a folder, **Remove these items from folder after printing** appears. Indicate here whether you want to empty the folder of all items after printing.

- **Include when printing**—If you do not make any selections in this area, the defaults will apply. The Detailed Citation and Abstract (plus any available HTML Full Text) will be printed.

- **HTML Full Text** (when available)—Indicate whether the HTML Full Text of the article (if available) should be included. **H**yper**t**ext **M**arkup **L**anguage allows for links embedded within a document to remain active.

- **Current Search History** (when available)—Indicate whether the current search history should be printed with your **Results.**

- **Standard Field Format**—Most users will choose the default, **Detailed Citation and Abstract**, or select from the drop-down list:

- **Brief Citation**—A brief citation should be printed.

- **Brief Citation and Abstract**—A brief citation and an abstract should be printed.

- **Detailed Citation and Abstract**—A detailed citation and an abstract should be printed.

- **Citation Format**—Print your citations in a specific format, select one from the drop-down list:

  - AMA—American Medical Association

  - APA—American Psychological Association

  - Chicago/Turabian Author–Date

  - Chicago/Turabian Humanities

  - MLA—Modern Language Association

  - Vancouver/ICMJE

- **Customized Field Format**—Select which fields are included with your results.

    To print an item in **PDF Full Text** format, you must use the *Adobe Reader* print option. When viewing the PDF document in your browser window, the Adobe Print option (a printer icon) is included on the Adobe Reader toolbar located above the article. If the item includes a citation and/or HTML text, these will print from the browser window.

    If you are printing an article that includes **Linked Full Text**, you must follow the links directly to the full text and then print. If the article includes a

citation and/or HTML full text, they will print from the browser window, but you will still need to follow the links directly to the **Full Text** in order to print.

Emailing (Fig. 3.16)

To email an article, do the following:

1. From the article, click **Email**.

2. Enter the **Email Address**. To send to multiple email addresses, use a semicolon between each address (e.g., *name1@address.com; name2@address2.com*).

3. To send the email, click **Send**. If not, click **Back**. A message appears when your email has been sent.

Figure 3.16: Email Screen, *Education Research Complete*

Advanced Emailing

- **Subject**—enter a subject to appear on the email subject line. (For example, *Results of research on topic ABC.*) (40 character maximum.)

- **Comments**—enter any comments you would like to include with your email.

- **Format**—select whether you want to send the email in Rich Text (various text formatting properties encoded) or Plain Text format.

- If you are in the folder, **Remove these items from folder after emailing** appears. Here, indicate whether you want to empty the folder of all items after emailing.

WHAT IF MY LIBRARY DOESN'T HAVE WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR? REMOTE LIBRARY CATALOGS AND INTERLIBRARY LOAN SERVICES

With the rapid evolution of digital scholarly communication and an ensuing proliferation of resource-sharing networks, the modern research experience often directs scholars far beyond the resident holdings and resources of their member libraries.

University libraries belong to regional and global consortia to and from which they are engaged in routine, reciprocal borrowing and lending. Perhaps you want to search a larger library collection than the one you have access to in order to determine what has been published on a particular topic; or you are in need of primary source material held halfway across the globe. For this purpose, cooperative cataloging extensions, such as *WorldCat*, provide the researcher with a global perspective on published works available for research loan or document delivery.

WorldCat (Fig. 4.1) is the world's largest network of library content and services. *WorldCat* libraries, through the service provider OCLC (**O**nline **C**omputer **L**ibrary **C**enter, Inc.), provide access to their holdings via the web, enabling users to search the collections of libraries in their community and around the world.

Figure 4.1: WorldCat Homepage via *FirstSearch*
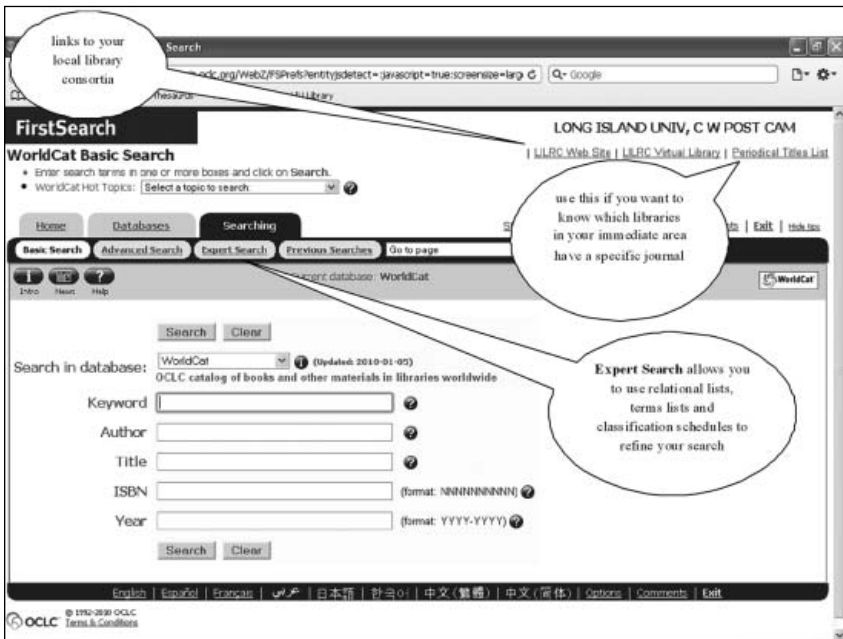
In addition to searching for traditional library materials, this database is an excellent resource for authoritative research materials such as documents and photos of local or historic significance, or digital versions of rare items that aren't available for loan to the public. Because *WorldCat* libraries serve diverse communities in dozens of countries, materials are available in many languages.

Your library may let you search *WorldCat* from the online catalog on its homepage, which will require borrower identification. Or, if you are physically at the library, you can search *WorldCat* using the *FirstSearch* reference service. Ask your librarian for more information.

After searching library catalogs (such as *WorldCat*) remotely, you may then have an idea of what you want to request through interlibrary loan at your affiliate library. Interlibrary loan services work through vast library consortia to provide for the reciprocal sharing of information resources; this involves simply providing the Interlibrary loan office with a bibliographic citation and your contact information. Most likely, the appropriate forms and links to these services will be on your library's homepage.

OPEN-SOURCE REPOSITORIES

The term *open-source* refers to computer software of which the source code is freely available for all to view, modify, and use. For the researcher, *open-source scholarship* has come to mean any knowledge artifact that has been made publicly available through the web.

Content aggregators like *Google Scholar* provide simple ways to broadly search for scholarly literature. Often, when accessed from a university-networked computer, *Google Scholar* is a powerful search utility for scholarly literature from both proprietary subscription databases (library databases) and open-source (freely-available via the Internet) repositories.

Google Scholar (Figs. 5.1–2) provides a single interface from which you can search across many disciplines and sources: articles, theses, books, abstracts, and transcripts from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities, and other web sites.

Figure 5.1: Accessing *Google Scholar* from Main Search Interface
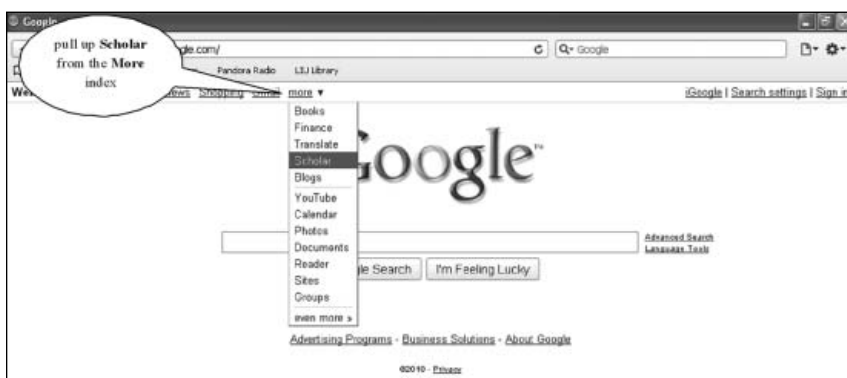
Figure 5.2: *Google Scholar* **Results List**
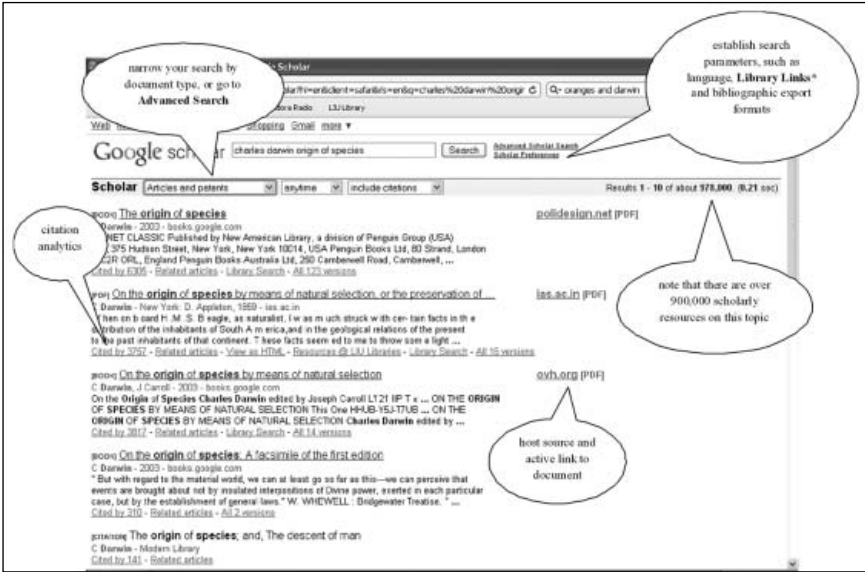
Google Scholar Library Links

Google works with libraries to determine which journals and papers they've subscribed to electronically and then links to articles from those sources when they're available. Once you identify your institutional library, *Google Scholar* links them in your search results.

Figure 5.3: *Google Scholar* **Library Link**
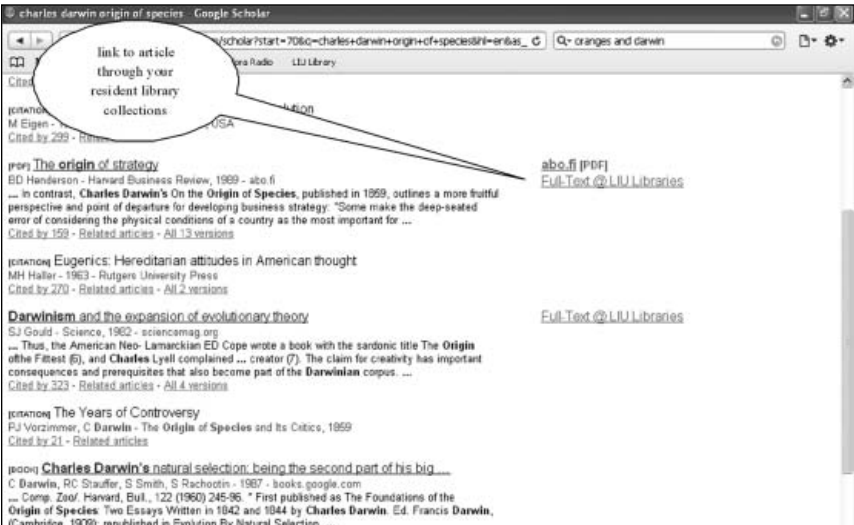
To enable these links, simply access *Google Scholar* from any on-campus location, or follow these steps:

- Click on **Scholar Preferences**.

- Type the name of your library in the **Library Links** section.

- Click **Save preferences**.

- Start searching with links to your library's resources (you may need to authenticate yourself with your library borrowing code to access these resources).

If you don't see these links or you can't find your campus library in the list, contact your librarian to inquire about Google Scholar's *Library Links* program.

At the time of this printing, NCHC is considering posting its publications' archive electronically via the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Open Access/Digital Commons initiative; and providing links to this repository through its *Members Only* portal. The *UNL Digital Commons* <http://digital-commons.unl.edu> is an online institutional repository for research, scholarship, and creative activity emanating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and its associated organizations. It is currently the second-largest institutional repository in the United States, with over 38,000 documents, providing between 4,000 and 5,000 downloads per day to users worldwide. The *UNL Digital Commons* is a permanent archive and the UNL Libraries are committed to maintaining its data in usable form in perpetuity. This archive is catalogued at the article level, with each document residing at its own independent URL address. Moreover, the repository is searched and indexed by *Google*, *Google Scholar*, and other major search engines; making it a critical resource for scholars who do not have access to the library databases earlier described.

Finally, many academic libraries offer *Research Loan* programs, which provide for temporary and site-specific usage and restricted-borrowing privileges to other libraries (through Interlibrary Loan departments) as well as real-time chat and instant messaging reference services (through Reference departments) if you get stuck along the way.

NCHC'S E-RESOURCES:
NCHCHONORS.ORG AND *HERMES*

NCHC has, in recent years, appreciably invested in its web-presence and online resources. From the organizational website, members now have access to a valuable storehouse of both published literature and online, collaborative discourse. Non-members, too, are often trafficked to the NCHC site from links within the library databases (*Academic OneFile* and *Education Research Complete*) where our scholarship resides.

In contrast to static, producer-driven information delivery mechanisms (such as print), Web 2.0 applications facilitate *interactive* information sharing,

interoperability, user-driven design, and collaboration. This dynamic platform involves continual updates to its architecture and constant revision of content. Such activity is typically manifest as links to "Coming Soon!" or "Under Construction." Thus, the Internet-savvy researcher is well-practiced in patience. Below are a few highlights from the NCHC website that are appropriate **e-sources** for research and collaboration.

Figure 6.1: *NCHC website* (homepage)

As a benefit of membership, a **Members Only** portal has been established, designed to link members with exclusive NCHC-specific resources and utilities (see Figure 6.2):

NCHC DISCUSSION FORUMS (MEMBERS ONLY)

A discussion forum is an online bulletin board designed to enable and promote intellectual exchange among scholars worldwide. The aim is to create a free and stimulating forum where NCHC members can generate discussion relative to individual interests, institutional programs, and larger intellectual pursuits. The ***Discussion Forums*** require registration to post. To do this, simply click on the **Discussion Forums** link in the **Members** frame on the right side of the screen. From here, you'll be prompted for your member username and password.

To post a new topic in a forum, exchange ideas, ask questions, or offer answers and assistance to colleagues, click the appropriate button on either the **Forum** or **Topic** screens.

Figure 6.2: Members Only, *NCHC website*
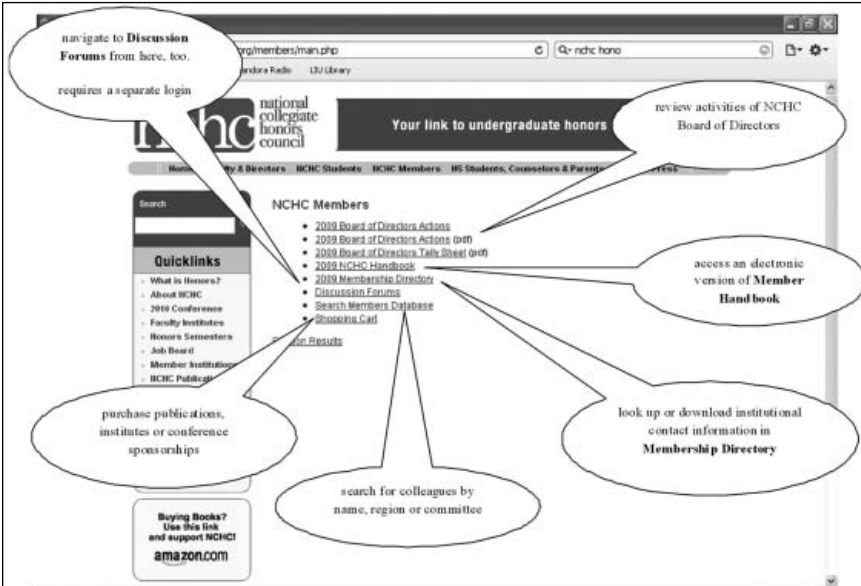
Figure 6.3: Discussion Forum, Members Only. *NCHC website*
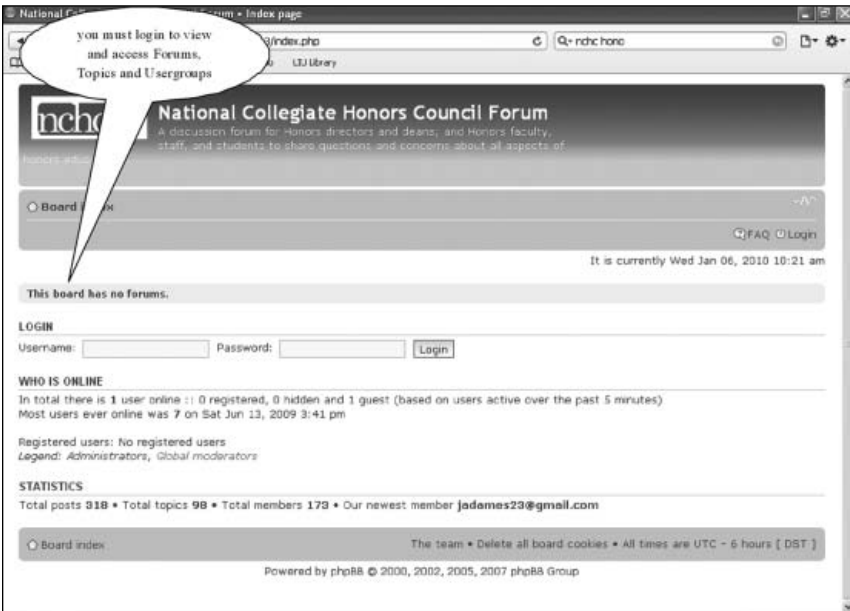
NCHC Listserv: Hermes (Open Membership)

In addition to NCHC-moderated discussion forums, many NCHC members are actively posting to the NCHC Honors Listserv, *Hermes*, which resides on a server at George Washington University and has for many years (circa 1992) provided an active venue for collegial support and collaboration.

As distinct from a discussion forum, where posts are made to a website, a listserv is an electronic mailing list software application consisting of a set of email addresses for a group in which the sender can send one email to a list of multiple subscribers. For NCHC members and others, *Hermes* has helped to solve problems, develop courses, and collaborate on conference presentations and journal articles.

It is important to remember that all communications in listservs are public. In *Hermes*, contributions sent to the list are automatically archived. Transcripts are indexed and available to be read online, which can be very useful to the honors researcher. Subscribers can access the archive files by simply sending a request to the listserv.

Persons must first join the mailing list—or subscribe to the listserv—before they are able to post emails to the group or access its contents. To join and use *Hermes*, do the following:

- To **subscribe** to the honors listserv, send an email message to <listserv@hermes.gwu.edu>. The command to subscribe is: **SUB HONORS your name**. Replace *your name* with your actual name (e.g., **SUB HONORS emily walshe**). Email this command to <listserv@hermes.gwu.edu>

- Make the above command the first line of your message and the listserv will automatically add you to the list (you don't need anything in the subject line).

- To **send mail** to the listserv group, address your email to <honors@hermes.gwu.edu> (this is the *list address* and email sent to this address will be distributed to the entire honors list). To send mail to the listserv, you must send from the exact email address in which you subscribed. To **sign off** or **remove** yourself from the list, send the command: **SIGNOFF HONORS** in the first line of the message box and send this to <listserv@hermes.gwu.edu>. This will automatically unsubscribe you from the listserv.

- If you have trouble, contact the listserv administrator at <UHPOM@GWU.EDU>

- *Tip* **REMEMBER,** commands and requests to the listserv go to: <**listserv**@hermes.gwu.edu> and messages to its subscribers go to: <**honors**@hermes.gwu.edu>.

Command Confirmation

Shortly after you contact *Hermes*, you will receive in your email inbox an automated receipt of your subscription request from **L-Soft list server at HER-MES.GWU.EDU**; this is an acknowledgment of your command and a confirmation request that requires response **within 48 hours**. In this message, you will be prompted to confirm the execution of your command and provided instructions on how to do this.

Subscription Acceptance

Once you have confirmed the execution of your command, you will receive another email message from **L-Soft list server at HERMES.GWU.EDU** that both confirms your subscription and provides details as to how to post and access the *Hermes* index and search utilities.

Accessing the *Hermes'* Archive

To access contents of the *Hermes* archive, do the following:

• Send the command **INDEX HONORS** to <LISTSERV@HERMES.GWU.EDU>.

• Order the files by sending a **GET HONORS LOGxxxx** command, or use the *Hermes* database search utilities to send an **INFO DATABASE** command for more information.

• The *Hermes* list is also available in digest form. If you wish to receive the digested version of the postings, send the command **SET HONORS DIGEST**.

More information on *Hermes* listserv commands can be found in the **LIST-SERV reference card,** which can be retrieved by sending an **INFO REFCARD** command to <LISTSERV@HERMES.GWU.EDU>.

FAIR USE AND THE MODERN SCHOLAR: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COPYRIGHT AND DIGITAL RIGHTS MANAGEMENT (DRM)

When engaging in scholarly discourse, it is important to remember that the rapidly changing modalities for information delivery and exchange have rapidly changing regulations by which they are governed.

In the last decade, libraries and social institutions across the globe have debated the economics of access versus ownership. The widespread commoditization of access to digital texts has benefits, to be sure, but also raises critical questions about the nature of property and pedagogy in contemporary culture.

For universities and libraries to serve their teaching and research missions, academics must be able to use published works in the full range of ways envisioned by the Copyright Act in its limitations and exceptions. If not carefully

balanced, digital rights management (DRM) limits the ability of colleges and libraries to serve the information needs of their communities in several ways.

The purpose of DRM technology is to control access to, track, and limit uses of digital works. These controls are often embedded within a work, accompany it in distribution, and operate even after a researcher has obtained access. In this ulterior control over the use of legitimately acquired works, DRM presents serious issues for scholars.

By limiting the secondary transfer of works to others, DRM undermines the *first sale doctrine*, which has for centuries been a bedrock principle governing how libraries loan lawfully acquired works to the public and how educators share instructional texts and transfer knowledge. By preventing normal uses of works protected by copyright law (such as printing and excising portions for quotation, attribution, and curricular support), DRM technology poses a threat to the free and balanced flow of information that underpins education and shapes democratic society.

The millennial researcher must be aware of these new content restrictions in both the design of their coursework and the delivery of their scholarship. As the traditional covenant between content-producer and consumer continues to change, scholars must stay abreast of changes in intellectual property laws and fair use licensures for their academic pursuits.

CONCLUSION

As the term suggests, **research** involves the act of searching and **re-search**ing, of searching again and again in an ever-widening circle of inquiry and discovery. For the scholar, this process often begins in conversation, within a published work, or inside the classroom; many times it will end there as well.

Just as the enduring tradition of libraries is to be the golden thread that sews together records of humanity and symbols of learning, so the tradition of honors scholars is to construe meaning among ideas as seemingly incommensurable as apples and oranges (and peaches and finches and fishes . . .).

The modern research process, in all its challenges and complexities, engenders the fundamental essence of honors education itself: ENRICHMENT. With the requisite time, attention, willingness to adapt, and adventurous spirit, the breadth and depth of information resources available to you through both your university library and your professional association with NCHC will surprise and delight you.

LIST OF FIGURES

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Is Originality an Appropriate Requirement for Undergraduate Publication?

Nathan Hilberg

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As the faculty advisor for the *Pittsburgh Undergraduate Review* (*PUR*), a professionally refereed undergraduate journal devoted to publishing scholarly papers across the disciplines, I found the following passages from Ellen Buckner noteworthy: "It is assumed that the honors work is an original piece of scholarship and prepared according to accepted standards for a written paper . . . " (149); and "the project's scholarly accomplishment . . . " should be conveyed in a summary or abstract (150). I agree that demonstrating scholarly accomplishment is a worthy goal of publishing academic work; I would also emphasize that scholarly accomplishment is different from originality. The significance of this subtle distinction is a central topic of this paper, which includes discussion of whether originality is an appropriate condition for the publication of undergraduate work. Though scholarly accomplishment and originality are different criteria for publication, they have in common the idea that an author is not merely building on someone else's ideas; I shall refer to this common feature as the *independent* character of the work. Note the synthesis making this article a piece of independent work: I am conceiving of this project and composing it on my own; however, it is not original in that the *origin* of the idea about the importance of a work making a scholarly contribution is someone else's article. So even if a given work is not original (e.g., this article), it still can make a scholarly contribution by virtue of its being an instance of independent work. I will argue that emphasizing the scholarly contribution of independent but not necessarily original work sharpens our expectations of good, scholarly (undergraduate) work and avoids the pitfalls associated with requiring that work be original to get published.

My point does not depend on whether Buckner (among others) and I are merely operating on different definitions of "original." My point is that we might be better served by striking the concept of originality as a condition of (undergraduate) publication. Moreover, by replacing originality with independent scholarly contribution as a condition of (undergraduate) publication (and institutional support more broadly), I am not suggesting a merely terminological change. As I will show, these two conditions entail different conceptions of

what constitutes scholarly quality. I wonder if originality, though often invoked in scholarly contexts, has come to lack significant content.

One might find it curious that the faculty advisor of an undergraduate journal is calling originality into question as a criterion for publication when the very journal for which I am the advisor, the *Pittsburgh Undergraduate Review*, states on its website that originality is one of its standards of publication <http://www.pur.honorscollege.pitt.edu/standards.php>. In this case, what the *PUR* staff means by originality is entailed in what I mean by independent scholarly contribution. Their attachment to the concept of originality has to do with its status of having been long been associated with the ideal of intellectual achievement. Since the staff and I are in substantive agreement about what constitutes work that is worthy of publication and our difference in this case is indeed merely terminological, I have not pushed them to change the website. After all, it is their journal; furthermore, originality is such a time-honored scholarly ideal, invoking it on the *PUR* website quickly communicates the type of work the journal seeks. The point of this paper is to examine more closely whether the concept of originality genuinely captures what is valued as a scholarly contribution.

In describing a work as "original," if all we mean is that it has not been done before, I do not see how such a characteristic is necessarily a mark of quality or of intellectual significance. Suppose that a scholar has published what is regarded by people with relevant expertise to be an original paper on the ramifications of n people standing on their heads but that I have written a paper on the ramifications of $n + 1$ people standing on their heads. That this example is intentionally silly does not affect the point since, technically, my paper would still be original if all we mean is that the work has not been done before. Conversely, we have the famous case of Newton and Leibniz *independently* coming up with calculus. Again, if all originality signifies is that something has not been done before, then at least one of these two intellectual giants was unoriginal. This case raises the prospect that perhaps originality is not necessarily the point of intellectual work since it is undeniable that each of these two men made significant scholarly contributions.

A characteristic of independent undergraduate work is that one is doing one's own work. This work may or may not be innovative (read: original), and it may or may not involve the oversight of a faculty mentor. I am suggesting that independent work that makes a scholarly contribution is a more appropriate expectation for undergraduate publication than originality.

One of the pitfalls of emphasizing originality is that good undergraduate work could find itself without support if we hold it up to such a standard. I am also the co-director of an undergraduate research fellowship and informal advisor for many senior theses. In these capacities, I have encountered undergraduate work that has demonstrated identifiable scholarly accomplishments, work that is worthy of publication in scholarly journals, or work that is more generally worthy of support, funding, and an audience. Rarely, though, would I say

that this work was original, if by original we mean that new intellectual ground is being broken or that no one has ever come up with the same basic idea before. Nevertheless, by undertaking these works of independent (as opposed to original) scholarship, students and their audiences benefited from what they learned; that is, their scholarly accomplishment consisted in their ability to do independent work and to convey their findings even if this work would not have measured up to a standard of originality.

At least one goal of having undergraduates do research is to have them grapple with leading scholarship and assess it critically. This goal remains intact even if the emphasis is placed on producing independent rather than original work. In my experience, work that is independent and is worthy of support (including publication) involves students taking a significant part in an intellectual undertaking such that they gain mastery of the subject matter even if the work is not original, as in most undergraduate research within the laboratory sciences. In such cases, the scholarly accomplishment is identifiable: perhaps the student synthesized extant ideas or played a part in a larger undertaking. This work still constitutes a scholarly accomplishment enabled by the independent nature of the work done by the students even if the work is not original. Independent work is characterized by mastery of relevant content in that undergraduates conduct their research and write about it in a manner such that they are not merely following the directives of a principal investigator.

Perhaps the same could be said of original work, but emphasizing the independent nature of the work, rather than its originality, addresses significant problems. As expressed by a no lesser light than Isaac Newton himself, we all stand on the shoulders of giants, so making originality a requirement for publication (especially for undergraduates) seems to me a misplaced concern. Perhaps analysis and synthesis of the works of "giants" is an appropriate goal for (undergraduate) scholarship. As some of the faculty referees for the *PUR* have noted, it is likely beyond undergraduates' ken to indentify originality in scholarship. Accordingly, it strikes me as a questionable expectation to have undergraduates produce original work, especially if the standard of originality disqualifies the work from being considered a scholarly accomplishment and thus from being deemed worthy of institutional support or publication.

In seeking originality, what is our goal? That "the work has not been done before" is a problematic criterion for publishing. Maybe there are good scholarly reasons why it has not been done before; after all, just because something has not been done yet does not mean that it is good. If we valorize "original" work because it makes a contribution to knowledge, this is entirely compatible with "scholarly accomplishment," which is compatible with holding undergraduate publication to the standard of "independent work" as I am recommending.

Even though I have argued for emphasizing independent work rather than originality as an appropriate criterion for assessing the scholarly accomplishment of undergraduate work, I acknowledge that the case I present faces difficulties. In fact, these concerns were voiced when I raised the issues discussed

in this article with the former executive editorial staff of the *PUR* (i.e., the undergraduates who used to run the journal; they have since graduated). One general question they raised was: What is the point of publishing unoriginal work? My answer would be that an author of independent (but not necessarily original) work that constitutes a scholarly accomplishment benefits, as does the audience. The audience benefits by learning from the scholarly accomplishment, and authors benefit from the learning they derive from the independent nature of the work they have done. That is, they learn from doing work that exceeds merely doing what they are told to do by a faculty overseer.

Another reasonable objection to the case I am presenting is that original work admits of being identified objectively while independent work is harder to identify. My response would be that, in keeping with current practice in professional academic journals, scholarly accomplishment can be identified objectively by those with relevant expertise in the field and who are thus able to make such discernments.

What is the scholarly accomplishment of this article? My aim has been to show that the "scholarly accomplishment" associated with independent work is a more appropriate requirement than originality for undergraduate publication. In addition to being a more appropriate goal, focusing on scholarly accomplishment addresses pitfalls associated with making originality the criterion for undergraduate publication. One pitfall is that novelty is not necessarily an indication of quality. More important than this, though, is the idea that emphasizing independent scholarly accomplishment rather than originality will help minimize the chance that good undergraduate work could go unpublished or without institutional support more broadly.

REFERENCE

Buckner, Ellen. "Ten Steps to Honors Publication: How Students Can Prepare their Honors Work for Publication." *Honors in Practice* 3 (2007): 149–55.

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Individual Achievement in an Honors Research Community: Teaching Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

Kaitlin A. Briggs

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The years leading up to the 1917 Russian October Revolution must have been a dynamic environment for an emerging young intellectual living in Moscow. Eclipsed by such popular Western cultural representations as David Lean's 1965 Academy Award winning film, *Dr. Zhivago* (based on Pasternak's novel), this milieu included the writers Babel, Gorky, and Nabokov; the poets Mandel'shtam and Tsvetaeva; the composers Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Stravinsky; the theater director and acting teacher Stanislavsky; and the artists Chagall and Kandinsky (Van Der Veer, 23–4). There we find situated a law student, also studying philosophy, literature, and aesthetics, who went on to become a developmental psychologist—Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), described by a contemporary as possessing "an aura of almost Mozartian giftedness" (Kozulin, xi). However, when only thirty-eight years old, Vygotsky died of tuberculosis, and his work did not become significantly known in the West until the 1960s. Despite this time delay, Vygotsky's book *Thought and Language* (*Myshlenie i rech*) and the Vygotsky essay compilation *Mind in Society* are now established, seminal texts across many Western academic disciplines, including education, linguistics, and psychology.

The focus of this essay is a Vygotsky reading I use in our honors thesis preparation course: the sixth chapter (Part II, Educational Implications) in *Mind in Society: The Development of the Higher Psychological Processes*: "Interaction between Learning and Development" (79–91). In the 1920s and 30s, on one side of the iron curtain Vygotsky theorized the structure of thought as socially derived while, on the other, Frank Aydelotte developed the first honors program at Swarthmore based on individual achievement (see Rinn, 2003). Yet Vygotsky's work has particular relevance for students embarking on an honors thesis in 2010. The Vygotsky chapter operates on many levels, both curricularly and pedagogically, as a common reading and as an operating principle, and sets the stage for the subsequent individually-oriented reading, writing, and research that students carry out together through the course process.

ABOUT THE HONORS THESIS WORKSHOP

So prevalent in graduate schools, the "All But Dissertation" (ABD) phenomenon is one we are all familiar with: even though students progress well through their master's and doctoral course work, they flounder when the time comes to carry out independent thesis or dissertation study. Undergraduate students completing their honors thesis requirements also experience difficulty making this shift. Because regular course work provides both structure and a detailed focus within the traditional time boundary of a semester, students generally have had little experience with more boundary-less and self-directed study, research, and writing. As they have done (often successfully) with their course papers and reading assignments, undergraduate honors students also misconstrue the work of the thesis as a product or an event that they can cram into a short period of time.

Given this pedagogical landscape at the University of Southern Maine (USM), in 1996 I was asked to develop and teach what eventually became a four-credit, required, writing-intensive course—the Honors Thesis Workshop (Honors 311)—to support students through the thesis proposal process. Prior to the development and implementation of this course, the USM Honors Program had a thesis requirement, but only a handful of students completed it. Since we instituted the workshop, the percentage of honors students completing this requirement has grown significantly and remains steady. We are an honors program in the interdisciplinary learning community model, like a small liberal arts academy within our university. As the first of two required sequential courses, both four-credit, which together constitute "the honors thesis" at USM, the Honors Thesis Workshop structures thesis development into a process in order to develop a product: a thoroughly researched and thoughtfully revised thesis proposal. Functioning like a compass, the workshop keeps students on track and oriented to this path and to this goal. Their proposal then functions as a map or plan of action to carry out the thesis itself in the second-semester course, Honors Thesis/Independent Study (Honors 312).

As a writing intensive course, the Honors Thesis Workshop assignments are organized into the following progressive, chronological sequence:

- Preliminary Idea Paper

- Research Component A (at the library)

- Project Diagram I

- Working Proposal Draft

- Research Component B (at the library)

- Project Diagram II

- Abstract

- Final Thesis Proposal

The process begins with the preliminary idea paper in which students present their initial ideas in writing for the first time. These papers are sent to the library to prepare the librarians to work with us in the databases there. One workshop requirement is that students must read and annotate ten research articles or book chapters, and the two course sessions in the library facilitate locating these readings. After our first trip to the library, in preparation for the mid-semester working proposal draft, the students orally present an outline of their project in visual, diagrammatic form, examining the inter-relationships among their developing thesis sections/chapters. Expanding on both the initial preliminary idea paper and this project diagram and incorporating the first five research articles, students put together the material gathered thus far into a working proposal draft, given to three honors faculty members to review and comment on. Based on this feedback, students must then carry out a substantive revision with the faculty feedback synthesized and the drafts reworked into an abstract and a final proposal. An important workshop goal is that students must execute this in-depth revision and improve the quality of their written product through a process of drafting, receiving feedback from multiple sources, returning to the research literature, then reconceptualizing, and rewriting accordingly. The second-semester course continues and expands this sequence, culminating in a public thesis defense and a published final product that is bound, catalogued, and archived in the university library and made available to other researchers on the World Cat database.

In an evaluation several years ago, a student recommended that we have some common readings at the beginning of the course before the students settled on and developed their respective projects, and I have experimented with different readings since then. Drawing from the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences, readings have included Rosemarie Waldrop's "Alarms and Excursions," a *New Yorker* essay titled "The Lobsterman: How Ted Ames Turned Oral History Into Science" by Alec Wilkinson, and Sarah Wall's "An Autoethnography on Learning about Autoethnography." The reading, however, that remains a constant is Vygotsky's chapter on learning and development in *Mind in Society*. At first students are confused by this choice. They are used to doing interdisciplinary work but have focused their mid-careers fulfilling the requirements of their majors. Most of them are not education majors and thus often exclaim in reaction to this text, "This is about little kids! What does it have to do with us?"

THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Vygotsky begins his chapter reviewing current (late 1920s, early 1930s) theories of the relationship between learning and development in order to contextualize his new theory—the "Zone of Proximal Development." These theories break down into three positions, moving from the theory that development occurs independently from learning (Piaget, Binet) to the theory that learning and development are synonymous (James) and finally to the theory that

learning and development are mutually dependent and interactive (Thorndike, Koffka).

The first section of this chapter thus turns out to be a strong, clear example not only of a classic literature review but also of how existing work lays the groundwork for new ideas. The past and the present, the old and the new are not in opposition to one another but mutually informing and inter-textual. Existing thinking makes new thinking possible. Across disciplines, the history of idea development is one of accumulation and accretion. This lesson is important for beginning researchers because they are often intimidated by the scope and thoroughness of existing scholarship; the organization of this chapter demonstrates that knowledge production is an ongoing building process and that there are always cracks and crevices for new insights, new statements, new questions—new scholars—to emerge.

This initial review and critique then set the stage for Vygotsky's departure from existing theories in section one to the presentation of his radically new theory, "the Zone of Proximal Development" (the Zone) in section two. Vygotsky explains that, from day one, children's learning and development are entangled in one another (84), but the onset of schooling introduces a new element: "that what children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone" (85). The Zone is the distance between the collective group problem-solving possible for a child *today* and the independent problem-solving emerging from that context that will be possible *tomorrow.* Conversely, standard educational psychological theory had assumed that only independent problem-solving determines mental level. Flying in the face of this accepted notion, the process of learning as theorized by Vygotsky fans out prospectively (into the future, what will be possible, the budding edge) as development fills in its wake. Skill mastery, whether of a basic mathematical operation or of a literacy benchmark, is not a conclusive endpoint but a beginning that lays the foundation for increasingly more complex and diverse subsequent thinking as what was at first external, socially derived knowledge becomes individually internalized and integrated (90–91). Furthermore, this relationship between learning and development continues to spiral forward up and across the educational hierarchy. Even though our focus on disciplinary knowledge in higher education at the other end of this hierarchy may background the processes of learning and development at work, they continue nonetheless.

Although Vygotsky focused on early development, the implications of his theory for complex curricular and pedagogical enterprises such as undergraduate honors thesis development are considerable. For students ready to commence their theses, reading this chapter serves as an example of not only the kinds of theoretical readings they are likely to encounter but also the processes they must engage—unpacking, translating, linking, speculating—to break down the ideas encountered and to make them their own. Theory seldom precisely fits the applied context. Not only is Vygotsky most often read in education

courses, but his theory is also about early schooling, not college. So students must take up the micro-project of creating the scaffolding (a term used by Vygotsky scholars) from the ideas as they are presented in the original text to this new context: a research community within which each student will develop an independent project.

Vygotsky's chapter serves both as an example of a literature review and as a catalyst for undertaking the processes of inter-textual scaffolding, but the direct application of his theory to students participating in a research community may be the most compelling reason to use it as a common reading in an honors thesis workshop. In early schooling as well as at the college level, the Zone underscores that what we can do with others today we will be able to do independently tomorrow. Making a meta-cognitive leap, through discussion of Vygotsky's chapter the first day of class, the students turn his theory to their present context; full research community participation in the first semester might maximize their chances of successfully completing their independent work in the second semester. In short, students buy in. Vygotsky's theory foregrounds the social dimensions of learning: we absorb and integrate the intellectual life—practices, attitudes, ideas, others—around us; for beginning thesis students, this translates to their immediate context: the research community forming in their midst. This insight may seem obvious to us, but it does not appear obvious to students.

Integral to this research community formation, reading and discussion of Vygotsky's chapter also make students *aware* of their research community membership and their role in, their influence on, and their responsibility for not only their own projects but also the projects of others. Moreover, because this awareness of thinking and learning falls into the meta-cognitive domain, it strengthens cognitive development (see Anderson and Krathwohl on factual, conceptual, procedural, and meta-cognitive knowledge; see also Kegan).

THE HONORS THESIS WORKSHOP
AS A ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

As explained above, the Zone of Proximal Development is the *distance* between learning enacted today within a social context and the individually integrated learning that will thus be possible tomorrow building on that foundation. Distance suggests space, and social context suggests an array of inter-personal relationships within that space, but these relationships expand exponentially and rapidly.

My own awareness of the Zone's fuller meaning and possibilities occurred during one of our library research sessions. After I sent the preliminary idea papers over to the library to prepare for our visit, one particular paper created quite a stir among the librarians—Nick Allanach's "Power, the Sex Economy, and Functional Aesthetics," eventually completed and published in 2003. Once the class had gathered, a lively discussion ensued, and a student working at a computer nearby—not in our class—spontaneously inserted a comment, "I was

wondering what you mean by 'functional aesthetics.' I'm not familiar with that term." This student and also a student at a neighboring computer joined in our discussion. Another librarian walking by stopped, listened to the conversation, and then went to retrieve the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. At that moment my understanding of the Zone crystallized.

As a community emerges around research, the Honors Thesis Workshop builds on and expands the traditional seminar format/course structure. Although the students develop interdisciplinary projects, the workshop is really more cross-disciplinary because the students come from an array of disciplinary majors. A recent workshop included students majoring in psychology, nursing, geography/anthropology, philosophy, English, and sociology, among others, and the topics they eventually developed included hypnosis; a cross-cultural study of health care systems; the history of granges in rural New England agricultural communities; a sociological phenomenon called "dumpster diving"; and the art of the personal essay. Allen Repko describes a critical stage in the interdisciplinary research process as finding "common ground" among the disciplinary theories and perspectives deployed to address the complex problem under study (271–295). In the Honors Thesis Workshop, the students receive multiple angles of vision and input on their own evolving projects, providing topical, methodological, and disciplinary diversity; the common ground occurs through a shared thesis development process.

However, given that so much of academic interaction is textually based, shared reading and shared writing most powerfully and immediately enact and shape the Zone. The Honors Thesis Workshop is a writing-intensive course, but the writing includes process writing as well as product writing. In their project logs, students articulate, explore, and track their thinking in writing as their projects evolve. Drawing from Vygotsky's other major work, *Thought and Language*, this practice operationalizes his insight that thought and language are inseparable. Thought does not emerge fully formed—like Athena from the head of Zeus—but rather is born *through* a process of articulation in language. For these beginning thesis students, this means everything must be documented and explored in their project logs, including, for example, the six conversations they are required to have with other faculty (we call these "Socratic dialogues").

Along with project logs, this process writing also includes in-class writing: students read their product writing (their preliminary idea papers, their annotated research articles or book chapters, their working proposal drafts) out loud to the others, who take three to five minutes to write in response; we then go around and read our responses out loud and give that writing to the students who presented their work. I term this process Read/Write/Respond (RWR). And I first encountered it, although it was not termed as such, in a graduate school course at the University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Education called "Phenomenological In-Depth Interviewing" with Irv Seidman, whose book on this subject is seminal in qualitative research method study. Pedagogically

powerful, this RWR format changes the audience of writing from teacher to fellow students, colleagues, the other beginning researchers present in the Zone. Because of the multidisciplinary student mix, these new research colleagues are more often than not outside the presenting student's discipline, thus highlighting the need for effective explanation and ongoing clarity.

A richly layered, complex, relational, and inter-textual space, the Honors Thesis Workshop Zone of Proximal Development is multi-dimensional and infinitely variegated. The students' individual reading histories and course studies are brought into play as they connect with and listen to their colleagues articulate various aspects of their evolving work. The Zone includes all of the faculty proposal draft reviewers, all of the faculty who meet with students to fulfill their six Socratic dialogue requirements, and all of the faculty members who agree to serve on thesis committees during the second semester. The Zone includes the librarians as well as the writers and theorists and researchers and various intellectual and creative figures, such as Vygotsky, whose work the students read, discuss, and write about. The Zone includes the members of the public attending thesis defenses, who, in the past, have included, among others, a Civil War re-enactor, the state of Maine architectural historian, and three drug court judges. Because these thesis projects are eventually made available to other researchers on World Cat, the Zone potentially includes anyone in the world, *ad infinitum*, who becomes interested in the thesis subject matter, reads English, and has access to a computer. Finally, the Zone reverses directions and bends back circularly because these published theses become foundational texts for the next group of beginning thesis students.

CONCLUDING PARADOX

The massiveness of the thesis enterprise requires that it be approached as a process—a process fraught with difficulties that include handling an overwhelming amount of generated material; organizing a complex, chaptered work; sustaining the writing process, revising the content, and incorporating feedback; moving in and out of databases; analyzing and synthesizing readings, field notes, primary texts, statistical analyses, and interview material; managing time and maintaining momentum. Even though ultimately the thesis is a product of individual achievement, creating a community context informed by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development has helped to augment student confidence, enhance thesis quality, increase thesis completion rates, and develop a thesis culture.

The successful completion of a student's individual thesis in the near future may depend on full participation in a research community today. In order for students not merely to adapt to this new, demanding learning context but also to thrive in it, a sense of belonging is as important as independence. Thus I conclude with a paradox. To maximize their success, students must learn to work individually but in community, and the stronger the community, the stronger the individual achievement—a case of East meets West.

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Student-Guided Thesis Support Groups

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STUDENT-GUIDED THESIS SUPPORT GROUPS

According to the Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College, an honors thesis should be required of honors college students. The benefits of completing an honors thesis are numerous and include the opportunity to work one on one with a faculty mentor, to move one's discipline forward, and to add an entry to one's résumé. For the vast majority of students, the thesis will be the first occasion they have to work on an academic project that requires a large amount of independent thought and motivation. One role of faculty mentors is to help students through the process, but students often need more help than a faculty mentor can provide. In such cases, students can benefit from the support and guidance of other students. To that end, a group of honors college students at Texas A&M University-Commerce created a thesis support group. This essay explores ways that a support group can be helpful, provides a potential structure for a support group, and suggests how to increase the support group's efficiency.

RATIONALES FOR THESIS SUPPORT GROUPS

An honors thesis can seem like a monolithic undertaking for a student at any university, and the challenge is exacerbated in a new program like the Texas A&M University-Commerce Honors College, which has no extant body of successful theses to provide as models for those who will set the precedent for the program. Our students are uncertain of the appropriate scope for an honors thesis; some think that an honors thesis is like a slightly longer class paper, and others think they have to solve all of the world's problems in one bound manuscript. Although faculty mentors know the appropriate scope and can try to guide students toward the appropriate goal, students still struggle with the question "How much is enough?" Even if students understand the goal, they may still find themselves unsure how to begin; one student borrowed the phrase "How does one eat an elephant?" The task often appears so large and multifaceted that students become paralyzed with indecision. Then, once students do get started, they often wrestle with feelings of isolation and loneliness. Working on a thesis is a fairly independent and solitary process. We often

explain to students that their goal should be to become experts on their topic, and spending exhaustive amounts of time engaged in research can make students feel that nobody understands what they are going through. All these concerns together can lead a student to feel stressed and overwhelmed. A thesis support group can help alleviate all these concerns.

Support groups are useful in a variety of ways. While mid-twentieth-century research seemed to indicate that group activity carried with it negative factors such as confusion, frustration, and time loss, modern research negates that research (Hall & Watson). Not only are group dynamics no longer viewed as inherently negative in their impact, but group synergy often exceeds the effectiveness of individual work (Johnson & Johnson). Groups can see mistakes that individuals miss (Ziller), and group members bring varied skills, talents, and resources to a task (Denton). These group characteristics may be useful on a large scale when a student runs into a dead end in a project or at the more mundane level of proofreading and editing. The fresh perspectives of other group members can help the student see the project in a different way. Further, as a student gets closer to completion, the group can act as an audience for a practice run of a defense or conference presentation. The aid of fellow students increases efficiency, allowing honors scholars to maximize the productivity of meetings with their advisor. Finally, the emotional support provided by one's peers should not be undervalued. The extant literature indicates the importance of social support in multiple avenues of life (Cohen & Wills).

HOW TO ORGANIZE AND STRUCTURE A THESIS SUPPORT GROUP

The benefits of a support group can be numerous. However, a poorly structured group can be counterproductive and waste time. While there is no one correct way to structure a thesis support group, the honors students at Texas A&M University-Commerce adopted a format that worked successfully for them. Students spread the word about the group through the student listserv and on flyers placed around the honors residence hall. Next, students met as a large group to clarify their goals and determine the best way to organize the support group. After discussion the students decided that dividing into smaller groups (three to five members) would be more efficient than trying to run one large group. The group dynamics literature supports this decision, indicating that smaller groups are preferable to larger groups, maximizing the interpersonal interactions between group members, increasing accountability, and strengthening cohesion (Kerr). Next, the students decided that the groups did not have to center on specific academic disciplines as long as group members shared interests and at least some understanding of the area. The logic was that the faculty advisor was there to help with the content and that the students were there to provide support. The students decided to break into groups based on how far they had progressed in the thesis process. The hope was that being at similar points in the process would give students a common ground and a

shared set of understandings whereas grouping students together who were at different points in the process might lead the more experienced student to "babysit" the less experienced student. Finally, the group members decided that meetings should be held once a week to provide some external motivation for accomplishing goals and adhering to timelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE SUPPORT GROUP

Based on their experiences, students offer the following recommendations for maximizing the potential of student-guided thesis support groups:

- Determine individual strengths and weaknesses early on, and use them to the advantage of the whole group.

- Begin meetings by discussing progress that was made during the week, thus providing motivation to get something done and also positive reinforcement for having done so.

- Create individual project timelines early on (by the second or third meeting) in order to provide a good starting point and to help guide the weekly meetings.

- Make weekly individual goals, breaking the project into small, concrete components that make it more manageable, less overwhelming.

- Hold each other accountable for those goals.

- Have some kind of "check-off" system, which—though it might seem juvenile—provides the satisfaction of checking off your weekly goals.

- Don't form a group with your close friends.

- Keep gossip and small talk outside your meetings.

- Share advice from your own advisor with your group members so that everyone, including yourself, can benefit from the knowledge of all the advisors.

- End meetings by setting goals for next week's meeting.

CONCLUSIONS

The honors thesis provides a formidable hurdle for students regardless of the skills they bring with them. Although students can tackle this challenge without the help of their peers, it stands to reason that getting help from others should ease the burden. However, putting a group of students together does not instantaneously make it a support group. Many formats can work for these groups, but the structure and goals of the group should be carefully designed to avoid its becoming a drain of time and an additional source of stress. The model developed by honors students at Texas A&M University-Commerce

provides one way to create an efficient group and help students complete their thesis projects.

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Curriculum Matters

More than a COIN Flip: Improving Honors Education with Real Time Simulations Based on Contemporary Events

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On October 7, 2001, in response to ongoing support for Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda terror network responsible for the September 11 attacks in New York City, the United States and Great Britain attacked Taliban targets in Afghanistan with cruise missiles and airstrikes. Shortly thereafter, American ground forces were committed and played an important role in the ouster of the Taliban and the creation of a new Afghan government. America's preoccupation with Iraq beginning in the spring of 2003 arguably allowed the Taliban enough time and space to rebuild and rearm, and by the summer of 2008 the Afghan government and its American partners faced a full-blown insurgency. This insurgency, which seems destined to continue for the foreseeable future, provides a unique opportunity for honors education that emphasizes critical thinking and creativity in a collaborative real-time environment. The simulation that emerged from this experience is also readily adaptable to other contemporary issues.

Insurgencies and corresponding counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts are nothing new, and like many military historians, I have spent the last several years exploring the history of this type of warfare even as I followed contemporary developments in Afghanistan and Iraq. By late 2007 I was comfortable enough with the literature of both insurgency and counterinsurgency to propose an honors seminar that would expose students to seminal readings in both areas. I also drew upon past experimentation with role-playing exercises to design a large-scale simulation and incorporate it into the seminar. The resulting course was offered as UHON 390: Small Wars and Counterinsurgency in the fall of 2008. I should stress that I have no direct experience in the subject matter and am by training a nineteenth-century specialist. Conceptualization and design of the course were driven by personal interest, which means that any well-trained academic with an interest in a related area could teach such a course without formal training. Offering a seminar like this, especially the embedded simulation, requires as much passion for the subject as expertise.

The semester started with selections from Karl von Clausewitz's 1832 treatise *On War* about the nature of war and the relationship between war and policy. This text provided a common point of reference for a seminar filled with students from a variety of academic disciplines. The remainder of the course was divided into thirds. The first third exposed students to seminal texts in guerrilla war, including Mao Tse-Tung's *On Guerrilla Warfare* (1937), Che Guevara's *Guerrilla War* (1961), Robert Taber's *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (1965), and Carlos Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (1969). The second third did the same for counterinsurgency, asking students to grapple with Charles Callwell's *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (1896), David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1964), two influential articles by Thomas X. Hammes defining "fourth generation" warfare in the *Marine Corps Gazette* (1994) and "fifth generation" warfare in *Military Review* (2007), and *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (2007), which defines current American counterinsurgency doctrine.

What set this course apart, and what might profitably be adapted to other honors seminars in a variety of disciplines, was the final third of the semester, where students engaged in a multi-week role-playing exercise. Past experience with simulations suggested that students would perform better on this large-scale undertaking if they were exposed early in the semester to smaller practice exercises that would build confidence and let them explore the limits of what might be possible. These practice exercises took several forms.

First, student moderators were incorporated into every class period for the first two-thirds of the semester, with each student serving as a moderator twice. Pairs of moderators led class discussion after having written a short summary and analysis of that day's reading. Students thus got used to talking in front of their peers from an informed perspective.

Second, once students finished all of the insurgency readings, they participated in a mini-simulation occupying a full class period. The fictional scenario was a present-day meeting in the Iranian city of Zahedan in Sistan-Baluchestan Province, where different elements of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard met with representatives of the Afghan Taliban and three different Afghan warlords to discuss the extent to which the Guard wished to involve themselves in the unfolding situation in Afghanistan and with whom (if anyone) they would cooperate. The class received background information about the three factions of the Revolutionary Guard that were present, about the Taliban, and about the three warlords whose representatives attended the meeting. The Guard representatives ran the meeting. The goal of the one-day simulation was some resolution about how the different parties would proceed from this point forward. To be successful, students had to incorporate ideas and concepts from their theoretical readings into their understanding of the current regional situation. The students performed well in this relatively forgiving environment where they could experiment a bit to see what might work in the larger simulation later in the semester.

Finally, as the students approached the end of their counterinsurgency reading, they participated in an in-class debate on the following resolution: "In any conflict between an established nation-state and an insurgency, the nation-state has an inherent advantage over the political and military resources of the insurgency." The class was divided into teams, assigned roles (exposition, cross-examination, or rebuttal), and given a full class period to organize their arguments, sources, and possible lines of defense. The class period that followed this preparation was devoted solely to the debate, during which team members were encouraged to collaborate. One of the teams extended that collaboration beyond huddled whispers and passed notes to the electronic sphere, collecting real-time feedback from its members via email and Facebook chat sessions.

Collectively, the experience of moderating class discussions and the two in-class exercises made the students comfortable collaborating with each other, challenging each other when necessary, and thinking creatively about how to gain maximum advantage within the rules of any given activity; this was crucial for the success of all that followed.

With the students exposed to the necessary skills, we began the extended simulation. A fictional organization called the Afghan Stability Working Group (ASWG), operating in real time during five weeks of the fall 2008 semester, was made responsible for the conceptualization, planning, and implementation of a strategy designed to restore stability to Afghanistan and the surrounding region. As course instructor (The Omniscient One in our game's parlance), I oversaw the simulation and made periodic adjustments to it but was not an active participant.

The simulation started with students using everything they had learned thus far to help determine what kinds of characters should populate the game. With thirteen students in the seminar, we settled on Afghani representatives from the Afghan Army, the Afghan central government, the Afghan police, and provincial officials from Helmand Province, Herat Province and Khost Province. They were joined by American representatives from the U.S. Army Central Command, U.S. State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as well as a liaison from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency, a Dutch Army representative from NATO's International Security Assistance Force, and an unnamed private military contractor. With the roles identified, students then used a preference system to select a specific character. Giving students some choice at this point was crucial to the simulation's overall success because several members of the seminar brought specific interests and knowledge to the table. For example, one student had done prior research on foreign development efforts and was a natural fit for the USAID role, a second was pursuing a Foreign Service career and so sought the State Department position, and a third was a former Marine who was very interested in issues associated with Central Command.

With their roles selected, each student then received an objective from the Omniscient One that their character was supposed to achieve over the course of the simulation. The only objectives that were singular in nature were those assigned to the representatives of the Afghan police and Khost Province, who both happened to be Taliban plants tasked with doing everything possible to ensure that the Taliban were ultimately successful. Their only other instruction was simple: don't get caught. Most objectives were more nuanced. For example, the Afghan central government character was told:

> You represent the interests of Hamid Karzai and others like him who hope to build a strong and united Afghanistan around a secular central government. As part of the anti-Soviet resistance during the 1978–1989 war, you knew well, supported and interacted regularly with the Taliban and other mujahedeen. You are willing to negotiate with them, but always with the intention of achieving that secular central government.

The CIA representative, like others in the game, received equally ambiguous instructions. He was advised:

> You are a relatively senior field officer who joined the CIA after the Agency's involvement with the mujahedeen against the Soviets was over. You have field experience in the region (not limited to Afghanistan) as well as substantial experience in the CIA bureaucracy at Langley. You are working towards the United States' stated policy goals of establishing a free and independent Afghanistan led by a secular government, but you are not convinced that the principles outlined in FM 3–24 [*The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*] are the best way to do it, in part because it reduces the CIA's independence of action. You are more than willing to explore alternatives whenever possible.

The goal of these somewhat ambiguous objectives was to give the students ample room to improvise and adapt over the course of the game. This flexibility recognized the chaotic nature of the real situation unfolding in Afghanistan and Pakistan and provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate the extent to which they understood the material we had covered in the first two thirds of the semester; it also required them to research their roles and conduct themselves in an informed manner, assuming the moral values and ethics of their characters. They were also encouraged to work with whomever they wanted to achieve their objectives and to do so outside of class. Setting up objectives in this manner and encouraging individual creativity made the simulation's outcome less predictable, thus increasing its effectiveness as a learning exercise.

Even with the preparatory exercises, past experience with simulations has taught me that they are often slow to start. Instructors want to jump in and move things along at the very beginning, but students need to be given time and space to figure things out for themselves. They will do so quickly, especially if provided with a medium that allows constant interaction with the simulation both in and outside of class. This simulation nurtured that interaction with a blog, although one could certainly use a closed Facebook group or course management software like Desire2Learn or Blackboard. The advantage of the blog was that it allowed non-class members to observe and send the instructor private messages that could be fed back into the simulation through the Omniscient One. In this case, such feedback meant using some of the instructor's contacts who had experience in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their contributions were invaluable.

As the students settled into the simulation, the entire classroom dynamic quickly changed. During the regularly scheduled class time, the seminar operated out of a central classroom. The Omniscient One was headquartered there, updating the blog in real time and answering questions, and a large political/topographical map of Afghanistan and Pakistan was available for common reference. The students regularly split into self-selected groups that changed constantly as they negotiated with each other while trying to achieve their objectives. Our building's wireless infrastructure became particularly important as students scattered down hallways and into unused rooms with their laptops. They followed the blog but also communicated with each other via Facebook chats, texting, instant messaging, and email, sometimes simultaneously interacting with one group physically and another electronically. More than one double-cross attempt happened this way.

Many, but not all, of the students were given budgets to work with, each person's budget being known only to him or her. These fictional funds allowed students to provide goods and services, construct infrastructure and buildings, buy off other members of the simulation, or initiate acts of violence. One regularly updated blog posting maintained a growing list of items and their costs. Students could purchase a ton of school supplies, build a kilometer of all-weather road, or staff a medical clinic for a year. Those with limited or no funds negotiated with those who had funds to get access to money. Contracts were entered into and side deals were struck, with every budget transaction recorded and kept private by the Omniscient One. In short, an economy whose size was known only to the Omniscient One was created, contributing to the uncertainty surrounding the simulation. As students dreamed up projects that needed to be funded, the Omniscient One set a price and added it to the ever-growing blog posting. Students needed to watch that posting closely; several American representatives missed a line late in the simulation labeled "cost of extremist madrassa in secure location that supports students/teachers."

One major concern in constructing the simulation was how to accommodate and incorporate acts of violence that would mirror the actual situation in

Afghanistan and Pakistan. Had the ability to initiate them been freely available, the game could easily have spiraled out of control. The resulting anarchy also would not necessarily reflect the real world, where these actions require planning, resources, and infrastructure. Our solution was to introduce the concept of Power Cards. Over the course of the simulation, players could earn Power Cards from the Omniscient One for superior game play, especially when a creative idea was rooted in the literature that the class read in the first two-thirds of the semester. Power Cards were privately awarded, with the rest of the seminar becoming aware of them only when a card was played. Even then, the seminar participants never knew exactly who played a Power Card. Over the course of five weeks, twelve Power Cards were awarded and played. Playing a Power Card also required students to spend funds, thus maintaining some realism and preventing militants from, for example, suddenly declaring they had access to the materials for a dirty radioactive bomb.

Initiating an act of violence by playing a Power Card did not guarantee positive results. All outcomes were determined by a dice roll, usually in class. For example, a student might spend funds to build and deploy an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) against a specific target, which might be another player. The Omniscient One would announce the IED explosion and roll the dice. Details of the severity of the explosion would then be posted on the blog as the simulation continued, which would in turn affect game play because students constantly monitored it during class. Here again, maintaining a degree of uncertainty forced students to think creatively, adjust their game play, and apply what they had learned earlier in the semester in ways they might not have foreseen.

One of the unique features of this simulation was the extent to which it incorporated contemporary events. Real news stories from both Western and Southwest Asian media were intermingled with fictional news bulletins from the Omniscient News Network on the course blog. Many of the stories were collected by the Omniscient One, but students looking for materials in the course of their own research also sent in many suggestions. The real news reports set the COIN simulation apart from other simulations, like those from the excellent Reacting to the Past series, that one sees incorporated into courses. A certain risk is involved because the instructor can never be quite sure how events will play out until they are actually happening, but the rewards were worth it: students could be absolutely certain there was no preordained outcome; the format rewarded those who immersed themselves in the subject; the uncertainty kept everyone on their toes; and there was a palpable sense that this was *real*, even though there was plenty of fiction involved. I knew that the simulation was working when a group of students conspired to remove a provincial governor, and the real provincial governor was removed by the Karzai government just two days later. The key is to pick a subject that generates enough media coverage from multiple perspectives over the course of the simulation. Finding such a subject may not be easy, but one could run simulations based on international monetary policy, U.S.-Chinese relations, health care reform,

sustainability, or any number of topics, making this approach ideal for programs that want to encourage engagement with global issues.

Simulation activities extended well beyond our formal meeting time. Group meetings happened all across campus and in local establishments at all hours, but the blog became the crucial element for fostering interaction and holding the simulation together. Three different categories of postings dominated the blog, with each type identified by an electronic tag that students could use to sort them out. The first, tagged as "Playing the Game," organized the game and provided structure when necessary. Postings here defined the scenario and rules for playing the simulation, announced when roles had been distributed and maps were posted, explained how Power Cards and budgets could be used, and encouraged players to submit press releases and communiqués for posting by the Omniscient One. When the simulation was over, this section of the blog revealed each player's hidden objective for the game. "Playing the Game" made these rules accessible at any time and also allowed the instructor to make mid-course adjustments to the game, which was particularly important when it became clear that a budget system had to be created and tweaked early in the simulation.

The second category, "Real News Releases," introduced students to a variety of media perspectives. Stories were posted from familiar sources like the Associated Press, Reuters, CNN, *The Independent* and *The Wall Street Journal*, but students were also exposed to non-Western media like al-Jazeera, the Pakistan News Service, Quqnoos.com and the Afghan News Network as well as niche-news providers like the American Forces Press Service and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These multiple viewpoints materially enriched the simulation, suggesting perspectives, ideas, and approaches that improved the quality of game play.

The final category, "Omniscient News Network," consisted entirely of fictional news posted by the Omniscient One, who was the blog's sole administrator. Some postings came from students in the form of press releases, announcements, and open letters. Others were written by the Omniscient One to announce the playing of Power Cards and their outcomes or to create context in response to the students' actions. For example, when the fictional Afghan National Government initiated the arrest of the Khost Province representative, ONN reported the following:

> Spontaneous demonstrations broke out in several key cities in Khost Province tonight as word spread of the arrest of provincial representative [John Smith] by the Afghan central government.
>
> The Afghan National Police quickly found themselves on the defensive in Musa Khel and Khost Mela, two district capitals where the crowds were particularly active. Three policemen in Khost Mela were caught by the crowd and severely beaten before they could be rescued by their comrades.

> A correspondent in the field reports effigies of Afghan central
> government representative [Jane Doe] being burned in several
> locations and random gunfire directed at symbols of the nation-
> al government.

These kinds of postings injected accountability into the simulation, helping to curb unrealistic actions by the students and guaranteeing heated discussions. They also forced students to think about what they were reading, as the instructor made clear in another post reminding students that "when there are notes of uncertainty or potential bias, ONN tries to project that either in its headlines or through its attributions, counting always on the abilities of its readers to be critical thinkers and identify potential propaganda."

Activity on the blog picked up in the late evening hours, usually starting around 11:00pm and running to 1:00am. Once students figured out that there were (intentionally) no controls on the blog commenting system, concerted propaganda efforts spontaneously took form, often using faked identities. In one case, three Afghan provincial representatives asked the Omniscient One to post an open letter to American representatives from the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and Central Command applauding some elements of American policy while pointing out shortfalls in other areas. Within ten minutes, a comment was posted from the Afghan National Government rebuking the provincial representatives for interfering in ongoing negotiations, which was in turn followed by heated responses from two of the three provincial representatives. Only after a fair amount of discord had been created did the real representative of the Afghan National Government come online to disavow any knowledge of the earlier statement and outline her position on the matter. The whole affair took five days to play out, and it definitely affected how members of the simulation interacted with each other until the truth emerged. Later, it became clear that the false statement was an attempt by the Pakistani intelligence representative to weaken the solid working relationship that was developing between the different Afghan representatives. Interactions like this were sometimes chaotic, but they kept students on their toes and increased the unpredictability of the game, mirroring the uncertainty and confusion of regional politics in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Simulations like this are not new. Among the best known are those in the Reacting to the Past <http://www.barnard.edu/reacting/> series, which are based on historical events like the French Revolution, the trial of Galileo, or Athens in 403 BC. In these simulations, students are thrust into historical situations, provided with period documents and some background about the social, political, economic, and religious context of the time, assigned goals to be achieved, and then asked to participate actively in events as they unfold. Sometimes history repeats itself, although not necessarily for the same reasons as original events, but it is not unusual for students to reach a different outcome. In truth, the outcome does not matter all that much. As several of my colleagues who use Reacting to the Past simulations have noted, students

devote incredible amounts of time to playing these kinds of game and learn accordingly. They seek out additional information on their own, work well beyond classroom boundaries with potential allies to defeat potential adversaries, absorb much more than instructors initially expect, and have a lot of fun doing it. The Afghanistan simulation followed a similar path, with my students learning more about guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency doctrine than I have ever imparted in a traditional lecture course.

Instructors who adopt this model, especially with the equivalent of an Omniscient One overseeing a blog, should note that their time will be distributed differently than in a traditional honors discussion course. Traditional courses often require larger blocks of preparation time, with the benefit that instructors have more control over when and where the preparation will happen. Simulations that react to contemporary events, especially with a corresponding blog, require more flexibility although not necessarily more overall time. In this environment, the instructor can make meaningful contributions to the simulation in smaller but more numerous blocks of time. So, for example, one could quickly check al-Jazeera, find an interesting story about events in Pakistan that might affect the simulation, and then post it to the blog so it could become a part of game play. Student participation often heated up later in the evening, and that is when I often found myself receiving news releases or communiqués that needed to be posted quickly or questions where a timely answer kept the simulation moving along. In short, my time investment was about the same but allocated differently. The results, measured in student engagement one could readily see both in class and online, were well worth the effort.

As the students played the simulation, they also engaged in a more traditional academic assignment: writing a paper. In this case, the paper was an analysis of small wars and counterinsurgency in the context of their character's role in the simulation, supported by appropriate primary and secondary source materials. They were asked to take everything that the seminar discussed over the course of the semester and write about how their character used that information in the Afghanistan simulation, not only to define what they did but also to define what they expected their opponents to do and how they in turn would react. The papers were intriguing, demonstrating to my satisfaction that the students had really engaged with the material and absorbed it. This perception was reinforced by student comments on their course evaluations. When asked what they liked most about the course, students responded that they appreciated "the close personal interactions between everyone in the class and the topic was incredibly relevant"; enjoyed "becoming familiar with the overall concepts & applying them to real life"; and thought that "the hands-on experience was amazing. I have never taken a course so relevant to current situations. It is definitely the most fun and hands-on course I've ever experienced." When asked if they would recommend the course to other students, every student responded positively. When asked why, they responded that "it was an interesting, relevant topic and we were able to demonstrate our knowledge through a lengthy

simulation"; that it was "an informative class that will leave you feeling like you have learned ample amounts but will make you want more"; and that they "learned as much from the other students as I did from the instructor."

Simulations that interact with and change according to contemporary events are a different twist on an already widely used technique, but this approach really seems to work. It is time intensive, assumes a certain degree of risk because one never knows for sure what will happen in the real world, and requires a great deal of flexibility, but it engages students with their course materials and the world around them in ways that can be extraordinary.

To Discuss or Not to Discuss: Integrating Pedagogies for Honors and Mathematics

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INTRODUCTION

Classroom discussion has long been an important pedagogical tool in fields such as the social sciences and the humanities because it allows students to critically examine ideas about what it means to be a human living within communities of other humans. It allows students to formulate ideas and judgments and to reconsider these formulations as time passes and new information is revealed. Within the field of mathematics, however, professors typically rely on lectures to ensure coverage. While students are asked to think critically, they are likely asked to do so within the context of homework problems. The primary question we consider in this essay is whether class discussion enriches student thinking and problem-solving processes within the field of mathematics.

The University Honors Program at Southern Polytechnic State University has found itself engaged in answering questions concerning the benefit of discussion as a tool for critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving since its inception in 2003. At that time an honors committee, composed of seven people representing the four schools, honed the policies and procedures for the University Honors Program. This committee set curriculum guidelines designed to ensure that courses involve substantially more tangible content than typical courses at the same level in at least four of the following seven areas: creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, oral or written communication, collaborative work, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary components.

For the humanists and social scientists on the committee, the idea of discussion-based classes in which students actively engage in the exchange of ideas generated through creative thought, critical thought, and problem solving seemed a promising solution for meeting many of these guidelines. The scientists and mathematicians instead saw the use of mathematical problems and assigned laboratory experiments as an optimal way to engage students in creative thought, critical thought, and problem solving. These differences in pedagogy spurred quite a bit of discussion among the honors committee members about the different methods the various fields use to emphasize student engagement in learning.

No standard for the use of discussion was created. However, many of the reasons articulated for using discussion-based pedagogy are supported by research on discussion-based classes. Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill list many benefits in *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, such as:

1. Discussion helps students develop critical thinking skills as they scrutinize their own assumptions as well as the assumptions of others.

2. It helps to create intellectual agility since students must think on their feet and react to unanticipated comments.

3. Discussion helps students develop skills of synthesis and integration because they must listen and speak as they work to understand how information is related. (24–35).

Discussion-based pedagogy functions in a similar manner to the Saxon Math Pedagogy, which draws on research showing that continual practice and review help students to demonstrate more thorough understanding of the material being taught (Mayfield and Chase). Just as, in class discussion, students are continually engaged with ideas that are reviewed and refined as the semester progresses.

Not until the honors office received the evaluations for L. R. Ritter's fall of 2007 Honors Calculus One class did members of the honors community re-evaluate discussion-based pedagogy. Evaluations for Ritter's class revealed not only that students in the Honors Calculus One class thought Ritter was one of the best mathematics instructors with whom they had ever worked but also that they felt the discussions were stimulating and contributed to the quality of the class.

The director decided to create a more formal study concerning the use of discussion as a tool for learning. In August 2008, the honors program hosted workshops and roundtables on the use of discussion, and these activities led William Griffiths also to implement discussion within the Honors Calculus One class. Ritter and Griffiths, along with Nancy Reichert, Director of the University Honors Program, have been involved in both initiating and documenting this process of implementation.

At the heart of our study is exploration of the following questions: What does it mean to run a "discussion-based" mathematics class? How is this discussion balanced with other techniques such as lecture or individual problem-solving? What pre-existing, cultural understandings about a field's knowledge base and its pedagogy lead to the ways in which both teacher and students approach learning? Our answers are drawn from the multiple perspectives of the teachers, students, and honors director.

THE DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Because my background entails literary criticism and rhetorical theory, I look at discussion-based pedagogy through the concepts of language constructs

and knowledge-making. Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory explores language as a system of signs whose values are determined by relationships set up by the users of these signs in order to facilitate communication. What Saussure emphasizes is that signs are arbitrary; they have no direct relationship with their referent. Therefore, a gap always exists between the signifier (whether audible or written) and the signified (that to which the signifier points). Thus, there is no absolute quality of "treeness" for the word "tree"; only because a community of people has come together and agreed that the word "tree" represents a certain type of vegetation do we understand "tree" to signify the thing it represents. That other languages (systems of signs) such as French, German, and Spanish have other words to signify this particular type of vegetation helps us to understand that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary.

In English, the arbitrary nature of the signifier is especially clear when words like "bad" can in one instance refer to something being "morally evil" or "unacceptable" and in another instance refer to something being "extremely good." Even when signifiers seem more tied to the signified, they can still symbolize something else entirely. For example, "tree" can symbolize "life" or a family genealogy.

Like languages, knowledge-making is both an individual and communal act; knowledge is not constant but is ever changing as individuals within the community and the community itself bring new knowledge to light.

A belief that language has arbitrary qualities and that knowledge is not already set but is instead always being made as we speak has an important impact on how we see classroom dynamics. While students are receivers of knowledge that is communicated by the professor (such as standard language conventions for a field of study), they are also makers of knowledge. For example, when I was teaching in Texas in the spring of 1997, my students coined the term "Bubbonics" for the ways they used language. They felt that their being "bubbas" influenced their language choices and their ability to use Standard English much in the same way that African Americans have been influenced by Ebonics. Around the same time that my students were using the term, it was also being used by Jim Wright in the *Dallas Morning News* for similar reasons (McFedries). Language is in constant flux as is knowledge-making itself. Discussion-based pedagogy allows for exploration of knowledge and language. Therefore, discussion becomes an important part of thinking and learning as we investigate the nature of language even as we use it to formulate ideas and communicate them to each other.

Such concepts are important to a paper on discussion-based pedagogy and mathematics because math can also be seen as a system of signs with a process of signification using arbitrary signifiers that refer to the signified. However, math attempts to erase the gap between the signifier and the signified. Although mathematics includes some variations in convention, particularly with respect to notation, many mathematical terms are not allowed any gradation of meaning. For example, an algebraic structure known as a *group* must always satisfy

a fixed set of axioms without respect to any specific application, context, or cultural consideration. Mathematicians typically try to curtail any fluidity of language; they use their "language" to solve problems and explore mathematical knowledge. However, they can still use discussion to allow students to explore problem-solving within a group of like-minded individuals and to formulate ideas, test them, and reformulate them as the need arises.

L. R. RITTER'S PERSPECTIVE, CALCULUS ONE AND TWO, 2007–08

At the opening of the fall 2008 semester, I was caught off guard by the director of the honors program here at Southern Polytechnic State University when she asked me how I had managed to facilitate a discussion-based class during the previous fall and spring semesters in the Honors Calculus sequence. I agreed to participate in a roundtable discussion on discussion-based teaching—a methodology preferred in honors humanities and social science courses. As I had not set out to conduct a discussion-based class, I had to look back and analyze the classes that I had taught. I also sought the input of some of the students who had participated in the classes, for it was the students in those courses who brought the discussion-based approach in my classes to the attention of the honors director.

I had taught the honors version of the Calculus sequence during the 2007–08 academic year. Enrollment was restricted to students in the honors program or to students who had special permission. The class sizes were very small—seven in the fall and twelve in the spring—as compared to a typical course with thirty-six students at Southern Polytechnic. I had not entered into teaching the sequence with an intention to conduct discussion-based classes. My intention in differentiating these classes from the non-honors version was to incorporate a higher degree of mathematical rigor and a greater degree of emphasis on written and oral communication skills. I also hoped to defuse the view of mathematics as a one-course-at-a-time sequence of readily solvable problems. I wanted students to explore mathematics in a broader human and historical perspective.

In a consideration of discussion-based teaching in mathematics, some important issues come to mind. For me, the first is how to ensure that some of the basic material, such as definitions, theorems, and techniques that aren't "up for discussion," are conveyed to and mastered by the students. This issue is of special interest in courses like Calculus One and Two, which are primarily prerequisites for further study. As a practicing mathematician, I understand the value of brainstorming, discussion, and debate about problem-solving techniques and the validity of assumptions and arguments, so another question is how to facilitate discussion when most students don't expect it and might not (at least initially) be comfortable with it in a classroom.

In every class I teach, I try to maintain a relaxed and open atmosphere that invites questions and participation, so I was interested in identifying any aspects

of this course sequence in particular that heightened the open atmosphere and created a sense of being *discussion-based*. I reviewed the teaching techniques I used over the year and in addition asked three students who had participated in those classes to serve as case studies and to give their perspectives.

I identified a number of aspects of the class including teaching and assessment tools that I believe promoted a discussion atmosphere. The small class sizes and take-home quizzes both helped to promote a discussion atmosphere. Each student received a particularly challenging problem at the end of the week with the expectation that he or she would present a solution (or partial solution) to the class the following week. After the first of these sessions, the class seemed to develop an increased sense of cohesiveness. All students had to undergo the same stress and were supportive of one another. When a student stopped short of a complete solution, the class members were free to offer input. A similar teaching tool that I used was collaborative in-class quizzes. Students were given the option to participate or to take a traditional solo quiz. During the spring semester, among twelve students only two regularly opted out of group activity. Students engaging in the group work, which would take place over a fifty-minute class period while I sat off in the corner, were able to take advantage of each other's strengths. Finally, students were strongly encouraged to ask questions, make observations, and answer questions posed by each other as well as myself.

To get insight into the students' experience, I received input from three of the participating students, who, although all traditional students, represented a broad spectrum of personality types. Chris was home schooled, extremely bright and creative, but also shy and reserved. Michael came from a public high school. He was bright, imaginative, and extremely gregarious. Marcus was highly intelligent with strong leadership skills. I asked them all a few questions and encouraged them to provide any additional input.

I began with the following question: In your opinion (i.e. without regard to some formal definition of *discussion-based classes* or *lecture-based*), would you say that your Calculus One and Two classes were (a) pure lecture, (b) mostly lecture, (c) half-n-half, (d) mostly discussion, or (e) pure discussion. Of the three students, one responded "half-n-half," and two responded "mostly lecture," so it would be unusual to characterize the sequence as *discussion-based*. However, I also asked the students to identify any class characteristic or activities that gave the classes a discussion orientation. All three identified class size as a primary contributor. Chris, who is somewhat shy, wrote:

> I think it's all about smaller class sizes. It's a lot easier to ask questions when you only have to worry about wasting the time of seven other people, rather than thirty. It's also a lot easier to risk saying something dumb (like asking a stupid question or replying to question) when there are fewer people to embarrass yourself in front of.

Other aspects of the classes identified by the students as contributing to a discussion orientation were: (1) questions posed by the instructor, (2) questions posed by other students, (3) collaborative quizzes, (4) and a cooperative classroom environment. They also agreed that the collection of personalities was a key component to the open atmosphere of the classes.

When asked to compare the classes with other mathematics courses they had taken, all three students reported spending more or much more time answering questions, writing on the chalkboard, and talking about topics tangential to the course. Two reported talking more or much more about topics not related to the course. This last revelation does not surprise me; however, it does raise again the question of whether such a highly active and participatory classroom setting can distract students from the material, and so I asked, "If the class(es) seemed discussion-oriented to you, do you think this enhanced your understanding of the material, distracted you from the material at hand, or had little impact on what you got out of the course?" All three students reported that it enhanced their understanding. Marcus in particular stated: "While I don't believe the discussion helped me with my grades, it did help me to truly understand what it is we were doing and why we were doing it." Chris made a similar statement about the role of discussion: "Since most of the discussion was geared towards related material, I think it helped me develop a deeper, more well-rounded understanding of the course material."

An important objective of mine was to give the students a glimpse into mathematics beyond the simple scope of the course without the emphasis being placed on the grade. All three students reported learning more or much more in the honors sequence about mathematics in general ("not confined solely to course topics") than in other mathematics courses. Michael, who is inquisitive, wrote: "I loved those Honors Math classes. I ALWAYS looked forward to class, never skipped (unless I had to study for a class I was shake-y about), and wanted to stay later and learn more." Although some people might suggest that attempts to implement discussion and other nontraditional methodologies in the mathematics classroom are often met with resistance from the students, it was the students' positive feedback that motivated my further use of discussion techniques in the following semesters. Michael's statement reflects not only an acceptance of such methods but an enthusiasm for them.

WILLIAM GRIFFITHS'S VIEW
(CALCULUS ONE) FALL 2008

As the fall semester approached, I found myself both concerned and enthused about the Honors Calculus One teaching opportunity. I wondered how exactly I would answer this challenge. When I agreed to teach the course, I knew there would be a discussion component but not exactly what that meant. My "traditional" courses already incorporated discussion. I had read material and heard certain buzzwords: be a "guide-on-the-side" instead of a "sage-on-the-stage," "shut up and teach," and so forth. Had I applied this to my

regular classes to a sufficient extent, and how could I distinguish an honors section?

Questions were followed by new ideas. Perhaps I should attempt to have the students lead the discussion. I could try sitting among the students, perhaps turning the chairs toward one another. We could discuss ideas, theories, and proofs. With a small class, we might be able to get away from the blackboard. Honors students, perhaps, would require less repetitious homework. In order to facilitate the discussion, I could have the students read the text for a particular lesson before class since reading a mathematics text has a value all its own. Almost no students actually read their math text because they really learn by solving problems, so this would be different. I also could have them attempt to solve problems before discussing the material to encourage more concrete discussion.

I did attend a roundtable discussion hosted by the honors program on the subject of discussion-based honors courses before the semester began. However, at this session, those representing other departments stated several times that my course, given the subject matter, would probably have less discussion than theirs; they were unsure that their techniques could be applied in a mathematics course.

At this point the real battle started. I needed to make a syllabus. The one idea the honors faculty all agreed on is that a discussion-based course should have clear guidelines for the assessment of participation. Being a numbers person, I liked the idea of a point system, but I did not want competition over points, at least not in a serious fashion, since it would defeat the goal of collaboration. I liked the idea of rewarding all students when the class led the discussion, but I didn't know if that would actually happen. It was difficult to plan when I could only guess at the dynamic, but I resolved to distribute points over the semester. Also, in order to avoid unfriendly competition, I decided to let the students know that I intended to ensure that all of the students would receive most of their participation grade.

I had already developed a very nice homework list for use in my calculus courses. I provided the honors students with the same list but did not require them to solve all of the problems. Instead, I proposed that the students go through the list and choose problems, giving them some control and also avoiding needless repetition; I figured that these students likely did not need to solve six problems of the same type when two would do. For assignments, I decided to collect a subset from the homework list, supplemented by more challenging problems. Beyond that, I decided to have the same number of exams as a regular calculus class, on approximately the same dates, with one or two extra sections of material thrown into each unit. With a plan firmly in hand, I began the semester.

As I presented my ideas on the first day, the students seemed largely pleased with the way I intended to run the course. Students who had never taken calculus before voiced some minor concerns. They felt the discussion-based course

might be better suited for those with more experience with calculus. I should also mention here the make-up of the class: of the twelve students, ten were first-semester freshmen, and only two had previously taken an honors course at SPSU. Those few who had previously been in a discussion-based university course were unsure that the same procedures could be applied to their math class but were willing to try.

In the first week, it became apparent that I had made some mistakes. Allowing free choice of problems seemed like a great idea, but I overlooked the possibility that few students would attempt the same problems. Participation and effort were good, but we did not have enough for discussion as a class. I quickly decided to choose a few of the later homework problems for each section to be attempted by all. I confess to being not a little frightened at this point. In trying to do things differently, I had overlooked a consequence that should have been rather obvious. What else was in store?

By the second week, the class was not progressing very well. Each day, I entered the class, took a desk, and turned it toward the students. I asked them for any questions or comments they had about their reading. Silence. Did they have any difficulties with any of the problems? Silence. I tried waiting them out, and eventually someone would say something, but mostly to break the silence. I could sense they were waiting for me. I could get things started, but they were so used to a right answer, one way to do things, that discussion would end if we solved a problem. It is difficult to go against their "programming" of a dozen years of math courses with right answers and the teacher's method of getting there. I needed to show them that there are more ways than one to solve a problem, and limits (the current topic of discussion) were not the best topic for this purpose; a limit asks for the value a function approaches as its input approaches a number rather than the actual value obtained by the function at that input number. Solving these problems is fairly intuitive, and solutions to early problems on the topic are strikingly similar.

For me, class was dragging a bit at this point, and if I was uncomfortable, it was likely worse for the students. So, I decided to bend a little. I decided to stand at the front of the classroom, fine. I decided to interject a bit more on proper terms and usage. I returned to leading the discussion myself. But I decided not to lecture. As in all things, I discussed this matter with the students since I like to be as transparent as possible in what I am trying to do. And oh, yes, I let them know that they would be frequently coming to the board!

As the semester progressed, this format seemed to function adequately. It was not what I had originally thought of as a full-discussion course, but the students got more comfortable and talked more. As more time passed, it bothered them less to have me sit among them while a classmate presented a proof of a theorem. Soon it was acceptable for me to sit near the board and talk with them about problems and applications, while making notes when necessary, instead of writing everything for them to copy down. By request, I would do a problem for which they had no more ideas, but I let them know that I preferred not to

do so. I preferred to help the students get an idea that they could take home with them to puzzle out. I believe that since they had an option, it was easier for them to agree to discuss and try again. I started to think that beginning the semester full-swing in a discussion-based style had been another obvious miss of mine; maybe they needed to be eased into it. Certainly there was an adjustment period in which they became more comfortable asking questions of one another, and this also took time.

As the semester came to an end, we did have a good group dynamic. I let them create their own assignment, and they decided to construct optimized cereal bowls in various shapes. A student suggested minimizing the required surface area for various shapes with a given volume and then constructing these optimized "bowls" for display. The fact that students met with me four days a week and also that most of the students lived in the same dorm encouraged collaboration. They developed a friendly competition for points; instead of being pitted against one another, the competition became more like a race. They knew they did not need to refute one another for points, and I gave them points for assists, and so the competition became a game of one-upmanship, leapfrog if you will. Admittedly, we had lost four students along the way, but competence was high among the remaining students. Most importantly, the stronger students were helping and encouraging those of lesser ability, and exam scores improved as well.

Finally, parts of the course had worked, and others had not. At the end of the semester, I asked the students to fill out surveys for me, and I also discussed the course with them and how it was taught. The most interesting statistic, I think, is that all of the passing students chose to continue with me into Honors Calculus Two the following semester, so we spent an hour talking about what they did and didn't like about the course and where we could make improvements.

I am happy to say that the students had several excellent suggestions. They really enjoyed the point distribution that I used for participation; it was concrete and fun. However, they said they wanted to see a little more structure to it. My method had been simple; I threw out points at random intervals and offered points for proving theorems. The students expressed a preference for a weekly quota to ensure that they kept up with it throughout the semester rather than thinking they might make up more points later when they were better prepared. We all ended up feeling that this change would improve the overall preparedness for discussion.

One major change the students suggested was somewhat surprising to me. They thought that reading the book was helpful and worthwhile, but one of the difficulties we had faced early on with the simpler problems arose because I had them reading and working problems, together and individually, before class; consequently, most of the discussion points had been cleared up before class began. The students felt that it would be better to read over the material and examples, discuss them in class, and then solve the problems. I believe this suggestion will make the discussions livelier and will help the students solve

the more difficult problems in a timelier manner and with fewer interjections from me.

Another major concern was the level of difficulty. I admit that, when I took on an honors course, my immediate compulsion was to increase the difficulty rather significantly. The students preferred to see an honors course as different rather than more difficult. Since I always seek to challenge my students, I challenged these students on several levels and perhaps overwhelmed them at times. This is an issue I will have to think about for the future. While I do believe that an honors course will, and should, be more difficult than a regular course, I wonder how much of the difficulty should arise from the material and how much should result from the clearer and deeper knowledge of the student.

To get more insight into how students reacted to the discussion-based Calculus One class, I asked them to fill out a survey about the class discussion. Table 1 indicates how students responded. One point was given for each answer in which students "strongly disagreed," two points were given for each answer in which students "disagreed," three points for each "neither agreed nor disagreed," four points for each "agreed," and five points for each "strongly agreed." An average for each item was then created.

Overall, the students agreed that the discussion improved the learning experience. When we consider this information within the context of the student answers for item #5, we can see that students did come into the course with ideas about the usefulness of discussion for mathematics classes, yet they still were able to find the discussion useful. Answers to item #7 seem to further indicate that the students and I were coming to terms with what it means to run a successful discussion-based math class. The results of the survey indicate that the class opened their minds to possibilities for how discussion could be used to help them succeed. The fact that all of the students will be continuing on with me into Calculus Two leads me to conclude the students did succeed and learn in this atmosphere.

The SIRS, a standard evaluation instrument used at SPSU, as well as the honors student course evaluations solidified my conclusion that the class had succeeded. On the SIRS evaluation, this course was rated over the mean for comparative four-year institutions in every category. A "5" is the highest rating one can receive. In the overall evaluation category, the course was rated a 4.29, over the comparative mean of 3.99. The most statistically significant result among the categories was in student effort and involvement. In this section, the course was rated 4.19 over the comparative mean of 3.70, indicating that the course is adequate in substance to challenge honors students without adding an excess of extra material.

For the honors student course evaluation, students rate the course on the same scale we used in the survey above. On these evaluations, the students indicated overwhelmingly that they were challenged by the course as well as having studied and prepared. For the statement "My learning increased because of this course," the students rated an average of 4.375, and if we remove the

Table 1: Honors Calculus I Survey, Fall 2008

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
1. I believe that the discussions from this course enhanced the learning experience.			1	4	2	4.14
2. I would have preferred a more traditional, lecture-based course.	1	1	2	2	1	3.14
3. The discussion element of the course was too forced, i.e. it could have evolved more naturally.		1	5	1		3.00
4. I was more focused in this course by the discussion element.		4	1	1	1	2.86
5. Math courses are an appropriate choice for a discussion-based course.		2	3	1	1	3.14
6. I learned more from this class through the interactions with other students than I would have in a more traditional course.	1	2		4		3.00
7. Some improvements in the design of this course would more easily facilitate my being involved in the discussion.			2	5		3.71
8. I do not like discussion-based courses.	1	3	2	1		2.43

one student rating of 3 or below on preparation, the average becomes 4.71. Another positive result was a 4.5 average on agreement with the statement "The course helped me to think independently about the subject matter." Among the free response comments from the students, the most common (at least six of the eight students) were that the class was kept interesting through discussion, the class was challenging, and the expertise of the professor was praiseworthy. Only one student raised concerns about the discussion-based pedagogy.

My experiment with discussion-based math classes has been intriguing. I have been at times frustrated, angry, hopeful, and elated. I have seen both strengths and weaknesses in what we have done. I shall certainly be attempting to refine the process for the next semester and to continue testing this course on different classes in the future. As for our class, and the sequel to follow, the students and I find great value as we come to understand what it means to use discussion well in a mathematics course.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM OUR STUDY

Our multiple perspectives and experiences have shown us that discussion can play an active role in mathematics classes, especially in helping students understand more deeply the mathematical concepts and theory that pertain to the field. That said, all three of us learned that we needed to better define the term "discussion-based," including how much of class time must be spent in discussion for a class to be "discussion-based."

Like William Taylor in his article "Promoting Critical Thinking through Classroom Discussion," those of us using discussion in the honors program at SPSU are interested in helping students to think through their ideas and to problem solve. Like Taylor we believe that discussion helps students to "practice forming their own judgments, and to do so in an atmosphere that is safe, supportive, and instructive" (78). Taylor articulates a four-step process:

1. Students formulate an initial judgment: "One that results from a careful analysis of text and data."

2. Students then articulate their "initial, tentative judgment" along with the "data and perspectives" that inform it to the rest of the class.

3. Students receive new "data and perspectives" from the discussion. They can then modify or reaffirm their original judgment.

4. Finally the students articulate their modified views. Either consensus will be reached or the participants will become clear on why they cannot agree. (78–79).

In the SPSU honors math classes, we saw students engaged in this process: forming judgments, not just individually but in small groups, sharing perspectives and data in order to solve calculus problems, and presenting their ideas to the rest of the class.

We know that Ritter's and Griffiths's discussion techniques fit the standards set by Taylor. However, both teachers raised concerns about how to use discussion successfully in the mathematics classroom; Ritter focused on the need for lecture in order to explain specific mathematical concepts, and Griffiths focused on easing students into the discussion-based format. Taylor can help us here once again. He has created the following continuum to show who controls the conversation in the classroom and who determines the "right" answers (79):

Teacher Control			**Student Control**
Monologue	Quiz Show	Discussion	Bull Session

Teachers dominate classes when they lecture, thus creating a monologue. The "Quiz Show" allows a student to enter the conversation, but only by answering narrow questions with right answers. "Discussions" are focused conversations since students are guided by the faculty to make informed judgments. Finally "Bull Sessions" are student-controlled discussions that may be arbitrary and random.

Ritter's and Griffiths's concerns seem to be about balancing the teacher/student control of the classroom. Ritter is concerned with how to use lectures for definitions, theorems, and techniques and how to move beyond simple "quiz shows" for student discussion. Griffiths's concern, not seen on Taylor's continuum, is the silence that occurs when students wait for the teacher to tell them what to think.

Both Griffiths and Ritter have created similar "alternative images" to that which Taylor articulates in his article. Taylor finds that an alternative image to the one in which the teacher sits in a student desk and contributes minimally to the conversation is one in which the teacher is at the "center of the discussion, orchestrating its dynamics by calling on students and pointing out the connections between what is being said" (81). Griffiths's evolving discussion-based instruction in the end created a continuum that began with a student-led framework, evolved into an alternative image, and then evolved back to a framework that was once again more student-led.

Ritter's alternative image combines various levels along the continuum for a discussion-based class; lectures or even mini-lectures using the dynamic of questions and connections helped students to begin thinking on the issues and concepts for the day while small-group work and full-class discussions immersed students more fully in the course material, allowing students to problem-solve and formulate judgments.

Clearly discussion-based mathematic classes can offer students many of the same opportunities found in other fields. However, they can do so only to the extent that professors are willing to engage their students in such an exploration within the classroom. What may stand in the way are the pre-existing notions of both students and faculty about how mathematical material should

be presented. In our case, both students and faculty had previously been taught by other mathematicians who used a lecture-based format. Given that Ritter's excellent evaluations led to the formation of this study and that Griffiths' evaluations for the Honors Calculus One class were also excellent, it is clear that pre-existing notions of how mathematics should be taught can be successfully challenged. In the spring of 2009, both faculty members were nominated by students from their honors classes for the Honors Faculty Member of the Year Award. These nominations may indicate that students are even more willing to work with a new format than previously thought.

The title of our article begins with a false dilemma: "to discuss or not to discuss." The false dilemma fallacy considers only two alternatives when in fact there are others. In teaching of honors mathematics, more options exist than discussion or lecture; the options are part of a continuum such as that employed by Taylor.

Despite the success of our experiment with discussion-based math classes, several questions remain unanswered. For example, Ritter asks how we should introduce discussion-like pedagogy into courses dominated by lecture. On several levels we did not answer this question. First of all, even though the honors program held workshops and a roundtable discussion in the fall, faculty still felt at odds about what a "discussion-based" class would look like for a mathematics class. Definitions, models, and techniques were grounded in ideas gleaned from Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill's book *Discussion as a Way of Teaching* as well as ideas from Donald Finkel's book *Teaching with Your Mouth Shut.* Honors faculty also modeled and spoke on different methods and techniques they used to stimulate discussion. However, the term "discussion-based" remained troubling for several reasons. How much discussion makes a class "discussion-based"? What are all of the definitions, models, and techniques that are essential to the term "discussion-based"?

We realized that we were talking about the term "discussion" as though we all shared a consistent definition but that it was a rather nebulous term. It was like the proverbial elephant, with each of us grabbing onto a different part and thinking we understood the whole. Some of us have been using the same basic discussion techniques for so long we see them as "natural" and have a hard time stepping back from them in order to name them for others or to try new techniques. Others of us are so new to the idea of discussion and so trapped in other techniques that seem "natural" that we cannot begin to envision the use of discussion techniques for our classes.

The next step for our program is to go back to definitions, models, and techniques in order to articulate more fully what our terms mean and how we use discussion to facilitate learning in our fields of study. We will also track honors mathematics students when possible to see how their success in discussion-based classes affects in any way their success in future classes.

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HONORS IN PRACTICE

French à la carte: Maintaining a Language Program on a Shoestring

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INTRODUCTION

While the size of our honors college environment is almost always a positive, its smallness has decided disadvantages when it comes to the study of less popular foreign languages. Fewer students, fewer subject offerings, and the absence of multiple sections all have a negative impact on language programs. Shrinking budgets have not helped matters. Despite these disadvantages, the French program at Florida Atlantic University's Harriet Wilkes Honors College has steadily grown from a total number of sixteen students in fall 2005 to forty students (more than 10% of the student population) in the fall semester of 2009. To achieve this outcome, Florida Atlantic University's honors college employed effective strategies that could be successful in other disciplines within honors at other institutions.

BACKGROUND

The Harriet Wilkes Honors College had its first intake of students in the fall of 1999. Robert J. Huckshorn, then vice president of FAU's northern campuses, championed our unique setup. The honors college was established on FAU's Jupiter MacArthur Campus, some forty miles from FAU's main campus in Boca Raton. Designed to be a curricularly independent, freestanding, four-year honors institution, the honors college exists alongside—yet independent of—the other colleges in FAU's Research II university. With a single exception in the history of the college, faculty members are external hires.

A tenure-track French professor was hired and began teaching in the honors college in fall 2000, but moved on after three years. An adjunct professor was brought in to teach first- and second-year French on a part-time basis but left after two years. Insufficient critical mass had been built up to offer upper-division French classes. At the time, the honors college students' interest in French did not appear to be growing, and upper-division French had been more or less written out of the program.

When I commenced work as an adjunct professor at FAU's honors college in fall 2005, the budget line for a French professor had disappeared as the then

dean had made the strategic decision to reallocate this money to other disciplines. Housing prices in Florida had skyrocketed, and in order to attract new faculty to meet growing student demand in the social sciences, salaries had to be increased. As a part-time adjunct professor teaching anywhere from eight to twelve credits per semester, I am paid out of the "non-recurring dollars" funds. The "budget" for the French program is $14,000 per year, or $3,500 per four-credit class for two classes each semester. Upper-division French classes have either been offered for free or paid at a lower rate based on numbers of students enrolled.

Given the absence of a real French program and the near impossibility of students' even minoring in the language, it has been difficult to attract students. Students who feel they may want to go beyond fourth-semester language do not choose French. Those who feel strongly about minoring or majoring in French even before they have started college do not enroll in the honors college in the first place. Seeing four of my best students transfer out of the college in order to pursue their love of the language has been a bittersweet experience.

While the honors college's small student population means smaller class size and more contact with professors, it also, unfortunately, means fewer course offerings. Not only are upper-division French classes technically unavailable at our campus, but students who would not normally be grouped together in lower-division classes are classmates. Larger universities are able to separate "true beginners" from those whose test scores place them into the first-semester class even though they have up to two years of high school French under their belts. Moreover, some large campuses offer French classes for French speakers who need instruction in reading or writing the language and restrict that category of student from joining typical first-through-fourth semester French classes. Since our honors college is able to offer only one section of each class and lacks the financial means and sufficient student populations to fill "true beginner" or native speaker classes, students are placed into classes on the basis of their placement test scores alone.

The fact that only a single section of even the most popular classes is offered gives rise to schedule conflicts. These conflicts make it impossible for eager students to undertake—or perhaps, worse—to *continue* the study of French. Often students who took first- and second-semester French are suddenly unable to take a third semester because a class necessary for their major is offered at the same time. Because only a limited number of non-honors classes can be used for credit toward graduation, plugging in French classes taken at other universities is often not a viable option. In my ten semesters at the honors college, although many students have expressed an interest in minoring in French, only one has succeeded; four transferred out of the college in order to do so. The successful student minored in French by taking the four semesters of French offered at the honors college, taking a DIS (Directed Independent Study) with me, enrolling in one class at FAU's main campus in Boca Raton, and participating in an eight-credit study abroad program run by FAU in Allès, France.

This student is now finishing an M.A. program in psychology and receiving a tuition remission in exchange for being a TA in French.

Despite these drawbacks, creativity and flexibility have allowed our honors college's program to more than double in size in four and a half years and to flourish in recent semesters. Following is a discussion of some of the solutions we have worked out in order to cater to a greater range of students despite the budgetary and staffing constraints. Particular attention is paid to an innovative class that meets the needs of students of varying levels.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

The first time I taught third-year French, which was technically not offered at the honors college, I had to do so in the form of a three-credit DIS. Two students enrolled in the class: one was a junior majoring in psychology who wanted to minor in French and had completed the two-year sequence offered at the honors college; the second was a junior who had just returned from a semester in Paris.

The following year, a group of math majors approached me in the spring during their fourth semester of French, hoping to find a creative solution for the following semester. A one-time-only physics class offered by a visiting professor was scheduled at the same time as the second hour of my class, and the students didn't want to miss it. I wanted to help the students continue with the language even though the honors college had no money budgeted to pay me for extra class hours. After a quick brainstorm with my section head and our associate dean, we created a viable solution which involved the creation of another three-credit DIS: the students would attend the first hour of class on Tuesdays and Thursdays and then meet with me for one hour at another time during the week to make a total of three contact hours. The workload was proportionately reduced from the regular four-credit class. Students in the regular class and in the DIS were to take the same tests. The arrangement resulted in an extra contact hour per week for me and some extra planning. I tried to arrange classes so that key material was introduced during the first hour. Dialogs, skits, group activities, and tests were usually scheduled for the second half of class.

There were two advantages to such lesson planning. First, all students were exposed to the same presentation of material, so I did not have to take meticulous care to present material in an identical manner to two different groups, one of them potentially disadvantaged because they were never there for the whole class. Students were, after all, taking the same tests and competing along the same curve. The second advantage was that, with an even smaller group, students got more opportunities to speak and interact in the target language. The major disadvantages were the juggling act I had to do and the fact that, because I tried to get most of the grammar presentation finished during the first hour, my lesson plans didn't always have an ideal balance of passive and active learning activities.

The DIS solution is obviously not a viable long-term solution for a foreign language staffed by a single part-time professor, but for four semesters it was the only solution other than turning eager students away from the study of French. Because Harriet Wilkes Honors College students are all housed together and eat in the same dining hall, both groups of students in the class had frequent contact with one another and were able to bridge any social gaps in the class that the set-up might have engendered. I frequently ate lunch with groups of students from this class at a back table in the cafeteria, continuing our discussions about culture or answering grammatical questions the students had thought of after class. The small setting of our honors college makes such ongoing contact with professors possible. Even when the instructor is not strictly in "teacher mode," discussion with him or her in more social settings provides students with valuable learning opportunities.

In the spring semester of 2009, two different groups of students approached me. One wanted a literature class, and the other wanted a class that would develop his reading skills. Neither group necessarily wanted a traditional third-year language class, and the honors college was not in a position to pay me to teach a third full-fledged class anyway. Teaching two DIS classes for larger groups of students simply wasn't viable. I decided to brainstorm once again, this time to develop "Reading French Literature," a two-credit class that met in the evenings (the only available time everybody had in common) and in which I attempted to meet the needs of both groups of students. While the class was in the development stage, a third group of students emerged: two particularly strong seniors who had completed the first-year sequence and wanted to continue French just for fun. All potential students had already satisfied the honors college language requirement.

Originally capped at eight, the group enrolled in Reading French Literature swelled to a total of fourteen students with a wide range of language backgrounds. The six most advanced students were extremely diverse: one, a native English speaker, had completed an IB program through the medium of French in Florida and had spent the previous summer using her French working in a U.S. embassy in north Africa; another had been educated in Haiti through the medium of French until age thirteen; two were native speakers of Portuguese and near-native speakers of Spanish and had completed the two-year sequence of lower-division French; and the other two had recently returned from study abroad experiences in French-speaking countries and had rather opposite skills—one lacked confidence in speaking but was excellent in grammar while the other suffered considerable grammatical lacunae but communicated effectively in French. The least experienced students were the two seniors I allowed in at the last minute; they had completed only two semesters of French. Because I had taught them, I was familiar with their skills and was confident that they could succeed. The other six students had varying skills above the intermediate level.

I was excited, if not slightly daunted, by the challenge of trying to meet the needs of all members of such a diverse group. I reassured myself that Harriet

Wilkes Honors College students, more than any other type of university student I had taught, are good at learning; they tend to be conscious and self-aware learners, so I could put part of the pedagogical task back onto their shoulders. I told them, "Think about what it is you want to learn most this semester. Then think about the best way to achieve that learning outcome." The answers they came up with determined the theme of one quarter of their class work and made up the bulk of their personal theme-based journals. Most students had strong ideas from the start ("I want to improve my reading skills. May I read four plays by Molière and a book about the history of Morocco's relationship with The Western Sahara?" and "I don't get the language used in French language comics—I can't understand what I'm reading. I'd like to focus on five books from four different comic series."). Some, unsurprisingly, needed more direction with their personal theme-based journals. Working with the "fuzzier" students was a good curriculum planning drill for me.

Class work and assignments in Reading French Literature consisted of the following:

IN-CLASS TRANSLATIONS

We started every other class with a ten-minute, in-class translation. Being present for the exercise was part of the participation grade, but the actual translation was not graded. Students were given a professional version of the translation at the end of the ten-minute exercise for immediate feedback. My intention was not to teach translation skill as such but rather to provide a medium for students to understand how well they had understood a passage. A series of reading comprehension tests instead might have better helped achieve this goal.

JOURNAL

Each student kept a personal theme-based journal throughout the semester in which they pursued their individual class goals and documented their ongoing work: The student reading Molière kept a list of vocabulary and turns of phrase for discussion with me; the one confounded by the language used in *bandes dessinées* (comics) used the journal as a forum for her *bêtes noires* and turned them into areas of relative expertise; and the Haitian social sciences student who had been educated in French used the journal as a place to revisit a long-forgotten interest in writing poetry.

The journals were also a forum in which students would consciously explore the process of reading and document their difficulties and triumphs. Students asked questions about a variety of topics, investigated responses on their own, and received feedback from me. The less verbose were able to document their efforts by pasting in print-outs of online tests or exercises or other outside work. Worth a quarter of the class grade, the journals were designed to be the component that allowed the course to meet the academic needs of all members of the class, no matter what their level.

READINGS

Each student purchased a book of excerpts (with parallel translations) of the French literary canon from the seventeenth to twentieth century. This part of the syllabus was hardest to coordinate with such a diverse group. While the more experienced students made use of the library so that they could read beyond the excerpt provided in the text, the two least experienced were mired down in the first two paragraphs. The upside was that the stronger students' discussions of the translations (particularly when they didn't like them) were useful to the least experienced students.

CLASS PRESENTATION

Each student presented in French on a literary, cultural or historical topic of their choice relevant to the literary excerpt that was being studied.

PORTFOLIO

Each student turned in a portfolio containing assignments worth a total of ten points. The "buffet style" portfolio enabled students to tailor the class to their needs. All but the two least experienced students were required to turn in at least three different types of assignment. A list of assignment types are shown in Table 1.

Students experienced the usual alternating forms of stress and excitement over their portfolio activities. After most classes, the group would shift to the cafeteria and continue informal discussion. After we had allayed our hunger, the talk around the table invariably turned into a round-robin discussion about the portfolio items students were currently working on. Predictably, the less experienced students learned a great deal from the more experienced ones. It was particularly satisfying to me, however, to witness the experienced students' interest in the work and ideas of the former group. Contact beyond the class-room heightened students' awareness that they could learn from one another regardless of apparent skill or experience level.

EVALUATION

I made notes on ways to improve the class both before and after reading students' anonymous written evaluations at the end of the semester. My own observations and the comments of students lead me to conclude that it is possible to meet the needs of such a diverse group of learners in a single class. The two weakest students exhibited significant learning without slowing down the rest of the class, and the strongest students were satisfied that their skills had augmented significantly as well.

Were the class to be offered again, the most significant improvement would be to focus the portfolio exercises more tightly on the improvement of reading skills. Students could complete a series of reading comprehension tests and could possibly create reading comprehension tests for their classmates. Also,

Table 1: Assignment Types

A.	Worth 2 points	Translation from French into English	Two pages. You choose an important passage from any literary or scholarly document that interests you.
B.	Worth 2 points	Translation from English into French	Two pages. You choose an important passage from any literary or scholarly document that interests you.
C.	Worth 4 points	Critical Paper	To be written in French. 3 to 4 pages in which you explore a theme, support an argument, or make a claim about a piece of French language literature you have read in French.
D.	Worth 4 points	Analyse de Texte	To be written in French. This is an in-depth study of a small chunk of text (3 to 4 well chosen paragraphs, a poem, an entry in the philosophes' *Encyclopédie*, etc.). Whereas a major goal of a critical paper is usually to show how a work is an artistic expression of the history and culture whence it issues, an *analyse de texte* is different. The goal of the latter is to study the mechanics (vocabulary, choice of words, rhythm, speed) of the piece you are studying. You study the work *within the context of itself.*

personalization of journal tasks distracted from the stated goal of the class (developing reading skills and exposure to the French literary canon). While the individual projects in the journal were developed as a safety measure to ensure that the academic needs of all levels were met, they were at times an unnecessary distraction. The goal of catering to diverse learning needs could also be achieved by fine-tuning reading-skills-centered work or having students read more and keep a reading log in which strategies, successes, and difficulties in reading are documented.

Prior to reading student comments, I felt that the least successful part of the syllabus was the reading of canonical literature. The excerpts were too difficult for the two weakest students and too short to satisfy the needs of the most experienced students. I was therefore surprised to read that students were unanimous in their opinion that the readings, coupled with the student presentations,

enabled the class to learn what they felt was a great deal about French litera-ture, culture, and history.

Somewhat surprising to me as well was the students' fondness for the biweekly in-class translations. Students reported that their skill at translating from French into English increased significantly and attributed the improvement to the in-class translation work. Not a single student was, on the other hand, entirely sure that his or her ability to read French improved all that much. Some pointed out that they were unsure how to evaluate how much their reading had improved. If I were to offer such a course in the future, I would add reading comprehension exercises to their portfolios, and I would strongly consider alternating in-class reading comprehension exercises with in-class translation exercises. I believe that testing students frequently made them more accus-tomed to (and therefore more confident about) the task of translating and made them conscious of their improvement. Perhaps accustoming students to reading comprehension tests would, in turn, focus them on the act of reading and make them more confident readers.

CONCLUSION

Meeting the diverse needs of students who are taking on a less-than-popu-lar language in a small honors college setting is a challenge. Working individ-ually or in small groups with students is not a long-term solution when there is only one part-time professor teaching the language. Gathering a larger group of students with diverse needs and experience into a single upper division class, while potentially cumbersome, is a possible solution. One key to success is a flexible syllabus that can be manipulated to suit different types of students at various levels. This said, such a flexible syllabus needs tightly focused learning outcomes. The goals within those outcomes can be individually adjusted to suit the needs of varying levels of class members. The other key to success is stu-dents' informal discussions about their assignments outside of the classroom. An honors college provides the ideal setting for this kind of intellectual growth. Such meta-academic contact with their professor and their classmates of vary-ing skill and experience levels makes the subject matter real to them and gives it real-world importance. The French experience at our honors college can potentially be applied to other curricular areas and to other institutions. The unique living/learning environment of an honors college and the contact stu-dents have with their professors outside of the classroom help ensure the suc-cess of such an endeavor.

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The Value of Extending the Honors Contract Beyond One Semester: A Case Study with Smithsonian Dinosaurs

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INTRODUCTION

Most honors programs offer multiple options for scholars to complete their honors credits each semester. Students may, for instance, take honors courses on campus or abroad, participate in honors independent study, or take upper-division courses as freshmen or sophomores. In some cases, especially if a scholar has a scheduling conflict between courses required for the major and honors courses, he or she may select to develop an honors contract, allowing the student to take a non-honors course and work with the faculty instructor to develop an honors experience in the course.

At our institution, honors students must complete a minimum of six honors credits per academic year. Of the fifty honors students enrolled in our honors program, approximately ten each semester satisfy honors requirements through honors contracts (called "honors options" on our campus). We communicate that the honors contract is not supposed to be an add-on to the routine assignments but should provide alternatives to some or all of the assignments. The honors contract should not simply require more work but should go more deeply into methodology, structure, and theory; attack more sophisticated questions; and satisfy more rigorous standards than are generally expected for the non-honors students. Honors contract advisers, who are the instructors for the course, commonly design the contract as an inquiry- or community-based project. Such projects are typically rigorous enough to then qualify for presentation at a conference.

Although the honors contract may be the only opportunity for a student to satisfy the honors credit requirements in a semester, several challenges may occur with the execution of an honors contract project. Some projects may not get started until well after the semester has begun if, for instance, a student needs to learn appropriate content knowledge before knowing how to proceed

or if there is a delay in getting institutional review board (IRB) approval to work with human subjects. Unanticipated changes may occur in access to necessary resources; a scheduled interview with a distinguished speaker may become impossible, for instance, because of a cancelled campus visit. Most often, we see that there is not enough time in the semester to complete the honors contract project. Everything from lab work to the construction of an art installation can take longer than anticipated. As a semester draws to a close, a scholar may become frustrated in not being able to complete the honors contract or may not produce the quality work of which he/she is capable because of a firm deadline to earn a grade in the course.

No motivation or incentive usually exists for a scholar and the supervising faculty member to continue an honors contract project beyond the end of a semester. Once the course concludes, students receive a grade for their honors contract work that is averaged into their overall course grade. Students cannot earn any additional honors contract credits for the same project since it was tied into a specific course. However, there may be an opportunity for students to continue the project in a future semester as an honors independent study if the student is not graduating and if the faculty member is available.

Great value to the scholar and the project outcome can result when an honors contract project is voluntarily extended and refined. This paper describes an example of one honors contract that expanded into a much larger project, benefitting two honors scholars in the growth of their content knowledge and skills sets in addition to producing a higher-quality product.

CASE STUDY: SMITHSONIAN DINOSAURS

In fall 2007, co-author Laura Guertin taught a general education course for non-science majors titled "Dinosaur Extinction and Other Controversies." Enrolled in the course and with Guertin's permission, sophomore honors scholars and student co-authors Alyce DiLauro and Teron Meyers decided to engage in a challenging dinosaur-themed project as an honors contract. Note that the remainder of this essay is written by the honors scholars DiLauro and Meyers.

The goal of the honors contract project was to apply what we learned about dinosaur type specimens in and out of the classroom to our additional research conducted at the Smithsonian Intuition's National Museum of Natural History. Ultimately, we were to create an enhanced podcast, viewable on an iPod and the Internet, to convey dinosaur type specimen information effectively through digital media.

Audio has served as a medium for communicating earth-science content since the 1960s, including delivery of physical geology material as an audio tutorial (Robertson and Marshall) and a radio series (McKee). Undergraduate students have also engaged in creating audio earth-science products by, for instance, conducting interviews with geoscientists, creating public service announcements for National Public Radio (Conway and Croxen), and producing an audio walking tour of tree biodiversity in a state park (Woodruff).

Audio presented on portable MP3 players has become popular with people of all ages. More than 22 million American adults own iPods or MP3 players, and 29% of them have downloaded podcasts from the web so that they can listen to audio files at a time of their choosing (Rainie and Madden). Faculty members have been turning to iPods for content delivery because podcasting allows education to be more portable and to meet students where they spend their time, on the Internet (EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative). Not only do students report a higher satisfaction with learning through audio (Miller and Piller), but the general public appreciates having audio to listen to and learn from anywhere and at any time (Pownell; Briggs).

We decided to create an enhanced podcast, an audio file with embedded photos, as the medium to showcase the dinosaur type specimens from the Smithsonian. Using podcasts for museum tours is relatively recent, and do-it-yourself versions as an alternative to an official museum audio tour started in 2005 (Kennedy). The value of our podcast is that it not only shows parts of the exhibit hall but also provides additional scientific information not on display for enhanced educational value.

DINOSAURS: PHASE I

We began the fall 2007 semester by conducting online research to see which dinosaur type specimens the National Museum of Natural History had on display within its dinosaur hall. In October 2007, we journeyed to Washington D.C. to explore the dinosaur hall at the Smithsonian Institution (the trip to D.C. was just for honors students, not for the other students enrolled in the course). We took extensive notes regarding each of the type specimens on display. With a Nikon Coolpix L1 digital camera, we tried to take as many good-quality photographs of the dinosaur type specimens as possible. Poor lighting in the dinosaur hall, however, made it a bit difficult to take clear photos with decent resolution.

We developed a script for the podcast consisting of historical background on how these type specimens were discovered and facts about each specimen. In order to record this information, we used external microphones and Apple's GarageBand, a music project and podcasting program available for the Macintosh computer. We reserved time in the Digital Commons, the campus's audio-video recording studio to use the digital equipment. Once the script came to life with audio recordings, we selected photographs of the type specimens and placed them to match the different sections of the audio tracks. We chose a jingle to play during the introduction and conclusion of the podcast as well as classical music to play throughout most of the visual displays and audio segments. We finished the project at the end of the fall 2007 semester, the end of our course and the end of the honors contract project. Our project can be viewed online at <http://tinyurl.com/dinohonorsoptionA>.

In the following semester (April 2008), we presented our enhanced podcast at Sigma Xi (the Scientific Research Society) Eastern Colleges Conference at

Saint Joseph's University, where we received feedback from our scholarly peers. Some students felt that our photographs within the podcast could have had higher resolution and greater clarity. Some students thought the audio level was inconsistent, a bit louder in some areas than others. Others noted that the classical music in the background of the entire podcast was a distraction from the information being provided about the dinosaur type specimens. One peer suggested that adding dinosaur noises would add to its scientific value. Discussing how to improve the podcast with others at the conference was intellectually inspiring. Some suggestions mirrored our own post-project ideas, such as connecting our video with the Smithsonian Institution's website.

After receiving feedback from our peers and faculty from other universities, we thought about improvements we could make to the podcast. Because of technological difficulties and limitations, we knew that GarageBand would not allow us to make the podcast we envisioned. The three co-authors sat down to discuss desired changes and how to improve the podcast during the summer.

DINOSAURS: PHASE II

We contacted one of Penn State's Digital Commons Campus Consultants to assist us in deciding what technology we would need to use to make the desired changes to the podcast. We concluded that we wanted a more interactive product with green-screen technology and better audio and visual quality. We decided to make a Quicktime video using Final Cut Pro.

In order to have better visuals, we needed better-quality photographs. We scheduled another trip to the Smithsonian Institution in June 2008, and this time we were prepared with digital single-reflex cameras, Canon Powershot S5IS models that were able to take quality photos in low-light environments. In addition to documenting the tour with photos, we used two Sony video camcorders to record a guided tour and an interview with Dr. Michael Brett-Surman, paleontologist and museum specialist for dinosaurs and other reptiles. A student assistant accompanied us to take extensive notes during the interview, which was scheduled an hour before the dinosaur hall of the National Museum of Natural History opened to the public, thus enabling us to have unobstructed and tight photographs of the type specimens. Dr. Brett-Surman shared stories of the dinosaurs that are not displayed in text throughout the museum and took us behind the scenes to see where and how the fossils are stored. Dr. Brett-Surman also explained that the dinosaur hall soon will be under an expected four-year renovation, which further motivated us to capture as much detail of the dinosaur hall as possible through our notes, photographs, and videos.

Previous notes taken during the first trip, supplemented with extensive new notes, allowed the development of a more focused yet detailed script for our new video. Though we used much of the content from the previous podcast, virtually all visual components were new. We were basically starting from scratch. Our new set of content and multimedia materials resulted in an

improved product, especially because Final Cut Pro 6 has more advanced technology to handle audio and visual enhancements.

The Digital Commons Campus Consultant helped to guide us in working the equipment and Final Cut program. We began recording each other detailing the dinosaur type specimen information multiple times until we conveyed the script naturally. At first, we attempted to write parts of our script across the chalkboard positioned behind the video camera and opposite the green screen, but after viewing the recorded videotape, our eyes could be seen shifting from left to right as if we were reading the script. To hide our reading eyes and to make it look more personal, we wrote the script on sections of poster board, which one of us held under the video camera lens so that we could still read the script while appearing to look straight at the camera during recordings.

We used the helpful comments and criticisms from our peers at the Sigma Xi Conference by ensuring that our voices and musical jingles were consistent. Though we took video during the Smithsonian tour, we decided that working with brighter, better-quality photographs with green-screen technology would be more feasible and more on target with our goals than trying to incorporate video as well. To eliminate any audio distraction during the video, we used transitions between background photographs instead of having any music play as we presented the information. After completing our new video in early August 2008, we posted it on YouTube.com, TeacherTube.com and the Penn State iTunes U channel for K–12 outreach for all to see. Our updated project can be viewed online at <http://tinyurl.com/dinohonorsoptionB>.

IMPACT OF EXTENDING THE HONORS CONTRACT

Learning how to effectively create and improve upon a podcast made us better able to communicate ideas through technology. Instead of simply writing an essay about what we had learned at the dinosaur hall, we created a visual product that informs viewers about dinosaur type specimens without their having to visit the museum. As communication majors, we developed skills in the context of another discipline while strengthening our communication skills through digital media. In creating an interactive video, we became more aware of how to communicate effectively as well as how to use improvements in the scientific field to entice scientists and non-scientists to learn more about dinosaur type specimens.

The opportunity to revise and expand a project at the undergraduate level is rare. We learned that analyzing our original project for potential improvements and then making those changes can help prevent future project mistakes and have a more efficient workflow. For example, we used copyrighted photographs from the Internet for the original podcast, and in making corrections for the enhanced video, we learned what photographs we were allowed to use. We ultimately chose to use only the photographs that we took ourselves at the Smithsonian Institution to avoid any copyright infringement.

We would never have realized how far we could take the project or realized our potential as student researchers if we had ended our honors contract project at the conclusion of one semester. By taking the extended time to enhance the project, we were able to improve our communication and technical skills and create a better project for both the Smithsonian Institution and the broader online audience. As student researchers, we learned the value of feedback. Direct comments for improvement, like those we received at Sigma Xi, helped us discover better ways to reach the target audience. When we applied those comments and suggestions, we created a more efficient and focused workflow toward a polished product.

The value of continuing an honors contract project until it is completed, not when the semester ends, extends across all disciplines. In science experiments, results can be tested and retested before producing a final report. Humanities writing projects can be reviewed and revised several times. Projects with community partners can be carried out more often and in greater depth to assist a targeted population with an identified need. Although learning to adhere to project deadlines is important, students also need to realize that the timeline for research and creative activity sometimes needs to be adjusted to yield more significant and complete results.

It is also important to note that we took the initiative to continue the project beyond the end of the semester. We received a grade in the fall semester, but we continued to work on the project through the following spring and summer. We did the work without receiving any additional academic/honors credits or any new grades. We were very fortunate to have a project adviser who believed in our work and encouraged us to explore the topic further. Co-author Laura Guertin continued to work with us without receiving any compensation or workload credit. Although it is possible to continue an honors contract beyond one semester, it clearly requires dedication, commitment, donated time, and enthusiasm from the students and faculty mentors to see these projects through to completion. Dr. Guertin suggested at the outset of this essay that, through honors independent study, credit might be provided for projects that extend beyond the contract semester; the implementation of this suggestion would enable and encourage the kind of enriching experience we had with our extended honors contract project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Service Learning and Skunkworks in a Senior Honors Colloquium

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INTRODUCTION

In this essay I will describe a course and a service learning project related to a course that I had the good fortune to teach when I was new at a university and in an honors college. My point in describing how this course developed, including its structure and year-long project, is to demonstrate that pedagogical environments relatively free from constraints give rise to innovations and worthwhile educational experiences.

In the summer of 2008, I took up a new post as Assistant Director of the Louisiana Scholars' College at Northwestern State University. The Louisiana Scholars' College is a "fully-developed" college with fourteen of its own faculty and roughly 160 students. The students take a series of courses that are specific to the college, and Scholars' College faculty members teach a large number of discipline-specific courses as well as a wide variety of interdisciplinary courses. The college offers a series of "Great Books" courses and includes a strong science education curriculum. The student who graduates from Scholars' will have completed over sixty hours of honors credit. The program from which I had come had, unlike this one, a traditional "program" structure with courses taught by members of other departments teaching honors sections. At my new post, few philosophy courses were offered since the college had no philosophy major (a lamentable fact to be sure), so I had no courses to teach within my specialty. When my director asked me to help teach the senior colloquium, I agreed.

A NEW JOB, A NEW COURSE

The senior colloquium is a two-hour-per-semester course offered sequentially in the fall and spring semesters. All seniors must participate, and the colloquium presents a venue where they can come together and choose a topic that will cap off their undergraduate career. One of the ideas behind the course is that it gives students a chance to reconnect with their peer group in an important way. The class has a mandatory service component and typically has a number of guest lecturers. The students in the course are responsible for

choosing both the topic and texts. Examples of topics that have been chosen are the 90s, drugs, and crime. The topic chosen for the 2008–09 academic year happened to be food. My experience with food, other than as a daily consumer thereof, was as a saucier and a baker while in college and graduate school, so I had some knowledge of food and food preparation, but I was not anything close to an expert in an academic sense. Clearly I had some work to do.

The senior colloquium, I was told, is a course that contends with a number of distractions. The seniors are all working on their theses in addition to their other coursework. The class is not meant to be overly demanding of time and resources, and this is why it is a two-hour course. Further, the class is supposed to provide a variety of educational experiences ranging from guest lecturers to hands-on experiences. To that end, our colloquium had a sommelier, an expert on Creole cooking, a physician, an ecologist and a chef as guest speakers. The class spent two days in a kitchen learning to make a traditional stock and then using it as a component in a dish the students would later prepare. In addition, the class is supposed to be student-driven and include service learning, with which I had little experience.

While I was a bit unnerved at having my first teaching experience in this new college with seniors who already had a strong identity and had chosen the topic and texts for the course, I kept reminding myself that honors instructors need not be experts but can instead be guides in an educational journey. I was a facilitator rather than lecturer, a member of the class not a distinct leader. And though I repeated these reassurances to myself as I began reading the moment I arrived on campus in early July, I was not relieved of my apprehension until after the service learning project was finished in early March of 2009.

The texts that the class had adopted were Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, and an anthology called *Food and Culture* edited by Counihan and Van Esterik. All three texts had their merits and were enlightening reads. Having read some of Pollan's work before, I decided that I should begin with his text. The book was easy to read, and Pollan's subject matter was interesting; from this text and its ideas came the idea for a service learning project.

Pollan worries about the environmental and ecological, not to mention ethical, impact of the foods we eat. From the necessary steps involved in harvesting and processing certain crops such as corn to the practices involved in the raising and butchering of the meats we eat, all consumers need to know what is involved in bringing to the grocery our steak, chicken breast, cereal, or potato chips. Many consumers are only dimly aware of what it takes, by way of energy, labor, and capital, to create many of our comestibles. Further, the environmental and ethical costs of the various parts of the meals are often more than we might countenance if we were acquainted with the full facts.

One of the main ways Pollan exemplifies the difference in food production from typical agri-business productions (producers responsible for more of what one might find in a typical grocery store) and more environmentally

friendly or alternative production methods is by detailing the production approach of these more non-traditional operations. Pollan visits a non-traditional grass farm where all the produce and livestock is grown in an ecologically sensitive fashion. This farm becomes an example for the sort of farming practices we ought better to understand and support if we are concerned for the overall health of ourselves and the environment. I have long thought that I should support local farmers' markets and related ventures for both environmental and economic reasons. Thus, as I was reading this text and thinking about the issues, one of the ideas that came to me to fulfill the service learning requirement for the senior colloquium was to have the students create, develop and promote a single-day, free-to-the-public lecture series, hosted by the Louisiana Scholars' College and Northwestern State University, on local foods and local food pathways.

The seminar idea appealed to me for a number of reasons, one of which was to have the "academic" work the students were doing in the classroom find a direct outlet, by way of a service learning project, into the community. Certainly food drives and outreach programs that attempt to ameliorate hunger in some fashion were obvious choices that intersected with our topic of food and were of service to the community, but I was looking for a more direct use of the course materials in driving service learning projects for the course. It seemed important to have the students see how they could make the course readings benefit the community in a positive fashion. Further, as it turned out, the students were generally surprised to learn about their food sources from Pollan's book, and they then tried to eat in more conscious-about-production ways; that is, they found the sorts of issues brought forward in text to be issues they found reasonable and appropriate to bring to the wider community. Given the need to bring this coursework back out into the community, the students liked my seminar idea. They also arranged food drives and worked with the Council on Aging to host a lunch for the elderly, but those projects (laudable as they are) seemed tangential to the topics discussed in class. There remained a need to tie the academic work in the class to the community and find a way to introduce the academic issues covered to the community: a way to really bring the classroom out into the public.

While the seminar idea seemed to be an appropriate project for the service component, I had also hoped for a learning portion from which the students would gain some professional benefit as well. While service learning benefits students, faculty, and the community, students can at the same time develop organizational skills through the project and later demonstrate these skills to a future employer or graduate school; then the students will have achieved both a service and learning goal. I wanted the students to actively promote, organize, and develop the seminar into a highly visible and successful event. In short, I wanted a grand slam: a service learning project that tied directly to the course material, that intersected with the community in a novel fashion, and that gave the students both a philanthropic benefit and a boost to their professional

development. I was asking a lot, but this was a new job, I had a boss to impress, and the resources available locally made the service learning project all the more interesting.

LOGISTICS OF SERVICE LEARNING

Planning for the event began in late August of 2008 after the idea had been offered to the class. The students and I began to develop the seminar more fully by asking what sorts of people we wanted to participate and give talks. As a group we decided that some local growers should be contacted as well as the local city employees who run the Cane River Green Market, Natchitoches' version of a farmers' market. As we made contacts and netted some interest from local growers, one of our prospective speakers knew of another person who might participate as a speaker. Eventually the day would feature local growers who attempted sustainable growing patterns, a nutritionist to speak about the benefits of locally grown and fresh foods, a municipal worker who organizes the local farmers' market, an apiculturist (beekeeper), and a local rancher committed to raising free range cattle to produce beef.

Once the seminar idea had generated interest, I began working on writing a grant to support the service learning project with honorariums for speakers, catering, graphic design and marketing materials as well as travel for a later presentation some of the students would give on the project and any other expenses relative to the project. I wrote the grant with little input from the students because I surmised that grant writing was something a professor should do. This supposition turned out to be wrong, but more on that below

Early during the first semester, the students all agreed that responsibilities for the event should be broken up and distributed among the class members. One student was chosen as a liaison to the speakers and charged with getting relevant information from them for the seminar and making certain that they each had the information they would need for their presentation. The class also decided that public relations and marketing was a large enough set of duties that a committee of four people would make certain that flyers and publicity material were distributed and the proper media outlets contacted. Another person worked with the campus catering company to coordinate food donations from the growers, producers, and caterers. As a group, we thought it ironic to have a seminar about green and organic foods without foods not produced in these ways, so the catering company took the food donations (they could not buy the food as such action would violate state contracts) and created dishes from them. Finally, all students agreed to be present for the day of the event and help with the set-up and arrangement of the room and any other issues that might arise. The final job for the seminar was to create a pamphlet for the conference attendees so that they could have a record of resources they could use if they wanted to.

Once the various responsibilities had been arranged and set forth, the students worked out among themselves who would do what, and I became less

active in arranging the seminar. I did work with the designer (a university student) on the promotional materials, and, since I was the primary investigator on the grant for the seminar, I took care of paperwork and payments through the university's business affairs office.

The projects and work done in preparation for the event began in earnest mid-September 2008 and carried on through March 2009. Some work, such as graphic design work and catering arrangements, were completed by late 2008. Other work, such as contacting media outlets and distributing flyers, was completed in late January and February 2009. The publicity materials were ready for distribution a month prior to the seminar. Many local and regional papers and radio stations had been contacted, and the local paper did an interview with me prior to the event. In addition, three students agreed to present with me on the project at a service learning conference in late March 2009. There was plenty of work to go around, and in general the students kept up with responsibilities; aside from a last-second speaker cancellation, the event planning went well. The arrangements were time-consuming but worth the effort.

The seminar went very well. We had a modest attendance of nearly forty people. The donated organic food used by the campus catering company was terrific and received rave reviews. All the conference attendees expressed their gratitude for the event, and many asked if this would be a yearly event. The students not only attended the various talks but also were important in both the set-up and eventual clean-up efforts. After the event, one student raffled off the honey bears donated by our apiculturist.

LEARNING AND SERVICE

Since this event was not just a service but also a service learning project, part of my job as instructor was not only to guide students in getting the project developed but also to help them become aware of the work they were doing and why they were doing it. I had mentioned early in the project that the "learning" part of the project was to help students develop organizational skills they could use later in their professional life. The other learning component was to help students see why outreach of the sort taking place in the seminar was important. I wanted them to see that the classroom work they had done had direct application to the world in which they found themselves, that the scientific and humanitarian themes the class had covered were of interest to their local community, and that they could help bring these themes out and make them available to the public.

I had each student evaluate the event and its organization so they could develop a better sense of what all they had done and learned in putting this conference together. Each of the students was asked to create an after-action report and evaluate the success of the seminar. Students were able to write about where they saw need for improvements. My hope was that the "learning" portion of the service learning project would help students not only execute but understand the logistical and organizational factors required in a project of this

sort. If they were able to make useful evaluations and suggestions that could be incorporated into later events, their ideas could later become talking points that would demonstrate their abilities to a prospective employer.

Secondly, but not secondarily, the students were asked to reflect in an essay on how they saw this project as a successful form of outreach. I wanted the students to gauge the sort of impact they thought the event had on the community, whether it had any noticeable benefits to local growers and consumers. In general, the students thought the program benefited the local community. One student thought the experience had helped the class work better with a large group of people on a project and was surprised to see how the different talents and abilities in the group benefited the project. Another student was impressed by the group's ability to work through a "multi-leveled communication network," noting that the project "forced" them to learn to manage their time in ways to which they were unaccustomed. Another student found that such a project would have been impossible for one person to accomplish and that not even the professors could have done it on their own. Finally, all students mentioned how they became aware of the effort and energy required to make the project a success.

The students were also amazed at how much they learned from the presenters. They were pleased at how enthusiastic the seminar attendees were about the event and they felt proud that they were asked if the seminar would become an annual event. Perhaps the comment that most sums up how the audience reacted to the seminar came from another professor who attended the seminar:

> Please pass along to the seniors my deep appreciation for the event y'all coordinated last Saturday. I learned so much and have so many contacts for the kind of food I want to buy. I was never really clear on what service learning was, but your event was a great introduction to it!

The students also, though, noted some problems. Several thought that some jobs required more time than others, and some believed that the hours devoted to the project were excessive. Another important criticism was brought to my attention by one of the students: if one of the learning goals of the project was to have students learn valuable skills that could be demonstrated to a future employer, they should have been involved in the grant-writing process. Some of them will have to write grants in the future, and being able to show that they had experience writing a successful grant would be an impressive line on their résumé.

In a subsequent class meeting, I discussed the grant-writing issue with the students. My response, weak as it was, was simply that I had not thought of it as something a student should be part of. I had thought that one of my roles as the professor of the class was to be a grant writer and primary investigator and that a student would have difficulty navigating all the business affairs. Further, I thought that no student would be interested in working on the grant given their

other course requirements. Upon reflection, I can see no valid reason to have kept them from participating in the grant-writing process. If the goal of a learning project is to provide students with opportunities to develop skills they can use later in their careers, then not inviting them to join in the grant-writing process was short-sighted. So I learned something that may make me a better educator in the future. This last bit is, of course, a fact that many honors administrators and teachers routinely tell their professors both new and old and use as a point to sell prospective students on the types of activity and community found in honors.

CONCLUSION

In "Honors as Skunkworks," Paul Strong notes that honors can act as a sort of testing ground for new and creative practices that can be developed in environments relatively free from oversight and constraint. A task is set forth, and those charged with accomplishing it are left to accomplish the goal as they see fit. The senior colloquium was a totally new experience for me as an instructor; I had never taught a year-long course, nor had I ever taught a course where I had no input on the topic. I had very little time to learn from others how they had handled the senior colloquium, nor was I anything close to an expert on food. Further, I was at best only tangentially familiar with service learning, but I had to help the class come up with a project and then accomplish it. For me, this was skunkworks, and I have come to understand that skunkworks is what honors is all about.

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Beyond the Great Books: Increasing the Flexibility, Scope, and Appeal of an Honors Curriculum

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Two traditional models for honors programs are a chronological Great Books structure and a theme-based approach. Recently, the comparative virtues of these two models have been the subject of practical and theoretical analyses at Central Washington University (CWU), which is in the process of implementing a new honors curriculum to replace its longstanding Great Books program. The new curriculum consists of variable topics courses that satisfy general education requirements and contribute to an honors minor, as well as an upper-division scholarship experience in which students complete advanced research with faculty mentors.

As our experience demonstrates, a Great Books-based curriculum has inherent limitations that make it inappropriate for the student population at a large state university like CWU. There are important educational and logistical virtues to a program organized around interdisciplinary courses and multiple curricular options for students, virtues that are absent in a curriculum designed around specific canonical texts. The new program provides the flexibility and academic diversity that is needed to attract a wider variety of students while retaining the advantages of the old program: small class sizes, innovative pedagogy, student-led discussions, and an exposure to the great works of world literature.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The Great Books curriculum at CWU began as an informal reading group in the early 1970s, when the university had no honors program. Coursework was formalized and students were first invited to join the honors college in 1977. The college was named for William O. Douglas, the U.S. Supreme Court justice who was from the area and was a staunch supporter of the liberal arts. The initial class of the William O. Douglas Honors College (DHC) consisted of six students and four professors, and they spent the first two weeks discussing the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in their entirety.

The structure of the curriculum remained largely the same for over thirty years: students had weekly lectures on the material, usually from a specialist who guest lectured, followed by weekly colloquia in which students discussed their papers with one another, guided by a colloquium instructor. Changes to the program were incremental and largely cosmetic. The pace of the reading assignments slowed in an effort to make the workload more practicable given students' other commitments and more appropriate to the number of credits—they were eventually given three weeks to complete *War and Peace*, for example. In addition, new books were added to supplement a reading list that was at first dominated by white males: Mary Wollstonecraft, W. E. B. DuBois, Mohandas Gandhi, Virginia Woolf, and Gabriel García Márquez, among others.

Still, the DHC remained surprisingly free of politically charged debates about the canon that were initiated by Allan Bloom and E. D. Hirsch, among others. The real concern was student numbers. Over the last thirty years, enrollment at CWU's main campus has varied between about 6,000 and 8,000 students. Consistently, the DHC has had less than 1% of the student population enrolled in the program, a much lower proportion of students than are in the honors colleges at Central's peer institutions. Entering classes usually ranged from between fifteen and thirty students, with many of them leaving the program at various points in their college careers. Senior classes almost invariably consisted of fewer than ten students.

There were several reasons for low enrollment. First, the program was inflexible, requiring students to take four years of lectures and colloquia, preferably in order and preferably every quarter. This requirement interfered with some demanding majors (with many required classes and possible time conflicts), study abroad, and student teaching; students who skipped a quarter in the DHC would have to take two sets of DHC courses the next year to "catch up." Transfer students, even students who discovered the DHC after being at Central for a quarter, were all but excluded from participating.

The second problem was that honors students were asked to do a lot of work for very few credits and to complete separate general education requirements as well as their majors and minors. Honors students registered for just three credit hours in the DHC every quarter. The number was purposely set low to accommodate students' other academic obligations, but DHC courses remained reading- and writing-intensive. As students completed their general education requirements and were expected to dedicate more time to advanced courses in their majors, or when they had to resolve time conflicts with honors courses, typically students abandoned the DHC. Although the DHC became a minor-granting program a few years ago, the bottom line is that there was not enough incentive to remain with the program as other obligations became more pressing.

Of course, the program did offer students a wonderful opportunity to receive a classic liberal arts education at a large state institution. The rigid design of the curriculum kept cohorts of students together for four years, during

which the students developed close friendships and a sense of collegiality. They helped one another with writing and reading comprehension, both in and out of class. Discussions were always lively and informed. Those who remained with the program were enthusiastically committed to it and were able to satisfy their broad intellectual curiosity. And, of course, the reading list was amazing: novels and poetry, philosophy, religion, political theory, and the history and philosophy of science, from authors such as Plato, Aquinas, Shakespeare, Milton, Newton, Tocqueville, and Faulkner.

THE NEW CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

Committees were formed several times over the years to revise the program, but invariably they merely tinkered with the existing structure, adding additional perks and changing the reading list slightly. Low student numbers eventually forced a new group of faculty to make a radical break from the traditional model. A faculty committee was charged with creating a more flexible program that would allow existing and transfer students to join, be more enticing to students while continuing to challenge them in writing-intensive courses (including the completion of a senior thesis), draw participants from throughout the university, and integrate with an already established science honors program.

The committee designed an honors curriculum that consists of two distinct but related tiers: a core curriculum of lower-division breadth requirements and an upper-division scholarship experience. By completing the core curriculum, DHC students satisfy their general education requirements in special honors courses; their general education requirements are distinct from those for non-honors students. By taking a subset of these core courses plus one additional course (History of Science), students also receive an interdisciplinary honors minor. As juniors and seniors, students then have the option of either leaving the DHC to focus on their majors *or* continuing in the program and pursuing advanced research either in the sciences or in the arts and humanities. Students who complete both parts of the program are designated DHC Scholars and graduate with honors from the university.

The two-tiered structure is our attempt to make the program attractive to entering freshmen, existing CWU students, and community college students who transfer to CWU with their associate degrees. New students can begin taking DHC courses immediately to satisfy general education requirements; students who have already taken some college courses, including courses at Central, can take honors courses (as equivalents) to fill gaps in their non-honors general education requirements; and transfer students who have completed their general education requirements can skip the core curriculum and immediately enter one of the upper-division scholarship experiences. In short, the new curriculum allows for multiple entry points and serves a variety of students. Students are no longer required to be a part of the DHC for four years, beginning the moment they enroll (as freshmen) at Central. (For a diagram of the curriculum, see Appendix A.)

THE CORE CURRICULUM

The DHC core curriculum consists of interdisciplinary courses that expose students to a broad range of topics. Unlike the Great Books program, which primarily drew on the humanities and was taught by the same professors year after year, the new curriculum has different courses taught by different professors every year, from a number of different departments. The course titles are as follows:

DHC 140/141:   Humanistic Understanding I and II (5 credits each)

DHC 150/151:   Aesthetic Experience I and II (5 credits each)

DHC 160/161:   Physical and Biological Systems I and II (5 credits each)

DHC 250/251:   Social and Behavioral Dynamics I and II (5 credits each)

DHC 260/261:   Cultural Competence I and II (5 credits each)

DHC 270:   Integrated Learning (5 credits)

None of these courses have designated topics or set reading lists; they need not cover specific Great Books or a particular historical period. Rather, the course titles—Humanistic Understanding, etc.—are general categories within which variable topics are taught, provided that they satisfy appropriate learner outcomes. (See Appendix B.)

Together, these outcomes fulfill the mission of the general education program at Central Washington University. Specifically, DHC coursework "offers undergraduate students a liberal arts education in order to cultivate thoughtful and responsible persons and citizens, to prepare them for the world of work and to teach them to pursue knowledge for its own sake" (*Central Washington University 2009–2010 Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog*, p. 36). Because the aims of the honors core curriculum are related to the mission of the university's general education program, DHC professors and students can be assessed against outcomes that reflect the character of the institution as a whole, but classes can also be tailored to the specific needs of our most academically talented students. Students who complete these core courses, as well as developing proficiencies in mathematics and a foreign language (either at the university or in high school), satisfy the DHC's and the university's general education requirements.

The separate mathematics requirement is meant to develop students' quantitative reasoning abilities, but some members of the DHC Curriculum Committee have questioned whether the existing requirement accomplishes that goal. Currently, students must be proficient in math through MATH 154: Pre-calculus Mathematics II; this means that different students have different courses to take, usually depending on what they took in high school. Students with little background in math may have to take three classes to prepare for and complete MATH 154 while others satisfy the math proficiency simply by

testing into college-level calculus. In the future, the committee may replace the math requirement with one course in quantitative reasoning that would be required of all honors students. As we envision it now, the course would use magazine and newspaper articles as primary source material to help students develop the power and habit of mind to search out quantitative information, critique it, reflect upon it, and apply it in their public, personal, and professional lives. The projects and case studies in the course would largely change from year to year based on current events. For example, in the context of the health care debate, students might analyze the risks and benefits of early and frequent screenings for breast and prostate cancers, including the monetary cost and the overall effect on patients' prognoses, to determine how significant the medical benefits are, in relative and absolute terms. Such a course would be more in keeping with the aims of a general education curriculum, would be more appropriate for people from a variety of disciplines, would cater to a small cohort of honors students, and would treat students more equitably.

COURSE SELECTION

Although there are specific learner outcomes for each breadth requirement, the new curriculum provides students with a diverse range of intellectual experiences. Core courses in the honors program need not be taken sequentially; for example, Cultural Competence I is not a prerequisite for Cultural Competence II. Although pairs of courses share learner outcomes, the subject matter varies depending on who is teaching the course and how the person decides to fulfill the outcomes. Each year, professors from throughout the university propose courses to a group of faculty, the DHC Curriculum Committee, that chooses the best among the proposals to be offered the following year. Faculty members are paid to develop the courses and may be asked to teach them more than once in successive years. Proposals are selected based on how well they meet the learner outcomes, the course content, and the pedagogical techniques to be employed. Class numbers are limited to twenty students, so we encourage faculty to include student participation as much as possible. Lectures, both by the designated instructor and guest speakers, have their place in the new curriculum, just as they had their place in the Great Books program. However, the committee encourages professors to incorporate student-led discussions, class presentations, and service-learning into their classes, all of which have been shown to improve academic performance and promote students' sense of investment in the work (cf. Brookfield and Preskill; Eyler and Giles). We also gauge student interest in the proposals by making anonymous versions of them available along with "ballots" so that students can indicate their preferences.

Courses that transgress traditional disciplinary boundaries have long held great promise for higher education (Kockelmans). Although the DHC retains some discipline-specific practices, such as required labs in Physical and Biological Systems courses, the DHC provides a venue for professors to explore

issues from multiple perspectives. For example, in winter 2010 a psychology professor is teaching an Integrated Learning course titled Behavioral Genetics: Science, Ethics, and Literature, in which students learn basic genetic concepts and research strategies, consider how genetics shapes people's behavior and psychology, and confront the ethics of genetic research and screening. Students critically evaluate the social impact of genetic screening and engineering by discussing novels such as H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Although the biology department at CWU offers several courses on genetics, none of them cover behavioral genetics, nor do they address the growing ethical concerns related to genetic screening and counseling. The subject matter and readings in the DHC class go beyond those of a typical biology or psychology class. The Douglas Honors College thus attracts professors with broad intellectual interests and an enthusiasm for cross-disciplinary connections.

DHC courses are also distinctive because they provide opportunities for faculty to work more closely with students. Research has shown that small class sizes improve academic performance by allowing for a more interactive experience with the instructor (Crittenden, Norr, and LeBailly; Krueger). Professors take advantage of the rapport with students to do projects they would not normally be able to do in a fifty- or sixty-person class. For example, this year a music instructor is teaching an Aesthetic Experience course titled Ten Quartets, in which he and the quartet of which he is a member give private live performances for the students every week. Each composition is used as a departure point to explore a broad spectrum of literature and art as well as cultural, intellectual, and political history. In addition to giving lectures and leading class discussions, the professor engages students in guided listening exercises, which require more individualized instruction. Obviously, these courses (Behavioral Genetics and Ten Quartets) are different from typical core offerings such as General Psychology and Introduction to Western Art, both of which satisfy general education requirements for non-honors students at Central.

Honors courses in the new curriculum do not entirely abandon the Great Books tradition, but they do relate those books to more recent work on a specific theme. For example, this year a philosophy professor is teaching a Humanistic Understanding course titled Trauma: Memory, History, and Identity. John Locke's and David Hume's theories of personal identity form the basis for discussions of the complex relation between memory and identity, but students also read Oliver Sacks's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, which examines neurological anomalies in an effort to understand the foundation of personhood. In order to trace the effect of history on identity, students read parts of Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War, G. W. F. Hegel's *Introduction to the 'Philosophy of History,'* and the founding documents of the United States as well as literary works by Jorge Luis Borges and Charles Simic. Students then examine the undermining of identity through psychological and historical trauma by studying Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the*

Pleasure Principle alongside contemporary writings by Cornel West and Judith Butler. Classic and contemporary works in psychology, literature, history, and philosophy give students a broad exposure to a history of ideas in which the Great Books are brought into conversation with contemporary thinkers.

As mentioned earlier, students take such interdisciplinary, theme-based courses to satisfy general education requirements. These courses, along with the History of Science, also earn them an interdisciplinary honors minor, which is an enticement for students whose majors require them to declare a separate minor. By focusing on the complex relations among science, literature, philosophy, and religion, the History of Science is not just another science course; rather, it is a history course that, ideally, is taught by a historian or a philosopher; it is an attempt to bridge the gap between what C. P. Snow calls "the two cultures," to show that the scientific process developed historically and contingently, and that science and the humanities have dramatically influenced one another. The most recent History of Science course is titled Great Scientific Experiments, in which the ideals, ideas, and goals of science are understood through a number of experiments that have fundamentally transformed the way we think about ourselves and the world—Galileo's investigations regarding the Law of Descent, Lavoisier's work on the Oxygen Theory of Combustion, the Meselson-Stahl experiment on DNA replication, etc.

UPPER-DIVISION SCHOLARSHIP EXPERIENCES

The History of Science is also a kind of bridge course to the upper-division scholarship experience because it serves as a shared classroom experience for honors students with a variety of academic interests whose work progressively becomes more specialized. After completing their core requirements, junior and senior honors students enter one of two separate but related programs: Science Honors or Arts & Humanities Honors. An honors research program in the physical sciences has existed at Central for several years, with a small cohort of students taking courses in how to do advanced research and then working closely over the summer with faculty mentors to conduct experiments that culminate in publishable articles. The new Science Honors program will allow students to fulfill their DHC requirements by doing either this summer research (with a stipend) or a less intensive research experience during the academic year. The DHC will also allow students to pursue work in either the physical sciences or the social sciences. Students in the new Arts & Humanities Honors curriculum will have a parallel experience: each student will either research and write a formal thesis or will complete a creative project such as a painting or series of paintings, a collection of poetry, or a play, along with an essay explaining the artist's own work through the lens of aesthetic theory and art history.

For much of their upper-division scholarship experience, Science Honors students and Arts & Humanities Honors students take different courses; the cohort of honors students is not as tight in the junior and senior years. However,

students in the two programs are required to take two specific courses together. In addition to the History of Science, all upper-division honors students must take an Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar in which they explore a topic or historical event from multiple disciplinary perspectives. For example, a course on evolution examines not only evolutionary theory and its misappropriation as a theory of cultural hierarchy but also its cultural impact, including the debate over the teaching of evolution and creationism. A seminar on ethics and technology covers such topics as the historical impact of technology on a culture's development (including technological determinism), the ethics of human cloning, theories of artificial intelligence, and the legal issues involved in regulating nanotechnology. The history course and the interdisciplinary seminar provide a shared experience for all upper-division students.

As students continue in the program, the requirements for Science Honors and Arts & Humanities Honors become separate and more specialized. Because of the very different methodologies and expectations for advanced work in, for example, biology versus philosophy, students in the two programs take different courses in research and writing that are tailored more specifically to their fields. Finally, Science Honors students do supervised research in the lab and write their theses while Arts & Humanities Honors students research and complete their theses or creative projects, all the while working with faculty mentors. Students who complete both the DHC general education requirements and one of the upper-division scholarship experiences (either Science Honors or Arts & Humanities Honors) graduate with honors from the university.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE NEW CURRICULUM

Among the many advantages of this new curricular structure, the most important for us are the program's flexibility and multiple entry points. Students may join the DHC their first quarter at Central or later, and transfer students from community colleges may enter directly into one of the upper-division scholarship experiences. The whole program can be completed in three years or spread out over four years to allow for student teaching, study abroad, and demanding major requirements; that is, students can vary the number of honors courses they take in any given quarter. Students have more reasons to remain in the program: satisfying general education requirements, earning a minor, graduating with honors from the university (for completing the entire curriculum), and producing a publishable piece of research with a faculty mentor. Professors from departments throughout the university offer courses in the DHC, and students from many different majors, including students in the sciences, have reason to enter the program. Students can tailor their advanced honors work to their academic interests. Also, a curriculum grounded in specific learner outcomes is much easier to assess and improve over time than a program whose only unifying element is the canonical status of the assigned

readings (Reilman, Varhus, and Whipple; Otero and Spurrier), and it is more clearly related to the university's mission, which makes it easier to justify funding for an honors program at a large, public institution like Central Washington University—easier, that is, than explaining the need for a traditional Great Books program that serves only a handful of students.

In addition, the new curriculum retains what is good about the old program. Classics in the field are incorporated into the new courses, where they are related to a given theme rather than studied chronologically. The courses are interdisciplinary and give students a broad liberal arts education, with a firm background in the history of ideas. Despite some variation from course to course, a fairly tight-knit cohort of honors students develops over successive quarters. Innovative pedagogy and student discussions remain a hallmark of the honors experience. Finally, as with the old program, the full honors experience includes a thesis.

Of course, the new curriculum also has some drawbacks. With no one course that *every* honors student must take—one of the casualties of a flexible curriculum—the students do not feel as strong a sense of community as they did under the more structured Great Books program. In addition, the Great Books are not covered as thoroughly and are not read chronologically, so students do not necessarily see how different books relate to one another historically. Colleagues at other institutions have suggested a variety of remedies, such as offering a one-year historical introduction to the Great Books that is required of everyone. However, it would be difficult to cover works from the Bible to *The Bell Jar* in a mere thirty weeks. Such a class would also risk alienating those with time conflicts or other obligations that make it difficult to commit to three successive quarters of honors classes. The problem of inflexibility reemerges.

CONCLUSION

The Great Books program at Central Washington University was not dismissed lightly, but it was undone because of our inability to teach the Great Books in a way that meets the needs of our particular student population. Low recruitment and retention rates provided us with the necessary impetus to reevaluate the curriculum and to devise an honors program that is equally challenging and educational but that is more attractive to the best and brightest students in the Northwest. In addition to its flexibility, the new curriculum respects interdisciplinarity, supports innovative teaching, is more easily and reliably assessed, and continues to provide students with a broad education in the liberal arts.

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APPENDIX A

WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS HONORS COLLEGE
ACADEMIC STRUCTURE
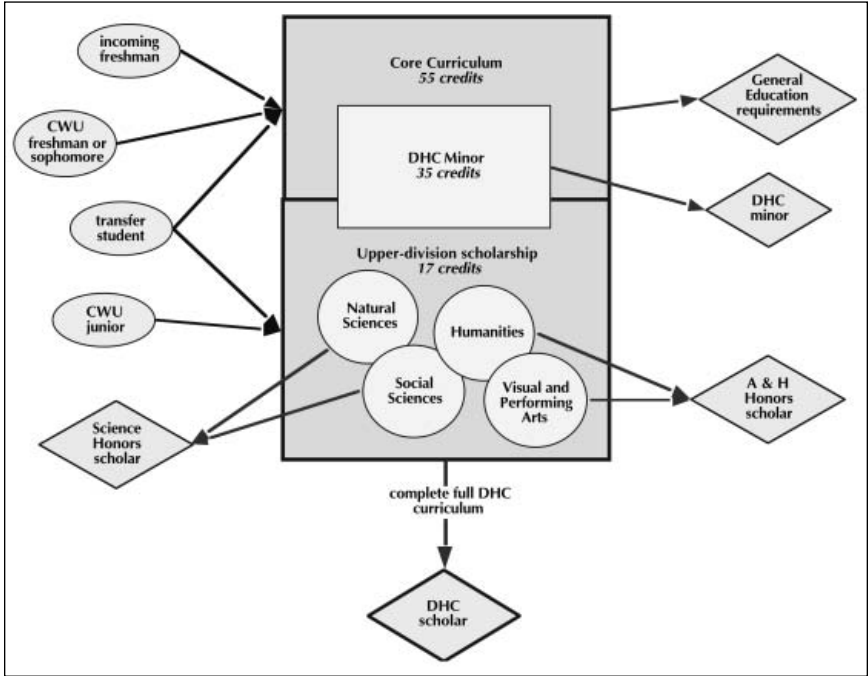
APPENDIX B

DOUGLAS HONORS COLLEGE COURSES:
LEARNER OUTCOMES

DHC 140, 141. Douglas Honors College Humanistic Understanding I and II (5 credits each). Variable topic. Courses in the humanities focuses on the analysis and interpretation of human stories of the past, present and future in order to understand the processes of continuity and change in individuals and cultures through both documented and imaginative accounts.

Learner outcomes for Humanistic Understanding:

• Students will be able to examine ways in which beliefs and values affect interpretations of experience and events.

• Students will be able to reason about causes and effects within historical contexts and across historical periods.

• Students will be able to analyze the interrelatedness of human concerns.

• Students will be effective in using written and oral communication skills both in form and structure.

• Students will demonstrate strong critical and creative thinking skills.

• Students will be able to interact openly, respectfully, and knowledgeably with those from different backgrounds and perspectives.

• Students will demonstrate the ability to investigate problems new to themselves, draw conclusions, and evaluate source materials utilized in these investigations.

DHC 150, 151. Douglas Honors College Aesthetic Experience I and II (5 credits each). Variable topic. Courses in this area explore questions about the nature of art; to understand, interrogate, and engage in the creative process; and to explore the connections between art, culture, and history.

Learner outcomes for Aesthetic Experience:

• Students will be able to participate in imaginative/artistic production.

• Students will be able to explain aesthetic experiences and expressions within their historical, artistic, and cultural traditions.

• Students will be able to interact openly, respectfully, and knowledgeably with those from different backgrounds and perspectives.

• Students will be effective in using written and oral communication skills both in form and structure.

• Students will demonstrate strong critical and creative thinking skills.

DHC 160, 161. Douglas Honors College Physical and Biological Systems I and II (5 credits each). Variable topic. Courses in this area study physical and life systems, provide basic methods for rigorously describing the natural world, or treat social, economic, technological, ethical or other implications of natural phenomena.

Learner outcomes for Physical and Biological Systems:

- Students will be able to apply scientific methods and forms of inquiry and to describe phenomena and predict consequences.

- Students will be able to use knowledge of basic scientific disciplines to examine large and complex physical and life systems.

- Students will be able to use knowledge of basic scientific disciplines to make informed decisions and address issues of human concern.

- Students will be effective in using written and oral communication skills both in form and structure.

- Students will demonstrate strong critical and creative thinking skills.

- Students will demonstrate strong analytical skills including quantitative and experimental techniques.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to investigate problems new to themselves, draw conclusions, and evaluate source materials utilized in these investigations.

DHC 250, 251. Douglas Honors College Social and Behavior Dynamics I and II (5 credits each). Variable topic. Courses focus on how individuals, cultures, and societies operate and evolve and introduce disciplined ways of thinking about individuals and groups.

Learner outcomes for Social and Behavioral Dynamics:

- Students will be able to reason about principles of human behavior for understanding self and others.

- Students will be able to examine implications of participation in social groups and institutions to inform ethical interaction.

- Students will be able to use apply critical thinking to specific situations involving personal and community decision-making.

- Students will be effective in using written and oral communication skills both in form and structure.

- Students will demonstrate strong critical and creative thinking skills.

- Students will demonstrate strong analytical skills including quantitative and experimental techniques.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to investigate problems new to themselves, draw conclusions, and evaluate source materials utilized in these investigations.

- Students will be able to interact openly, respectfully, and knowledgeably with those from different backgrounds and perspectives.

DHC 260, 261. Douglas Honors College Cultural Competence I and II (5 credits each). Variable topic. Courses focus on negotiating cultural differences by applying appropriate patterns of understanding and behavior in culturally diverse settings. Courses focus on one or more non-dominant cultures or peoples of the United States.

Learner outcomes for Cultural Competence:

- Students will be able to demonstrate a capacity for cultural self-assessment.

- Students will be able to observe and analyze the dynamics of cultural interaction.

- Students will be able to critically evaluate evidence of institutionalized cultural assumptions as they affect individuals and groups.

- Students will be effective in using written and oral communication skills both in form and structure.

- Students will demonstrate strong critical and creative thinking skills.

- Students will demonstrate strong analytical skills including quantitative and experimental techniques.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to investigate problems new to themselves, draw conclusions, and evaluate source materials utilized in these investigations.

- Students will be able to interact openly, respectfully, and knowledgeably with those from different backgrounds and perspectives.

DHC 270. Douglas Honors College Integrated Learning (5 credits). Variable topic. Courses take an interdisciplinary approach to examining social, economic, technological, ethical, cultural or aesthetic implications of knowledge. In addition to department courses that embrace multiple disciplines, these opportunities include learning community, service learning, and international studies courses.

Learner outcomes for Integrated Learning:

- Students will be able to develop an appreciation for the interconnectedness of modes of inquiry across disciplines.

- Students will be able to identify and explore connections between or among different disciplines to explain or inquire about phenomena.

- Students will be able to solve problems that require multidisciplinary approaches.

- Students will be effective in using written and oral communication skills both in form and structure.

- Students will demonstrate strong critical and creative thinking skills.

- Students will demonstrate strong analytical skills including quantitative and experimental techniques.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to investigate problems new to themselves, draw conclusions, and evaluate source materials utilized in these investigations.

- Students will be able to interact openly, respectfully, and knowledgeably with those from different backgrounds and perspectives.

DHC 380. History of Science (5 credits). Introduction to major themes in the history of science. Investigation of historical and scientific methods through the study of particular historical cases.

Learner outcomes for History of Science:

- Students will describe the historical development of the scientific process.

- Students will recognize the essential elements of a scientific investigation.

- Students will apply the methods of scientific inquiry to issues of contemporary relevance.

Programmatic Matters

Students Engaging Students in the Honors Experience

SARA BRADY

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HESHAM ELNAGAR

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

SHANE MILLER

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

[Editor's note: The three authors served together as student representatives on the NCHC Board of Directors. The institutions listed above were the ones they represented at the time, but Sara Brady is now at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, and Shane Miller is at Marshall University.]

Student members of the NCHC Board of Directors often share information about successful student programs at their home institutions in order to promote student engagement in honors. We have found that a key component for student engagement is some type of "Honors Ambassadors" program to benefit not only honors students but also their programs and colleges. When the authors discussed honors ambassadors programs during the Students in Honors™ session at the 2008 and 2009 NCHC national conferences, numerous students expressed interest in learning more about such programs (NCHC Student Board). During these two conferences, students from Hillsborough Community College had an Idea Exchange table titled "Ambassador Programs: Cultivating a Community Environment in Honors," where many honors directors requested information about starting or retooling their own honors ambassadors programs (Hillsborough). In 2007, West Virginia University addressed student ambassador programs in their presentation "Leadership Positions in Honors Communities: Students Helping Students" at the NCHC national conference (Miller and Cole). Additionally, Northern Arizona University reached out within its region and presented a paper titled "A How-To Guide: Honors Ambassadors" at the Western Regional Honors Council Meeting in 2007 (Hauk).

Since no two honors programs are alike, we will focus on the honors ambassadors programs at three institutions: West Virginia University, Hillsborough Community College, and Northern Arizona University. These

three institutions vary in their approach to honors and in their structure, size, and student recruitment tactics. However, all have a strong commitment to furthering student engagement through honors ambassadors programs that enhance the honors experience for current and potential honors students.

Student leadership is important to fostering the goals of honors education. Honors ambassadors are integral to recruitment, providing prospective students with personal accounts about the program and answering questions from a current student's point of view. Additionally, ambassadors encourage current honors students to become active participants in the honors experience. Ambassadors can be trained to inform and advise their peers about honors requirements, ways to become involved, leadership opportunities, and student life in addition to offering their personal feelings about the benefits of an honors education. This form of student leadership engages students to shape and to promote an honors tradition at their college or university. Additionally, honors ambassadors can alleviate some of the workload of often overworked honors staff, recruiters, and advisors.

In reaching out to prospective students, honors ambassadors demonstrate to potential students the value of lifelong learning. Most honors programs and colleges strive for a sense of community and support among the honors student population; honors ambassadors are able to demonstrate this commitment to the student population through personal interactions with the students. Ambassadors can also disseminate information about upcoming honors deadlines, events, and courses.

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

West Virginia University is a land grant university with approximately 29,000 students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The West Virginia University Honors College includes approximately 1,500 undergraduates and occasional first-professional student members. The college is a multidisciplinary program designed to complement any course of study. The WVU Honors College has only two ambassador positions: one honors student is the Academic and Community Ambassador, and another student is the First-Year Student Ambassador.

Both of these ambassadors are selected by the dean on the basis of an application (see Appendix A); they each serve as members of the honors college staff; and they are paid an hourly rate. In addition to having high GPAs, candidates are expected to exhibit strong skills in leadership and in written and verbal communication. The application form used for these two positions is the same as the form for all honors college staff positions.

The ambassadors provide input on college matters, develop and implement programming from a student perspective, and assist with outreach activities. Originally, the WVU honors ambassadors were elected, but, with the shift to an honors college and expansion of the college's professional staff, these student roles have evolved to serve the growing needs of the college's students.

Additionally, the shift to appointed, rather than elected, ambassadors has allowed for better screening of potential applicants to ensure their success in the positions. Typically, upperclassmen whose majors allow for flexibility in scheduling make the strongest candidates.

The Academic and Community Ambassador provides enrichment activities that include working with the Honors Student Association (HSA), recruitment activities, new student orientation, and social events like the annual Honors Ball. The Honors Ball, organized by this ambassador and student volunteers, is a student-conceived formal event that has become the highlight of the college's spring semester. The ambassador also provides support at visitation days, attends college fairs, occasionally visits high schools, and generally offers out-reach to prospective and incoming students.

The First-Year Student Ambassador's principal role is to aid the freshman class in adjusting to university life. He or she is actively involved in New Student Orientation, provides advice and outreach, mentors incoming students, and communicates regularly with other university departments and high school guidance offices. This ambassador works closely with the college's HONR 199: Honors Orientation course, which is team-taught by upperclassmen, and coor-dinates the functions of the Honors Hall's live-in student mentors.

The ambassadors gain a significant portion of their training through on-the-job experience. Both are expected to shadow the incumbent ambassadors in the spring semester prior to assuming their duties, for which they receive inde-pendent study credit for an 8-week honors course as compensation. Additionally, both ambassadors generally attend the annual NCHC conference as well as regional and state conferences. In exchange for their attendance, they share the experience and generate new ideas for potential implementation in the college.

Both ambassadors are resources for their fellow students. They are active members of the college's staff, attending regular staff meetings, communicat-ing frequently with the dean and professional staff, and maintaining regular hours in the honors office. They post frequently on the honors college blog and make use of the college's Facebook and Twitter accounts to communicate about upcoming events. Thus, these ambassadors are continuously in contact with their peers and are accessible should students need to reach them with questions.

Strong ambassador positions such as these benefit both the college and the students occupying these roles. The ambassadors have the opportunity to work in significant positions of responsibility and gain experience in higher educa-tion governance. The college gets first-hand input on salient issues such as suc-cessful programming or student difficulties. The students in the college have both a resource and an avenue for communication with the college's staff. The result has been very positive at West Virginia University, leading to numerous innovations that have ultimately improved the student experience for honors college members.

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Hillsborough Community College (HCC) is a public institution of higher learning. Located in Hillsborough County, Florida, HCC serves a population of approximately 43,000 students seeking a range of degrees and certificates. While acceptance to HCC is open to all qualified applicants, acceptance into the Hillsborough Community College Honors Institute is limited to those students who are seeking an Associate of Arts degree and who meet specific academic standards. Applications are open to incoming freshmen and to current HCC students. The honors institute maintains an enrollment of approximately 250 students with a graduation rate near 97%. According to its official website:

> Hillsborough Community College's Honors Institute is designed to promote a rigorous academic program for exceptionally talented and motivated students. With the evolving goal of gaining a comprehensive view of the nature of thought, knowledge, and human understanding in an environment of creative interaction, the students will explore the fundamental ideas of human civilization from a variety of academic disciplines. The honors students will be challenged to accept their moral responsibilities which include leadership, thoughtful self-governance, and service to other.

In order to help new honors students make a smooth transition from high school or traditional HCC classes into the honors institute, the student is assigned an honors ambassador. The goal of the Honors Ambassador Program is to create an enthusiastic and active honors student community through strong, personal relationships with peers. Initiatives of the honors institute's ambassador program are diverse. Ambassadors strive to cultivate a community environment in the honors institute, to generate smooth academic and social transitions for new students, to promote participation and retention of students in the honors institute, to mentor students through regular guidance and communication, to educate students about the variety of benefits available to honors students, to promote the honors institute during college nights at local high schools and in the community, and to accept moral responsibilities including leadership, thoughtful self-governance, and service to others.

The responsibilities of the honors ambassadors are as varied as the opportunities afforded students through their participation in honors activities. Ambassadors must lead by example and participate in social events, service projects, class discussions, and Areté, which is the honors institute's student organization. Ambassadors welcome incoming students by initiating contact with them prior to their new student orientation. The ambassadors maintain contact with their assigned students throughout the semester to keep them informed about upcoming honors events, deadlines, and general information. Ambassadors employ a variety of methods for maintaining open lines of communications with their assigned students. Phone calls, texts, emails, and social

networks have been successful in the past. The ambassador/mentee relationship often falls into a comfortable cadence after a few weeks.

Furthermore, the ambassadors must provide monthly updates about their mentees and provide self-evaluations to the honors coordinator, a full-time staff member of the honors institute who is responsible for the ambassadors program. Most importantly, the ambassadors must be positive and enthusiastic. The ambassadors become "the face" of the honors institute, and honors students generally respond in kind to the ambassadors' enthusiasm, participation, and dedication.

The honors ambassador is a highly competitive, volunteer position. Applicants are vetted through a three-step process before they are assigned mentees. The first step is a written application. The honors theme, which is selected by the honors coordinator, is unveiled during the written application process and is present during all ambassador activities. Examples of past themes include a construction site theme entitled "Making the Honors Connection"; a nautical theme entitled "Setting Sails Toward Student Success"; and a space theme entitled "2009: An Honors Odyssey." The application, which is distributed to each honors student early in the spring semester, consists of a series of short-answer questions and an essay. The short-answer questions gauge the student's availability and dedication to the ambassador program. The essay elicits why the applicant wants to participate in the program. The written applications (see Appendix B-1) are reviewed by the director and coordinator, who also evaluate the applicants' past involvement with the honors institute and then decide which applicants will move forward to the second step of the application process: the individual interview.

The interview panel varies yearly. The director, coordinator, and academic advisor for honors are always present. In the past, the panel has also included the honors senior staff assistant, honors professors, deans from outside departments, previous honors ambassadors, and the president of the honors student organization. During the interview, the panel asks questions (see Appendix B-2) in order to gauge the applicant's working relationship with others, communication and time-management skills, and ability to handle constructive critiques. After all of the applicants have been interviewed, the panel discusses each applicant's strengths and weakness. While the panel is highly selective, it may also chose a candidate with the potential for personal growth through their participation in the program. The interview panel then votes on which candidates to advance to the final step in the selection process: the overnight ambassador training.

The honors director and coordinator lead the training process at a local retreat center. Prior to departing for the ambassador training site, the candidates receive a packet detailing the items they need to pack for the overnight training, but nothing is revealed to them about what to expect once they arrive. The honors theme is prevalent throughout the training process through festive décor and t-shirts that the coordinator provides to the candidates. The training process

includes extensive study of the college catalog, graduation requirements, scholarship policies, and the honors institute's policies and procedures as found in the *Honors Institute Student Handbook*, which is updated yearly by the honors director. The training process also includes team building through physical activities such as rock climbing and a high-ropes course. Upon successful completion of the training retreat, a candidate officially becomes an Honors Institute Ambassador.

The honors director and coordinator do not select ambassadors based on a particular number; instead, they evaluate each candidate on his or her own merits. Since giving the ambassador opportunity to each honors student is important, there is neither a minimum nor a maximum number of ambassadors in the program.

Once the overnight training is complete, the ambassadors embark on a yearlong journey of development. They begin their term late in the spring semester and continue throughout the summer during a series of new student orientations for the students who will enter the honors institute the following fall. Outreach in the summer includes organizing outings to play laser tag, watch a movie, eat lunch, or grab a cup of coffee. In these unofficial events, the ambassadors and incoming students are responsible for paying their way. The ambassadors are willing to invest their free time and their personal money because the new students often cite the summer activities as the catalyst for their participation in official honors activities. Throughout the academic year, the ambassadors continue to plan activities for students outside of the honors institute in order to encourage deeper personal connections among the students.

The Honors Institute Ambassador is a voluntary position. The ambassadors are provided uniforms consisting of one long-sleeved, button-down shirt and one short-sleeved, collared shirt. Additionally, the ambassadors receive training materials and books about leadership. Since leadership development is critical to the success of the ambassador program, the honors coordinator invests a great deal of time in it, meeting with the all the ambassadors on a bi-monthly basis and on an individual basis once a month. The purpose of the meetings is to inform the ambassadors about upcoming activities, to assess their connection with their assigned mentees, and to encourage continued personal and professional growth. In order to work with each ambassador on areas of communication that may need improving, the honors coordinator asks for feedback from the new students about the work of the ambassadors.

Additionally, the coordinator allows ambassadors to develop and implement new initiatives within the ambassador program. As a team-building exercise, the ambassadors create and execute various community service projects throughout the summer. For instance, each ambassador plans a community-service event that has special meaning for him or her, and all of the ambassadors, the coordinator, and the director help execute the project.

The ambassadors also work closely with the honors institute's student organization to promote upcoming events and to encourage student participation. Furthermore, the ambassadors may be called on to represent the honors

institute at a campus-wide event or to assist the college during a number of campus activities like summer programs and graduation.

The Honors Ambassador Program for the Hillsborough Community College Honors Institute is not a static program. As the institute continues to grow and to evolve, so does the ambassador program. While critical to the integration of the new students into the honors institute, the program allows the ambassadors significant personal and professional development, which is the reason it continues to be a successful volunteer program.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Northern Arizona University is a doctorate-granting public institution with 23,600 students among its multiple campuses and distance-learning sites; of these students, 18,310 are undergraduates, and 5,971 are first-year. The Northern Arizona University Honors Program is the oldest honors program in Arizona with a current enrollment of approximately 500 students. The educational objective of the program is to prepare its students for citizenship and leadership in the twenty-first century. Current honors students are hired as honors ambassadors to help recruit and prepare students for the program and to address potential students' questions and concerns. As stated by the honors program:

> Honors Ambassadors are a group of highly trained honors students who represent NAU and the Honors Program at NAU recruitment events and act as a personal contact and a general resource for prospective and current honors students and their families. Current NAU honors students are trained to serve as resources for NAU in general, but more importantly for the Honors Program. They attend college fairs as well as individual high school junior or senior recruitment functions. They also communicate with admitted students, sending personal letters of congratulations and extending an offer of assistance. They may also attend NAU functions for prospective students, such as on campus visits and high school junior events. Ambassadors will also be asked to correspond with potential and accepted honors students through email, phone, and mailings.

"Honors Ambassador" is a paid student leadership position within the NAU program. Overseen by the honors program's senior coordinator, a full-time honors staff member, the ambassadors position seeks highly motivated and charismatic individuals who care to engage in educating potential students about honors education and the honors program's unique opportunities. Open to all continuing honors students, the ambassador position attracts applicants from all class standings. With two application due dates, one per semester, interested students begin the application process by first completing a peer leadership application (see Appendix C-1). Used for multiple leadership positions within the

honors program, the application asks students to highlight their past student experiences, skills, and potential contributions to the position. Beginning each March, the senior coordinator and existing ambassadors review the applications and hold personal interviews (see Appendix C-2). Decisions are based on the number of returning ambassadors from the previous school year and on the candidate's field of study as well as potential to contribute positively to the program's mission. Ten to twelve students serve as honors ambassadors each academic year.

Honors ambassadors provide many services to prospective and incoming students. Their roles include attending a required ambassadors orientation meeting, attending monthly meetings, hosting morning information tables at Discover NAU Days (formerly called open houses), attending joint afternoon information sessions with the honors director at Discover NAU Days, holding phone campaigns for prospective and admitted NAU honors students, and attending honors program events for new and first-year students. Additionally, ambassadors are assigned either office hours or on-call hours each semester. These assignments are made once per semester dependent on each ambassador's schedule availability.

Ambassadors are assigned office hours in the honors program's main office, and prospective students are able to contact them by email and voicemail to ask questions about campus life, program requirements, student living, admission offers, application status, and more. The website <http://home.nau.edu/honors/h_ambassadors06.asp> provides information on all the ambassadors, including their school email, year in school, major and minor, hometown, why they decided to come to NAU, and why they joined the honors program.

When assigned on-call hours, ambassadors are given a specific day of the week to come to the main honors office and meet with prospective students and their families. The ambassadors program works closely with NAU's admissions office to coordinate campus visits. After prospective students have met with the director, the ambassador takes them on a tour of the honors office, the classrooms, and the residence hall for first-year and continuing honors students. Although on-call hours run Monday-Friday between 11:15AM and 12:15AM, ambassadors are only called in when a perspective student sets up an appointment to visit the honors program.

Ambassadors occasionally attend off-campus recruitment days in various west coast cities; work and usher special campus events such as NAU's annual Celebration for Academic Achievement and the University Symposium Keynote Speaker address; host information sessions for special interests groups, middle schools, and high schools; and write letters to prospective students detailing their NAU and honors program experience.

Although the ambassadors participate in a variety of events, from meetings to on-call and office hours, phone campaigns, new ambassador hirings, and special events, the requirement of the position is to complete a minimum of fifteen hours per semester. Upon completion of the fifteen-hour commitment,

each ambassador receives a stipend of $150. These funds come from the honors budget.

Although the senior coordinator heads the ambassadors program, a student ambassadors coordinator is hired to assist in planning, organizing, and running the program. The ambassadors coordinator reports to the senior coordinator and plans a required ambassadors orientation, calls monthly meetings, organizes event signups, and schedules the on-call and office hour assignments. In the required ambassadors orientation, for example, the ambassadors coordinator discusses the purpose of the program, answers crucial logistical questions, and presents likely scenarios in response to frequently asked questions. The ambassadors coordinator is also responsible for keeping a record of every ambassador's involvement and reports the hours to the senior coordinator. The ambassadors coordinator, selected from the returning ambassadors each academic year, receives a stipend of $250 per semester.

The Northern Arizona University Honors Ambassadors Program demonstrates how student leaders positively affect the perceptions of prospective and incoming students. An asset to both the honors program and wider university community, ambassadors are often sought out by departments for their ability to impart information crucial to student success. Students often express gratitude for the guidance they received from the honors ambassadors, thus motivating future ambassadors to apply and to continue the mission of the honors program, which is to enhance students' self-awareness and responsibilities as citizens in the world.

PROGRAM COMMONALITIES

Ambassadors programs vary significantly depending on the needs and contexts of their home institutions. Honors administrators often turn to peer leadership for recruiting and assisting new students. An ambassadors program can be large or small; it can focus on recruitment or mentoring; and it can provide stipends or rely on volunteers. These different strategies reflect the differences between the honors programs and colleges that the ambassadors represent.

Although different, the ambassadors programs at West Virginia University, Hillsborough Community College, and Northern Arizona University are linked by common traits. One such trait is the approach to student leadership. A careful review of students through an application process identifies motivated students who exhibit the potential to communicate pertinent information to future honors students. With resources provided by each institution, including appropriate training and orientation, ambassadors participate in campus-wide recruitment events, often leading presentations and interacting with potential and new students face to face.

Table 1 provides a component overview of each institution's ambassadors program. Despite varying components, each program affords its participants the opportunity to develop into more successful leaders. Each also provides benefits to their institution in terms of outreach to current and prospective honors

Table 1: Comparative Components Between Honors Ambassadors Programs

	West Virginia University	Hillsborough Community College	Northern Arizona University
Type of Institution	Land-grant Public State University	Community College	Public State University
Size of Institution	28,839– 21,145 undergraduate and 6,968 graduate and professional	43,000 degree and certificate seeking students	23,600– 18,310 undergraduate and 5,290 graduate and professional
Honors Program or College	College	Program	Program
Size of Program/College	1500	250	500
Ambassador Title	Academic and Community Ambassador; First-Year Student Ambassador	Honors Institute Ambassador	NAU Honors Program Ambassadors
Application Process	Paper application with essays and recommendation, followed by an interview	Paper application with essay, followed by an interview	Paper application with essays, followed by an interview
Number of Ambassadors	2	Varies– dependent on the number of applications	10-12
Paid/Volunteer	Paid hourly; expenses paid for NCHC conference	Volunteer	Paid by stipend each semester

Training and Meetings	8-week, 1-credit spring course; both ambassadors attend Honors College weekly staff meetings	Ambassador training each spring semester; bi-monthly group meetings and monthly individual meetings conducted by the honors coordinator	Training orientation at beginning of each fall with subsequent monthly meetings
Uniforms	Professional dress with Honors Staff name badge	2 Honors Institute Ambassador shirts	2 NAU Honors Program shirts
Main Responsibilities	*Academic and Community Ambassador:* new student orientation, advising, recruitment, social activities, and Honors Student Association; *First-Year Student Ambassador:* Coordination of live-in Honors Hall mentors, Honors Orientation course assistance, New Student Retreat, and other first-year student activities.	Attend high school college recruitment nights, lead orientations for incoming Honors Institute students, maintain communication with new students throughout their first semester in Honors	Attend open house events, meet with perspective students, answer perspective calls/e-mails, participate in phone campaigns, participate in new student and first-year Honors Program events

students. The key components in all three programs are that the student ambassadors have the opportunity for peer leadership, that they effectively advise their administration about what is important to the students, and that they spread information about the innumerable benefits of honors education to incoming students from those who are actively experiencing it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Miller, Shane and Rose Simis Cole. "Leadership Positions in Honors Communities: Students Helping Students." 2007 National Collegiate Honors Council Conference. Philadelphia, PA.

NCHC Student Board of Directors. "Students In Honors™." 2008 and 2009 National Collegiate Honors Council Conferences. San Antonio, TX and Washington D.C.

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The authors may be contacted at

hhe2@nau.edu.

APPENDIX A

Honors Student Job Application
The Honors College at West Virginia University

Personal Information

Name:_____
Last   First   Middle

Campus Address: _____
Street   (Apt)   City, State, Zip

Permanent Address: _____
Street   (Apt)   City, State, Zip

Contact Information: (____)_____(____) _____
Home Phone #   Cell Phone #   Email

Position Sought (check all that apply):

☐ Academic & Community Ambassador (at least 20 hrs a week)

☐ Summer Program Intern

☐ First Year Ambassador

Education

I am a (check ONE box)

☐ rising Sophomore (2nd year)

☐ rising Junior (3rd year)

☐ rising Senior (4th or 5th year)

Major(s): _____

Minor(s): _____

How many credit hours are you planning to take in Fall 2009? _____

How many credit hours are you planning to take in Spring 2010? _____

Please attach a copy of your WVU transcript (this can be an unofficial transcript printed off STAR) with your Honors classes highlighted.

Previous Experience

Please list your previous leadership positions or other experience that you feel would relate to your ability to excel in the position you are applying for.
*Please keep these experiences to within the past 3 or 4 years.

Date _____**Role/Title** _____

Organization _____**Location** _____

Describe this leadership experience: _____

_____

_____

Date _____**Role/Title** _____

Organization _____**Location** _____

Describe this leadership experience: _____

_____

_____

Date _____**Role/Title** _____

Organization _____**Location** _____

Describe this leadership experience: _____

_____

_____

Please attach a brief, typed statement (no more than 250 words) that explains why you are the best candidate for the job, and also describes or illustrates your ability to be an effective verbal and written communicator.

Please attach a list of three references, with names, titles, contact information, and a brief explanation of your relationship with them (no family members).

Please include one letter of recommendation from a faculty member that you have or have had class with.

APPENDIX B-1

Hillsborough Community College
2009: An Honors Odyssey
Honors Ambassador Application

Last Name_____First Name_____Middle Initial ____

Street Address_____City_____State_____Zip Code_____

E-mail Address _____

Home Phone Number _____Cell Phone Number _____

Please check the following date(s) and time(s) that you are able and willing to devote to being an Honors Institute Ambassador:

☐ 3–5 hours per week (average)

☐ Big Friday (once a month)

☐ Honors Ambassador Retreat

☐ All New Student Orientations

Are you employed?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, then please provide the number of hours you work per week _____

Do you have two semesters (excluding summer semesters) remaining at HCC?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Essay

Why do you want to be an Honors Institute Ambassador? (500 words or less)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B-2

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HONORS INSTITUTE
HONORS AMBASSADOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the Honors Institute?

2. Can you describe a time where you have been required to perform as part of a team? What was the situation? What part did you play in the team and what was the outcome of the exercise?

3. How do you establish a working relationship with new people?

4. Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa). How did you handle that situation? How did you deal with them?

5. Give an example of a time when you motivated others.

6. How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.

7. Describe a situation where others you were working with disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?

8. Please provide an example where you were given constructive criticism. Explain how you handled receiving the criticism and what you did with the advice.

APPENDIX C-1

Northern Arizona University
University Honors Program
Peer Leadership Application

Please review the next two pages of this application for more detailed information about each Honors Peer Leadership position available.

Since these opportunities are somewhat different from each other, we ask that you provide a written response for each opportunity you are interested in.

Applications are due **Wednesday, October 28, 11:00 am**. Applications can be submitted via email attachment to <honors@nau.edu> or in person to Honors Program Office, Room 104, Cowden Hall.

1. Provide **separate, typed responses for each** type of Peer Leadership opportunity for which you are you applying (please provide one response for each opportunity) on a separate piece of paper. Be sure to include the following in your response:

   a. Detail your involvement in extra-curricular activities.

   b. Outline what skills or experiences you would anticipate each opportunity requiring. How well do you meet these experience(s) or skills? What can you contribute to each?

2. Include a copy of your resume with your application.

Upon review of your application, we may request a secondary application or an in-person interview specific for the opportunities you indicated of interest.

Please contact the Honors Program at 523-3334 or email <honors@nau.edu> if you have any questions.

Honors Peer Leadership Application—Fall 2010 and Spring 2011

Name:_____Student ID Number: _____

Current Mailing address: _____

Phone Number(s):_____E-mail: _____

Major:_____GPA: _____Units completed: _____

I'm interested in the following Honors Program Peer Leadership Opportunity(ies):

☐ Honors Ambassador Honors Program Assistant

☐ Honors 100 Seminar Facilitator Honors GURUS

I verify to the best of my knowledge that the information I have provided is accurate.

Signature _____Date _____

Peer Leadership Opportunity Descriptions

Honors Ambassadors . . .
. . . are a group of highly-trained Honors students who represent NAU and the Honors Program at NAU recruitment events and act as a personal contact and a general resource for prospective and current Honors Students and their families. Current NAU Honors students are trained to serve as resources for NAU in general, but more importantly for the Honors Program. They may attend college fairs as well as individual high school junior or senior recruitment functions. They will also communicate with admitted students, sending personal letters of congratulations and extending an offer of assistance. They may also attend NAU functions for prospective students, such as on campus visits and high school junior events. Ambassadors may also meet with individual students who drop Honors and perhaps attend a class with, a prospective student. Ambassadors will also be asked to correspond with potential and accepted honors students through email, phone, and mailings.

Ambassadors will be selected based on this application and interview. Considerations will be made based upon availability, field of study, and ability to work well as a representative of Honors. Ambassadors currently receive a semesterly stipend. While applications are being accepted for Ambassadors, selection will not occur until March 2010.

Honors Program Assistants
Program assistants work in the Honors Office performing various clerical and administrative tasks for the Honors Program including answering phones, responding to incoming questions, and working on specific assigned projects that the Honors Program coordinates throughout the year such as Early Enrollment Information Night, Honors Week events and the Celebration of Academic Achievement. These positions are paid (hourly wage) experiences. Employment is sought beginning as early as spring 2010.

Honors Student Advisory Board
Advisory Board positions are not available at this time. We anticipate a selection process in mid Spring 2010.

Honors First Year Seminar (HON 100) Facilitator
HON 100 is a highly-interactive freshman seminar designed to help new NAU students get an excellent start to their college career. Students explore academic, navigational, and life skills with the help of an upper-class peer Facilitator.

Peer Facilitators are expected to serve as role models to no more than 20 first-year students while providing dynamic and relevant classroom instruction. The position's professional responsibilities include collaborating on the curriculum and instructional design of the course, implementing classroom activities based

on a set curriculum, reading papers and providing appropriate feedback to students, and functioning as a member of a larger team of Facilitators. ***Preference will be given to students in their third or fourth year at NAU*** at the time they will facilitate HON 100. This is anticipated to be a paid (semesterly stipend paid bi-weekly) and credit-bearing experience. Credit is earned as a 2-unit class (full 16 weeks) in spring and a 1-unit class (full 16 weeks) in fall.

- Facilitate at most 2 sections of HON100.

- Develop curriculum topics by conducting independent research, and designing classroom activities to encourage student engagement and learning.

- Hold at least one office hour per week per section and be available to meet with students.

- Read student journal entries and assignments and provide appropriate and timely feedback.

- Read and discuss the book chosen for the NAU Reads Program.

- Complete weekly progress reports.

- Actively participate in all training and read all supplemental materials.

- Assist with departmental projects and programs.

- Perform other duties as assigned.

Honors GURUS
Honors GURUS seek to build a community within the classroom by contributing to discussion, facilitating activities and serving as a resource to students. They aim to strengthen the relationship between the professor and student by encouraging communication in and outside the classroom, seek to foster community within the Honors Program and encourage success in the Program and the university.

The Honors GURUS selection process will require additional information. You will be contacted at a later date regarding these materials and submission processes.

APPENDIX C-2

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM AMBASSADORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Applicant Name: _____

Interviewer:_____

NOTE: We are looking for individuals who are able to communicate well with others. Note at how the candidate presents him/herself and how s/he would be able to present him/herself to our prospective students. If they don't answer the role-play questions completely accurately, do not hold it against them— remember, you all had to be trained before you knew exactly what to say.

Please also make sure you look for individuals who show diversity. We want to reach all of our prospective students, so we want a variety of Ambassadors.

1. What do you find most appealing about the Ambassador Program? I.E. Why would you like to be an Ambassador?

2. What do you think are some criteria for a successful Honors student? Prompt (if needed): AP classes, high test scores, study skills, extracurricular activities, etc.

3. Role Play: You are at Discover NAU (open house), and I approach the Honors booth (explain). I am a high school senior and interested in the Honors Program and have taken honors classes in high school, but am not sure about pursuing Honors in college. What would you say?

4. Role Play: I am a concerned parent who is looking out for the best interests of my incoming NAU Freshman. I have heard great things about the Cowden Learning Community. Would you suggest they live there as a Freshman.

5. As an Ambassador, you will be required to act as a campus resource, by answering questions, giving your opinion and advice to prospective students and their parents. Please describe a previous position you held, or experience you had where you acted as a resource for that specific program.

6. We would like you to think of a time when you were involved with an organization or other group, and something went wrong. What did you do to remedy/resolve the situation? What was your involvement in the solution process?

7. Please comment on your time management skills: strengths and weaknesses. Follow-up: What are your commitments for the Fall?

Additional Comments:

Ad Tracking, Brand Equity Research, and . . . Your Honors Program?

WILLIAM A. ASHTON

YORK COLLEGE, CUNY

BARBARA ASHTON

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CUNY

RENNY EAPEN

CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

ERZULIE MARS

YORK COLLEGE, CUNY

All honors programs face the problem of making their institution's student body aware of the program's existence, its eligibility requirements, curriculum, and benefits. Directors who are already comfortable with the number of the program's members and applicants do not need to think much about awareness, publicity, and advertising. For example, the college's admissions department assists many honors programs in their recruitment. However, some directors must think hard and carefully about campus-wide awareness. These directors will naturally consider some type of advertising method. However, both before and after turning to advertising, directors need to address two important questions. Before embarking on an advertising campaign, they need to know *why* eligible students are not applying. After the campaign, they need to know *how effective* the advertising methods were. We will provide a template for other honors programs to use in answering both of these questions by describing a planned marketing research evaluation of a program's image among the student body and of our advertising efforts.

Advertising is defined as the communication of persuasive information about products, services, or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media (Bovee & Thill 9). Typical examples of advertising seen on campuses include advertisements from external sources (soft drink and credit card companies) and advertisements from internal sources (the registrar's office), and they may take the form of fliers, posters, displays, informational tables at school events or in common areas, or announcements on campus closed-circuit television. Daniel Starch explained in 1923 that, regardless of the medium,

advertisers historically have recognized that, to be effective, advertising must be seen, read, believed, remembered, and acted upon.

Since Starch, researchers and practitioners in advertising have developed advanced methods to understand the target audience's attitudes about a product or brand and also the effects of exposure to advertising. These methods are called, respectively, brand equity research and advertisement tracking.

Brand equity is a measure of the strength of a consumer's attachment to a brand (Feldwick 37) and includes measures of brand awareness, perceived quality and other consumer associations with the brand (Aaker 27). In the context of honors, brand awareness is an important marketing measure. We can ask students to recall the program name if prompted ("What programs for academically gifted students exist at York?"), and we can ask them to recognize the program name from a list ("Which program, from this list, requires a thesis for graduation?"). Measuring associations to an honors brand is another element of brand equity. A list can be developed of suspected *selling points* of the program ("classes with only other honor students") and also a list of *fears* concerning student beliefs ("only nerds are in the program"). Students can then be asked to select all statements which they feel are advantages of the program and to select all statements which they feel are disadvantages of the program. Honors brand quality can be measured by statements regarding the benefits of the brand ("The honors program improves the image of the college to the public" and "The honors program encouraged higher academic standards for the entire college") and by asking students to respond to Likert response scales (one-to-seven-point numerical scales).

While brand equity methods generally examine pre-existing attitudes about a brand, ad tracking research determines the effectiveness of advertising by examining the consumer's response to advertising (McDonald 119). Useful ways of measuring consumers' responses vary and include recognition of advertising (McDonald 120), recall of advertising, awareness of brand, perceptions of brand, attitude toward brand, and reported consumer behavior (Feldwick 114). In the context of honors, ad tracking can be measured by asking students how often they heard their instructors talking about the program or whether they remember an honors student coming to their class to speak about the program. Another way to measure student awareness would be to question students about the content of advertisement messages. For example, students can be given a list of statements about the program ("Honors students take special classes just for honors students") and asked how confident they are that the statement is true.

These marketing research techniques can be applied to the publicity work of any honors program but are especially useful for those that must rely on self-generated advertising.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HONORS PROGRAMS AND THE NEED TO ADVERTISE

While all honors programs must at some time advertise, certain situational factors can make this process easier or more difficult. One such factor is student living arrangements. On residential campuses, students are part of many communications networks that can be accessed and used for the dissemination of recruitment information. Residential life, for example, can be asked to pass on messages, or fliers can be posted in dorms and dining halls. These avenues for advertising are not always available on commuter campuses. The duration of the program, measured in semesters or terms, can be another factor. Four-year honors programs usually integrate recruitment information with general college admissions and scholarship information for incoming high school students. In many cases, honors programs are created or used as general admission incentives (Sevier 30). Two-year programs that run only during the junior and senior years and recruit from the college's matriculated students will not have the benefit of the organization, funding, and reach of the admissions office. Finally (though not exhaustively), the ratio of adjunct to full-time faculty can affect recruitment efforts. With higher ratios, students will be in classes more often with adjuncts, who may not be familiar nor feel a connection with the college's honors program. Adjunct faculty may be less likely to encourage students, as a class or individually, to explore the honors program.

OUR TRIAL ADVERTISEMENT METHODS AND OUR ASSESSMENT OF THEM

These three situational factors—commuter campus, high adjunct ratio, and two-year program—describe the unique situation at York College in Jamaica, New York. York College is a commuter liberal arts college which grants bachelor's degrees in over forty majors; it also has several professional programs and one master's degree program. The youngest senior college of the City University of New York's system, York was founded in 1966 and moved to its current campus in 1986. Over forty percent of York's classes are taught by adjunct instructors.

York's student body reflects the diversity of its location in Queens: of the 6,727 students, most of the students are Black (47%), with fifteen percent Hispanic, nine percent Asian and four percent White. Forty percent are not U.S. citizens, and over a third (38%) are twenty-five years old or older.

THE HONORS PROGRAM

The York College honors program is, like the college itself, a young program that has been in existence for only seven years at the time of this study. The program traditionally has had only twelve to fifteen active members, who all enter the program in their junior year. Students are required to take two

interdisciplinary honors seminars, convert two general curriculum courses into honors contract courses, and complete an honors thesis, all while maintaining a 3.25 GPA. The program graduates about four students per year.

The main impetus of this study was to better understand the general student body's impressions of the honors program. Even though approximately three hundred first-year and sophomore students meet the GPA requirement to apply to the program, barely 20 apply each year. Anecdotal conversations revealed that students had incorrect impressions of the honors program or were unaware of its existence. This lack of awareness suggested that our publicity methods were lacking. Thus, we included ad-tracking measures in our study to objectively examine the effectiveness of our traditional publicity methods as well as two novel publicity methods.

Traditionally, we advertise the program by sending letters, emails, and fliers to instructors, requesting that they read the fliers to their class and then pass them out to interested students. Two new activities were implemented and tested: starting an honors student club and sending honors students to classes to talk about the program.

THE HONORS CLUB

By design, York College has a very active student club system, which is used to create a sense of community on the commuter campus. The importance of the clubs at York is illustrated and reinforced by "club hours"—a reserved time from noon to 2:00pm every Tuesday and Thursday when classes cannot meet—that provide exclusive meeting time for student clubs.

The honors club is a student club sanctioned and funded through the Student Activities office and Student Government. All student clubs, regardless of their focus, must be open to all college students. The honors club was suggested by our second author, who served as the honors director at another college for six years; it was envisioned to serve campus students who are not currently associated with the honors program. This outreach club would not just advertise the program (such a club mission could not exist under student activities rules and in any case would not be very interesting) but would promote the honors program by providing a sample of the activities engaged in by members of the honors program, such as cultural events or scholarly talks, and by providing fellowship with honors students who were also engaged in club activities.

In the spring of 2008, the honors club hosted two events. The first was a talk given by a popular professor titled *More on the Psychology of Evil* (attended by twenty-four non-honors and five honors students), and the second event was a pizza and film night that involved the viewing and discussion of the Kurosawa film *Rashômon* (attended by five honors and four non-honors students). Both events were publicized by fliers posted around campus.

THE CLASS-VISITOR PROGRAM

The class visitor program was our second new advertising scheme. Two honors students contacted instructors teaching lower-level courses and requested ten minutes of class time to talk about the program. When invited to a class, the visitors would describe the eligibility requirements, the program, and its benefits, and then they would pass out application forms.

TIMELINE AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Both the honors club and the class-visitor program were implemented during the middle of spring semester, 2008. During the first few weeks of that semester, we collected our pre-test data by using an online questionnaire with access to a representative sample of York College students. After the activities were completed, we collected our post-test data. By analyzing the pre-test data, we assessed ambient student attitudes toward the program. By comparing the pre-test and post-test data, we assessed the effectiveness of the combined effects of the honors club and class-visitor program.

SURVEY OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

We will present an overview of our survey's outcomes organized by our three goals for the assessment:

Goal 1: Using brand equity measures to better understand the ambient attitudes York students have toward the honors program.

Goal 2: Assessing the current publicity methods using pre-test ad-tracking questions.

Goal 3: Assessing our trial publicity methods using the post-test ad-tracking questions.

GOAL 1:
UNDERSTANDING AMBIENT ATTITUDES VIA PRE-TEST BRAND EQUITY

An important component of ambient attitudes is brand recognition and recall, i.e., whether students remember or recognize the program. When our 136 participants were asked to list the names of college programs for academically gifted students, 86% of the students surveyed indicated that our college had no program for academically gifted students or were unable to recall one. Only about half of the students were able to recognize the honors program name based on a description of its basic characteristics. These findings not only indicate a lack of awareness of the program but suggest a more general problem for the college regarding student perceptions of the quality of York's programs and students. The honors program is not the only program at the college

for gifted students (there are six of them), yet 86% of York's students could not name even one of these programs. In response to the data, we have suggested that the college administration review the effectiveness of their public awareness activities regarding the many outstanding York programs for academically advanced students and the many high-achieving York students.

Even though students generally did not know that York had an honors program, they responded positively to all of the questions about their attitudes towards the brand. They thought that an honors program was important to the college, helped improve the image of the college to the public, and encouraged higher academic standards for all college students. These results would suggest that students do not naturally associate York College with academic excellence, but, if forced to consider the possibility, they *assume* that some program exists. This assumption indicates that the honors program should focus on brand advertisement (name recognition) and that this focus should be a high priority. Beyond that, the data from the advantages/disadvantages portion of the survey allowed us to further tailor our advertising message.

The participants were given twenty-three items and asked first to select the items that were advantages of the honors program and then to select the items that were disadvantages of the honors program. The percentages of participants who selected each item are presented in Appendix A.

Among the advantages, those with the highest percentages were: helps on application to graduate school (77%), helps on job application (76%), and improves career opportunities (71%). The disadvantages with the highest percentages were: extra classes to take (40%) and honors courses cost extra money to take (38%). These top advantages and disadvantages can help us design the specific content of our advertising and also reconsider issues of program development. Currently, the selling points of the program on our recruitment literature are program elements themselves: cultural experiences (44% saw this as an advantage), research experiences (55%), special courses (43%), writing a thesis (29%), and working with a mentor (47%). In order to make our recruitment message more appealing, we needed to emphasize graduate school admissions, job application advantages, and career opportunities.

The disadvantages with the highest percentages were informative about the success of our advertising and the direction that advertising and our program should take. Thirty-eight percent of the students thought that honors courses require extra money to take, a surprising result since honors courses do *not* require additional funds. Thus, we added, as one of the elements of our recruitment advertising, the statement that honors courses do not cost any extra money and are covered by normal tuition. The disadvantage with the highest percentage was having to take extra courses. Currently, honors program courses satisfy no general education or major requirements, but they are part of the student's liberal arts requirement, which requires students to take courses beyond their major and general education requirements. We now, in our recruitment literature, explain the concept of the liberal arts requirement

(students seem uncertain about this) so that students can understand that the honors program does not require additional credits. Also, the honors committee has been trying to convince faculty and administrators to support a plan to develop an honors curriculum that satisfies general education requirements. Our data can be used to support such a plan.

Finally, students saw as advantageous two items regarding scholarships for honors students. Currently, our college does not provide any scholarships for honors program students. However, the program director and faculty committee have been petitioning the administration to begin some type of financial aid program for honors program students. Our data provide us with strong empirical support for the petition.

GOAL 2:
CURRENT PUBLICITY EFFECTIVENESS VIA PRE-TEST AD TRACKING

Key to our traditional publicity methods was that instructors mention the admission requirements for the program. Two thirds of the students reported that they could not recall an instructor mentioning either the honors program or club. Only half reported having "heard" about the honors program, and a third reported hearing about the club. Furthermore, only 17% were able to recognize the GPA required, and only 34% were able to recognize the credits required to join the program.

Beyond our basic advertisement message (the admission requirements), what did students know about the program? To answer this question, we gave students several statements about the program and asked them to rate their confidence in the veracity of the statement. Overall, students lacked confidence about all of the elements of the program. Participants lacked confidence in whether there were special classes for honors students, on- and off-campus activities for honors students, a thesis required for graduation, a thesis mentor, and a special honors lounge for members.

Based on our ad recall data, we concluded that our current advertising methods were ineffective, most likely for one of two reasons: the professors do not talk about the program, or students do not remember such talks. Regardless of the reason, we concluded that the time and effort taken to encourage professors to talk about the program in class could be curtailed without much effect on program awareness.

Segmented Market Analysis

Although we had over a hundred participants, most were not within our targeted market segment. A market segment is a subset of the entire market with a desired demographic characteristic (Wright 892). Our desired characteristic was eligibility to apply to the honors program. The data records of participants who met our application requirements (GPA and credits remaining) were identified.

This segment was represented in our sample by twenty-seven participants. These students were not more likely than the participants who did not meet the application requirements to have heard of the honors program. In fact, our target demographic responded to our questions similarly to the non-target demographic except for three questions: our target segment was more likely to know about the honors lounge and more likely to desire to join the honors club and honors program. This finding suggested that our target group was unaware of the program itself but felt that they themselves were honors material. This knowledge possibly indicates that our target market is interested and motivated to learn about the honors program (please see below about the honors club).

GOAL 3:
NEW PUBLICITY EFFECTIVENESS VIA
POST-TEST AD TRACKING

On all of these items—program awareness, ad recall, knowledge of the brand and brand attitudes—we detected no improvement from pre-test to post-test in students' familiarity with the brand and attitudes toward the brand. Thus, the combined effect of the honors club and the class-visitors program did not make students more aware of, knowledgeable about, or favorable toward the honors program than previous marketing methods.

However, nearly 13% of post-test respondents reported attending club events versus 2.3% in pre-test. This finding is another positive point in the data and is especially interesting if we consider that no recruitment messages were included in the club events. Thus, attendance probably did not influence knowledge about the program, which suggests a course of action for the future: increase the number of club events in a semester, and include recruitment messages about the honors program in each meeting. If we take this finding along with the findings from our market-segment analysis (that our target segment is not more aware and knowledgeable but motivated), a speculative conclusion can be constructed. Since our target segment students consider themselves honors program material, perhaps they attended honors club events to learn about the honors program; if this is correct, program advertising should be added to the honors club events.

In summary, our study has indicated several courses of action: (1) provide scholarships for honors students; (2) design honors courses to satisfy general education graduation requirements; (3) include in our basic message that honors classes do *not* cost extra money, nor do they add to the total number of credits needed to graduate; (4) de-emphasize the importance of professor in-class announcements; (5) do not proceed with the class-visitors program; and (6) schedule more honors club events, and include announcements about the honors program at those events.

CONCLUSIONS AND NOTES ON DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING A STUDY

We had two goals for this paper: to share our ideas about the honors club and class-visitor program and to share our adventures in objectively assessing our publicity activities.

We believe that the honors club, a student club for non-honors program students, is a unique and potentially useful idea. We hope that other programs may benefit from emulating our idea. While our class-visitor program was unsuccessful, we believe it could be a usefully implemented at other campuses. We have a small and nascent program which relies on students who join the program after their sophomore year. If your program has similar characteristics, you may wish to test the effectiveness of a visitor program. We would caution you that, even though our study found some positive results for the honors club and no results for the class-visitor program at our college, your college may be different. The honors club might not work at your college while the class-visitor program might. To find out, you will need your own marketing research study.

A second goal of this paper was to describe and share our idea of applying marketing research strategies to an honors program. Such strategies are not time-intensive. Our evaluation program was conducted using about two hours per week for one and a half semesters and provided us with some very useful information. Also, in this era of outcomes assessment in academia, the results of such a study are understandable to and can be used to influence administrators.

If you decide to conduct your own study, please remember that some parts of our survey can be directly copied, but other parts of the process should be re-conceptualized for your campus. For example, our brand equity questions (advantages/disadvantages) were specifically developed with our program and our student body in mind. To develop our list of twenty-three items, six honors students and the director had a fun brainstorming session developing phrases such as "only nerds in the program." Ad recognition ("Did an honors student speak to your class?") and ad recall ("What is the GPA requirement?") questions should also be developed uniquely for your program and campus. However, the attitudes toward the brand, brand awareness, and consumer behavior questions will probably require minor adaptation for your own use.

Materialistic concepts such as ad tracking and brand equity may seem at odds with the urbane world of college honors. However, honors programs must work with the situation they are in and work with the resources they have. We have identified situational characteristics some honors programs face and have also described our efforts to succeed with our program's marketing in spite of some limitations. We have also described our efforts to evaluate carefully and objectively the expenditure of our resources. With limited resources, a program has to assess their activities carefully and objectively rather than relying on anecdotal beliefs or tradition. We have identified several directions our program should take using these methods and hope you find our experiences useful.

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APPENDIX A

PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPANTS SELECTING A STATEMENT AS AN ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE OF THE HONORS PROGRAM IN PRE-TEST

Statement	Pre-test	
	Advantage	Disadvantage
Classes with only other honor students	29%	15%
Extra-curricular activities	43%	16%
Extra classes to take	26%	40%
Financial aid for other honors students	41%	8%
Greater/more responsibilities	38%	24%
Helps on application for graduate school	77%	10%
Helps on job application	76%	8%
Helps students transfer to other colleges	51%	9%
Higher academic expectations	49%	22%
Honors courses cost extra money to take	11%	38%
Improve career opportunities	71%	7%
Lack of appreciation for efforts	7%	24%
Lack of recognition for efforts	7%	22%
No scholarships or financial help	6%	22%
Only nerds are in the program	7%	16%
Scholarships for honors students	55%	7%
Special recognition	62%	8%
Special scholarships for honors students	57%	7%
Students get laptops	17%	7%
Students have cultural experiences	44%	7%
Students have internship experiences	55%	7%
Students have research experiences	53%	7%
Students take special honors classes	43%	9%
Students use honors lounge	31%	11%
Students will write a thesis	29%	24%
Students works with faculty mentor	47%	6%

Percents calculated based upon the number of participants selecting an item: n=136

Big Ideas Matter

From the White House to Our House:
The Story of an Honors College Vegetable Garden

MICHAEL LUND AND GEOFFREY ORTH

LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

When Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine announced in December 2008 his "Renew Virginia" initiative for the Commonwealth, state agencies responded with their own programs "promoting renewable energy, creating green jobs, and encouraging preservation of the environment." At Longwood University in Farmville, a state-assisted co-educational comprehensive institution, the Cormier Honors College for Citizen Scholars proposed a rooftop vegetable garden on its newly renovated honors residence hall to address these issues. The university's signature "Citizen Leader" program would be enhanced by a working garden that demonstrates to those on campus and in the larger community the advantages of organic farming, composting, rain water usage, and other important sustainability principles. It would also allow hands-on learning consistent with honors pedagogy. Putting the garden on top of a building would provide exciting promotional material and stress the application of such programs even in urban environments. What was first viewed as a setback—the university's initial rejection of the plan—led to the discovery of a compelling piece of history that made the garden project distinctive. Furthermore, this discovery institutionalized an example of the "place as text" focus in honors programs throughout the country.

To give added strength to their initial proposal, the honors staff linked their effort to President and Michelle Obama's decision to establish the first vegetable garden on the White House grounds since Eleanor Roosevelt's World War II Victory Garden of 1943. The connection to this presidential initiative and to history was particularly important to the mission of Longwood's Honors College for Citizen Leadership, a program designed to meet the needs of academically gifted undergraduate students by offering challenging courses that enable them to expand their intellectual horizons. In keeping with the university's mission, the honors college strives to develop citizens who use their learning to provide service to their community. This linking of citizenship and learning is the hallmark of honors at Longwood.

The unexpected and severe economic downturn of 2009, the growing awareness of the importance of preserving the environment, and the strain of rapidly increasing global populations have made many believe that a coordinated national effort like that which sustained the country during wartime is needed now. Indeed, the garden could create opportunities to highlight or discuss what may be radical differences between World War II's sense of shared national purpose and the situation brought about by today's War on Terror, which many think is creating an unacceptable level of sacrifice from military families. Many Americans, as well as most of our students, do not have family members and friends serving in the war and are therefore even further removed from a first-hand understanding of such sacrifice. As Kristin Henderson writes in *While They're at War: The True Story of American Families on the Homefront,*

> In a country of nearly three hundred million people only two and a half million serve in the armed forces . . . A year after the Iraq War started, if you looked at the people who were laying down their lives for the country . . . you found yourself looking across America at small rural towns, at decaying urban cores and close-in suburbs, past their prime, and at minority and immigrant communities. . . . Virtually none of those who serve come from America's elite classes: business executives, politicians, academics and celebrities—their children do not join the military. (4)

These "children [who] do not join the military" generally attend college, and they need to consider whether the United States now has a shared national purpose. In establishing the White House Garden based on the heritage of the World War II Victory Garden, Michelle Obama made specific reference to the shared goals that the garden would represent. The honors college thus proposed to copy, in as much detail as possible, the layout and planting guide available on the White House website (see Figure 1) in order to encourage discussion of a national shared purpose on our campus.

Our goals would match many of the White House's stated objectives: to focus attention on diet and nutrition, to explore the advantages of locally grown produce, to realize the potential of community gardening, and to promote sustainability by using organic farming methods and careful management of natural resources ("A Healthy Harvest"). Because one of Longwood's traditional strengths has been the preparation of elementary and secondary school teachers, a campus garden would also prepare undergraduates to follow the First Lady's example of giving school children hands-on experience in the fundamental and universal human task of raising food. Connecting student labor in the garden with local organizations involved in the production and distribution of food, the project would encourage recognition of the interrelated dependencies of different segments of our population.

In the documentation accompanying the proposal submitted to the university's Space Planning Committee, the honors staff explained:

Figure 1: White House Garden Layout and Planting Guide
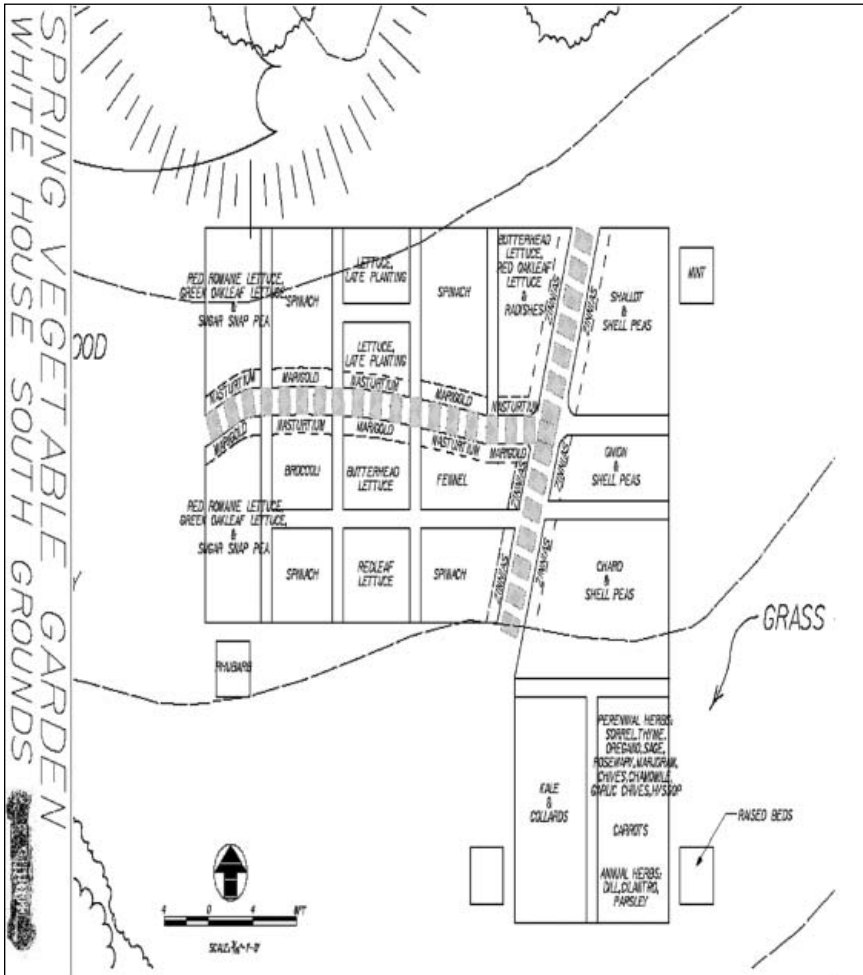
In addition to providing fresh fruits, herbs, vegetables, and flowers, the Cormier Honors College Vegetable Garden (CHCVG) has educational components for the students who plant it, harvest it, and cook it. Among them are:

1. Fundamental principles of botany and agriculture;

2. Education on matters of health related to poor diet, such as obesity and diabetes, and their relationship to food produced for mass consumption, especially for the fast food industry;

3. Political and historical connections found in contextualizing such an effort within a post-industrial society;

4. Communications challenges in the electronic age encountered in documenting the project's development and finding media outlets to expand its effect (hence the need for a video camera);

5. Community relations, as some garden produce could be donated to FACES, the local food bank, but cooperating also with the local Farmers' Market;

6. Business dynamics underscored by investments in capital and labor in relation to profit and loss and recorded in expenses, profit (based on grocery store prices).

An additional strength of the proposal was that, if space were available, very little initial funding would be needed to begin the project: the university had basic tools that could be borrowed, and the White House's initial outlay for seeds was estimated at $200.00.

However, Longwood University concerns about a rooftop garden—based primarily on liability and structural issues—led to an early defeat for the Cormier Honors College for Citizen Scholars Vegetable Garden. The staff decided not to abandon the idea, however. They conducted a survey of the grounds close to Wheeler Residence Hall for an acceptable garden site. Fortunately, one was found behind the building and across one street, Griffin Boulevard, where there were established walkways to a parking lot. At the north end of that space was a grassy plot approximately the same size as the White House garden; and the honors college requested that that space be allocated for a vegetable garden (see Figure 2; Wheeler Residence Hall is at the bottom left of the drawing).

Even the drainage from the parking lot could be made an advantage with this site, as the honors college would be able to propose landscaping to control runoff, improve the watershed, and explore possible water storage systems for irrigation use.

When the honors staff sat down with the Space Planning Committee to discuss the potential for this site, they received even better news than they anticipated: the site could be approved for their use, and they were told that the large Southern Magnolia tree on the edge of this plot had come from the White House, something very few people on campus knew. The "place as text" principle the honors staff had used with students at such places as nearby Appomattox State Park was suddenly evident in this project. The professors on the committee found themselves asking the same basic questions Bernice Braid articulated in her honors classes: "how [did] people who live here transform the space they occup[ied] into the place in which they live[d]. And equally important: what is it about how I myself observe them that shapes my conclusions?" (15). The people who planted this magnolia shaped their lives within the context of slavery, Reconstruction, and a long struggle for civil rights. A working garden on this plot would have educational potential not only for the study of

Figure 2: Wheeler Hall across Griffin Blvd. from the Honors Garden
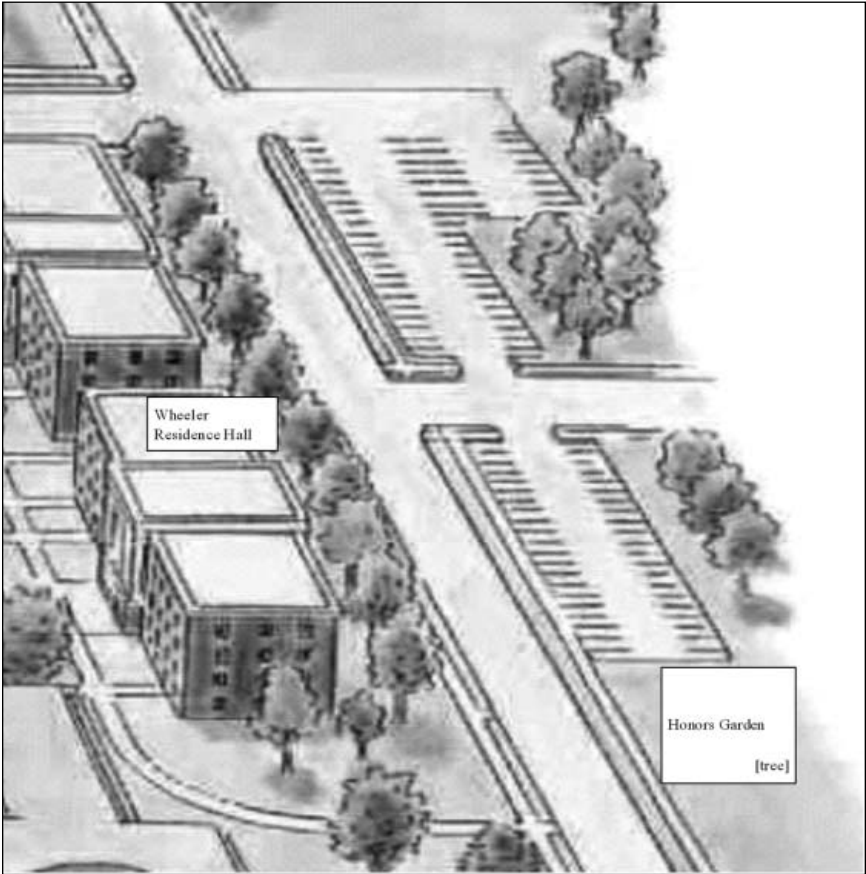
such logical subjects as plants, water usage, and food production but also for the study of American history. The shape of the past could be dramatically understood by students and other visitors standing on this piece of ground.

The honors staff was first referred to a recent online article by retired Longwood faculty member Edna Allen Dean, who had researched the history of the magnolia for the Remarkable Trees of Virginia project:

> A few yards from the corner of Griffin Boulevard and High Street stand two beautiful magnolia trees. Only a few people in the Farmville area know that these trees came from the grounds of the White House during the administration of President William McKinley. Robert Evans, formerly of Farmville, Virginia, was a groundskeeper at the White House. Evans was the son of a Reconstruction legislator, William D. Evans, and a relative of Reconstruction state senator J.W.D. Bland. One day around the

year 1898, Evans was probably told to prune a magnolia tree on
the grounds. As he prepared to dispose of the cuttings, he decid-
ed to save a few branches as gifts for some of his relatives in
Farmville, hoping that the branches would become trees. Seven
of these branches did become trees in Farmville. However, five
were in the path of Longwood College expansion and only the
two remain, both of which will probably meet the same fate.
Robert Evans gave two of his magnolia branches to Pompey
Bland, who was the brother of Senator Bland. The former had
recently built a beautiful home near the corner of Griffin Blvd.
and High Street. Pompey Bland planted his gift on each side of
the walkway leading to his home. This information was taken
from a newspaper article written by Mr. Charles White, publish-
er of *The Informant.* . . . Note: Mr. White interviewed five senior
citizens who confirmed that the tree was planted from the
McKinley White House.

That the honors college vegetable garden inspired by the White House garden
had its own White House tree was a fortunate coincidence. However, further
research into this site, uncovering the origin of this tree, has made the story
richer and deeper, giving the garden project material for research by historians
and social scientists. As Eric L. Ball and Alice Lai argue, contextualizing edu-
cational programs with an institution's locality can be an important pedagogi-
cal goal. The creation of a garden at this site provided a focal point for future
Longwood students and campus visitors to learn about central issues in our
national life.

In 1898 Longwood was known as the Normal School, a teacher prepara-
tion institution for women. At that time the maintenance staff and custodial staff
included African-Americans, but, because of their race, they were not permit-
ted to enroll for classes. The neighborhood across from the campus along
Griffin Boulevard (then Ely Street) was populated largely by African-Americans
like Pompey Bland, whose descendants would not have become Longwood
students before the 1960s. To measure the gap between white and black in the
community, one should note that from 1959–1964 Prince Edward County,
where Farmville and Longwood are located, closed all of the public schools
rather than integrate the system (see R. C. Smith). A generation of African-
American young people lost its chance for education, and their children faced
unusual challenges when they entered school decades later. Tension in the
community was not significantly lessened by the college, which attempted to
isolate itself from the issue, but in 1969 Longwood did create an integrated
Campus School, grades one to seven, that was part of the slow process of heal-
ing that continues today.

Another component of Prince Edward County history that provides a back-
drop for the issues raised in developing the honors college garden is the story
of a free-black community that prospered just west of Farmville in the first half

of the nineteenth century. As Melvin Patrick Ely explains in *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s Through the Civil War*, the community had its own blacksmith and other craftsmen; dairy, corn, and tobacco farms; and a general store. Black citizens of Israel Hill worked for wages comparable to whites, pursued legal redress for grievances against whites in courts, and worked and interacted socially with whites. The larger turmoil of the Civil War contributed to the dissolution of the community, but a tradition of racial cooperation had existed in Prince Edward County prior to the days in which Robert Evans brought cuttings from the White House grounds to Farmville. Longwood's honors college hopes to use its vegetable garden site to inform incoming students about this kind of local history, as many other schools are doing. Anita R. Guynn, for instance, proposes to "promote the mission" of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke by having honors students explore the community "where many area residents' surnames are the names of campus buildings, where many students have family in the area, and where many students have off-campus jobs" (33).

Longwood University is now committed to maintaining a diverse student population and has joined the Farmville-Prince Edward County community in recognizing the tragedy of past divisions. The university has participated in events such as the reenactment of a 1951 student walk-out in protest of unequal educational facilities at the black Moton High School. (The school desegregation lawsuit that resulted was part of the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation.) There are also signs on campus for the self-guided Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail of Southside Virginia. The tree at the site of the honors college for Citizen Scholars' Vegetable Garden, then, accentuates a powerful piece of American history in which the fundamental rights of citizens have been pursued over several centuries. That the honors college garden helped to institutionalize the tree's place on the college campus during the first year of President Obama's term is therefore fitting. Our web site and garden signage will be developed to complement the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail of Southside Virginia and the nearby Moton Museum (in the old Moton High School building).

The significance and potential impact of the garden led to the honors college's receiving grant funds from the American Democracy Project at Longwood, a multi-campus initiative focused on higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy. Money was given for the purchase of hand tools to work the garden, including wooden, long-handled, round-point shovels, wooden-handled garden hoes, 12-tine bow rakes, a wooden-handled garden cultivator (push plow), a 100-gallon super composter, and a video camera to record and publicize the project. Such hands-on experience, of course, is central to many honors programs (Holman, Smith, and Welch). Additional funds are being sought at Longwood so that work on the garden can be documented for distribution in a number of ways, including on-site multimedia, interactive displays. The garden has a

developing website that includes slide shows to document the ongoing opera-
tion as well as more detailed explanation of such topics as Organic Farming,
Sustainability Issues, Diet & Nutrition, the Culture of Gardens, and Citizen
Leadership. Two students doing research outside of the honors college provid-
ed related material on vegetarian diets and genetically modified foods in the
first semester of our work. The garden tree will be used to underscore the his-
tory of this place—its White House origin in the context of free black commu-
nities, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement.

The complexity of current political dynamics will also be highlighted by
the honors college garden. The White House was lobbied by groups who
believe that growing more food locally and organically can reduce reliance on
huge industrial farms that use more oil for transportation and chemicals for fer-
tilizer. On the other hand, some people believe home gardens could decrease
demand for crops and have a negative effect on agriculture. Restaurant owners
and workers also express worry that American families with gardens might
begin to eat out less often and that their business will be harmed. Similar con-
cerns initially led the Department of Agriculture to oppose Eleanor Roosevelt's
creation of a White House Victory Garden. Debating these issues in the present
context and with an awareness of history will be worthwhile for students with
varied interests.

The honors staff encouraged first-year students especially to take on lead-
ership roles with the vegetable garden. These students are required to partici-
pate in an off-campus retreat before the regular orientation begins in the fall
and to live in the honors residence hall for their first year. The goal is to build
the strong sense of community that has been related to improved academic per-
formance, as Elissa Guralnick has described:

> When instructors used methods such as group work, fieldwork,
> service learning, peer reviews, and discussion, students had
> opportunities to interact, and friendships were more likely to
> develop. With higher rates of communication and greater oppor-
> tunities for peer socialization, students found they had a forum
> in which they could discuss college transition issues. The ongo-
> ing affiliation with a small community of peers helped many stu-
> dents figure out how to adapt to college and make the shift in
> identity from high school student to college student. (353)

While it may be difficult to trace stronger community spirit specifically to the
garden alone, the staff consistently witnessed lively interaction among students
from planting through the first official harvest meal.

Another objective of the Longwood Garden also relates directly to honors
pedagogy. Debbie Storrs and Lynsie Clott have argued that high-achieving stu-
dents capable of advanced work are too often motivated less by a traditional
("liberal") desire to learn than by pursuit of a profitable career; that is, many
honors students work toward an impressive résumé that increases chances of

employment and professional status rather than a desire to study and understand the world, to learn for knowledge's sake. Storrs and Clott believe, however, that "liberal" learners are more likely to become informed, active citizens, a goal often specifically cited in creating and maintaining honors programs. Because Longwood has no programs directed toward careers in agriculture, the honors college hopes that its garden can attract students who are curious about the fundamental nature of food production, who are willing to do physical labor, and who take personal satisfaction in seeing the material results of their effort more than students who see plowing, raking, and hoeing as skills to foreground at a job interview.

To develop and maintain the garden as a teaching and a research site in the future, the honors staff hopes to make appointments of student officers with specific areas of responsibility:

- **Manager**: organize work sessions for hands to till, plant, weed, harvest; ensure that the garden is maintained in a manner consistent with university grounds.

- **Finance Officer**: prepare budgets and record expenditures, including labor costs (at minimum wage), profit (at grocery store prices), seed, equipment, research.

- **Publicity Officer**: find ways to promote the project and to inform the public of the garden's benefits, including organizing tours, scheduling presentations and news releases, building a data bank that documents the garden's operation.

- **Historian**: place the current garden in our own and other historical contexts, exploring the relationship of this effort to gardens in other cultures.

- **Development Officer**: seek support to add features to the garden, such as educational placards, interactive displays, brochures, additional equipment.

- **Researcher**: explore additional resources to determine new applications, such as the use of parking lot drainage, rain barrels, varieties of insect control, organic fertilizers, bee hives, bird houses.

- **Hand(s):** assist the manager with the actual garden operation, contributing a fixed number of work hours over the course of a semester.

In the first fall semester of the project (2009), the garden was plowed, fertilized (organically), and planted. By Thanksgiving students had sufficient lettuce, spinach, kale, onions, and collards to host "The Great Green Greens Cook-off" in the kitchen of Wheeler Hall. Other parts of the garden were planted with turnips and cabbage, but the disappointing yields revealed that more soil testing and fertilizing were necessary. A number of herbs that would winter over were also well established by December, and a portion of the ground was planted in oats as a cover crop to be plowed under in the next spring. A record

of these events was recorded by an honors student, who is one of the program's student assistants. He constructed a growing website with slide shows, samples of student writing, and links to community garden projects, organic farming operations, and related educational programs.

When students return in the spring 2010 term, the first order of business will be to work the soil much deeper, adding compost and other organic matter. In mid-February the garden—35 wide and 45 feet long (approximately the same size as the White House garden)—will be planted with the same seeds and in approximately the same pattern used by Michelle Obama last spring in the nation's capitol. Flowering plants to repel insects, such as marigolds and nasturtiums, will border the edges and walkways. Among the hopes for late spring are donating food to the local food bank, challenging chefs at local restaurants to create dishes featuring the garden produce, and staging panels to discuss issues related to nutrition, diet, and fast food.

Enlisting Longwood faculty members from other disciplines—as well as teachers in local schools—also has the potential to enlarge the project's impact across campus and in the community. Many existing courses could refer students to the garden or require they visit the site. Future research topics we hope faculty and teachers can direct students toward include processed food and health issues; the fast food industry and diet; the politics of agriculture; elementary education and sustainability; marketing in the electronic age; community relations in college towns; the psychology of gardening; gardens throughout history; gardens and art; gardens and exercise; and the economics of home gardens. In the garden's first semester, a student in an advanced general education course produced an essay on the history of victory gardens from 1600 to the present that will be added to the honors website. Such involvement of faculty and students from multiple disciplines across the university models the cooperation of different elements of the national population during wartime in the past. The honors staff hopes to further illuminate the mutual interests of our campus community as well as the larger local community by sharing the harvests in such events as a chefs' challenge hosted at a local restaurant, the distribution of food to the local food bank, and cooperation with farmers' markets. Results of student research projects will be included in our online library and made available to local libraries.

The honors staff also intends not to lose track of the fundamental fact that many students today are unfamiliar with farm work, unlike in Pompey Bland's day when over 40% of America's population lived or worked on farms (see Dimitri, Effland, and Conklin). From our initial experience with volunteers— some of whom found that using tools without gloves creates blisters; that sandals are not correct footwear for shoveling; and that you really do have to pay attention to the depth and separation of seeds when planting—we have concluded that at least one work session be required of each student!

Among the stated objectives of Longwood's honors college is "to create an academic community that is sustained through the drive and ambition of its

student members." As our students have dug, planted, weeded, and harvested, we have seen the vegetable garden and its White House tree become productive components of this effort. As more students take on such tasks, the project can become a model for honors work at other institutions.

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Studies in Cyberspace: Honors, Professional Teacher Development, Curricular Development, and Systemic Change in Louisiana

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For years, honors programs and colleges have experienced well-documented difficulties in justifying and defending their budgets (and in some cases their existence). These challenges—some of which are discussed in the 2006 *JNCHC* "Forum on Honors Administration" and the 2009 *JNCHC* "Forum on Social Class and Honors"—have ranged from the philosophical ("honors programs are elitist") to the pragmatic ("we have to take care of our own students first, so we can't spare any faculty for an honors class"). Honors administrators have therefore developed an extensive and effective litany of benefits that emphasize how honors programs enhance the student experience, the health of the university, and the good of the community. Honors administrators highlight the role of honors education in student development and curricular innovation; we trot out statistics regarding the positive impact of honors on recruitment and retention; and we show what good citizens our students are, how they engage and serve the larger community.

Some remain unconvinced, however. In good years these doubts can handicap honors programs in their struggle with other units for adequate funding, and in lean times, as universities seek to protect their "academic core" with fewer resources and staff, these familiar criticisms can be crippling. To better insulate themselves as well as to better fulfill familiar mandates, honors programs must continually strive to place themselves at the core of the university's mission, not only as that mission relates to the development of the university itself but also as it relates to the university's commitments to state and regional initiatives. What follows is how the honors program at Louisiana Tech University sought to position itself to participate in a state and regional initiative to develop an area that is ideally suited to the strengths of honors education: the emerging field of cyberspace (see the 2009 *JNCHC* "Forum on Honors

in the Digital Age"). In initiating studies in cyberspace, the honors program drew on traditional strengths of honors education but also charted some new venues for exploration that might be of use to other programs and colleges.

CYBERSPACE:
THE "BIG PICTURE" AND THE REGIONAL PICTURE

With a sweeping impact that cuts across virtually all fields, cyberspace is a natural fit for the interdisciplinary focus of honors education. Cybertechnology has permeated all aspects of our world, affecting how we access information, communicate ideas, interact with one another and the larger society, and carry out economic activities. As the world has become more connected, it has also become more vulnerable. Policymakers have scrambled for ways to define, articulate, and defend this new medium. In 2006, the Department of Defense's doctrine entitled *The National Military Strategy for Cyberspace Operations* defined cyberspace as "a domain characterized by the use of *electronics* and the *electromagnetic spectrum* to store, modify, and exchange data via *networked* systems and associated physical infrastructures" (11). The scope of this expansive definition brings all manner of electronic devices into the realm of cyberspace and challenges policymakers, scientists, and educators to wrestle with both the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and traditionally "soft" (humanities and social sciences) aspects of this emerging field of study. Although initially slow to respond, academia has begun to realize the need for programs and scholars that can bridge traditional disciplines and approach the problems of cyberspace from a multidisciplinary and holistic perspective.

This emerging area of need became critically important in northern Louisiana in 2007, when the Air Force announced its decision to locate its provisional Cyber Command at Barksdale Air Force Base in the metropolitan area of Shreveport-Bossier City, La. After the announcement, local governmental and university leaders began working on initiatives to develop a regional workforce to support the work of the military in defending the nation's cyber infrastructure. As part of this initiative, the state of Louisiana and the municipality of Bossier City put up $100 million toward construction of a secure facility for the newly-established Cyber Innovation Center (CIC). Understanding the role of K–20 education in affecting the kind of systemic change necessary to develop the appropriate workforce, the CIC immediately began work on education outreach. Recognizing that honors, with its historic focus on interdisciplinarity, curricular innovation, and student development, was uniquely poised to make a significant contribution to shaping the contours of teaching and instruction in this emerging field, the director of the university honors program partnered with the CIC and colleagues in the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Engineering and Science to create a multidisciplinary immersion experience for select high school teachers and their students in the area for the summer of 2008. Integrating robotics, cryptography, history, literature, law,

and ethics, the resulting cyber camp introduced some of the brightest students in the region to the many different facets of the cyberworld. In addition to contributing to the collaborative framework and promoting the honors interdisciplinary outlook, the honors program was also affected by the experience: in particular, it was exposed to the possible benefits of participating in teacher professional development.

CYBER DISCOVERY CAMP AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In crafting the Cyber Discovery Camp, the authors followed a model for teacher professional development pioneered by the College of Engineering and Science at Louisiana Tech University and funded by the National Science Foundation. The u-Discovery model develops and deepens partnerships between key feeder high schools and the university in the belief that creating systemic change requires close collaboration between university and high school faculty (Nelson et al.). The overriding philosophy of the u-Discovery model is that cultivating high school teachers and providing them with the skills, knowledge, and resources to implement the subject matter in their classrooms will provide the necessary basis for systemic improvement in selected educational areas. In that sense, the high school teachers, and not the high school students, are the real targets of the initiative. To foster and strengthen the right kind of collaborative relationships necessary for long-term success, a series of required teacher workshops are held before each camp. Led by the university faculty team, the teacher workshops walk the faculty through some of the projects and assignments that will be utilized in the camp. In this way, high school faculty are incorporated as part of the team and empowered to take an active role in the education of their students. The feedback of the teachers in these workshops mirrors that of honors students in experimental honors courses: their comments make the instructors aware of what pedagogical and curricular innovations are likely to be successful in the long term.

The Cyber Discovery Camp departed from the u-Discovery model in two significant ways, allowing a greater role and impact for the honors program. The first is that the Cyber Discovery Camp, owing to its subject matter, promotes greater interdisciplinarity than the traditional u-Discovery model, which is focused on STEM disciplines, particularly engineering. The Cyber Discovery Camp incorporates disciplines from STEM and the liberal arts, thus allowing for a greater range and number of teachers in traditional honors disciplines to be involved. The second is that the Cyber Discovery Camp targets a different population of students than the traditional u-Discovery model. Funded by the NSF, TechSTEP, the initial iteration of the u-Discovery model, was animated by an explicit desire to recruit and retain more students into STEM disciplines; in the Freshman Enrichment Project (FrEP) portion of the program, this involves enrolling interested but at-risk students in a set of summer courses to prepare them for the freshman curriculum (Crittenden et al.). By contrast, the Cyber

Discovery Camp was aimed squarely at high-achieving students, precisely the kind of students that go on to honors programs and colleges in universities. Teachers from participating schools were asked to select students who had shown an aptitude for math/science or the humanities (with a rough balance of students between the two disciplines). By working with high school faculty who teach high-achieving students across a range of disciplines, the Cyber Discovery Camp helped directly recruit potential honors students that partici-pated in the camp *and* created a recruiting pipeline through the participating teachers of other high ability students. Moreover, the expansion of the model to include non-STEM disciplines enabled the liberal arts faculty to address long-standing stereotypes about the institution and highlight programs in the liberal arts for participating high school students and faculty.

The Cyber Discovery Camp was a total-immersion experience for teachers and their student teams. This camp integrated numerous interdisciplinary expe-riences as well as week-long challenges involving specific disciplines such as engineering, computer science, mathematics (cryptography), literature, history, and political science. The camp used multi-media formats such as movies, lec-tures, hands-on tasks, and writing assignments. The students and teachers lived on campus for the entire week. Their housing and meals were provided, and activities were scheduled from 8:00am until 11:00pm in such a way that teams relied on the different strengths of the various members to complete the intense challenges of a given day. The camp organizers divided a typical day at the camp into different topics and incorporated various means of group interaction, including sessions that involved the entire camp group, sessions where the schools worked independently as a group, and sessions with mixed small groups where individuals were randomly assigned to help create new, diverse interactions (see Tims et al.).

By participating in the organization and execution of the camp, the honors program at Louisiana Tech helped re-create the honors collegiate environment in a compact and intense camp for rising high school sophomores of high abil-ity. In the process, it helped foster interdisciplinarity and collaboration among high school and college faculty. The experience proved so successful that the faculty team decided to try the same curriculum as a highly interdisciplinary honors course.

CAMP CURRICULUM AS AN HONORS COURSE

On the heels of the success of the first Cyber Discovery Camp in the sum-mer of 2008, the interdisciplinary faculty team responsible for its creation and implementation agreed to test the camp curriculum in an upper-division honors course. Mapping essentially the same subjects and projects covered in the camp over the course of a one-term honors class (with a deeper exploration of the issues appropriate for a college-level honors course), "Studies in Cyberspace" was offered in the winter quarter of 2009 as an upper-division, cross-listed hon-ors course. The authors wanted to see if the same interdisciplinary approach that

was so successful in a compact, intense week-long experience for rising high school sophomores could translate into an eleven-week course for college juniors and seniors. The authors also wanted to find out if this basic approach could serve as the basis for an interdisciplinary minor in cyberspace and then perhaps as the foundation for undergraduate programs in cyberspace engineering and graduate programs in cyberspace studies.

Overall, the course was a major success. The course attracted significant student attention: sixteen students enrolled in the course from a range of majors, including engineering, computer science, communication design, political science, business, literature, and biology. Involving eleven professors from six different disciplines, the course also received statewide attention for its innovative approach to the promises and problems posed by cyberspace. Moreover, the course received national attention when the honors director was able to secure a field trip for the students to the Air Force Cyber Command Provisional at Barksdale Air Force in Bossier City, La. (for the story see <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123148696>). This interaction provided a real-life context for the course content. Students and faculty had the opportunity to interact with members of the Air Force who are focused on defending the nation's cyber infrastructure. Finally, the course did an admirable job of familiarizing participating faculty with the honors program itself—its governing philosophy, its institutional challenges, and its potential in facilitating like-minded endeavors in the future.

The integration of topics across the disciplines was achieved by carefully selecting the right liberal arts themes, assignments, and case studies to integrate with the computer science, engineering, and mathematics subjects. Below are summaries of the major areas interwoven throughout the course:

HANDS-ON-LAB, BOE-BOT

The faculty employed the Boe-Bot robotic platform used in the freshmen engineering integrated curriculum. The hands-on robotic activities provided a visceral way of demonstrating vulnerabilities in coding and wireless transmission. The course developers recognized that not all students had been exposed to programming topics in their traditional curriculum. It was critical that the Boe-Bot activities be appropriately cast so that it exposed non-STEM majors to new concepts and expanded the capabilities of STEM students. The use of a robotic platform served as a mechanism for teaching problem solving and provided a context for other activities in the course. The robots also provided the unifying construct for the competition at the end of the term.

CYBER POLICY AND ETHICS

Students were presented with ethical issues from historical and philosophical positions. Faculty encouraged students to critically examine their engagement with information technology and assess its impact both on classical ideas of democracy and American democracy in particular. Students were also

exposed to the historical use of information technologies in domestic and international politics as well as the dangers that their use posed to various historical actors. Students were encouraged to discern and apply "lessons of history" to contemporary situations today.

HANDS-ON-LAB, CRYPTOGRAPHY

After presenting a historical perspective on the use and development of cryptography, faculty from the computer science and mathematics departments led discussions on issues in cryptography. Starting by posing the simple question "Can we share information without revealing information?" taken from Computer Science Unplugged (Bell et al.), a series of hands-on activities in computer science designed for pre-college students, we explored deeper more advanced topics in cryptography. Using material from classic upper-level number theory books, students were exposed to some of the key theory behind modern-day cryptosystems. Topics included modulo-arithmetic (a cornerstone of all cryptography), one-way hash functions, shared-key systems, public-private key systems, certificate authorities, and man-in-the-middle attacks. Several of these topics use very high-level mathematics, beyond the pre-requisites for the course. However, the complexity generally lies in the proofs of correctness. Rather than concentrate on the complete details of the proofs, we focused on presenting the students with the actual cryptographic methods used and the general arguments for their correctness. These sessions exposed students not only to cryptographic and code-breaking techniques but also to the mathematics and logic behind the techniques employed. Showcasing the mathematics behind modern cryptographic systems allows students to understand that we are only as safe in our online world as the state of knowledge in solving sophisticated mathematical problems.

CULTURE

The students read William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and issues of the *Machine Man* comic book. They also watched the films *Sneakers* and *The Matrix*. Finally, they created avatars on Second Life. Throughout the discussions of these cultural artifacts, students wrestled with what it means to live in a "cyber culture." In particular, they addressed the problems posed by the fictional works and whether or not these concerns have proven valid or would prove valid in the future.

HANDS-ON-LAB, ARCHITECTURE

Another aspect of cyber security relates to the physical structures that humans create. An architecture faculty member developed and presented material that showcased the need, vulnerability, and design of structures related to cyberspace. In particular, students considered how the digital environment constitutes a new "built" environment and what impact this new cyber

infrastructure might have on new and existing buildings. Student teams also designed "secure" buildings that would be used in the final Cyber Challenge; this required students to anticipate how their designs were vulnerable to attacks. Students designed their Cyber Challenge bases using 3-D modeling software (Sketch-Up) and constructed them based on these designs.

CYBER CHALLENGE

The final class in the course included what was called a "Cyber Challenge," a robotics competition based on the engineering and computer science platform used during the course, in which students incorporated various aspects of the activities from class. For example, students used the "secure" building from the architecture hands-on-lab in protecting and defending their base during the final challenge. Additionally, students expanded the hands-on Boe-Bot activities to meet their individual team needs. All the teams used wireless communication, and some of them expanded the capability of their system by adding game controllers for easier maneuverability of the robots.

COURSE ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

At the beginning and end of the term, we surveyed our honors students on a variety of questions regarding their confidence and attitudes in areas related to cyberspace. Although the sample size of sixteen students is too small to be statistically significant, the results are promising, and if we can convince other universities to adopt similar interdisciplinary courses more reliable results might be forthcoming. The questions posed can be grouped into two broad areas: STEM-related topics mainly focused on cryptography and robotics and the more liberal-arts-related topics dealing with ethics, politics, and culture. The response options were *confident, somewhat confident, neutral, somewhat not confident*, and *not confident*.

In the STEM-related questions, we probed the students on a number of issues. We asked the students to rate their confidence in designing robotic systems to perform tasks controlled by a human user interface. The pre-assessment survey responses showed that 44% of the students felt confident or somewhat confident in the matter. We note that 69% (11 of 16) of the students were engineering and science students while the remaining 5 were either liberal arts or business students. In the post-assessment survey, the positive responses jumped to 85% with only one student responding "somewhat not confident." We posed a similar question regarding confidence in arguing about strengths and weaknesses of simple security protocols. Initially, 19% of the students responded "somewhat confident," 12% were neutral, and 69% responded either "not confident" or "somewhat not confident." After the course, the response rate for "(somewhat) confident" increased to 46% and the "(somewhat) not confident" rate dropped to 31%. The heavier focus on the robotics project particularly at the end of the course most likely explains the stronger improvement in robotics ability versus security.

Though the initial confidence scores were relatively higher, we found similar improvements when assessing student attitudes to the liberal arts aspects of cyberspace. In particular, when asked how confident the students felt about arguing ethical issues involving cyberspace, initially 69% of the students answered "(somewhat) confident" but after the course the "(somewhat) confident" response rate jumped to 100%. Similarly, when students were asked about their confidence in discussing political issues related to cyberspace the response rates for "(somewhat) confident" jumped from 50% to 69%.

Of course, these numbers need to be interpreted carefully. As noted, the sample size is too small with a change of two students causing a 12.5% shift. Also, since these students are honors students, their natural confidence might skew the pre-assessment surveys toward a higher confidence level. Also, although they might have gained a deeper understanding of the topics after the course, their confidence levels might have remain unchanged. We did not ask them either to rate their feelings on how much they learned in the course or to reassess their pre-course confidence using their new understanding of the topics.

Since this was an initial offering of a highly experimental course, the faculty and students expected from the beginning that improvements could (and should) be made, so they were on the lookout for modifications. The survey results as well as feedback from the student participants and faculty instructors provided some interesting lessons of their own.

1. **Managing a course with several instructors requires careful planning.** On several occasions, various instructors placed assignment deadlines near each other, completely overwhelming the students; this happened because not all the instructors were always aware of specific demands placed by others. Making better use of an online course planning site such as Blackboard to track deadlines or requiring all assignments (and deadlines) to go through a single instructor could potentially remove such problems. Fortunately, the small class size and flexibility of the course and instructors meant that, once the students pointed out the conflicts, we were able to adjust the deadlines quickly and to adopt a single instructor as the point of contact.

2. **Integration of topics by the students cannot be assumed.** Integration of the multiple disciplines that relate to issues in cyberspace was a key emphasis of the course and most in need of improvement. Probably several offerings and, ideally, collaborations with other universities will need to occur before clear, successful strategies emerge. In the one-week camp, the integration of the material was far clearer to the students, probably because the camp was completely immersive and cyberspace topics were all that the students thought about for an entire week. Translating that experience to an eleven-week course was not easy; the students had other courses to worry about, and, instead of having a robotics lesson every day (twice a day) as with the camp, they had a robotics lecture roughly every two weeks. Our intent was

to take the successful topic sequence from the camp and expand it over an entire term, but this did not translate as well as we would have liked. In the evaluations, one student summed up the issue nicely: "I think it would help if the classes were somewhat grouped together, so that the students could keep track of what was going on. This really applies to the engineering/robotics and the cryptology sessions more than the other sessions." The notion of grouping the topics was one that we had initially considered and in hindsight might have been a better approach. Essentially, in a future offering, we most likely will offer the robotics session far more frequently in the early stages, perhaps every other lecture, while continuing to integrate the humanities aspects, and then switch to cryptographic sessions in the latter half of the course, again offering them on a more regular basis rather than once every two weeks.

3. **Finding the right number of topics to cover is also important.** Another suggestion students made was that, since the number and variety of topics was overwhelming, the course would be better if offered as two courses. The best suggestion to split the topics into two courses that would have to be taken together so that they could still be integrated. By effectively creating a six-credit course, we would be able to delve more deeply into each subject area and include additional topics. In a quarter system such as ours, students take an average nine credits, so a six-hour course would allow students to focus primarily on our course the entire term, leading to an environment more in line with the camp approach. Unfortunately, this suggestion poses new challenges: students, especially in engineering, find it difficult to fit an elective into their course load, let alone two electives in the same term. Such a requirement would almost guarantee a drop in enrollment due to scheduling issues.

4. **Advertising in order to balance enrollment numbers is essential.** For an honors course, we did not expect nor want a class size that was significantly larger than our sixteen students. However, the background of the students was not as balanced as we would have liked. As mentioned, we had eleven students registered as engineering and science students and five as liberal arts students. Our goal was to have equal portions of both. We attempted to enforce this balance by offering two officially separate (but unofficially identical) sections, one listed under Engineering and the other under Liberal Arts. A cap of ten students in both sections would have created a perfect balance. However, not enough students registered for the latter. We feel that we would have achieved a closer balance if we had done a better job of advertising the course to the liberal arts honors students and stressing the liberal arts content of the course. As this was the first offering of the course, advertising essentially was the main venue for recruitment; offering the course again relatively soon could help since word of mouth becomes another good avenue for recruitment.

5. **The payment structure for the course is viable.** The honors program affords prestige to faculty, and we found that faculty would be willing to teach a few classes in a highly experimental course with high-achieving students on a class-by-class basis. We paid each faculty member a modest stipend based on the number of courses that he taught. Together these stipends added up to the equivalent of the normal payment given for one adjunct to teach a class.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM HONORS PARTICIPATION IN THE CYBER INITIATIVE

In addition to the insights gleaned from our assessment of the course itself, the entire experience of participating in a university and regional initiative yielded important conclusions for the honors program, ideas that will help guide future initiatives. We pass them along here in case they may be of use to others.

1. **Honors educators should think more broadly about its use as a laboratory for innovation**. The familiar mantra about the usefulness of honors for trying out new courses was borne out by our experience with our honors class. It allowed us to gauge student and faculty interest and to try out some concepts on talented and flexible students; it also allowed the faculty a great deal of freedom in integrating material. In the course, a class on robotics was followed by a class on culture, which was in turn followed by a class on cryptography. We found that such a concept could have broader applications. For example, we are currently looking at adapting parts of a curriculum that we first tested in a camp for high school sophomores and then adapted to an upper-division honors course for use in community colleges as part of a 2+2+2 arrangement. Such an application suggests that the work we do in honors on curricular design does not have to stay just within our institutions.

2. **Honors can serve as a grant-writing vehicle.** By bringing together faculty from across the campus, the honors program helped establish new partnerships for teaching and research among faculty. Our next stage should be for these multidisciplinary teams to apply for funding through the honors program to give them greater resources for future research and curricular initiatives.

3. **Honors should be involved in professional development.** The teacher workshops are an excellent way to establish relationships with local teachers. These relationships allow honors administrators a way to get a sense of the context and background of local students, to establish a useful dialogue between college and high school faculty, and to gain outstanding opportunities for recruitment.

4. **Honors should be involved in university and regional initiatives.** Perhaps the greatest outcome of our involvement in the cyber initiative was the publicity. While this publicity was no doubt great for the honors program itself, it was perhaps more useful for the region as a whole. Our honors class made a small contribution to demonstrating what our state's institutions of higher education can do to promote research and workforce development in an area of critical need. The more we convince private and governmental employers that we can provide the education and workforce they need, the better off our region and state will be.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE CYBER INITIATIVE

Although the Air Force Cyber Command was recently downgraded to a numbered air force and relocated to San Antonio, the cyber initiative continues to gain steam through the efforts of local community, military, and university leaders. Barksdale Air Force Base was appointed headquarters of the new Global Strike Command, which will retain a portion of the old Cyber Command, and its leaders continue to work with community and university leaders to develop the kind of workforce necessary to support this industry. The Cyber Innovation Center building is scheduled to be finished by the spring of 2010, and the CIC reports considerable private and government interest in its ultra-secure environment; the Air Force has already contracted to rent out three of its floors. The Cyber Innovation Center also continues to work assiduously to promote greater collaboration between its private, academic, and governmental partners.

Academic outreach also proceeds apace. The authors were awarded a $951,000 Department of Education grant to promote cyber education and awareness in grades K–12. These funds will be used to pay for future iterations of the Cyber Discovery Camp as well as teacher development workshops over the 2009–2010 academic year. The Cyber Innovation Center received an NSF-ATE planning grant to establish a Regional Cyber Education Center, and it has formed a working group (led by the team from Louisiana Tech) to develop curricula that can articulate from high school through community colleges to universities. The honors program received a grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents to host a professional development workshop for university faculty on information literacy in January 2010.

The Louisiana Tech University Honors Program stands in a unique position to contribute to and benefit from these initiatives. As a place historically committed to interdisciplinary collaboration and curricular innovation, the honors program provides an ideal climate for supporting this initiative. But by extending its reach, commitments, and activities beyond the traditional honors setting, the honors program at Louisiana Tech hopes to play a role that will benefit the university, region, and ultimately itself. By involving itself in curricular development at the high school, community college, and university levels, it positions itself to play a major role in shaping the contours of teaching in this new

field, and by playing a significant role in academic outreach and teacher development, it cultivates and deepens relationships with area administrators and teachers, placing it in an advantageous position to recruit high-end students in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Fertile Ground: Reflections on Collaborative Student-Faculty Research in the Arts

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This project grew out of mutual interests. In January of 2008, I briefly intro-
duced myself to the students in my Honors 112 seminar, describing my most
recent research on a women's art collective that painted together in Houston,
Texas, during the 1970s. That afternoon, I received an e-mail from Honors 112
student Aya Mares that was charged with enthusiasm for art as "fertile ground
for change."

*Mimi had told our class that she was researching the Houston art collec-
tive, the Garden Artists, because her mother had been a member. She hoped to
learn more about the workings of an art collective and art's potential healing for
a group of women, some of whom suffered from poor health or depression. I,
too, am quite curious about the societal healing power of art, so I emailed Mimi
asking her for any art therapy resources she might have come across in her
research. This is where our project began.*

I replied to Aya that perhaps we could combine our respective research
questions—hers being particularly related to art activism, mine to art collec-
tives, and both of us sharing a desire to study therapeutic aspects of art. We
decided to submit a proposal to present on our collaborative research (which
had yet to take place) at the 2008 NCHC Conference in October. Our propos-
al was accepted, so we gradually mapped out a research plan in which we
would conduct oral histories over the summer with a variety of Maine artists,
several of whom were members of art collectives.

*Our project was primarily interview-based. Mimi and I met with former
members of the women's art collective, the 8"x 10"s, Gail Page and Lydia
Cassat; former member of the 10"x 10"s and current art activist Robert
Shetterly; art therapist Fran Clukey; art teacher and humble art activist Margaret
Baldwin; the environmental art activist group the Beehive Collective; and a
fiery woman artist and wife of a former University of Maine Honors College
Director, Arline Thomson.*

Our NCHC conference proposal claimed that we would present not only
our research findings but also the experience of doing a collaborative student-

faculty project, a topic that we found to be equally fertile ground. Conducting shared research with a student expanded my notion of myself as an instructor as I suggested scholarly ways to pursue common questions while remaining open to the many lessons Aya would teach. I guided us through fundamental research steps: drafting a conference presentation proposal; submitting a description of our research to the University of Maine Human Subjects Review Board; mastering Marantz digital recorders borrowed from our library's Media Resource Center; drafting consent forms; zipping around in university cars; arranging meetings with interviewees; and arriving together on subjects' doorsteps with shared scholarly anxiety and anticipation.

I regret having failed to collaborate wholly at times, mostly when schedules were tight. I could dash off an email draft of a consent form for Aya's review faster than we could coordinate a meeting to work on it. We did, however, manage authentic writing collaboration on several pieces, and I felt genuinely successful as a faculty collaborator during the rich and rewarding experience of conducting oral histories, which we did in a balanced and equitable way.

What a great experience it has been. Mimi and I have different backgrounds and experiences. This project propelled our individual research, and many interviews proved particularly meaningful for us. I am a third-year student at the University of Maine and began my time here as an art history major. As students do, I periodically questioned my choice of majors and wanted to explore other possibilities in the field of art and beyond. One of my thoughts had been the field of art therapy until our interview with art therapist Fran Clukey. Although Fran made clear how her work helps people, especially children in the community, I realized that her field might not be the path for me. Fran described an enormous wall of paperwork separating her from people who need help the most, like returning Iraqi war veterans whose limited insurance precluded their receiving treatment. I crave direct action.

Subsequent research in art activism excited me in a way that art therapy had not. The first art activist Mimi and I spoke with was Robert Shetterly, a painter who has mastered the art of effectively communicating with his audience through his bold exhibit "Americans Who Tell The Truth." The subjects for his 131 portraits range from small restaurant owners to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the Gold Star mothers who have lost a child in combat. Through his paintings, Rob prompts others to recognize the truth he sees in the remarkable Americans whom he portrays. He hopes to inspire citizenship, to encourage his audience to engage actively in bringing about authentic, radical change.

While speaking with Robert Shetterly about his art and its educational value, he mentioned a friend and fellow artist, Lily Yeh, and the positive role her art has played in the world. Yeh has worked for many years with inner-city communities and in war-torn countries creating art parks with murals, sculptures, and mosaics. Rob described how Lily and her organization, the Barefoot Artists, healed people in despair through the community art projects. In turn, suffering groups have begun to see themselves as people still alive. *I recognized*

Yeh as a direct-action art therapist, and I was able to imagine becoming a barefoot artist one day.

My thoughts on Art Therapy were transformed yet again when we spoke with artist Gail Page. Gail described murals that she had painted in an orphanage in Saigon and explained that an infusion of color altered the whole aura of the place. *She also described painting images of "spinning charkas" in vibrant colors, a process which she claimed preserved her energy and sustained her spirit through her own bout with breast cancer. In speaking with Gail, I understood that art therapy can be put into practice in various ways that might be personal and intimate for the practitioner. Above all, I was convinced that art indeed has a way of healing.*

I further benefited from speaking with the environmental art activist group, the Beehive Collective, based in Machias, Maine. Through research, collaboration, and education, the Beehive Collective has created enormous pen-and-ink murals depicting militarization, colonization, and privatization incurred by imperial governments and transnational corporations, highlighting the damaging consequences for the earth and its inhabitants. Like Shetterly, the Beehive Collective is thorough in its research and clear in its imagery, telling stories through verbal and visual language.

The Bees are an exceptional example of an art collective. Begun as a women's mosaic group in 2000, the collective has expanded nationally and internationally into a complex social system that is wholly cooperative, eschewing individualism and art ego through shared projects and cohabitation. No art, according to the Bees, is made outside of community. They are anticopyright, describing themselves simply as transmitters who do not own their ideas—an organism not an organization.

Visiting the house in which members of the Beehive Collective communally live was a telling experience. When we finally found the Bees' dwelling place, Mimi and I knocked on a side door that read, "Warning Bees." Inside the house, we found grungy young adults jointly preparing a polenta and beans breakfast, which they generously shared with us. Mason jars full of an odd leafy mixture looked less appealing, but we joined a small group at the kitchen table, and they explained their mission, their distribution of jobs, their collaborative mural work, and their extraordinary trips to Cuba and Panama. The environment was productive, exciting, and attractive in its cooperativeness.

As Mimi and I sat on the Collective's rickety kitchen chairs, I looked around the room, taking in the chore charts and the various facial expressions that greeted us or that didn't greet us at all. I listened to whispered conversations in the background, noting an undeniable tension that I recognized as something that grows out of the pressure and strain of being overworked as well as living with one's co-workers and friends all at once. I had considered joining a collective after I complete my undergraduate degree at the University of Maine. Visiting the Beehive helped re-shape images I had in my mind of collective living. I now have sturdier and more realistic ground upon which to make decisions related to future communal life and work.

I encourage students to research what they think they want to do before they make a commitment. An intensive look into art therapy or an art activist collective did not shatter my idealistic views of using art as my medium in the caretaking of the world. This research project strengthened and balanced my perspective. I have been encouraged and empowered through exploring my options, and the Honors College and Mimi have supported me in this effort.

Many of our questions regarding art activism, art therapy, and art collectives were answered through our research, yet we also discovered new and important lines of inquiry. We became wholly convinced that we must analyze the studio spaces in which art is produced in order to understand an artist and fully appreciate his or her intent. We gradually considered more deeply issues surrounding gender and art, having conducted a study primarily of women artists. Finally, we developed a more textured understanding of the unique potency and authenticity of original art as it offers an especially profound expression of individual experience and an important means toward activism and healing.

This study was not for a class, and it was not for a job; it was simply an experimental research project from which I have gained interviewing skills and knowledge of the paths I may want to pursue during my time at the University of Maine and beyond graduation.

Having explored rich fertile ground together, Aya and I will now cull from our work what we need for our respective studies in the arts. I also take away from this experience a newfound enthusiasm for collaborative student-faculty research, recognizing the endless mutual benefits of engaging my honors students as colleagues with whom I might share scholarly questions and conduct future, common research.

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Looking Back Matters

Teamwork for NCHC

Lydia Lyons

Hillsborough Community College

(What follows is a revised version of the presidential address that Lydia Lyons delivered on Saturday, October 31, 2009, at the annual NCHC conference in Washington, D.C.)

Having had the opportunity to listen to NCHC presidential addresses since 1995, I find today's opportunity a humbling one. Some of our presidents have used the conference themes as points of reference, but our first four conferences starting in 1966 had no themes. Ada Long and I share the experience of having chaired our NCHC conferences in San Antonio: she in 1994 with the theme "Crossing Borders" and I in 2008 with "Crossing Frontiers." Theme or no theme, some presidents have grappled with defining honors or, even more challenging, the NCHC.

Intuitively, we know what honors is, yet we have difficulty in explaining it to others and sometimes even to ourselves. Listen to the hallway conversations! However, our work in NCHC has given us frameworks within which to analyze honors. Frames of references should help us understand where we are and also where we should be going. That understanding should lead us to action. First, we need to understand the background of these frames, and then we need to question whether they work for us, knowing that we may need multiple or oddly shaped frames.

I am tempted to give once again the history of honors in our nation, followed by the history of the NCHC, but others have done so and done it well. So I will take us back only a decade to when we were on the brink of insolvency. I recall many earnest voices, but I hear one voice especially, that of Gary Bell, calming, reasoning, convincing, and reassuring. Our membership agreed to a painful dues increase.

Even then in those times of doom and gloom, NCHC leadership understood the acute necessity of permanent headquarters and an executive director. Plans for restructuring the NCHC with a professional executive director began in 1995; in June 2002, Past President Rosalie Otero wrote: "A permanent office could serve and expand the membership, guide public relations and publicity, coordinate programs and institutes, and, in general, provide a host of important services to the members, individuals, and institutions of NCHC" (45).

Our membership endorsed the concept, and the work began in earnest. We were changing the culture of NCHC, and we worked hard at the task. We came to understand Vince Lombardi's definition of a team: "Individual commitment to a group effort—that's what makes a team work." We were white-water

rafting, at times desperately; we lost an oar or two. In our zeal and passion, feelings were hurt, and we realized, as Mark Twain said, "Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits."

After our raft hit a rock or two or three, the University of Nebraska, Lincoln provided the space for our national headquarters. We owe and continue to owe our gratitude to the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and particularly its honors director, gentleman and scholar Patrice Berger. Our facilities are outstanding. We have a place of our own; Virginia Wolfe would approve.

Then, our raft flipped over as we struggled with adjusting to an executive director, a major cultural change in any volunteer organization. I started to thank all those who bailed out the water and righted our raft, but I wouldn't ever leave the podium, so I will single out for recognition Liz Beck, who came out of retirement to be Interim Executive Director as we went through the process of a new search.

That process was successful under the presidential leadership of Hallie Savage, and Cindy Hill became Executive Director. I am pleased to say today that, under Ms. Hill's leadership, the national office has met and exceeded the Board of Directors' mandate for a professionally run office. Ms. Hill has succeeded in hiring, training, maintaining, and encouraging an excellent staff.

Our raft has navigated through the exciting, challenging, and sometimes dangerous churns of foaming waters, and we have now come to a serene pool of water, but we must be mindful that, even in these smooth waters, undercurrents are projecting us forward. We must take command of our raft. We cannot be complacent nor abdicate our responsibility to be a positive force in higher education. NCHC must position itself to play an active role in higher education, or ever mindful of Will Rogers' admonition that "Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there."

Just as in white-water rafting, we must keep a careful collective eye on what lies ahead. You may be thinking that we are each doing everything we can in our own universities and colleges and have no time to work or to increase our work for NCHC. After all, we have an executive director and staff in our established headquarters. But I remind you that we are still a volunteer organization. Teddy Roosevelt could have been defining our work when he said, "Far and away, the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

Please join committees of your interest and help address the important issues of those committees. Our conference printed program always includes the committees' meeting times and locations. At all our conferences, you have an open invitation to attend any of the meetings, including your Board of Directors' meeting.

Like every organization, NCHC has a personality. The shared values and assumptions that are at the center of our organizational culture allow us to thrive. Our statements of Vision, Mission, and Core Values present our shared focus on excellence in and respect for honors education. As our mission

statement says, we are a professional organization that provides support for our members as they develop, implement, and expand honors education. Through the years, NCHC members have initiated and maintained a wealth of activities: curriculum development, program assessment, teaching innovation, national and international study opportunities, internships, service and leadership development, mentored research, and outstanding publications.

I ask you to look especially at the sentence in our mission statement that defines the NCHC as "serving Honors professionals, and advocating support for an excellence in higher education for all our students." Our students are high-maintenance, and we devote countless hours to their care. As an organization and as honors administrators and faculty, we need always to exercise that care with respect for our students in all their diversity within both institutional and national contexts.

We all face obstacles to serving all of our students all of the time: we face a growing percentage of students with serious mental health problems; we are frustrated by the culture of cheating that plagues education today; and, as Past President Sam Shuman said in his 1992 presidential address, "In spite of some genuinely valiant, even heroic, efforts American pre-college education continues to sink into a bog where accreditation is confused with competence and inadequate baby-sitting mistaken for learning. . . . " (1).

We live in a culture of cheating and quick fixes, and our students bring the consequences of this culture into our colleges and programs. I was intrigued this summer as I sat in the audience at a conference of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars when the speaker asked his student audience how many were having a birthday; hands went up, and one student grabbed her driver's license to prove her birthday even though no one had asked for proof. The culture of cheating that this student took for granted has arisen in part from all the misleading slogans and empty promises that they have encountered: cleaning products kill 99.9% of germs; state lotteries promise instant wealth; news reports come out with more attention to speed than accuracy; AP courses are designed to accelerate the degree process; ACT and SAT scores are quick and easy criteria for admissions even though we know that they are not good indicators of success in honors. Students who have been raised in an environment that values instant results are tempted to produce instant work, even it that mean copying from others.

In spite of all the negatives trends, we bring students to a place where they find comfort and discipline, intense work and play, purpose and action. We model honors on the front porches of the past.

We have no quick fix for higher education. NCHC's Core Values posit collegiality and a shared purpose of NCHC. The time is now to reexamine what our shared purpose is as we try to prepare our students for an increasingly complex world. What we know today will change tomorrow, but this need not cause confusion or suspicion. Instead, the multifaceted realities of how people think, feel, and act should encourage us to remain open to possibilities, to

change, to common ground. We should be able sometimes to cooperate and sometimes to disagree with one another. That's human nature and the enduring gift of relationships.

In planning for the future, we must balance new opportunities with the uncertainty of change and resulting new trends. We must continue to encourage enhanced personal, social, and intellectual development while at the same time helping our students develop within themselves rather than focusing only on external validation. We in honors give mixed messages in trying to create environments where students can develop themselves as whole, healthy citizens with a sense of worth but all the while awarding plaques, certificates, and medallions. When our graduates march across stage with medallions clinking on their chests, cords on their shoulders, and shawls around their necks, the irony should not be lost on us.

In honors, we recognize the importance of life-long learning and social responsibility. Even though social responsibility is ever more challenging today, we are up for meeting this challenge because we must be. Our NCHC membership has an abundance of expertise and energy, and we must use our creative tensions to move the NCHC from its present to its preferred future (Chait, Ryan, and Taylor 29). We must recognize our external and internal influences, celebrate our uniqueness, and also identify what binds us, what we have in common. With that commonality of purpose, we will position NCHC as an important voice in higher education.

One of the 2009 conference goals was to give meaningful opportunity to reflect on and experience the spontaneous character of an honors education. Our organization distinguishes itself because we encourage student involvement through their election to the Board of Directors, committee memberships, and presentations. We must reaffirm that students are at the center of all we do, helping them wherever and whenever we can.

We must embrace another of our conference goals by focusing on superior quality while recognizing the constructive nature of learning. NCHC always provides, as this conference has promised, "opportunities to take risks, to stretch, to innovate, and to learn." T.S Eliot notes, "Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go."

On the Crosstown Expressway that I often travel, signage warns "stay in lanes"; under most circumstances on the Crosstown that is good advice, but equally important is knowing when not to stay in one's own lane. The time is now for NCHC to move out of restricting lanes. We can no longer paint our landscapes with the paint-by-numbers sets of old.

The time is now for NCHC to join other higher education organizations of similar interests and to initiate such partnerships. In summer 2001, Past President Joan Digby wrote: "For a long time, NCHC has been good at teaching and learning, at talking and listening—but mostly to each other. . . . We were too self- directed and as a result, too few people knew about us. If our mission in support of excellence in undergraduate education is to expand, then

we need to talk, think, partner, and work with others" (74). In honors, we have been at the forefront of what later became trends in higher education. Unfortunately, in our zeal we didn't stop often enough to document, report, promote, and share our own best practices.

In our collaborations, knowing who we are, what our goals are, we must take the lead and make our voice heard in higher education, presenting reasoned and articulate positions on the issues from an honors perspective.

I began this talk with the metaphor of white-water rafting, and I'll end it with another sports metaphor: biking. Soon after we were married, my husband had a custom-made, two-seated bicycle built for us. As I am 5'1 and he is 6'2, any standard design wasn't enough to make for a long-range bike trip or even for cycling a few feet. The perfect bike for us had to be specially designed, and even so it was useless without our learning to ride together. Having not married until close to the age of fifty, my husband had to learn not to push off without warning—especially since my shoes were clipped to the petals. I, like many honors directors, needed to learn to give up control. From the back seat, I couldn't be the one to pedal first. I simply had to stay balanced and trust that we would not crash to either side as he initiated the first pedal with a strong forward thrust.

If we are to be the voice of higher education, we could take some lessons from that two-seated, custom-made bicycle. We need clear goals, a custom design, assigned tasks, new patterns of behavior, changing roles, strength, commitment, and trust. If we master these lessons, we can work together to make the NCHC move forward with speed, balance, and grace.

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When It Comes Time Not to "Jump the Shark": Stepping Down as Director

Nick Flynn

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BACKGROUND

I was the founding director of the honors program at Angelo State University. Our program started off in a small room in our library back in 2001 with seventeen students. Since then, the program has grown to approximately 150 students with a 2,000-square-foot lounge. Additionally, we received a $250,000 donation for programming and scholarships. After seven years as Director, in 2007 I began to contemplate the possibility of stepping down, and at the start of the fall 2008 semester I made the difficult decision so that I could devote more time to my scholarly endeavors. In retrospect, I wish that I had had some of the insight I am providing in this essay, and I hope that I can help others who are contemplating a move, permanent or temporary, out of honors.

INTRODUCTION

I recently heard the term "jumping the shark" and decided to look into this colloquialism. The original reference for "jumping the shark" is an episode in "Happy Days" when Fonzie jumps over a shark tank in order to maintain his coolness in front of his friends. Since that time, the term has come to refer to television shows that have passed their peak and, in turn, do odd things with plot lines in order to regain viewership or reinvent the show. In many ways, this term could be extended to the issue of when, why, and how somebody should step down as director of an honors program. Using the metaphor of "jumping the shark," this essay will discuss the timing and reasons driving a director's decision to leave an honors program, focusing on some reasons why somebody should not step down, some reasons why they should, and some matters to consider during and after stepping down. Finally, I will discuss what a former director might want to do in order to assure a successful return to honors.

REASONS FOR NOT STEPPING DOWN

It may seem a little odd to discuss reasons for not stepping down first, but this issue is important since some directors do step down prematurely. A

common mistake that directors make in stepping down is feeling that their program lacks adequate resources to do everything they want to do, and so they become frustrated with their progress. But if you are honest with yourself, you usually realize that other programs and academic departments on campus also lack the funding necessary to do what they could be doing, and, in some cases, your vision for the program and for the resources associated with it might not be in line with the university's priorities. In these tight budgetary times, most programs lack sufficient resources and must live with less than the ideal.

Other directors may step down because they feel that their honors supervisor is not paying enough attention to the program. However, if you follow NCHC guidelines, then your supervisor should be your chief academic officer, so you are dealing with a person who is extremely busy. While your supervisor should demonstrate an interest in the program when you hold your periodic meetings or when you informally discuss the program with him or her, this person probably does not have the time to pat you on the back every time you do something well.

Other directors become disillusioned when they find that people on campus just do not understand the honors program. Physicists aside, do you understand string theory or, for that matter, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle? The point here is that none of us can be expected to know something about every initiative or program on campus. If people do lack an understanding of your program, then you can enhance its visibility, perhaps by sending out emails, sponsoring campus events, and writing newsletters to promote your program.

On another note, some directors might get frustrated with their situation and threaten to resign in order to get the attention of their supervisor, which is probably the worst reason for stepping down. If your supervisor thinks you are threatening to step down in order to manipulate him or her, you may find yourself being removed from honors before you are actually ready to leave.

The last two reasons for not stepping down primarily have to do with perceived productivity. You may feel you are doing all you can in honors and elsewhere but not getting enough done. I will discuss resource issues associated with stepping down later, but some of us just need to learn how to delegate. Newsletters, for example, can be written by a journalism or English major in the program, with you just providing the initial topics and editing. Consider generating subcommittees within your honors advisory council that can handle some parts of your job (e.g., admissions, student events, or external relations). Most honors directors understood when they took the job that they would have a harder time performing consistently well in teaching or research. To overcome this difficulty, you might find ways to incorporate your honors work into your professional advancement by, for instance, doing research with an honors student in your own academic department or writing articles and doing presentations on honors topics or on honors education in your field. You would be wise to first have discussions with your honors supervisor and department head about where you can place your honors work among your promotion materials.

Some of us will reach a point where we feel we are burned out on honors. At my wedding, a good friend told me that, if I really loved my new bride, I would not make her spend every waking minute with me during our first year of marriage. This advice shocked me at first, but now it makes sense. If you find that most of your waking hours are spent thinking about honors, then you probably need a temporary break from it—maybe a vacation or just a few days between semesters doing nothing professional at all—so that, after this break, you can evaluate where you are.

GOOD REASONS FOR STEPPING DOWN

Now, we can talk about good reasons to step down as director. Samuel Schuman published an excellent article for *Honors in Practice* last year that addresses this topic. The reasons that we will discuss here include resources, professional advancement and health. In regard to resources, you might take a look at programs at peer institutions and determine whether your level of support is in line with the norm. If there are clear discrepancies and nobody wants to do anything about them come budget time, maybe you do need to start thinking about stepping down. First, however, give yourself a finite period of time for the administration to come up with funds. Provided that your program is growing well, two budget cycles should be enough to determine whether the resources are coming or not. If you fail on the first cycle, then you can consider restructuring your arguments in your next budget request; after all, insanity is doing the same thing twice and expecting different results.

Another good time for stepping down is when honors is getting in the way of your professional advancement. If you find yourself getting further and further behind in salary or promotions because of what you are doing in honors, then it might be time to step down. Again, make sure that you first have considered and exercised ways to incorporate your honors work into your academic career.

The most important reason for stepping down is that your health is beginning to suffer. If you have taken some time off and still find yourself run down more often than before you took the honors position, then take the time to examine your situation. If the job is taking too much out of you personally, perhaps you need to do something else.

BOWING OUT GRACEFULLY

My drama instructor once told us that our entrance on stage would often be eclipsed by our exit, and this is certainly true with how you step down as director. The resignation letter, timing of the announcement, and possible counter offers are serious matters. The resignation letter can benefit from Internet resources; plenty of good websites out there discuss how to draft resignation letters. You want to end on a good note, so this is probably not the time to complain about the honors situation. If you have already told the administration that the program lacks sufficient funding and you need more direct

support, then you do not need to say it again. Your letter needs to include the effective date, benign but plausible reasons for stepping down, and a thank you for the opportunity to work for a worthy cause. Giving a one-semester notice for stepping down may be appropriate in some cases, but you should consider providing a two-semester notice; this will help ease the transition for the new director, and it will help prevent the search committee from having to scramble to find your replacement (Schuman 2009).

When you do make the announcement public, timing is everything. Make sure that the people who deserve to know about your resignation before the public announcement are told beforehand; these people should include at least your academic department head, honors advisory council, and honors staff. Ideally, all of these conversations should occur within a couple of days to assure that the word does not leak out before all of these important people know. Your honors students need to know before the decision is made public, but try to avoid announcing it to them until your resignation letter has been accepted; it is always possible that the administration will come back with a counter offer that you can't refuse.

You need to be ready for a counter offer. The administration may come back and ask you to stay longer, or they may ask what they need to do to keep you at the helm. You need to know under what special set of circumstances you would be willing to remain as director. Again, the resignation should not be a tool to get what you want for you or for the program. On the other hand, if the administration asks you what it would take to entice you to stay on, you want to be prepared to tell them. You also need to be prepared for your supervisor to accept the letter politely and wish you the best of luck. A good supervisor will likely see your resignation coming and be ready to move on.

YOUR REPLACEMENT

Another important point that some directors do not consider before they step down is the issue of their replacement. You may or may not be asked to choose your successor, and most administrative models suggest that the successor should be chosen by somebody else. I tend to agree with these models, but in some unique situations the outgoing director is asked to select or at least recommend a replacement. If you have not been asked to get involved in the selection process, leave it that way. Usually you should not insert yourself into the conversation or tell the selection committee whom they should pick. You may not be happy with the person chosen, but you relegated that decision when you stepped down; you need to respect the decision that the selection committee makes. Finally, make sure that you do everything possible to help your replacement be successful (Schuman), thus demonstrating your continued support of the program and making your transition into "normal" academic life easier for you. Typically you will need to spend significant time with your replacement explaining operational procedures or decisions.

AFTER YOU STEP DOWN

Important considerations after you step down include how to handle changes within the program, rumors, student complaints about the program, and being tapped for another position; you also need to consider how to handle your emotional response to stepping down. You may find it distasteful or hard to believe, but your successor is going to make changes in the program. If you are asked your opinions about these changes, you want to express them in a professional and socially acceptable manner. ("What the heck are you thinking?" is not socially acceptable). You made changes to the program while you were director, so it is unreasonable to think that *everything* is going to stay the same.

You may also find yourself having to deal with campus rumors and student complaints about the program after you step down. If you are asked about a rumor concerning the program that you have insight on, then consider the ramifications for both yourself and the program before you discuss the topic publicly. Similarly, you may be confronted with student complaints about the program (Schuman 2009). If you were doing your job right as director, you formed at least a few strong relationships with your honors students. Some of these students may approach you to discuss or complain about something in the program. Your best response is to encourage them to talk to the new director or to talk to staff in the program. You do not want to undermine the program director or honors staff by being negative or, even worse, giving an uninformed opinion. Depending on your relationship with the new director, you may be able to pull her or him aside and mention the concern; if you choose this course, then treat the situation delicately, especially during the first semester or so after you stepped down.

After you step down, you might well be tapped for something else, as I was. The announcement about my stepping down was only three days old when somebody asked me if I could serve on a very demanding committee. Some people may think that you chose the position of honors director because you love doing service work. Since my major reason for stepping down was to pursue scholarly interests, the explanation of my decision to decline the committee position did not entail a long discussion. Similarly, you should have an answer to this question before you are asked so that you do not end up taking on unwanted responsibilities.

One of my greatest surprises has been how emotional stepping down is for some directors. In much the same way that you grieve other losses in your life, you may find yourself second-guessing your decision or irrationally reacting to changes in the program after you stepped down. Accepting the fact that the decision has been made and trying to move forward is better than dwelling on it. If it was a mistake to step down, then you have the opportunity to learn from your mistake.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR RETURNING TO HONORS

Returning to honors is probably the last thing on your mind if you are considering stepping down, but you may want to leave the honors door open for a return in the future. If you step down gracefully, handle issues tactfully with the new director, and avoid rumors and student complaints, a future return may be a viable option. You want to make sure that you take the time to update your *curriculum vitae* while honors is fresh in your mind. You can also review the job postings on the NCHC website for honors director and dean positions. You might want to examine these announcements right after you step down to see what other skill sets you would need to acquire in the event you decide to return. You may also want to maintain contact with your honors colleagues. Granted, you left your position, but this does not mean that you need to forego all things honors. In fact, staying in touch with honors colleagues has proven to be healthy for me personally. A few of our conversations have affirmed my decision to step down, and I have also been able to help some directors with their problems.

CONCLUSION

Stepping down or quitting is never an easy task. You need to verify that your decision is made rationally and for the right reasons. You want to carry your head high throughout the process and not allow yourself to think that the decision is irreversible. Since no administrative position is a lifetime appointment, you can take comfort in the fact that, at some time, everybody has to step down.

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Celebrating Twenty Years of Honors through Oral History: Making an Honors Program Video Documentary

CATHERINE IRWIN

UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

On April 4, 2008, the University of La Verne Honors Program celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a benefit dinner. The main entertainment for the night was a twenty-minute video documentary based on excerpts from oral histories I had completed with former students and faculty of the program. As students and faculty sat side by side and watched the documentary, I could see people in the audience smiling or nodding their heads in agreement with the person speaking on screen. An occasional "Hey, that's me!" was followed by laughter from the crowd. After the documentary, a discussion followed that added to the memories collected in the documentary as individual faculty and students stood up and reminisced about their experiences in the honors program. The stories gleaned from oral histories and incorporated into the film documentary had transformed a large, formal dinner into a warm, intimate setting.

Ten months earlier, when the founding director of our honors program, Dr. Andrea Labinger, asked me to do an oral history of our honors program for its twentieth-anniversary benefit dinner, I found myself enthusiastically agreeing to go one step further and use the oral histories to create a video documentary. To make this project work, however, I knew that I would need a lot of support from people on campus who had the equipment and technological skills required to do a good job. While the main reason that we embarked on this project was to put some oral histories together to entertain guests at our honor program dinner, we were also committed to the task of gathering important images and distinct, first-person experiences that could articulate the importance of our program: we wanted our finished documentary to reflect the high standards of our program so that it could potentially serve as a supplemental resource for future grant applications, fundraising events, and institutional program assessments.

Because they are preserved, documentations through oral history provide valuable institutional memory to honors programs that lack administrative or staff continuity. Oral histories have been referred to as "spoken memory" or "personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews"(Ritchie 1). They are usually documented through audio or (more

recently) digital recordings, with the interviewer asking the interviewee, otherwise known as the narrator, specific questions prepared in advance. With the accessibility of video and computer editing equipment, more and more oral histories are now both audio- and videotaped. Unlike news reporting, the entire taped dialogue between the interviewer and the narrator is usually transcribed and archived in a library or archive for future use.

As a discipline, oral history has ethical and legal guidelines as well as professional standards. For students and faculty new to oral history, two good sources of information about oral history are *The Oral History Manual* by Barbara Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan and *Doing Oral History* by Donald Ritchie. Both books include the "Principles and Standards of the Oral History Association" as well as forms and documents commonly used in the field. A good online source is the Oral History Association's website, <http://www.oralhistory.org>, which also has valuable resources such as regional oral history workshops and institutes for both the professional and the amateur oral historian.

GETTING STARTED

As an instructor in the honors program, I knew that our financial resources were limited (that's why we were doing a dinner benefit!), so immediately I had to assess whether I had the appropriate equipment to complete an oral history project. Before I started contacting former students and faculty of our honors program, I first set out to determine whether I had access to any available film and editing equipment on campus. Fortunately, my university's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which works closely with our Office of Instructional Technology (OIT), was equipped with a digital camcorder, professional lighting equipment, and microphone; it also had a studio that included Apple computers complete with editing software that instructors could use for free. I learned from this experience that, if you need to keep equipment costs for your oral history project to a minimum, ask around at your school whether you have access to audio-visual equipment either from your instructional technology office or such departments as broadcast journalism, communications, or film. Your local historical society may also have audio-visual equipment available to rent as well as staff historians to help you with developing, interviewing, and archiving your project (but check their fees first).

After locating the appropriate equipment, I then met with Dr. Labinger, who became the main advisor for this project. We discussed potential interviewees for this project and identified the themes and topics to cover with former students and faculty members of the program. I also began my research by asking Dr. Labinger basic questions about the honors program. I wanted to know who was involved in getting the program on its feet and what the first classes were like. What year was the honors program born? Who taught the first courses? Who made the decision that honors courses were to be team-taught and why? I also began working on questions that I wanted to ask students: Out of

all the classes they took, which was their favorite honors class? What is their fondest memory or craziest experience that they had in honors? Which professors had an impact on them? Through my initial phone conversations with former students and my conversations with Dr. Labinger, I was able to prepare a list of open-ended interview questions for faculty and students that I revised and/or expanded according to the themes and topics I covered with each individual interviewee (see Appendix C).

From our conversations, Dr. Labinger and I drew up a list of twenty-five students and six faculty members to contact for an oral history interview. Ultimately, seven former students and four faculty members were willing and available to appear on camera to talk about their experiences in the honors program. I was able to interview the two key faculty members who founded our program. I invited the two other faculty members for an interview after three students mentioned that these instructors had an impact on their lives. I was lucky to have found seven students who had been in the program at different periods: one student was in one of the program's earliest classes in the early 1990s; two students were from the late 1990s; and four students were recent graduates. In addition, the two male and five female students included two Asian Americans, two Latinos, one African American, and two whites from different socio-economic backgrounds and college majors. The diversity added to the richness of the program.

This mix of faculty and students ended up sharing some of their most vivid memories and experiences in the honors program. Two students talked about being the children of immigrants as well as the first in their family to go to college and how their professors in the honors program helped them succeed in college; another student talked about the eye-opening experience she had when she went with her professor and fellow honors students to Los Angeles' skid row and ate a meal at a homeless shelter; one professor talked about his course on "Utopian Societies" and taking his students on a field trip to Arcosanti, an experimental town in Arizona infested with scorpions (the hostel where they stayed gave them fly swatters for the night); other students spoke movingly about life-long friendships they made as a result of being in honors.

CONDUCTING AND EDITING THE INTERVIEWS

Perhaps the most time-consuming and tedious part of this project was transcribing each interview and then editing it for "just the highlights." Because I was new to editing film, I decided to set the length of my documentary at twenty minutes and to schedule interviews in thirty-minute blocks of time in order to keep to a minimum the number of hours of film to edit. I also emailed a list of open-ended questions and guidelines for audio-visual oral history interviews to participating faculty and students so that they were well prepared when they sat down in front of the camera (see Appendix C). The result was that most interviews lasted twenty minutes, and, although I ended up with over 250 minutes of film to cut, edit, and shape into a tight,

well-written, twenty-minute documentary, I did not feel overwhelmed by the task of editing.

Because I had no funds to hire a professional editor, I found a staff member from my university's Center for Teaching and Learning/Office of Instructional Technology to teach me how to use iMovie, which is a relatively simple computer program on most Apple Macintosh computers that provides any Mac user with the tools to create and edit movies. It took me an average of nine hours to edit each interview down to "just the highlights." To identify the highlights of each oral history, I looked for particular moments in each interview where the interviewee opened up and articulated the most compelling, insightful, or funny anecdote or experience that he or she had in the honors program. Almost all of the highlights that ended up in the documentary were then whittled down to approximately sixty seconds in length. As I chose the highlights from each interview to include in the documentary, I also began the process of writing and organizing the documentary around them. In its final form, the documentary was organized into six sections, each with a different theme: "In the Beginning: the First Adventures"; "And Then There were More Adventures . . . "; "Great Times Learning from Professors"; "Meeting Andrea Labinger"; "A Place to Grow . . . "; "And to Form Lasting Bonds." With these themes in mind, I then transferred and organized different interview highlights that fit any of the themed sections into the documentary. I then had a staff member from my CTL/OIT do final edits of the sound, background, and lighting.

LESSONS LEARNED

Because I had the time and the equipment, I was able to do most of the work for this project. In retrospect, however, if I had the funding and a large budget, I would have hired a professional editor and post-production crew to help with sound editing, lighting, and music. I would have asked my colleagues in the Department of Communications if they or their students would be interested in collaborating with me on this documentary, perhaps incorporating it into one of their courses on documentary filmmaking or film editing. With a good film crew, I would have been able to concentrate more on the administrative and historical aspects of an oral history project: contacting and organizing interviewees, doing preliminary interviews and research, preparing different forms, developing questions, and doing the actual interviews. However, the chance to do this project on my own was an invaluable experience as I now understand and know how to manage, direct, edit, and write a visual documentary based on oral histories from beginning to end (see Appendix A).

At the end of the project, I also began to see more benefits and reasons for doing an audio-visual oral history project. Because this project was of historical and research value to my university, the University of La Verne's Wilson Library agreed to keep all of the original oral histories in their archives. And with the library holding these oral histories in their archives, I can now continue to build on the number of interviews conducted with former students and

faculty members of the honors program. These interviews are now available for any future research on and institutional assessment of La Verne's honors program. This project's in-depth, ethnographic-style research could potentially supplement traditional quantitative assessment that relies on statistical data rather than case-study-style responses. One professor who was interviewed and praised by her former students in this documentary even included a copy of this documentary—along with her students' regular course evaluations—in her file for tenure.

In addition, as universities cut programs as a result of the financial crisis, oral history video documentaries could be shown to university administrators, boards of trustees, legislators, and other audiences as part of a comprehensive argument for the continued existence and funding of honors programs and colleges. Perhaps, most importantly, they are ready to be used for the next celebration!

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_____

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APPENDIX A*

BASIC STEPS TOWARD COMPLETING AN ORAL HISTORY DOCUMENTARY

Pre-production (Time frame: three months minimum)

1. Identify the focus of your project and name your project. If you are creating a documentary to share at a particular event, determine the date of this event.

   a. Ask your Department or Honors Program Chair if your project needs to go through any type of institutional process for approval. While oral histories are usually considered exempt from Institutional Review Board approval, more and more institutions are requiring that oral history projects go through the IRB process. Check with your IRB Committee for university guidelines.

2. Review and determine equipment needs, budget, time frame, and personnel. Average professional costs are listed in parenthesis; obviously the quality of the equipment will vary. Ask your university if you have privileges to check out film and video equipment and to use any video/post-production rooms on campus.

   a. pro HD camcorder with tripod ($150–300/day)

   b. lighting equipment ($30–70/day)

   c. microphone ($12–35/day)

   d. video deck monitor ($100–$225/day)

   e. editing video deck ($150–300/day)

   f. video room rental ($150–300/day)

   g. post-production room rental ($600–850/day)

Many production companies also have video equipment packages; plan on spending a minimum of $3000/week. In the state of California, the cost of a 2-person production crew (equipment included) is $1400 for a ten-hour day (the price tag varies with each state). A post-production film editor can cost $2000–$20,000/week.

3. Review and determine location, budget, and deadlines for production and post-production

   a. place to do interviews

   b. dates for scheduling interviews (minimum of 1–2 weeks)

   c. dates for transcribing and reviewing interviews (minimum of 3–4 weeks)

   d. dates for editing and writing the documentary (minimum of 2–4 months)

4. Identify and meet with Honors Program advisors and project personnel who will help you identify and locate potential narrators as well as provide technical support.

   a. Establish deadlines, time frames, and budget with advisors and personnel.

5. Find funding (if needed).

6. Decide on who will own project materials (archive or repository).

7. Create files for record keeping (agreement forms, biographical information form, interview forms, initial contact letter, interview confirmation letter, master schedule form). See Appendix B for a sample agreement form. A full-size, reproducible sample of these forms can be found in Sommer and Quinlan's *The Oral History Manual* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2002).

8. Meet with advisors to begin background research on your project .

   a. Do background research on Honors Program. Find and gather photographs from director of Honors Program, former faculty and students.

   b. Create list of potential interviewees.

   c. Identify interview questions and the themes and topics to cover during the interview (see Appendix C).

   d. Write up interview guidelines to help prepare interviewees (see Appendix C).

9. Begin contacting potential interviewees and scheduling interviews.

10. Do preliminary interviews with interviewees (schedule phone appointments) and prepare them for the interview (provide guidelines and basic list of questions).

Production (Time Frame: two weeks minimum)

11. Do the interviews

12. Process interviews. Make a copy of each interview and archive original interviews

13. Send thank you notes to interviewees (budget $10–20 for cards and postage)

Post-Production (Time frame: four months minimum)

14. Transcribe interviews (professional cost for transcription: $4/page. On average, the transcription of a thirty-minute interview will cost between $140–170).

15. Review and edit interviews for "highlights."

16. Determine major themes based on interview highlights. Determine title of the documentary.

17. Write narrative (if needed) and organize documentary around themes.

18. Begin integrating interviews into documentary.

    a. Integrate relevant, funny, or noteworthy photographs into the film (in between sections as well as at the beginning and end of the documentary).

19. Edit documentary for picture, sound, lights, background, etc.

20. Add "thank you" list of interviewees, interviewers, advisors, donors and funders to end of movie. Also include by-lines for writer(s), director, editor(s), and other crewmembers and personnel.

21. Preview and critique documentary. Revise and re-edit documentary as many times as needed.

22. Show documentary.

The total time and cost of an oral history video documentary project will vary. If you will be working on this project part-time with a bare bones staff, plan on working on this project for a minimum of eight months. If you will be hiring a professional production and post-production crew and support staff, plan on spending a minimum of $10,000.

*Parts of Appendix A are based on Barbara Sommer's "Oral History Project Planning Steps" in her book *The Oral History Manual* (Walnut Creek, CA; Alta Mira Press, 2002).

The author also wishes to thank Shane Rodrigues of the Communications Department at the University of La Verne for reviewing the budget in Appendix A.

APPENDIX B*

THE HONORS PROGRAM ORAL HISTORY VIDEO DOCUMENTARY PROJECT AGREEMENT FORM

You have been asked for information to be used in connection with the Honors Program at _____ (name of institution) and their video documentary project. The purpose of this project is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use. In return for the recording of this interview, the Honors Program will place and maintain it in _____ (designated archive or repository). These materials may be made available for research and such public programming as determined by _____ (designated archive or repository). These materials may be made available in formats other than the original, including, but not limited to, radio, television, cable, web/internet, or any other form of electronic publishing for purposes of research, instructional use, publications, or other related purposed.

Thank you for participating in this project.

I _____ (name of interviewee) have read the above

and knowingly grant to _____ (designated

archive/repository) the full use of this interview. I hereby transfer to

_____ (designated archive/repository) legal title

and all property rights to this interview (including copyright).

Interviewee's signature_____Date_____

Narrator's name (please print)_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone_____Email _____

Interviewer's signature_____Date _____

Address_____

City, State, Zip Code _____

*Parts of this agreement form are based on the "Narrator Agreement Form" used by the Center for Oral and Public History at California State University, Fullerton.

APPENDIX C*

HONORS PROGRAM VIDEO DOCUMENTARY:
INTRODUCTION FOR EACH INTERVIEW

Hello, my name is _____(name of interviewer). It is <u>DAY, DATE,</u> <u>YEAR</u>. It is a (beautiful, hot, warm, cold) (evening, afternoon, morning). We are at <u>PLACE OF INTERVIEW</u>. The interview is with <u>NAME</u>, a former Honors Program student/instructor at <u>NAME OF SCHOOL</u>. We will be discussing his/her memories and experience as an Honors student/faculty member at <u>NAME OF SCHOOL</u> during the years _____. This interview is being conducted for the Honors Program Video Documentary Project. The interview will be archived at <u>ARCHIVE/REPOSITORY</u>.

Good (morning/afternoon, evening), _____. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Honors Program Video Documentary: Professor Guidelines

At the interview, I'll be asking general questions to get us started. To prepare for the interview, please go over the questions below and reflect on your answers. Sharing specific memories about events and people during the interview would be great. If you need time to go over your notes during the interview, we can stop the camera and you can go over your answers.

Questions for Professor, Department of

Here is the list of general questions to get our interview started:

1. Tell me a little bit about how you got involved with the Honors Program. Which courses did you teach?

2. Who co-taught the course with you? How did you both decide on the focus?

3. What are the strengths of teaching your course in an inter-disciplinary manner?

4. What are the strengths of Honor students?

5. What impact has the program/faculty had on students? What impact has the program had on you as a faculty member?

6. What is your most vivid or most memorable experience working in the Honors Program with students and faculty? Any other memories?

7. How does the Honors program help prepare students for their lives after college?

8. Since its inception, how has the Honors Program grown?

9. What message would you like to send to past, present and/or future Honors students?

10. Is there anything else about the Honors Program that you would like to share with me today?

General Information

What to Wear, Make-up, etc.

• The video interview will be from the "shoulders up," so dress business casual: Wear a long or short-sleeve shirt that is not "busy"—a solid color is good. For men, a tie looks good. Since the background is green, you might want to wear a different color than green.

- Bring a comb or brush. We don't provide make-up, so if you do your own, wear "flat" make-up. The lighting is pretty intense.

The Place of the Interview

During work hours, the interview will take place in the video room at _____. Evening or weekend interviews will take place at a convenient location for both the interviewer and the interviewee.

I think that's about it! If you have any more questions, feel free to call me at _____.

Thanks again,

Signature

HONORS PROGRAM VIDEO DOCUMENTARY: STUDENT GUIDELINES

At the interview, I'll be asking general questions. To prepare for the interview, please think about your answers to the questions below. Jotting down notes usually helps. Consider talking about specific memories, events, and people during the interview. If you need time to go over your notes during the interview, we can stop the camera and you can go over your answers.

Questions for Honors Students

Here is the list of general questions to get our interview started:

1. When were you in the Honors Program? Which Honors classes did you take? What was your major?

2. Why did you want to be in the Honors Program?

3. What are the strengths of the program? How did the program help you navigate through your college experience?

4. What is your most vivid experience or fondest memory of the Honors Program? Any others?

5. What impact did the teachers and your fellow Honors students have on your life? (Any specific memories or examples?)

6. How did the Honors program help you professionally or after college?

7. What are your future endeavors? What is your current or future career/occupation?

8. What message would you like to send to past, present and/or future Honors students?

9. Any other memories or experiences that you would like to share with me?

What to Wear, Make-up, etc.

- The video interview will be from the "shoulders up," so dress business casual: Wear a long or short-sleeve shirt that is not "busy"—a solid color is good. For men, a tie looks good. Since the background is green, you might want to wear a different color than green.

- Bring a comb or brush. We don't provide make-up, so if you do your own, wear "flat" make-up. The lighting is pretty intense.

THE PLACE OF THE INTERVIEW

During work hours, the interview will take place in the video room at _____. Evening or weekend interviews will take place at a convenient location for both the interviewer and the interviewee.

I think that's about it! If you have any more questions, feel free to call me at _____.

Thanks again,

Signature

*Appendix C guidelines were created during pre-production meetings with my technical advisors at the University of La Verne's Center for Teaching and Learning.

Becoming Part of a Story

TED L. ESTESS

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

[What follows is a slightly revised version of a story that Ted Estess read at the ceremony honoring his retirement after thirty-one years from the position of Dean of the Honors College at the University of Houston. The story, as he explained to those assembled, was written some years ago in Colorado, where he spent time most summers with his wife, Sybil, and his son, Barrett.]

I

Late in the day my thirteen-year-old son Barrett and I row down to the deep water at the end of Sun Valley Lake. He wants to try a new lure called a *Mepps.* To his amazement, the Mepps no more than touches the water when a big Rainbow hits it.

We move around the lake for a couple more hours and Barrett tosses that Mepps out another two hundred times, but he never gets another strike. He is puzzled. How is it that he catches a trout on the first cast and never touches another the rest of the day?

To a considerable extent, it is a fortuitous matter, this catching a fish. The task of the fisherman is limited merely to doing what he can to encourage good fortune to come his way. At a bare minimum, he doesn't want to get in the way.

All this reminds me of the series of events that led me to being hooked by the University of Houston several decades ago. It began when my phone rang in March of 1976 in Missoula, Montana, where I was visiting professor at the university there. The voice said, "This is Donald Lutz from the University of Houston." I had never heard of Lutz, never thought of the University of Houston.

"I'm calling to invite you to be a consultant for us. Gerald Hinkle recommended you."

I started to ask, "What's a consultant?" And I didn't tell Lutz I wouldn't have known Gerald Hinkle if he walked in the door.

Later, I recalled that I had met Hinkle at a meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council in October of 1973 in Williamsburg, Virginia. Hinkle, Sam Schuman—who is my distinguished and long-time friend in honors education—and I ended up going out to dinner together. I wanted to try the peanut soup at Aunt Sally's Tavern.

I've met lots of people at lots of meetings, but this one time in Virginia I meet Hinkle. The following year Hinkle meets Lutz at an honors meeting in Arkansas; and then over a year after that Lutz calls me in Montana, thereby setting in motion a series of events that led to Sybil's and my moving to Texas in January of 1977. My intersecting Hinkle in Virginia and then his intersecting Lutz in Arkansas were at least as improbable as the first cast of Barrett's Mepps landing right on top of that trout in the deep water of Sun Valley Lake.

Had I decided to eat a hamburger alone instead of going with Hinkle for some of that god-awful peanut soup at Aunt Sally's Tavern, my life in Houston, Texas, never would have happened. Thirty-one years of life in Houston would have been . . . well, it would have been nothing. Not a thing.

Now somebody might say, "That's just the way life is, Estess. What's the big deal?"

Well, to Estess, it *is* a big deal. It's my life I'm talking about, and I don't like thinking that my life, *as I have lived it,* might never have been. If it might never have been, it somehow seems flimsy, shadowy, inconsequential. I've heard that song about life being but a vapor in mid-summer's day and all that, but somehow I want *my* life to be more substantial, more solid. If it's not, the game doesn't seem worth the candle, and why do I spend so much time thinking about it?

A book arrived in yesterday's mail, a gift from my friend John Smith. The inscription says: "Ted & Barrett, drop everything & read this book." I tend to do what friends tell me to do, so last night I started reading *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy. I came quickly to like John Grady Cole and Lacey Rawlins, two young cowboys living around San Angelo, Texas. One night John Grady and Rawlins lie down in the middle of a blacktop road to watch the stars:

> *Rawlins propped the heel of one boot atop the top of the other. As if to pace off the heavens. My daddy run off from home when he was fifteen. Otherwise I'd been born in Alabama.*
>
> *You wouldnt of been born at all.*
>
> *What makes you say that?*
>
> *Cause your mama's from San Angelo and he never would of met her.*
>
> *He'd of met somebody.*
>
> *So would she.*
>
> *So?*
>
> *So you wouldnt of been born.*
>
> *I dont see why you say that. I'd of been born somewheres.*
>
> *How?*
>
> *Well why not?*

If your mama had a baby with her other husband and your daddy had one with his other wife which one would you be?

I wouldnt be neither one of em.

That's right.

Rawlins lay watching the stars. After a while he said: I could still be born. I might look different or somethin. If God wanted me to be born I'd been born.

And if He didnt you wouldnt.

You're makin my goddamn head hurt.

Some years ago, I made *my* goddamn head hurt trying to get through Jean Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness.* Like most folks who tried, I never made it, but I read enough to catch the drift. Sartre uses the French phrase *de trop* to capture something of what John Grady Cole is talking about. An occurrence—like Lacey Rawlins' getting born in Texas—is *de trop* if it has this accidental, fortuitous quality about it. *Contingent* is another word philosophers use to talk about the same thing. An occurrence is contingent if it may just as well have happened as not.

An occurrence—indeed, a life—that depends so thoroughly on the unlikely intersection of Estess and Hinkle at an honors meeting in Virginia and on the subsequent intersection of Hinkle and Lutz at another honors meeting in Arkansas is thoroughly contingent. It is *de trop.* Thinking about that makes my goddamn head hurt.

Now some folks are different from me. When they see how chancy life is, they're ready to have a go at it. They enjoy taking chances as long as they have a chance to take chances.

Others are like Jean Paul Sartre. They bravely face up to the contingency and even to the absurdity of their choices such as my choice to try the peanut soup at Aunt Sally's Tavern.

But for the life of me, I've never been able to respond like that, and I tell you why: I wasn't reared that way. It's in the rearing, that's what it is.

Now philosophers may scoff at this, but it's the only refutation—if I may use the word—to Sartre I've ever come up with. When he says that my life is thoroughly contingent, he implies that my life is as insubstantial as vapor floating off a lake. Again, against such a view, I have to say: I wasn't reared that way.

But I have to confess that my life felt mighty vaporous, mighty *de troppy* in the months after I moved to Texas to direct the nigh-moribund University of Houston Honors Program. I felt that I might as well be—or not be—somewhere else. It was as though I was somewhere I wasn't supposed to be, living a life I wasn't supposed to be living.

"That's why," I said to Michael one day, "I feel so bad." Michael was a therapist-friend who helped me quite a bit during those first months in Texas.

"What's why?" Michael asked.

"Why I feel so bad moving to Houston."

"Last week you told me you didn't think you would ever figure out why you feel so bad, and here you are this week still trying to figure it out."

"That was last week," I said.

"Well?"

"I feel bad because it's all an accident, my even being in Houston, Texas, directing an honors program that really doesn't exist. It might just as well not have happened. None of it."

"That's curious," he said, and then he started laughing. I don't know why, but his laughing got me to giggling, too. Before I had a chance to say anything else, Michael said, "Our time is up for today. But, Ted, there's another possibility."

"What's that?" I asked.

"Instead of feeling bad you could feel good."

I said, "I doubt it."

II

Out here in Colorado this summer I've taken to rereading some old books. This week I'm rereading Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It.* I know it's only a coincidence, but my friend John Smith sent this book to me fifteen years ago, and here this week he sends me another, the one by McCarthy. Talking about growing up in Missoula, Montana, Norman Maclean writes:

> By the middle of that summer when I was seventeen I had yet to see myself become part of a story. I had as yet no notion that life every now and then becomes literature—not for long, of course, but long enough to be what we best remember, and often enough so that what we eventually come to mean by life are those moments when life, instead of going sideways, backwards, forward, or nowhere at all, lines out straight, tense and inevitable, with a complication, climax, and, given some luck, a purgation, as if life had been made and not [just] happened.

To tell the truth, that's the way I was reared to think of life. The Baptists did it to me. Good-hearted preachers and widow women told me that Good God Almighty had nothing better to do than make a plan for my life. I thus came to expect my life to line out "straight, tense and inevitable" and for all the parts of it to go together like parts of a well-made story.

At the same time, other good folks were saying, "Young man, you are an American: you can do anything you want to do, be anything you want to be." In other words, I was free to make up my life any old way I wanted to. But while I was trying to make it up, it felt like my life was going "sideways, backwards, forwards, or nowhere at all."

Now this is a strange, even contradictory situation for a young man to be in: to be hearing, on the one hand, that somehow your life is planned even

before you begin living it and, on the other, that your life is up for grabs. The first places you before one great Necessity; the other places you before an infinite number of possibilities.

To some extent what the Baptists said about life made me feel pretty good. After all, it was rather invigorating to think that Good God Almighty had a plan for little old Teddy Estess way down there in Tylertown, Mississippi. That view made things pretty simple: all you have to do is figure out the plan and get on it. But if you don't, you are, as we say, up a creek without a paddle.

The problem, of course, arose in the middle of life when I saw that something so momentous as moving to the fair city of Houston, Texas, and taking on a leadership role in honors at the University of Houston turned on so fragile a matter as a cup of peanut soup. I didn't seem to be living a life that had been made by any Great Maker or Planner.

Nor did I seem to be living a life of my own making. It wasn't clear what story, if any, I was in; but it was clear that whatever was happening wasn't altogether of my own making. It was as though my life was being constructed out of fortuitous happenings and tortured choices, happenings and choices that could just as well have been otherwise or not been at all. Mine seemed a tenuous little life with no foundation.

"Michael," I said the next week, "I feel like I'm walking on thin air."

"That's the way I felt when I decided not to be a priest anymore."

"*What?*" I said. "*You* were a priest? I didn't know that."

"For eighteen years. I even taught theology in Rome for a while. Studied there, too."

"Then you know what I'm talking about?"

"Maybe," he said. "Perhaps you feel like you are walking on thin air because of a discrepancy. It's the discrepancy between a picture you have of life and the life you're living."

"How's that?"

"Well, the life you are living seems more fluid, risky and chancy than your picture of life allows, that's all. It's a common thing. Just change your picture of life and you remove the discrepancy. Maybe then you wouldn't feel so bad."

"But, Michael," I said, "don't you think there's something to what the Baptists said about—"

"Ted," he said, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but our time is up for today."

What I was getting ready to say when Michael called time on me was that maybe the old Baptist widow women weren't complete idiots in suggesting that one might live life as though it is made—and before made, planned. Maybe one can see one's life that way.

And wouldn't it be something to have both things at once: at the same time to acknowledge the fluidity and contingency in one's life, even to enjoy that, *and* to have the solidity and firmness that come from living a life that, in some sense, is made, where all the parts seem to fit.

The next week, I said, "Michael, I want both."

"Both what?"

"I want the old picture I had of life *and* to be truthful about feeling that my life turns on chance."

"*That's* curious," he said. "I thought we decided last week that the discrepancy is painful. To remove the pain you have to remove the discrepancy, which means, Ted, that you have to give up that old picture of your life as being planned before you live it. You just have to give that up."

I said, "I don't want to give that up."

"That's not surprising," he said. "You were reared that way. Still . . . " And here Michael's sentence trailed off and silence took over for a while. After a minute or two, I asked, "Well, what are you thinking?"

"It's a possibility," he said.

"Really?"

"Really. But I still think you're making a mistake."

"What's that?"

"You want prospectively what you can only have retrospectively."

I wasn't sure I was understanding a thing the man was saying, so it made sense to ask, "What are you saying?"

"Just what I said," he said. "I mean that retrospectively—when, one day in the future, you find yourself looking back, say, after thirty years—life might acquire the kind of stability and firmness your old picture promised you. Seen retrospectively, the story of your life may acquire a degree of stability and firmness, but I think you will have to wait a while for it."

"Wait for what?" I asked.

"Wait before you can acquire a deep-down sense that your life could not have been—nor would you have wanted it to be—any other way."

"But you said that I'm making a mistake. What's the mistake?"

"Ted, it's what I said. The mistake is to expect prospectively what you can only have retrospectively. Prospectively, your life will continue to be fluid, chancy."

"That's bad," I said.

"There's another possibility."

I said, "I doubt it."

He said, "You could find it interesting or fun. You would have to practice, but you could."

"Could what?"

"Ted, aren't you listening? I'm saying that you could, or may, find the chanciness of life interesting or just plain fun."

I said, "I doubt it."

"As I said, *you* would have to practice a long time."

"But, Michael," I asked, "what about that old Baptist picture?"

"That's not just Baptist, you know," he said. And then he took off talking about St. Augustine's *Confessions*. I almost interrupted to tell him that I was paying for me to talk to him, not to listen to him talk to me. He went on to say

that, when Saint Augustine was forty-five years old, he wrote the story about how he got to be who he was. By that point, his life had acquired a kind of inevitability about it. That's what gave him authority as a teacher. He felt as though his life could have been no other way, that his life was as it was from the very beginning.

I wanted to say, "That's what I want, Michael, and that's what I don't have and don't expect to have." But I didn't.

Then Michael said, "Whenever I taught Augustine to the seminarians, I asked them to memorize one line from *The Confessions.* The line goes like this: *sic curas unumquemque nostrum tamquam solum cures, et sic omnes tamquam singulos.*"

"Michael," I said, "Baptists don't do Latin."

"Oh," he said, "I forgot." Then he went off talking again, this time explaining that when Augustine wrote that line he was at a sufficient remove from certain events of his life that he could see how things fit together, even the random details. By that point in his life, Augustine saw that he had become part of a story.

"Michael," I said, "what does the Latin mean?"

"Oh," he said, "it means, ' He cares for every one of us as though he had no other for whom to care. He cares for all as he cares for each.'"

"That's very curious," I said.

"Yes," he said, "it is."

Over the years I've thought a good deal about what my friend said that day. In many ways, he was right: I was making a mistake. I sometimes still make it. The mistake is to expect always for life to unfold as it ought to unfold, as it has to unfold. To want too quickly for the pieces of life to cohere as in a well-wrought story.

I've tried to give it up, but I sometimes catch myself making the same mistake. Only now, I don't call it a mistake. I call it *my way of getting on.*

But at times you may see a pattern in life and see life lining out straight, tense, and inevitable. You may see your life becoming part of a story. And the story of your life may seem so stable that it feels as though it might well have been made in advance of your living it. Even those things that presented themselves as so much sand blowing in the wind may seem, retrospectively, somehow inevitable. Without each one of them, you would have missed part of the story and every part somehow seems necessary—even good—for the whole life to be what it is. At some point, somehow the parts seem mysteriously to fit together and form a whole grander and more satisfying than anything you ever could have imagined.

III

As I leave the deanship of the Honors College after these thirty-one years, I am inclined to think of my life in honors education in something of the same kind of way: things could not have been, nor would I want them to be, any way other than the way they were.

But once you get past fifty or sixty years old, you've had world and time enough to see why Saint Augustine would also confess that "the soul is a great abyss." This great explorer of the interior abyss hereby fesses up to a deep-down and abiding ignorance about himself. Only in the shadow of a confession of abysmal ignorance about the deepest things of himself could he venture something so audacious, something so comically exuberant, as, "He cares for every one of us as though He had no other for whom to care. He cares for all as he cares for each."

Would that it were so. May we do our part to make it so.

_____

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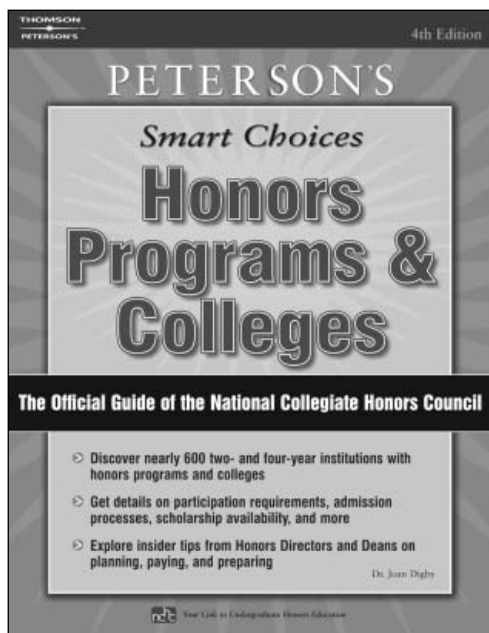
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