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IMPACT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Us 3

Editorial Statement 4

About This Issue's Authors 5

Announcements 6

Impact Essay Competition 7

Essays:

For the Love of Dogs: An Academia-Community Partnership Targeting a Mutual Goal
By Shlomit Flaisher-Grinberg, Saint Francis University 8

Navigating 'Archives of Power': What's the Objective?
By Karen R. Roybal, Colorado College 16

An Interdisciplinary Partnership to Address Financial Literacy among Undergraduate Students
By Stephen Hill, Eileen Beiter and Cathy Leverone 23

"It's a lot to take in" - Undergraduate Experiences with Assigned Reading
By Maura A. Smale, New York City College of Technology and Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY) 28

Book Reviews:

Ray, Angela G. and Paul Stob, editors. *Thinking Together: Lecturing, Learning, & Difference in the Long Nineteenth Century.*
Reviewed by Susanna Kelly Engbers, Ferris State University 38

Edin, K. K. *The Measurements of Decay*.
Reviewed by Jeffery Vail, Boston University 40

Previous Issues 42

ABOUT US

Impact: The Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning is a peer-reviewed, biannual online journal that publishes scholarly and creative non-fiction essays about the theory, practice and assessment of interdisciplinary education. *Impact* is produced by the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning at Boston University College of General Studies. *Impact* accepts submissions throughout the year and publishes issues in February and July. Please submit your essays for consideration at https://citl.submittable.com/submit.

 If readers want to search by journal subject they might use these words: education, graduate, undergraduate, interdisciplinary, disciplines, curriculum, higher education.

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Dear Readers,

Explicitly established to foreground interdisciplinary teaching and learning, *Impact* also welcomes evidence and discussion of experiential learning. Often the two – interdisciplinary teaching and experiential learning – co-exist. Yet even when they do not, both practices model how to think in myriad ways and to notice how knowledge is constructed.

As our winter 2019 issue makes clear, interdisciplinary teaching and learning and experiential learning often begin with questions. Why does it matter that students grapple directly with archival material? What happens when undergraduates practice psychology by training dogs? Do students understand financial literacy? This issue also asks questions about students' reading habits and faculty expectations of them as readers.

Our book reviewers also appreciate authors who examine what characters and people learn when they journey forth into the world (as opposed to remaining in the lecture hall).

We hope you enjoy the various programs and possibilities examined within this issue, and we encourage you to reach out to us with your thoughts.

All the best,
Megan

Megan Sullivan, Editor-In-Chief, Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning

ABOUT THIS ISSUE'S AUTHORS

Eileen Beiter is an associate professor of accounting in the School of Business and Leadership at Nazareth College, where she teaches Managerial and Intermediate Accounting. Professor Beiter graduated from Canisius College with an MBA in Professional Accounting. Her research interests include corporate governance and internal controls as well as personal financial literacy.

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Shlomit Flaisher-Grinberg is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Co-Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Neuroscience Minor at Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania. She teaches classes such as "Biological Psychology," "Learning," "Canine Learning & Behavior," "Animal Minds," and "Psychopharmacology". At Saint Francis University, she maintains an active research lab that investigates the biological basis of anxiety and mood disorders, as well as the effects of the human-animal bond on health and well-being. Her research appears in peer-reviewed journals, and she has presented it at local, national, and international conferences.

She is a member of the "Society for Neuroscience" and a reviewer for multiple journals and textbook publishers. In 2018 she was awarded the Saint Francis University's "Honor Society Distinguished Faculty Award" for her model classroom teaching; the "Gerald and Helen Swatsworth Award," which recognizes excellence in teaching, research, and service; and the "Become that Someone" Community Engagement Award for her work with the community. She is passionate about experiential learning and community engagement, avenues that allow her to invite the community into her classroom and to take the students out of the classroom and into the local community.

Stephen C. Hill, PhD, is an assistant professor in the School of Business and Leadership at Nazareth College. He teaches at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Specifically, Dr. Hill teaches in the Leadership & Organizational Change and Human Resource Management graduate programs. He completed his Ph.D. in Industrial/ Organizational Psychology from the University of Akron. His primary research interests include career development, working in retirement, and mentoring.

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Karen R. Roybal is an Assistant Professor of Southwest Studies at Colorado College. She is the author of *Archives of Dispossession: Uncovering the Testimonios of Mexican American Herederas, 1848-1960* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017). Her research and teaching focus on gender, race, and place.

Maura A. Smale is Chief Librarian and Professor at New York City College of Technology, and faculty in Interactive Technology and Pedagogy at the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY). Her research interests include undergraduate academic culture, critical librarianship, open educational technologies, and game-based learning. With Mariana Regalado of Brooklyn College, she published *Digital Technology as Affordance and Barrier in Higher Education*, exploring the ways that CUNY students use technology in their academic work (2017). Their edited volume *Academic Libraries for Commuter Students: Research-based Strategies*, published in 2018, presents studies on commuter students' library use at public colleges and universities around the U.S.

Jeffery Vail is a Master Lecturer in Humanities at Boston University's College of General Studies. He is the editor of *The Unpublished Letters of Thomas Moore* (Picking and Chatto, 2013) and the author of *The Literary Relationship of Lord Byron and Thomas Moore* (Johns Hopkins, 2001). For our next issue he will be conducting an interview with K.K. Edin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Latest Announcements

Please refer to CITL's website for our latest announcements: http://www.bu.edu/cgs/citl/.

IMPACT ESSAY COMPETITION

Every December, the editors of *Impact: The Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning* invite submissions of scholarly and creative non-fiction essays between 1,000 and 5,000 words on any aspect of interdisciplinary teaching or research. The author of the winning essay will receive a $250 award and publication in *Impact*.

Essays should be readable to a general, educated audience, and they should follow the documentation style most prevalent in the author's disciplinary field. Essays for this contest should be submitted by the first Monday in December to http://CITL.submittable.com/submit. See our general submission guidelines in Submittable.

CITL reserves the right to not publish a winner in any given year. Faculty and staff from the College of General Studies are not eligible to submit to this contest.

ESSAYS

For the Love of Dogs: An Academia-Community Partnership Targeting a Mutual Goal

By Shlomit Flaisher-Grinberg, Saint Francis University

Abstract

One of the most rewarding yet challenging tasks for a college or university educator is to construct an application-based course that integrates theoretical concepts with active, hands-on, career-oriented practices. At times, the task can only be accomplished if an academia-community cooperative team is formed. The current project was designed to create and implement a partnership between the Department of Psychology at Saint Francis University and the staff and volunteers at the Central Pennsylvania Humane Society in Altoona, PA. The project enabled students to foster shelter dogs for an academic semester, to use psychology-based concepts to train dogs for obedience and agility, and to explore topics relevant to animal-assisted therapy, education, and intervention. The goal was for this enterprise to do several things: enable the transformation of the traditional "Psychology of Learning" course into a dynamic and skill-oriented course; support the professional development of students and the hard work of staff and volunteers at the Humane Society; and contribute to the successful adoption of shelter dogs. Students' grades were used to assess success in the class, anonymous surveys were used to assess students' attitudes towards the learning outcomes of the class, and the success of the program was evaluated using the ratio of dogs' adoption at the end of the semester. Results indicated that students attain an appropriate grade distribution in the class and consider it beneficial towards their academic and professional development. The adoption ratio following the conclusion of the semester is 100%. Future directions for the project are discussed.

Introduction

Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behavior. It spans topics such as emotion, motivation, cognition and physiology, and explores normal and abnormal processes which affects human health and well-being (Schacter et al.). The "Psychology of Learning," a course which focuses on the analysis and modification of behavior, is offered as part of the undergraduate psychology curriculum at many academic institutions (Trench LS). The course teaches about permanent change in a learner's knowledge, skills, and responses through habituation, sensitization, and classical and operant conditioning (Schacter et al.; Domjan Michael). While the course examines traditional and contemporary theories of learning, it also has the potential to include hands-on active and interactive exercises so students can apply learned concepts to their daily lives. To accomplish this goal, many institutions provide students with the opportunity to work with non-human animals (most commonly rats) as an integral part of the course design (Elcoro and Trundle; Hazel et al.; Hunt and Macaskill; Trench LS).

Given the demonstrated intelligence, and communicative and adaptable nature of dogs (Elgier et al.; Huber et al.; Miklósi; Reid), as well as the interactive nature of the "Psychology of Learning" class, it may seem surprising that very few, if any, Psychology-based curriculums integrate dogs into the course. Partial explanations may include space and funding constraints or the fact that while academic institutions can offer various resources to their students (including technology-enhanced classrooms, dedicated faculty, and supportive staff and administration), most academic institutions have no direct supply of dogs.

A possible solution to this problem is the creation of an academia-community partnership with a local animal shelter. Estimates are that each year, 5-8 million dogs and cats enter U.S. animal care and control facilities, and each year 3-4 million are euthanized (*Pets by the Numbers*). Many of the animals entering US shelters display various maladaptive behaviors. They may engage in excessive locomotion and barking in the kennel (Protopopova et al.). They may have behavioral issues (e.g., growling, biting, jumping) and inadequate training (e.g., house training). They may also have problems with socialization (towards humans or other animals). These behaviors, which can be aggravated by the high level of noise, confined spaces, and reduced levels of human contact that are typical to the shelter environment (Thorn et al.), may impede successful adoption. Since students enrolled in the "Psychology of Learning" focus on theoretical concepts of behavioral analysis and modification, the inclusion of shelter dogs can help facilitate their learning outcomes. The inclusion also alters dogs' behavioral rehabilitation and adoption outcomes.

In line with this logic, the Department of Psychology at Saint Francis University (SFU) formed an alliance with the Central Pennsylvania Humane Society (CPHS) to create the "Canine Learning and Behavior" class, a community-based engaged learning course. It was hypothesized that the class would enrich the experience and success of enrolled students, facilitate their career-building efforts, advance their preparation towards graduate-school, and support the dedicated work of shelter staff and volunteers. It would also allow for the behavioral rehabilitation of shelter dogs, which could help adoption rates.

Method

To create the "Canine Learning and Behavior" course, the Department of Psychology at SFU and the staff and volunteers at CPHS identified common goals to generate a unified definition of the course. They also selected personnel to engage in curriculum design, and established the appropriate procedures required to support community-based teaching within the institutional classroom. Learning outcomes were evaluated using students' grades, and the perceived contribution of the class to students' knowledge/comprehension and skill development. I assessed their preparation for future occupation with anonymous surveys that included the following items: 1)"The lectures contributed to my knowledge/comprehension of the material" 2) "The (dog-centered) labs contributed to my knowledge/comprehension of the material" 3)"The class was relevant to my chosen education/occupation" 4) "Enrollment into the class contributes to my future education/occupation" 5) "I will use the skills acquired in the course in my future education/occupation", and 6) "I will integrate dogs into my future education/occupation" (Likert scale distributions: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree 1=strongly disagree). Surveys also solicited qualitative measurement of attitudes towards the class via student feedback, and the success of the program was evaluated using the ratio of success in the placement of dogs into adoptive families. All procedures were approved by the SFU Institutional review board (IRB) and by the SFU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC, Protocol # 00017).

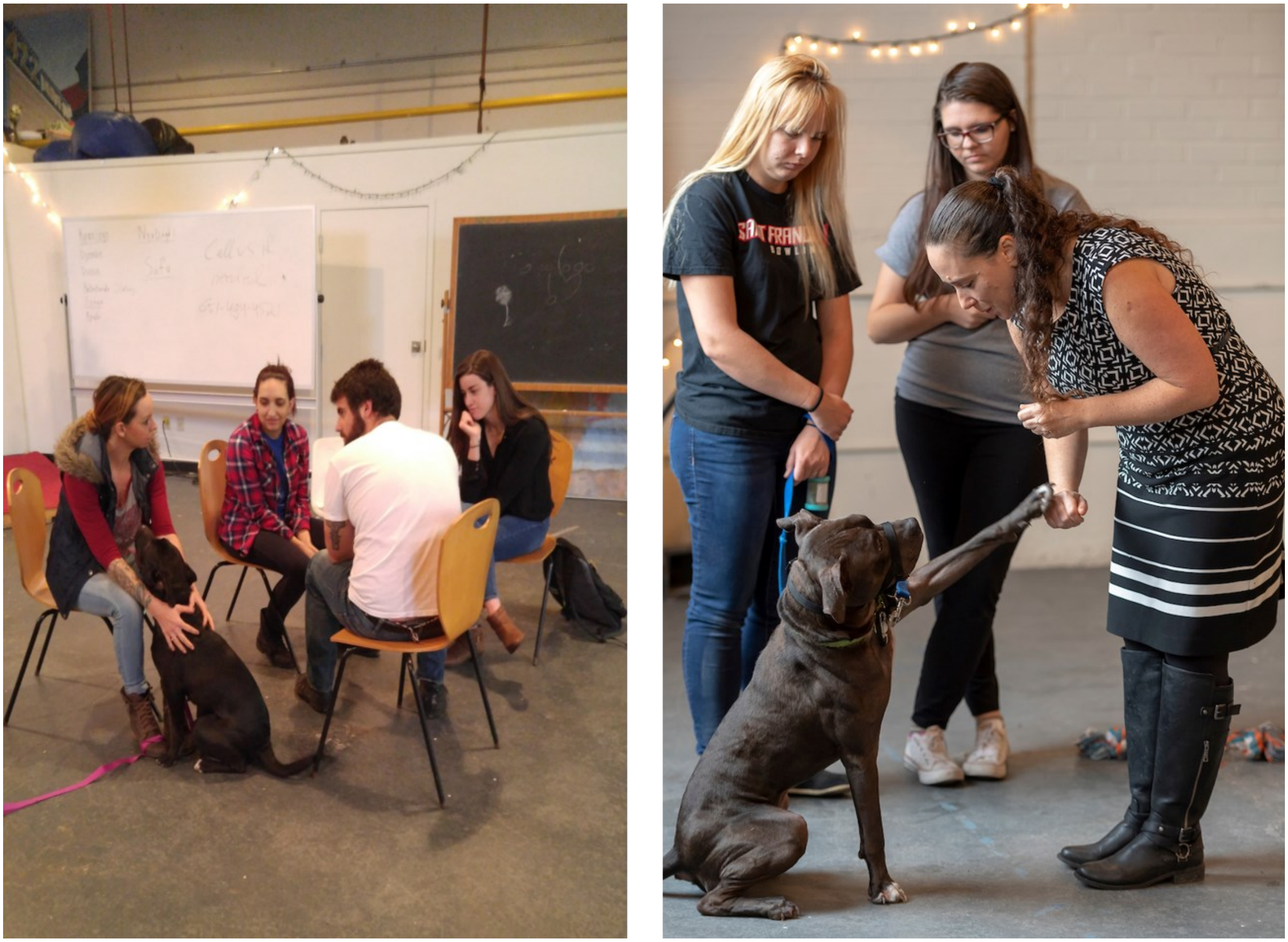
Results

Once CPHS was identified as a possible community partner and the Director of the CPHS agreed to collaborate with SFU to develop the class, the course's goals were established based on the mission and vision of both partners. The identified mutual objectives were: 1) Support the CPHS's mission to prevent animal neglect and cruelty through education and enforcement. 2) Support the CPHS's vision to meet the needs of animals in our community through communication, compassion, and conviction. 3) Facilitate SFU's mission to provide its students with inspirational education opportunities for personal and career enhancement. 4) Respect and use ethical and scientific approach to solve problems related to the field of psychology, learning, and behavior.

Second, a curriculum was designed to integrate classroom-based lectures on the theoretical foundations of the "Psychology of Learning" field with hands-on labs to provide an applicable approach to dog training/behavioral rehabilitation. Lectures and labs were co-taught by a member of the SFU Department of Psychology, Dr. Shlomit Flaisher-Grinberg, and a member of the CPHS staff, Ms. Megan Stanton, (see Picture 1 below). Students attended lectures on topics such as habituation, sensitization, and classical and operant conditioning (Schacter et al.; Domjan), and applied their knowledge in lab sessions by training dogs for obedience (e.g., sit, down, stay, leash-walking), agility (obstacle course), and animal-assisted activities (appropriate behavior in classrooms, in a crowd, around medical equipment, around children and elderly individuals, etc.).

Various procedures and precautions were taken in order to allow the integration of dogs into the campus environment. The SFU Residence Life Office identified animal-approved housing so students could live with the dogs and monitor their progress. Appropriate classrooms were selected so students could work with the dogs on campus. The SFU IACUC implemented human and animal safety regulations, and campus police were notified about the approved presence of dogs in pre-specified campus areas (dogs were not allowed in dining and biology/chemistry lab areas). SFU provided financial support (via Excellence in Education, Curriculum Development, and Special Topic Grants to Dr. Flaisher-Grinberg), and CPHS provided dog food, crates, collars, leashes, and veterinary support.

ESSAYS – CONTINUED



Picture 1. Left Picture: Ms. Megan Stanton (left), “Canine Learning and Behavior” course co-instructor, with Athena, delivering a lab to students Alexander Romeo (back to the camera) Paige Mclean (right) and Christine Geiger (middle). Right Picture: Dr. Shlomit Flaisher-Grinberg (right), course co-instructor, with Kovu, delivering a lab to students Allyson Taureck (left) and Taylor Clark (middle).

Thus far, the class has been administered in spring 2016, spring 2017, and fall 2018. It has included a total of 27 students and 10 dogs. Students’ demographic distribution included 24 females and 3 males; 12 students were in their junior year and 15 were seniors. Students had various majors (13 psychology, 9 biology, 3 occupational therapy/ psychology, 1 nursing/psychology, and 1 social work/psychology). Dogs were of different sex, breeds and ages. There were 6 males and 4 females ranging in age from 8 months to 10 years. The mixes included Pitbull (5), Boxer (1), Pug (1), Beagle (1), Shepherd (1) and Hound (1). Two of the dogs had congenital sensory deficits, a unilateral hearing loss in one of the Pitbull mix females, and a congenital lack of right eye in the Pug mix. Several dogs had health issues (teeth decay in the Shepherd mix, various illnesses in the Hound mix), and many had various behavioral issues (lack of house training, lack of human and/or dog-socialization, lack of general training). Nine dogs were surrendered for mostly unknown reasons, and 1 had been found as a stray (see Picture 2 below).

ESSAYS – CONTINUED

Picture 2. Dogs trained by the “Canine Learning and Behavior” class, 2016-2018: Akira, Jungo, Neeko, Athena, Tobie (top, left to right). Otis, Kovu, Paisley, Hamilton, and Cleo (bottom, left to right).

The formal evaluation of students’ success yielded the mean final grades of 92.38 (SD=5.844) during the 2016 spring semester, 93.42 (SD=7.221) during the 2017 spring semester, and of 92.54 (SD=4.225) during the 2018 fall semester. Analysis of responses to the anonymous surveys assessed students’ perception of learning outcomes and demonstrated positive perception of the course’s contribution to knowledge/comprehension, skill development, and future education/occupation (see Table 1 below).

Survey Item	**2016** Mean (SD)	**2017** Mean (SD)	**2018** Mean (SD)
1) the lectures contributed to my knowledge/comprehension of the material	M=4.66 (SD=0.50)	M=4.71 (SD=0.48)	M=4.28 (SD=1.49)
2) the labs contributed to my knowledge/comprehension of the material	M=4.66 (SD=0.70)	M=4.71 (SD=0.48)	M=4.28 (SD=1.49)
3) the class was relevant to my chosen education/occupation	NA	M=4.71 (SD=0.48)	M=4.43 (SD=1.13)
4) enrollment into the class contributed to my future education/occupation	NA	M=4.85 (SD=0.37)	M=4.57 (SD=0.78)
5) I will use the skills acquired in the course in my future education/ occupation	NA	M=5.0 (SD=0.00)	M=4.57 (SD=0.78)
6) I will integrate dogs into my future education/occupation	NA	M=5.0 (SD=0.00)	M=4.13 (SD=1.07)

Table 1. Students’ perception of learning outcomes; survey analysis. Time of assessment: end of the semester. Likert Scale: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree 1=strongly disagree (n = 9, 2016; n=7, 2018; n= 9, 2018).

ESSAYS – CONTINUED

Students' qualitative feedback was very positive, and included the following comments:

> "I love how hands-on the course was. It made learned concepts applicable to everyday situations & to my future career."

> "Living with a dog made this experience so much better and made me appreciate the class on a deeper level."

> "Both professors were extremely knowledgeable and passionate about this subject. They make a great team together and make the class very enjoyable" … "I really enjoyed having [Ms. Stanton] around to help with the animals. She really knew what she was talking about. Her help and advice made the class truly successful" … "I just wanted to say thank you. This class has been my favorite I have taken at SFU. It has given me so much. What I learned will help me in the future. Knowing that I helped a dog in its journey to finding a forever home means a lot to me."

Surprisingly, many students commented that among the benefits of the class was their newly acquired sense of maturity and responsibility, which they attributed to the requirement to provide care, training, and guidance to their fostered dogs throughout the entire semester. All the dogs were adopted by the end of the semester, and follow-up interactions indicated that no dogs had exhibited any behavioral issues or been re-surrendered to local shelters/rescue groups (see Picture 3 below).

Picture 3. Students and their fostered dogs. Upper row, left to right: Abu Fofana and Alicia Tiberino with Tobie; Natalie Tedjasukmana and Hannah Pelger with Otis; Paige Portale, Alexander Romeo, and Christine Geiger with Athena; Alicia Tiberino with Tobie. Bottom row, left to right: Taylor Clark and Allyson Taureck with Kovu; Hannah Keeley and Kelly Kramer with Hamilton; Cecilia Graze and Danielle Choisez with Cleo; Ashley Lehman and Megan Alborg with Paisley.

Unexpected results included the high level of excitement demonstrated by the campus community. Students enrolled into the "Canine Learning and Behavior" course and their fostered dogs were invited to participate in many events on campus and to deliver various dog-centered events. In light of this interest, the students have decided to end each semester with what they have named a puppy graduation that includes a graduation certificate and an "SFU Graduate" collar tag. Many students, staff and personnel attended these events, and the CPHS and adopting families celebrated a successful semester (see Picture 4 below). The local community embraced the students and the dogs, as indicated by invitations to visit local nursing homes, public libraries, and elementary schools, as well as by media coverage.

Picture 4. Scenes from puppy graduation: Upper row, left to right: the class of 2016; the class of 2017; the class of 2018. Bottom row, left to right: students Ashley Lehman and Megan Alborg with Paisley, meeting Paisley's new family; students Kristyn Wendekier and Megan Hayden with Jungo, receiving a handshake from Dr. Timothy Whisler and a diploma from Dr. Wayne Powel; Cleo, receiving a handshake from Dr. Karan Powell; Cleo, receiving a collar tag from Dr. Donald Walkovich.

Discussion

Results demonstrated that the project successfully enabled the creation of an academia-community alliance, supporting the attainment of several mutual goals: 1) the formation of an active, interactive and applicable learning experience, facilitating learning outcomes and allowing students to translate academic materials into newly acquired skills; 2) The creation of a novel form of academia-community teaching opportunity, inviting community representatives into the classroom and allowing students to step outside of academia and into their local community; and 3) The generation of an inclusive network of professionals, representing various sectors of the academia and public communities, all working together to meet the needs of shelter dogs through communication, compassion, and conviction.

Throughout the semester, students were able to foster and live with shelter dogs. Students learned to apply theoretical concepts such as classical and operant conditioning to dog obedience and agility, and they were introduced to special topics such as animal-assisted therapy, education, and intervention. These experiences would not have been possible without the formation of a community engagement partnership, defined by the Carnegie Foundation as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity ("Carnegie Community Engagement Classification"). Given its positive effects on students, dogs, the campus community, and the general community, it is suggested that such partnerships can span beyond the limits of this specific course to multiple subjects, classrooms, and learning environments.

While the project clearly offers many benefits to humans and animals alike, its implementation into additional locations may pose difficulties. First, not all academic campuses allow non-working dogs on property, and not all landlords agree to rent a house to a student who is fostering a dog. Second, some individuals within the campus community suffer from allergies or dog-phobia, so precautions should be employed. Third, since one cannot know a shelter dog's background, an experienced professional should conduct a proper evaluation of the dog's temperament, attitude, and behavioral

ESSAYS – CONTINUED

repertoire. In addition, standard operation protocols should be available for contingencies such as a dog's escape or injury, as well as injury to an individual. Finally, all relevant administrators and offices (e.g. department chairs and deans, campus police, and residence life) should be invited to contribute to the effort to plan and design the class.

To summarize, the "Canine Learning and Behavior" course enabled the bridging of academic curriculum with real-world application through the formation of an academia-community partnership. This avenue of community-based learning was possible because of the dedicated work of personnel from both communities. A lot of work, as well as genuine care, passion, and motivation, enabled this project. We hope the project will prosper and even inspire other learning communities to initiate partnerships to accomplish mutual goals.

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without the following: Dr. Timothy Whisler, Former Dean of the School of Arts and Letters; Dr. Donald Walkovich, Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Education; Dr. Karan Powell, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs; Fr. Josef Lehman, Vice President for Mission Integration; Ms. Lisa Boland, former director of the CPHS and partner in creating the course; Ms. Megan Stanton, co-instructor and treasured community partner; Ms. Briana Risbon, Volunteer coordinator at the CPHS and treasured community partner; Dr. Stephen Baker,Chair of the Psychology Department; Ms. Melissa Garrity, Administrative Assistant to the Psychology Department; Dr. Stephen Gilmour, Professor Emeritus of Psychology; Ms. Lisa Georgiana, Director of the Center for Community Engagement; Dr. Randy Frye, Dean of the School of Business; Mr. Jim Donovan, Chair of Fine Arts Department; Mr. Donald Miles, Director of Residence Life; Ms. Jacqueline Mazeika; Dr. Marnie Moist; Dr. Olivia Pethtel; Mr. David Wilson; Dr. Wayne Powel; SFU Campus Police; all the students enrolled in the class; Katherine Roos, Sabrina Palguta, Lauren Olek, Samantha Zeiders, Jeremy Gelpi, Megan Hayden, Allison Nedrow, Elizabeth Schaffner, Kristyn Wendeiker, Margaret Connley (2016); Abu Fofanah, Alix Hochard, Hannah Pelger, Alexander Romeo, Paige Mclean, Christine Geiger, Alicia Tiberino, Natalie Tedjasukmana, Kelsie Marconi (2017); Taylor Clark, Allyson Taureck, Hannah Keeley, Kelly Kramer, Cecilia Graze, Danielle Choisez, Ashley Lehman, Megan Alborg (2018).

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ESSAYS — CONTINUED

Navigating ‘Archives of Power’: What’s the Objective?

By Karen R. Roybal, Colorado College

Introduction

When a colleague asked me to participate in an “Archival Encounters” symposium, I thought of the quirks, coincidences, and "ah-ha" moments I have had in the archive over the years and how I could detail the uniqueness of each encounter during my talk. It was not until I sat down to craft a syllabus for a course I was teaching that spring entitled "Archives of Power” that I realized the integral need to think about how we practice archival research. I also thought about how we make discoveries when we enter the archive, and most importantly, how we teach students the value of the archive and the responsibility that comes with using it. The course would be the perfect intersection of the epistemologies that guide my research and the pedagogy I employ in my courses. I have been thinking about the archive for decades; now I was tasked with teaching students about archival studies (broadly conceived). I wanted to introduce them to the science of the archive and how it has been theorized. I attempted to blend these two approaches to the archive in a way that seduced them into "articulat[ing] [their] own desires in relation to the archive" (Tortorici 2015, n.p.). This essay argues that in our teaching of archival studies and methods, we must invoke theories, practices, and pedagogy from an interdisciplinary perspective to continue to provide students with a more robust understanding of the genealogy of the archive and equip them with the skills necessary to navigate a changing archival culture.

Planning Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Archive

I teach at a small, private liberal arts college known for its "block plan"; students take one course at a time, for three-and-a-half weeks. We meet five days a week for three hours, and when we are “in the field,” our meeting time is extended, and we can easily spend up to eight hours together. The block plan is ideal for intensive study of a single topic without other distractions; however, it also poses major challenges because that time is hardly enough to begin to understand how to define the archive, much less progress to fieldwork in the archive. Many students who enroll in the course are unfamiliar with historical or interdisciplinary methodologies, and/or they have never taken a course with an intensive fieldwork component. Because of my own frustrations with the archival gaps encountered during my own research, when I conceptualized the course, I framed it as a critique of the archive. I also wanted to challenge the preconceived notion of the archive as something objective, as a repository in which Truth is not only determined, but also recorded. I considered Michelle Caswell's work (2016) in my course design, especially the ways she highlights the tension between humanities and social science scholars and archivists. Caswell argues that though humanities scholars and archival studies scholars discuss "the archive," they fail to take advantage of learning from insights gained from their respective positions.

Especially pertinent to her argument is her critique that humanities scholars do not acknowledge the important theoretical work occurring in archival studies, of which there exists an extensive lineage. In my own research, I define the archive as a repository of memories that provide an alternative understanding of dominant historical accounts. I use that alternative understanding to reframe the archive to include those voices and stories that have not typically been included as “evidence” in “mainstream” historical narratives about gender and borders. Caswell called humanities scholars out for our "failure of interdisciplinarity when it comes to archives" (n.p.); in some ways, the course challenges her assertion because it emphasizes interdisciplinary methods for examining and using the archive. The course also reminds students that though archival research is typically performed in isolation, the process involves more than one person.

The course outlines and invites students to study the intellectual, ideological, and genealogical development of archive studies to determine how the archive is constituted. Course readings question the archive as an empirically sound and objective form of public history and record and allow students to examine the *many* logics of archival systems and the hierarchies that dictate those systems (e.g., authoritarian, institutional, colonial, gendered, and heteronormative). In other words, the course invites students to think interdisciplinarily. They identify the ways history AND literature AND culture are legitimized/delegitimized, recognized/unrecognized, and valued/devalued within the archive. In part, the course achieves this by allowing students to work with archivists in the field to learn how they constantly add to collections, learning that alters students' *perception* of the archive as static. Instead, they come to see archives as dynamic—to consider the multiple perspectives from which they are organized, analyzed, and used and how they evolve because of how we study them.

Course assignments (described in-depth later) include: (1) two "mini-archival projects" where students visit Special Collections on our campus and a local museum archive to craft short critical essays also used in their final research paper; (2) a field reflection journal in which they document and reflect on course readings, course lectures, and fieldwork site visits at two archive centers in New Mexico; (3) an abstract and annotated bibliography that prepare them to analyze an archival collection or collections of their choice; (4) a peer-reviewed 15-page paper based on archival research conducted in New Mexico; and (5) a 10-minute presentation at the end of the block in which they describe their respective collections and share their research findings with peers.

Course readings reflect variations in how archivists, literary scholars, historians, and community members consider the archive in their varied approaches to it. French philosopher Jacques Derrida's *Mal d'Archive*, first a lecture and later published as the oft-cited text *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995), is a staple of the course. In this lecture-turned-significant-text in archival studies, Derrida explains the origin of the archive as it is rooted in the Greek word arkhē, "the principle according to the law, *there* where things commence—physical, historical, or ontological principle—but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command*, *there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given—nomological principle" (emphasis original) (1). *Archive Fever* provides a strong foundation so students understand the etymology of the term "archive," while their fieldwork actively engages them in better understanding the distinctions among archives, libraries, and other spaces in which repositories are housed, along with the power dynamics of the archive—a point gestured towards in Derrida's definition through words like "order," "command," and "authority." Students analyze the archive as a physical collection, but also theorize about it as a methodology through which order is determined.

I pair Derrida's work with historians such as Antoinette Burton, who is critical of the archive and who has engaged in "archival encounters" for the better part of her career. Burton invokes Derrida's ideas about the "archival turn," which she suggests "is perhaps especially threatening to contemporary historians at accelerating moments of interdisciplinarity because of the ways it strikes at the heart of the evidentiary elitism of the discipline" (2005, 5). These authors offer students a glimpse into the overlaps in theoretical discussions about the archive and demonstrate tensions in how archival scholars find value in it in different ways. Students see for themselves that a universal understanding of the archive and archival studies is unrealistic. Another objective of my course is to emphasize and explain to students that these important and often competing archival ideologies point to the contention between humanities and social science scholars and archivists, as identified by Caswell. I pair Caswell's work with that of Marlene Manoff, who theorizes about the archive and the historical record arguing, "The concept of the archive…is loosening and exploding" (10). She continues, "Archival discourse has also become a way to address some of the thorny issues of disciplinary knowledge production and the artificial character of disciplinary boundaries" (2004, 10-11). Through readings like these, students identify how cultural theorists, historians, and archivists articulate similar issues from seemingly different archival perspectives, and their fieldwork and final projects help them visualize those overlaps and points of dissent.

Struck with 'Archive Fever'

My fascination with the archive began when, as a research assistant, I went to the Center for Southwest Research, an archival repository at the University of New Mexico that houses one of the largest collections of Southwest-related materials in the nation. My job was to examine reels of microfiche of unpublished manuscripts and records for a mentor's project. That opportunity encouraged me to pursue my own archival research, as I uncovered ephemera, manuscripts, and photographs later used in my dissertation and eventually my first book. I wanted my students to also experience the "archive fever" that afflicted me as a graduate student and that Derrida so eloquently describes as the "desire and disorder of the archive" through which assignation and consignation occur (1995, 3). My course exposes students to the messiness of the archive so they might better understand how archiving is a system through which items and memories are preserved so they are remembered; yet, what is left out of the archive is also an active process through which we learn what was deemed something to be forgotten. To get this point across, we discuss Pierre Nora's idea that "*lieux de mémoire* originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives" (1989, 1). Situating the archive as something produced encourages students to engage in critical history *and* to

ESSAYS – CONTINUED

consider how history, too, is produced. The course allows them to understand the archive as theoretical, it is produced and analyzed; but it also is material—archives are collections of items. This interdisciplinary perspective provides students with lenses through which they can better identify the intersection of theory and material reality. They do this when they embark on their archival research projects, as well as identify the "archival gaps" through such seemingly simple things as being limited by terms included in finding aids or not being able to find what they expected as they excavate collections. The combination of readings about the archive and their fieldwork, in other words, prepares students to use their field experiences as a lab of sorts, in which what they have theorized in class comes alive when they "experiment" in the archives.

In some ways, the course positions students to understand their fieldwork as a sort of "practicum" in archival research, and I encourage them to think about the importance of their roles as scholars interpreting the archives and the materials they hold. In our coursework, we explore how our understanding of history is not based on a single archival document; there is no manifest document. Rather, as Derrida reminds us, it is a synthesis of the contradictions within the archive. Moreover, I emphasize that what we find in the archives has real political and material consequences and forces us to consider with care our roles as "archival truth tellers" through what we produce as a result of our work. Throughout the course, students begin to critique the archive as they consider whom and what is represented within the archive and who makes decisions about what is included and excluded. Students in the course echo an integral point made by historian Linda Heidenreich, who argues that the majority of sources through which we learn about histories of subjugated peoples, for instance, were not provided by those groups themselves; our historical knowledge, therefore, remains limited even as we turn to what has been deemed by the dominant public as the "official archive" (2007, 35). An interdisciplinary approach fosters this type of in-depth, critical interrogation of the archive writ large. The next section provides sample course activities and projects that provide experiential interdisciplinary learning opportunities.

In-Class and Field-based Activities

Activity: Working with Minimal Information

I include in-class activities prior to our fieldwork that demonstrate how humanities scholars *must* think interdisciplinarily when it comes to archives. As a model, I use my own research and experience. During one class session in the first three days of the block, for instance, I began one in-class activity by asking students to examine primary sources I collected during my archival research. Working in small groups, students spent the first half of our three-hour session on the first part of the activity. I gave the first group a letter written by a female Mexican author to a California political official and military general. The letter was in Spanish and written during the nineteenth century. I gave another group a letter written to the editor of the *Pittsburgh Catholic Observer* in the twentieth century by a Tejana author and bilingual educator. The final group examined copies of photographs included in an autobioethnography, I asked all groups to spend roughly 20 minutes discussing and determining what they could deduce from the information contained in the letters and photo captions. Students quickly realized they had to analyze the sources based on what little information they had from the archival material itself to determine what story their archival document told. The group with the Spanish letter worked together to translate it into English; the group with the letter from the Tejana author discussed the significance of the editor to whom she was writing and why she was writing to him; the group with the photos attempted to identify people in the photographs. Though they were beginning to make some headway in their investigations and analyses, students expressed frustration because they needed more information. I explained that archival research *is* frustrating because although one might have a clear idea of what archival materials are included in a collection, at times one has very little information with which to work. At the beginning of class on Day 2 of this exercise and after their first round of investigation and analysis, I gave additional clues from the "repositories" where I gathered the sources and allowed students to conduct internet searches for approximately 15 minutes. Each group located supplementary information in the form of biographical details about persons named in their materials, and/or information about descendants or events associated with the people or places they could identify to help piece together the stories hidden within their archival documents. We discussed whether what they found online was credible and how to determine validity of sources by considering what they could tell from the site from which they drew their information. For example, we discussed why a site such as Wikipedia, to which anyone with a computer can contribute information, might not be as credible as a historical society site.

Students expressed surprise at the amount of “sleuth” work involved in the research process. During the activity, I also played the role of archivist and when asked by the students, provided additional background information on the three authors whose materials we examined, or we discussed possible search terms to use to find additional information about materials they examined, such as specific regional identities, alternative name spellings, and landmarks or events. I asked them to reflect on the process; they should explain what was frustrating to them, what would have helped them in their searches, and how they would plan their searches if they had to conduct them again. Students identified other approaches they might need to take or recognized that they might become reliant on archivists. I explained that I assigned this exercise so they would have a primer for going through the processes of archival digging they would perform when we visited our first set of special collections in our campus library. I extended this in-class assignment over two days; it could easily be expanded to three and students could do some research outside of class. The primary sources used in this exercise are not in students’ final projects; they introduce them to the process of archival research only. The activity explained in the subsequent section marks the beginning of their own research on pre-selected topics.

Activity: Primary Source Analysis

Prior to the visit to our campus Special Collections, I sent the students’ first formal assignment description to our Southwest archivist and met with her to make a preliminary decision on a selection of items tangentially related to topics students expressed interest in for final projects. For the first day of class, I prepare a list of possible topics from which students can narrow their focus, and I ask them to review course readings to see which theoretical models we will study. Toward the end of the first week of class, I ask them to begin searching the online finding aids of repositories we will visit during our fieldwork to further help them select their area/topic of interest. They also attend office hours to discuss their interests, and together we narrow their topic. At that point, I contact the archivist from our Special Collections again to make modifications to materials she and I had originally identified. When we visit her, she sets the objects, documents, and photographs out so students can examine the archival material and discuss any item with us; they can take photographs of material(s) for their analyses. I explain this entire process to my students and make clear that I follow this procedure when I send their topic ideas to the archivists in New Mexico. Explaining this process is important, because it allows students to understand the need to communicate early with archivists so they do not assume that they can simply arrive at an archive unprepared. Before we begin fieldwork, I ask students to start communicating with archivists in New Mexico via email so they learn how to request materials and how to describe their projects. The primary source assignment in our Special Collections helps students gain confidence in asking the archivist questions about their materials.

I adapted the primary source analysis assignment from the approach of Dr. Cora Granata, Professor of History at California State University, Fullerton. The assignment asks students to address four major areas in a 3-5 page analysis: (1) Basic Identification; (2) Author’s Intent; (3) Historical Context and (4) Content of the Source. In addition to these categories, I ask students to consider how the source could be relevant to conducting research on the U.S. Southwest, which they have to address in each course assignment. This step helps them progress from identification to analysis. Identifying four main areas of inquiry for students allows them to spend more time on their analysis of key elements and specific details about the archival material. The section on “Basic Identification” seems intuitive at first, but I find often that because students are so engaged with their material, they assume the reader knows what they are describing, when the student has not named or described it specifically. The same can be said about the third criterion, “Historical Context.” Though some of the archival collections include an abundance of historical details about the object or author, some do not, which means students have to conduct external research. I remind them that though they might be familiar with the historical details because they read them, readers may not; thus, they need to include pertinent historical context. As students get to the “Author’s Intent,” they are left to surmise what the author/collector “may” have intended by documenting or preserving the material in the archive. Here students are asked to use their imaginations, but I stipulate that what they write has to be grounded in some historical, social, professional, or personal information they learn about the person, place, or thing analyzed. This section goes hand-in-hand with the “Contents of the Source,” as students must describe what perspectives are left out of the source material and what questions they are left with as they conclude their analyses. The first primary source analysis assignment preps students for their second assignment—a longer analysis of a second primary source from a local museum archive that, ideally, should be related to their first archival source. I scaffold the assignments so the first two mini-archival assignments introduce students who had not been exposed to primary sources and/or archival work to the need to be detail-oriented and careful observers. It also gives them a sense of the level of analytical depth they have to achieve in their final project analyses, which takes us to two significant archives in New Mexico: The Special Collections at the Institute for American Indian Arts (IAIA), and the Center for Southwest Research (CSWR).

ESSAYS — CONTINUED

Archival Fieldwork

In preparation for the field outing and in tandem with first week office hour visits and preliminary scouting of collections we will visit, I give students time in class to conduct research and to ask questions. They must also conduct research on their own and generate a list of two or three collections that most closely aligns with their final topic of interest, which they share with me via email. I then compile a list for the archivists with whom we work when we visit the New Mexico archives. The summer before the start of the first iteration of the course, I visited the archives, met with the archivists, shared my course syllabus and final assignment, and explained my intentions for the course and for the students' final papers. Setting this project up prior to the course was extremely useful, because it reduced the amount of time students needed to identify collections while we were in the field, and the archivists were able to generate suggestions for other potential collections or materials.

Students were already nervous about working on their final assignment while they were in the field. This final project required them to write a 15-page paper where they were to (1) describe the archive collection examined during fieldwork; (2) provide historical context for the collection and its materials; and (3) connect the work to key ideas and theories from class. The goal of this final longer essay was to encourage students to use the two previously completed mini-archival assignments, along with their primary fieldwork research, as part of this longer research paper. To provide the historical context, they also had to conduct outside research and consult secondary sources. To mitigate issues with time management, I schedule time during fieldwork for students to work on research papers. We spend at least two days at each major archive, arriving when they open. Students use the first half of the day to conduct research. After lunch, they can use their time to write in the archive reading rooms, or locate another area to write in the main libraries. This approach allows students to organize their time in a way that is conducive to their routine "work" schedules when they are on our home campus. In addition to giving them time to research *and* write, I make myself available throughout the day by setting up an "office" in the libraries we visit so students can sit with me as if we are engaged in "office hours" to address any issues they have in the field. Though they are not required to meet with me, almost all do; we also "de-brief" as a group during dinner.

One of the most important steps in this process is introducing students to the archivists and scheduling time for each archivist to give a broad overview of their respective collections. Students see the "back end" of the archival repositories, as the archivists at each institution walk them through rows of materials and explain how they are organized. In addition, the archivists generously give of their time and meet one-on-one with students as they scour collections and generate questions about materials they have found. In these sessions, students have asked archivists questions such as the following: How would you describe your relationship with researchers who visit the archives with different levels of 'expertise' about a topic? How do you determine which material you choose to accept, and what is the process for rejecting materials that are in special collections? How would you respond to someone who might identify you as the 'guardian of the archive'? The archivists are aware beforehand that the course explores systems of power and their relationship to what and whose stories are preserved in their repositories, so they engage with students well on these critical questions and students appreciate this type of experiential learning opportunity where they hear the archivists' firsthand experiences, rather than solely reading about them.

Though their archival work in the course is designed to be original and single-authored, throughout the course, I reiterate the importance of building relationships when conducting archival research. I model for them the importance of building relationships, which I have done and continue to do with archivists with whom I still work, especially those with whom we meet in the field.

Activity: Field Reflection Journal

At the start of our block, I ask students to keep a field journal so they can reflect on their experiences during guest lectures and site visits, and so they can articulate their research as a process. The journal is where students document and reflect on "fieldwork," broadly conceived. Because I did not want the journal to be a compilation of notes, I request active reflection. I want them to consider questions about their experience and their learning within and about the archive. Though it seems somewhat elementary, I also discuss what I mean by "field notes" and "reflective information." They know I want them to record their thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns as they conduct research and then *reflect* on their field experiences. This step is important for their final essays. Their reflections reveal that they value the time with archivists; they believe the process of conducting of archival research is "hard"; they want to spend more time in the archive; and they find items they never could have imagined and that sometimes lead them in a different direction than they originally anticipated. The field journal provides me with a strong sense that students experience the "archive fever" they read about in Derrida's book.

Discussion and Follow-Up Post-Fieldwork

When we return from fieldwork, we continue our discussions about current theoretical uses of "the archive." We also discuss what we label "alternative" archives, which reveal how particular authors, cultural, racial, and gendered groups, and institutions encourage a re-reading of the archive and its foundations. Students generally say the fieldwork was the most enriching exercise they did in the course up to that point and express the value they found in working closely with archivists. I emphasize that I could not do the work I do in course planning and in my own research alone; I rely on my archivist contacts, who share their expertise in archival science *and* their experiences working with scholars, students, and community members who visit the repositories they built and manage. Before we visit with the archivists, I make clear that part of what is so enticing about working in the archive is not only the material you find within it, but also the friendships you build with the archivists with whom you work for days, months, and, in my case, years. It is not until we get to our archives in the field that students truly understand what I mean by the importance of the connection researchers make with the archivists and how fostering those relationships is more important for research because it demonstrates a mutual level of respect between researcher and archivist—two individuals engaged in archival labor. This type of experiential learning does not come by reading an article or by hearing about *my* experiences with archivists and with the archive. Students need to talk with archivists in person and learn how the archivists view and understand the archive. In considering the archive and archival studies in this way, I am committed to working towards a more multi-disciplinary conception and understanding of the archive Caswell calls for, one where there is less of a divide among archivists, archival studies and humanities scholars.

Conclusion

The varied opportunities provided throughout the course help students understand that there is not a single way to create, sustain, or utilize an archive. During our final course meeting, students articulate how their experiences as archival researchers allow them to think critically about the physical space of the archive, the decision-making involved in managing an archive, and the level of attention to detail those who donated their papers/collections to archives must have had—much greater than students initially conceived. These discussions reinforce my initial assumption that to teach archival studies, we must consider how interdisciplinary methods and epistemologies for understanding the archive are integral to providing students with a more holistic picture of history and how the way we record and memorialize stories of our past affects the present.

Students especially comment on the importance of fieldwork. One student wrote in a course evaluation, "I wanted to attempt something out of my comfort zone [taking a course on archival studies], and doing archival research was definitely different (in the best way possible)" (Anonymous course evaluation, Archives of Power, spring 2018). When asked, "What features of this course made the most valuable contributions to your learning," another student responded, "Going to New Mexico and experiencing the archive for myself" (Anonymous course evaluation, Archives of Power, spring 2018). Responses in the course evaluation confirm that students discovered that "archives seduce" (Tortorici 2015, n.p.); but they also demonstrate that students need opportunities to see theory and praxis in action to better understand how other sites, memories, and archives inform our understanding of identity and cultural memory. Put plainly, experiential learning techniques and interdisciplinary conceptualization of the archive remain imperative.

ESSAYS – CONTINUED

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An Interdisciplinary Partnership to Address Financial Literacy among Undergraduate Students

By Stephen Hill, Eileen Beiter and Cathy Leverone

Introduction

Small comprehensive institutions offer unique opportunities for collaboration across academic levels. Specifically, we found an opportunity for peer learning through graduate/undergraduate course collaboration, furthering the promotion of financial literacy among undergraduate students. Eileen Beiter, Associate Professor of Accounting, and Cathy Leverone, Assistant Professor of Finance, decided to explore ways to integrate financial literacy into their capstone courses at Nazareth College. As preliminary discussion began, fellow faculty member Dr. Stephen Hill, Assistant Professor of Management, joined the group with students from his "Organizational Development and Change" class to give the project an interdisciplinary approach. The graduate students served as process consultants for focus group facilitation and survey design. With the help of a local financial literacy community partner, the Financial Literacy Focus Group Pilot at Nazareth College was born.

The purpose of our focus group was to create an opportunity for peer learning across levels. The graduate/undergraduate design of this project allowed students across academic levels the opportunity to interface while applying knowledge in their particular subject areas. The undergraduate students were asked to determine the level of personal financial knowledge of typical undergraduates and to determine what financial topics caused them stress or concern. Their goal was to aid in the development of a financial literacy program created for students, by students, that would educate undergraduates in their areas of financial concern. The graduate students were process consultants in this effort. The primary goal for the graduate students was to provide an opportunity to apply best practices to address a consulting issue for the community partner. A description of the project, including challenges, benefits, and future direction is presented in this paper.

Financial Landscape and Educational Approach

Personal finance can be a source of stress for many individuals. According to Bethune (2015), "For the majority of Americans (64%), money is a somewhat or very significant source of stress, but especially for parents of children below the age of 18 and younger adults" (p. 38). An Ohio State University (2015) study reports 70% of students feel stressed about their personal finances. Meeting educational expenses as well as monthly expenses was a leading contributor to this stress. Additionally, the Ohio State study revealed that 32% of students reported neglecting their schoolwork because of financial stress.

We chose a service learning approach to understand the financial stress of our students. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (n.d.) cites service learning as a high impact teaching and learning practice. Given that financial literacy data point to a need for better personal financial management strategies for college students, the idea of developing a service-learning project was a natural fit. According to Watkins and Braun (2005), "Service-learning is a form of experiential learning and teaching that achieves course objectives while meeting an identified community need" (p.1). The authors indicate that service-learning provides (among other things) an opportunity for students to actively engage in hands-on experiences connected to academic coursework.

Project Background

Our community partner is a not-for-profit, 501(c) (3) organization focused on financial wellness providing services that include financial education, student loan counseling, and debt management programs. Taking into account that our community partner's mission is to promote financial literacy through education, we saw an opportunity to bring together our community partner and a group of college students who are part of the demographic experiencing financial stress.

ESSAYS – CONTINUED

Our original plan with the community partner was to engage in a grant-funded financial literacy program where undergraduate students would work with high school students. Because of a scheduling conflict, our partner completed this program without us. As a result, we redirected our efforts to a financial literacy-training pilot and asked our community partner to provide training in financial literacy topics. Our partner met with both graduate and undergraduate students and provided brief training in focus group facilitation. Our community partner identified critical areas for the development of financial literacy, including credit scores, understanding banking, and managing debt. The training was valuable but did not provide the expected financial literacy content that the undergraduate students were expecting. Further, this training was contrary to the expectations of the graduate students, who had anticipated providing the focus group training.

Student Learning Outcomes

The project was planned with the objective that undergraduate students would gain experience in the facilitation of a peer-led focus group. This objective would be accomplished through the students' preparation of the topic, definition of the group conversation parameters, facilitation of group conversation, refocus of the group back on the topic (as needed), summary of group discussion, and analysis of results. In addition, it was our objective that our students would gain an increased knowledge of financial literacy topics. This goal would be achieved through meeting with our community partner. These student learning outcomes were directly related to the stated student learning outcomes for the Accounting and Finance Senior Seminar courses.

The graduate students within the Organizational Development and Change course were charged with creating an organizational intervention project that integrated workplace experiences into classroom learning. These students had the ability to engage in a service-learning project and assist a local community organization with mission-related work. Two graduate project groups served as process consultants, working with the focal organization and undergraduate student facilitators to prepare focus group questions and group protocol consistent with best practices in training and survey design. The groups created pre- and post-test survey instruments to determine the effectiveness of the training. Final recommendations, conclusions, and insights from the project were discussed with the financial literacy community partner during the final class meeting of the semester. Both graduate and undergraduate students presented their findings at a school-wide conference, the Creative Activity and Research Showcase (CARS).

The Pilot

Two weeks prior to conducting the focus group pilot, the graduate and undergraduate students met with our community partner, who provided materials and guidance for leading a focus group on financial literacy.

The day of the pilot, we convened a group of approximately 70 Nazareth undergraduate students across majors to participate in conversations about personal financial topics. The students were recruited through announcements in the School of Business and Leadership classes and by word of mouth. The meeting was held at a common lunch hour, with lunch provided, when no classes would conflict with student schedules. The undergraduate focus group leaders led the discussion, while the graduate students interacted with attendees observing the discussions. While the undergraduate students recruited their peers, we are unaware of any prior peer-led focus group experience among the student facilitators.

The undergraduate students were split into six discussion groups. Three of the groups were asked open-ended questions around the following topics: establishing and building credit scores, understanding banking, and managing debt. The other three groups were tasked to discuss managing student loans, wise spending and saving, and saving for the future (i.e. retirement). Our community partner identified these topics as critical areas in which to develop personal financial literacy.

Findings of the Financial Literacy Focus Groups

The undergraduates were debriefed after the focus group meeting, and many participants disclosed that thinking about their personal finances caused them stress. The primary stressor was the future management of student loans. The majority of students were unclear how student loans worked and did not understand some of the related terminology. This is significant given that student loan debt is $1.5 trillion with a default rate of 11% (Friedman, 2018).

The focus group findings also indicated that at this stage of their life, undergraduate students were not concerned about retirement planning or establishing good credit. They did not see these topics as relevant to their immediate future. We have surmised that they may have a short-term focus and may not be considering the long-term strategies that could secure their financial future.

Given that the design of the focus group intervention was non-directive in nature, it can be challenging to measure knowledge transfer in this type of activity. Although the focus groups pursued various approaches in utilizing the pre/post methodology, one graduate student group reported that 50% of their student participants reported increased confidence in personal financial knowledge as a result of the focus group sessions.

Collaboration Outcomes

Challenges

Upon the conclusion of the focus groups, each faculty member conducted debriefing sessions with their classes and asked students to reflect upon the challenges and successes of this project. We encountered our own challenges when we tried to blend the graduate students with undergraduate students. Motivation (or "senioritis") was a significant challenge.

The graduate students were motivated, enthusiastic, and excited about assisting the community organization and partnering with undergraduate students. However, several graduate students reported that their undergraduate student collaborators did not share the same motivation for this project. Specifically, the graduate students noted extreme difficulty in communicating (via e-mail) with the undergraduate students prior to the project. The undergraduate students did not proactively communicate regarding focus group preparation or meeting requests. These communication difficulties limited the dissemination of best practices and appropriate focus group protocol by the graduate students to the undergraduate facilitators in advance of the group discussions.

The graduate student teams prepared pre- and post-assessments designed to measure self-reported knowledge in each of the training categories, along with the perceived utility of the focus group process. Overall, the graduate student teams found the undergraduate student facilitators lacked knowledge related to the core concepts of their discussion topics. The graduate students suggested that the initial training orientation provided by the community partner should have included additional content material that the facilitators could use to inform the participants. It was the graduate students' perception that the undergraduate students had difficulty articulating information as they were facilitating.

The undergraduate students indicated they saw this project as one of many competing course priorities and did not allot the same urgency to meeting. Therefore, the undergraduate students were not wholly responsive to meeting requests made by the graduate students. Further, their schedules did not align well with the graduate students' availability.

Aligning expectations of the two groups was an additional challenge. Since it was our first attempt at coordinating the project, establishing the roles that each would play proved to be difficult. Graduate students had higher expectations for the role they would play in educating the undergrads, particularly in focus group facilitation. The undergrads expected to be given more specific financial literacy content to communicate with their peers. Given the parameters provided to the students these results were not unexpected.

ESSAYS — CONTINUED

Our final challenge was the project timeline. Organizing the pilot and facilitating meetings between parties was complicated by a short timetable. This occurred in part due to the modification of the project by the community partner.

To remedy these challenges in the future, we suggest that students receive greater direction from faculty in terms of defining and communicating the roles and responsibilities of each group. We would arrange mandatory meetings between the graduate and undergraduate students to reduce the reliance on electronic communication, communication that proved to be ineffective. Finally, we believe that increasing the impact of the project on the course grade for undergraduates would elevate their motivation.

Benefits

Dooley, Mahon, & Oshiro (2004) highlight the importance of graduate/undergraduate student collaboration on projects within the field of food science. The authors indicate that students gained knowledge of the research process and teamwork skills. Schneider and Bickel (2015) describe a learning community where graduate students can mentor undergraduate students as a way to improve retention within the STEM fields. Clearly, graduate and undergraduate student partnerships can provide multiple benefits to all parties involved. The project herein described can serve as a pathway for enhanced benefits of multilevel students' collaboration across disciplines.

Both the graduate and undergraduate students were able to lead the financial literacy pilot program and provide feedback to improve the process going forward. An unexpected benefit is that the students worked on a project that had some gray areas. This can be particularly challenging for many students regardless of academic level. We had not been sure how the discussions would unfold, if focus group participants would attend, or if participants would fully engage in the discussions, and what we found about these questions will be helpful going forward.

As mentioned earlier, the students were able to showcase their work at our annual CARS (Creative Activity and Research Showcase) event. As indicated on the Nazareth College (n.d.) website, "CARS is an annual college-wide symposium celebrating students' creative and scholarly work through posters, presentations, and performances" (n.p.). Students reported that presenting at this event was an impactful learning experience. In particular, they noted the following:

> *… I found this project to be beneficial in my education as well as my career, due to the importance of understanding what is needed for organizational change and development in the workplace and how to apply it.*
> ~Graduate Student Participant

> *Participating in CARS was a very beneficial experience. I enjoyed seeing all of the research that students have done across various different majors and fields of study. Specifically, with our project, it was fun meeting with a wide range of students and assessing their knowledge indifferent areas of finance. I think that one of the biggest takeaways from doing this project would be that many students would like better access to information regarding their personal finances but aren't sure where to find it.* ~Undergraduate Student Participant

Future Directions

Our goal is to use this information to further develop a financial literacy platform at the College. Portions of financial literacy topics will be infused in a very deliberate way into the introductory Macroeconomics courses in the fall of 2019. Based upon our classroom debriefs and feedback sessions, students felt that more specific assessment of pre-workshop knowledge and targeted learning objectives would have been helpful in facilitating knowledge transfer, rather than utilizing focus groups with evolving topics.

Conclusions

The graduate/undergraduate design of the project allowed for peer-learning across three courses. Opportunities to arrange graduate/undergraduate student interaction and discussions may result in more effective communication and peer-learning. As faculty, this project exemplified our role as facilitators rather than instructors. We put students first, helping them teach and learn from one another. But we also learned that we needed to have a more detailed plan specifying the roles and expectations of the students involved.

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ESSAYS — CONTINUED

"It's a lot to take in" - Undergraduate Experiences with Assigned Reading

By Maura A. Smale, New York City College of Technology and Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY)

Interviewer: Tell me about some things that frustrate you about your course reading.

Student: I feel like, especially core classes, professors take the reading way too seriously, like they want you to know everything and memorize everything, and I'm just like, this isn't even my major, like I have other things that I need to focus on.

Assigned texts play an important role in college coursework, and students are required to read for their classes during their college careers – in textbooks and other volumes, on websites, in journal articles, and elsewhere. Yet faculty across all disciplines report that many students do not complete all of the reading for a course, and some do not do the reading at all.

Concern with reading compliance is not new, and researchers have examined student completion of reading in college courses over the past several decades. Burchfield and Sappington studied the results of student performance on surprise reading quizzes in Psychology courses; the quizzes were administered to 910 undergraduate and graduate students at a small Southeastern university between 1981and 1997. Their results indicated that the amount of course reading students completed decreased over the time period of the study; they referred to this as "a disturbing trend of noncompliance with reading assignments" (2000, p. 59). Other studies have also shown that students often do not complete their assigned course reading (Baier et al. 2011). In her research on reading in a first year seminar at a small regional university, Hoeft found that a greater percentage of students completed their assigned reading than did students in the foundational Burchfield and Sappington study; even so, less than half of the surveyed students reported that they completed their required reading (2010, p. 12).

In a review of prior research, Starcher and Proffitt suggested several reasons that undergraduates do not complete their reading, including struggles with reading comprehension, lack of motivation, misperception about the importance of reading for the course, and challenges in finding time to read (2011, pp. 397-399). Hoeft concurs and characterizes the reasons that students she surveyed gave for not reading: "schedules that didn't allow time for reading, social life that comes before reading, dislike of reading of any kind, lack of interest in topic, and laziness" (2012, p. 11). Though most studies have focused on students – measuring reading completion and suggesting strategies to increase compliance – Brost and Bradley (2006) examined the role that course instructors play in students' academic reading practice. While time and motivation are cited in most studies as reasons that students may not complete their reading, few have explored the reasons why students may not have adequate time for their assigned course reading or why they may not feel motivated to complete it. Further, many studies of undergraduate reading involve research at primarily residential colleges and universities, and do not adequately consider the experiences of commuter students, who make up a large and growing percentage of undergraduates, or institutions with highly diverse, non-traditional student populations.

What stands in the way of students completing their course reading, and how can faculty and staff support students' academic reading practices? Students who do not complete their assigned reading may have difficulty completing their coursework; exploring the reasons that students do not do their reading can inform strategies to support their academic success. To learn more about students' experiences with their required course reading, I undertook a study of undergraduate academic reading habits.

Research Methods

Building on previous research on the student academic experience at the City University of New York (CUNY) (Smale & Regalado, 2018b), this project employed qualitative methods to explore undergraduates' attitudes toward and practices around their required course reading. The research questions for this study were:

- What reading materials are students assigned in their courses, and how do they acquire or access them?
- When, where, and how do students do their assigned course readings?

This research was conducted at three CUNY colleges: Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), Brooklyn College, and New York City College of Technology (City Tech), selected to represent a range of schools at the university: a community college, a baccalaureate college, and a comprehensive college that offers two- and four-year degrees. In fall 2016, undergraduate enrollment at Brooklyn College was 14,406, at City Tech 17,282, and at BMCC 26,748; BMCC has the largest enrollment of any CUNY college (CUNY OIRA, 2018). While there are differences between the student populations of each of the three colleges in this study, they are not substantial, especially as many students transfer between CUNY colleges during their academic careers. CUNY is a highly diverse institution: across the university student self-identified race/ethnicity was 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 20.8% Asian, 26% Black, 31.9% Hispanic, 21% White. Most CUNY undergraduates are of traditional age and take a full-time courseload, though 26.5% are over 25 years old, and 33.8% are part-time students. Nearly 53% percent of CUNY community college students and 37% of comprehensive/baccalaureate college students lived in households with incomes of less than $20,000/year (CUNY OIRA, 2017).

During the spring 2017 semester semi-structured interviews of about 30 minutes were held with 10 students at each of the three colleges, for a total of 30 students interviewed during this project. After obtaining approval for this study from the college Institutional Review Boards, students were recruited via flyers posted on each campus to produce a convenience sample. Students were interviewed on their own campus, and all interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder; interview questions are available in the Appendix, below. All students interviewed received a $10 transit card or gift card for their participation. After the completion of the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed, and the Dedoose qualitative data analysis platform was used to code the interview data and develop themes to facilitate analysis.

The students interviewed during this study were in a range of majors and programs at the three colleges, from first-year students through seniors. Most were attending college full-time during the semester I interviewed them, with only two part-time students. All but five of the students interviewed were between 18 and 24 years old, and about one-third of them were working at least part-time or participating in internships. With a sample of only 30 students it is not possible to correlate reading practices with academic performance or demographic data; thus I did not collect information on GPA, gender, or race/ethnicity from the students interviewed. The results of a study of this size are not generalizable; however, as has been found in previous research on the student experience at CUNY, students reported strong similarities surrounding their experiences across the three schools despite the academic differences between community and baccalaureate colleges (Asher et al., 2017). The results of this research are thus discussed here in aggregate for all three colleges.

Undergraduate Course Reading Narratives

The students shared information about their reading process that is likely familiar to many academic faculty and staff, though they also revealed detail that is less visible about their practice, priorities, and challenges with their required course reading. Three narratives of CUNY students' course reading, students pseudonymously referred to as Tamara, Sana, and Isabella, illustrate the experiences that surfaced in this research. While each narrative comprises the responses of one individual student to my interview questions, these three students are not outliers; each reported experiences that were broadly representative of the responses of many students who participated in this research, and revealed themes that were common across multiple student interviews.

ESSAYS — CONTINUED

Tamara

Tamara was a traditional-aged student in her second year of college when she was interviewed. She was working part-time in addition to attending school, and taking a full-time course load that included both required General Education courses and classes in her major, Psychology.

That semester Tamara was assigned course readings from both print (textbooks, handouts) and online sources. Tamara described a tension between reading online and in print: she noted the constraints of the free printing allocation at her college and a desire to be "ecofriendly," though she also had limited options for reading online. While Tamara had a laptop computer she did not bring it to campus, and doing the reading on her phone was "a little bit of a distraction because I have text messages coming in, and it's a very small screen." Tamara also preferred to annotate her readings on paper, revealing that "it's a lot easier to jot down notes on the side."

Tamara was a commuter student, like the vast majority of CUNY students, and often used her commute on the bus or subway to complete her course reading. She said that she sometimes did her course reading, "right before bed, [because] a lot of people are asleep already" in her household, which included a parent and several siblings. However, Tamara also shared that "it's a lot easier to do it on the bus or train." She found that annotating or taking notes on her reading could be a challenge while on public transit – "it's difficult to maneuver" – and she would often wait until getting to her destination to take notes; occasionally she would take notes on her phone.

I mentioned to Tamara that she was brightening and smiling when she discussed the reading for the two Psychology classes she was taking that semester. She replied that the reading in those classes was "interesting, *really* interesting." Tamara characterized the readings for her major courses as "the real stuff," and their place in her academic priorities was clear when she declared "those are the readings I tend to do first."

Tamara was also taking several required core courses during the semester that we spoke, and her prioritizing strategies for the reading varied. Sometimes she set a timer to read for 10 minutes each day to try to get through her assigned reading, though she would go beyond that time if she found the reading interesting. Overall, she prioritized based on "the weekly agenda," whatever homework or assignments were coming due that week, though she sometimes had to make choices among what she could do in the time she had, and noted, "I feel like I'm juggling in a circus." She felt that her Psychology courses were most important, and said, "I like being able to engage in the conversation and to have input." For some of her other classes in which she wasn't always able to complete the reading she told me "I usually just stay quiet."

Tamara's main frustration with her required course reading was the amount, and she shared that "there's so much to read and it seems like so little time, and it's annoying because don't these professors know we have other classes and other assignments and other things to do?" Sometimes she wished that her course readings were easier to understand, and when she found herself struggling her most frequent strategies were rereading and taking notes in her own words. She did sometimes review particularly challenging readings with a classmate or ask her professor for clarification after class, but with multiple classes, a job, and family responsibilities, she did not always have the time to seek help with her reading.

Sana

Sana was a traditional-aged student in the second semester of her first year of college when I interviewed her. She was majoring in Nursing and taking a full-time course load.

Sana was mostly taking required core courses during the semester we spoke, and only one of her courses was part of her major. She characterized herself as “a slow reader,” and tended to do her homework after classes ended for the day or on the weekends, preferring to do her reading at home where she had quiet space to concentrate rather than her college library, which she described as “kind of a hangout place for most people.” Sana tended to do her readings in print, printing out online readings whenever possible; she told me “I like to highlight so I know the important parts” when studying for tests.

That semester Sana was taking classes full-time but did not have a job, and she was conscious of the resulting impact on her time. She told me that she felt that her reading load was heavy but that she always found time to do it, though she acknowledged that she probably wouldn’t have time to do all of her required course reading if she had a job. Even without a job, Sana did sometimes find her reading load to be too heavy, and she let me know that sometimes “if I don't have time I'll try to skim through, but if I do have time I'll read the whole thing.”

Sana prioritized reading for the one course she was taking in her major “because it’s the most important.” She also mentioned prioritizing reading for her English course, because her instructor gave the class a quiz on the reading each week, and she was pleased to share that she had passed each quiz so far. For her Sociology course Sana revealed that she no longer did the reading “because it doesn’t benefit me,” explaining that her professor “goes over what’s in the readings in class.”

When asked about strategies she used to deal with readings she found to be challenging, Sana replied that she did not have a specific strategy. She mentioned that she often found both the amount and the topics of her course reading to be difficult, telling me that she was frustrated that “sometimes it’s hard to understand, and it’s a lot [slight laugh] of reading.” Sana sometimes asked her classmates for help clarifying the reading, though she did not think it would be helpful to ask her professors about the reading, saying, “I don't think they would have time for that.” She also did not know of any offices on campus that could help specifically with reading; she had visited the writing center in a prior semester but found it to be very crowded with a long wait and had not returned this semester. Sana astutely identified a challenge for students in reading subject matter that may be new to them, and told me “if you don’t understand the whole topic then it’s hard to ask a question, like you don’t know where to start.” She also expressed a wish for more reading support at the college, “a reading center on campus for students who are having trouble reading.”

Isabella

Isabella was a student in the final semester of her Associates degree program when we met for our interview; she planned to transfer to a four-year program to complete her Bachelor’s degree. She was majoring in Business and taking a full-time course load as well as working outside of college, and she was a few years older than the traditional-aged college student was.

When asked to describe her reading practice, Isabella shared that she preferred to do her course reading at school, characterizing both her home and her commute as too busy and distracting. Isabella studied in the library, empty classrooms, or other quiet areas on campus because “I kind of focus more that way.” She told me that she took handwritten notes when doing her course reading, which she described as “kind of, like, old-fashioned [though] it works better that way for me.” Isabella did not mention a preference for reading in print or online, though she did note that her practice of taking detailed notes on the reading meant that she could bring her notes to class instead of her heavy textbooks.

While at this stage of her degree program Isabella mostly took courses in her major, she was also taking required General Education courses during the semester that I interviewed her. Isabella told me that she felt it important to do the required reading for her major courses because the topics could be complex, and she wanted to maximize her opportunities to learn them thoroughly in class. She prioritized her reading assignments based on their due dates and homework, and she did try to complete all of her reading if she had time.

Isabella felt that her course reading was most difficult when it covered subject matter that was not of interest to her. She mentioned that the English composition course she took in the previous semester was more interesting than her current English course, and she wished she could have known the topical focus of the current course before enrolling. As a student whose first language was not English, Isabella told me that “because it's my second language, sometimes the language, and especially, like, when I'm not interested in the topic, I just kind of give up, but, that's when I feel frustrated.” When struggling with reading, Isabella tried to “read little by little” and reread texts until she understood them. Some of Isabella’s professors recommended online videos – she specifically noted YouTube and Khan Academy – in order to help explain difficult topics and subjects. Isabella appreciated those resources, and said, “it's really helpful because it explains like, the process of if we actually do a problem wrong.”

Isabella shared that she typically did not have time in her schedule that aligned with opportunities to meet with her professors or classmates to seek additional help with reading, though she did sometimes ask for help with reading at the college’s writing center. She often came to campus even if she didn’t have class on that day, and would visit discipline-specific tutoring for assistance with course material that she found challenging. Isabella told me that she valued the tutors because “even if I think I know how it works, I just like to double-check that I'm doing the right thing.”

Discussion

The similar but not identical experiences of Tamara, Sana, and Isabella were shared by many of the CUNY students who were interviewed about their assigned course reading. Student responses – from these three students as well as many others interviewed during the study – centered around three themes for further analysis: their reading practices, their criteria for prioritizing reading assignments, and their perceived successes and challenges in reading for their courses.

Practice

In this context practice is defined as the way that students complete their course reading, including preferences for – or resigned acceptance of – the format of their assigned texts (i.e. print or digital), and methods of engagement with the text.

Most of the students interviewed preferred to do their required course reading in print rather than online; this is consistent with the results of other studies (Foasberg, 2014; Mizrachi, 2015). A recently published multiyear survey of more than 10,000 undergraduates around the world revealed that the “majority of participants report better focus and retention of information presented in print formats, and more frequently prefer print for longer texts” (Mizrachi et al., 2018, p. 1). The most common reasons for preferring print cited by CUNY students interviewed were the ability to annotate easily and the lack of distraction. One student noted that they felt frustrated by ebooks specifically: “it's harder to read online…I like the physical book more because you can go easier back to another page.”

However, several students did acknowledge that readings available online could potentially be completed more easily during the commute. One student shared that they preferred to do their readings in PDF on their tablet if possible, and that they highlighted the PDF as well. Students balance multiple factors when acquiring course readings, including cost and format preference. Student strategies for accessing their required course reading in multiple locations can be complex: on and offline, and at times that are most convenient for them. This tension has also surfaced in research with CUNY and other commuter undergraduates (Smale & Regalado, 2017; Regalado & Smale, 2018a).

Priorities

Like Tamara, Sana, and Isabella, the CUNY students interviewed shared a variety of criteria they used to prioritize their required reading assignments. Most students tried to use their syllabus and the assignment due dates to plan their reading, and most intended to complete their reading before class. Students acknowledged the many constraints on their time, and most felt that the reading for their major courses was more important to complete than that for their core or General Education classes. A few students mentioned that as they moved into upper-level courses, they realized the necessity to allocate additional time to complete their now more detailed and complex readings, which could affect their academic priorities overall.

As other studies have shown (Baier et al., 2011; Brost & Bradley, 2006), students often do not complete their course reading if they feel it is not an integral component of their success in the course, and many of the CUNY students I spoke with concurred. Some students said that their instructors reviewed all of the reading thoroughly in class, which obviated their need to read the textbook. Others shared their frustration when instructors assigned but did not refer to or use the reading during the course, which made students feel like their time and funds had been wasted. Given students' time constraints with their multiple academic, family, and job responsibilities, it is not surprising that many students decide it is not worth their effort to complete the assigned readings for every class if it will not affect their performance in the class.

Challenges

All students interviewed shared challenges they encountered when completing, or attempting to complete, their assigned course reading. Both interest in and prior knowledge of the course topic affected students' motivation to read; students who found the subject uninteresting or who were encountering an unfamiliar discipline often found their reading to be difficult. A few students mentioned that they struggled with reading because of learning disabilities, though some also made use of student support services on campus. Like Isabella, several students for whom English was not a first language shared their frustration with reading scholarly material; this frustration could be compounded if the material was uninteresting or unfamiliar to them.

Some students identified support strategies for the reading challenges they encountered, including asking for assistance from their instructors, either after class or during office hours, or from their classmates. Other students understood that their professors were available for help, but did not have the time or availability in their schedule to obtain help in this way. Several students referred to the writing center on campus but did not know whether there was an office at their college specifically to support reading, and were not sure whether the writing center was an appropriate place to seek out reading support.

Conclusions & Interventions

What can faculty, staff, and administration do to support students' success in their academic reading? While this research with CUNY students was limited in size and scope, interviews with students about their assigned reading demonstrate the value of considering students' lived experiences in their past and current academic contexts. It is easy to assume that undergraduates come to college having mastered strategies for academic reading during high school. Many students have not, and even those who were explicitly taught how to read scholarly texts in high school are likely to encounter far more difficult texts in college. Some of the students I interviewed seemed embarrassed when asked whether they sought support with challenging reading assignments. Students too have internalized that reading is something they should know how to do already; as one student told me, in college "reading is your problem."

An assessment of what is a "reasonable" reading load for students must also take into account their life circumstances; often research on reading compliance takes as a given that faculty assign "reasonable" amounts of reading in their courses (Brost & Bradley, 2006, p. 105). In addition to their work as students CUNY undergraduates are not unique in their multiple time commitments, and many hold part- or full-time jobs or have substantial family or community responsibilities. At commuter colleges and universities, the time required to commute also affects students' available time to devote to their coursework.

ESSAYS — CONTINUED

Some researchers have acknowledged several of the challenges in completing required course readings that CUNY students shared. Fujimoto, Hagel, Turner, Ka iyapornpong, and Zutshi (2011) also report on the difficulties students face encountering academic subject material that is new to them and switching between disciplines; they mention the additional challenge for students for whom English is not their first language. Brost and Bradley discuss the need for faculty to ensure that the link between assigned reading and coursework is clear to students. They recognize that many students will not read if they do not see the value in reading, and they suggest that "faculty members deserve our share of the responsibility as well" (2006, p. 106).

However, most literature on reading compliance follows Burchfield and Sappington, who encouraged "a renewed emphasis on compliance with required reading assignments and an incorporation of appropriate consequences" (2000, p. 60). Other suggested actions include implementing reading journals or surprise reading quizzes, assigning students to read for a specific amount of time, or using other homework or assignments to test students' completion and comprehension of the required course readings (Carney et al, 2008; Hilton et al., 2010; Hoeft, 2012; Kerr & Frese, 2017). The overwhelming focus on assignments that measure students' reading compliance seems to leave unanswered the question of why students do not complete their required course reading.

Alternatively, a focus on explicitly teaching undergraduates strategies for reading disciplinary texts and supporting them in practicing those strategies could increase students' motivation to complete their course reading. A student I interviewed who had found success in her course reading explained that she had taken an Advanced Placement English class in high school. She told me, "I learned from my AP class to look for important keywords," and she had learned effective notetaking strategies in that class. Faculty may consider building in time during the semester to support students' reading practice in their courses. Fujimoto et al. describe a structured reading assignment in which students are given an academic reading along with a set of criteria to identify in the text; they are also asked to identify important themes in the reading, and placed in groups for discussion (2011). Fisher shares details on workshops she has taught on the reading apprenticeship model for scaffolding undergraduate reading skills across the disciplines (2018).

Faculty and staff can also advocate for providing additional reading support on our campuses. While creating a Reading Center may not be feasible for all colleges and universities, it is likely that the campus Writing Center also provides assistance with students' reading. Making that aspect of Writing Center services more visible to students might help them more readily find their way to that source of support. Faculty can also make sure that all students are aware of student support services and of any support that is available for students for whom English is not their first language, regardless of whether they have identified themselves as a student in need of additional support.

Our undergraduate students arrive on campus with varied experiences prior to their academic careers; their preparation for and facility with required course reading also varies. As this research demonstrates, it is worthwhile to consider both our students' constraints and challenges in reading as well as possible strategies to address these constraints and challenges in our classrooms and on our campuses. Faculty should seek out ways to learn more about their students' reading experiences, and to incorporate specific discussion of reading practices into their courses. Understanding our students' reading experiences can help us identify the most appropriate ways to motivate our students to read, and support their opportunities for success in their coursework and degree programs.

Appendix

Undergraduate Reading Attitudes & Practices

Semi-structured Interview Questions

Student #:

College:

Date:

1. Let's start with a few questions about you:

- What's your program of study/major?
- How many semesters have you been in college?
- Are you going to school full-time or part-time?
- Did you start off at this college or transfer from another college?
- Age

2. How many courses are you taking this semester? What are they? Are they required for your major?

Let's talk about the reading you have in those courses specifically, though if you have other experiences with course reading you'd like to share that's fine too.

3. Tell me about the reading that's assigned in each course. Is it in textbooks, online, or in other formats?

4. How do you do the reading you need to do for your courses?

5. When and where do you do the reading for your courses?

6. How do you decide what reading to complete for your courses?

7. What are your plans for after you graduate; is there a career or future schooling that you have in mind?

8. What frustrates you most about the reading you're assigned in your courses?

9. If you could change one thing about your course reading, what would it be?

10. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about reading for your courses?

ESSAYS – CONTINUED

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BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review: Ray, Angela G. and Paul Stob, editors. *Thinking Together: Lecturing, Learning, & Difference in the Long Nineteenth Century.* The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018. Rhetoric and Democratic Deliberation Series. 249 pp. ISBN (hardback): 978-0-271-08087-1.

By Susanna Kelly Engbers, Ferris State University

In *Thinking Together: Lecturing, Learning & Difference in the Long Nineteenth Century,* Angela G. Ray and Paul Stob examine the ever-changing ways in which we "think together," focusing especially on how groups of people in the nineteenth century thought together outside the confines of higher education. They direct special attention to groups and individuals who were denied access to such education, noting that these people who gathered "considered the same questions that echoed through the nation's great halls of learning—questions about justice, equality, career opportunities, entertainment, war and peace, life and death, heaven and hell, the nature of the world, and the nature of education itself. Yet they considered these questions while facing difficulties, uncertainties, and opposition seldom encountered by those in power" (4). The contributors look primarily at lyceums—that is, popular education that was advanced through civic debate and lectures in communal spaces—but they go beyond that strict focus as well to study a variety of ways in which nineteenth-century Americans gathered to converse and learn together.

Ray and Stob divide the volume into two broad sections: In the first, entitled "Disrupting Narratives," contributors challenge common assumptions about how, and for what ends, popular learning occurred in the nineteenth century; in the second, the authors turn their attention specifically to communities or individuals (e.g., the Liberia Lyceum, various women of note, and the early Mormon Church) who demonstrated distinctive ways of thinking together.

Standout chapters include the first by Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, titled "The Portable Lyceum in the Civil War," in which the authors explore the little-discussed period of lyceum activity during the Civil War. Having spent fifteen years transcribing materials such as "wartime diaries, letters, memoirs, and account books," the authors add to our understanding of lyceum culture during this wartime period, a time during which lyceum activities have typically been ignored—assumed to have been discontinued for the duration of the war. Through this project of transcription, the authors have created the "largest body of data on Civil-War-era reading culture to date," and the chapter seems like just the beginning of work to unpack the significance of their findings.

Also in the "Disrupting Narratives" section, Granville Ganter's "Women's Entrepreneurial Lecturing in the Early National Period" is notable for its examination of the careers of several women of the post-revolutionary period who have not yet "figured into accounts of American education" (43). Besides discussing the lecturers themselves, Ganter considers women as *active* audience members, noting how the lecture hall gave "respectable women" a way to participate in public intellectual life. Among other noteworthy examples, he cites the story of a Miss Wheaton, who was known to have given a "thirty-five-lecture series on geography in 1821 with no controversy about the lecturer's sex or subject matter mentioned in the newspapers afterwards" (51). Part of the importance of Ganter's chapter is bringing to light the "decades of 'women thinking' alongside men—an epoch in American history that existed in contrast to the gendered prejudices of later periods" (52–3).

The second half of the book, "Distinctive Voices," consists of more focused studies of individuals whose gender, race, or religion shaped their experiences. This half begins with Bjorn R. Stillion Southard's chapter "A Lyceum Diaspora: Hilary Teage and a Liberian Civic Identity," a compelling study of a largely white-led project to bring freed slaves to Africa and the lyceum culture that ensued there. Southard describes these settler-colonists as people who, in general, wished not so much to separate from American life and culture as to access the intellectual fruits denied to them in their country of origin—the United States. In particular, Southard examines the work of Hilary Teague, founder of the Liberia Lyceum and editor of the *Liberia Herald,* and uses his example as a means of understanding the "interplay among lyceum culture, Afri-

BOOK REVIEWS – CONTINUED

can American rhetorical practice, and the revisions to both undertaken by settler-colonists" as the lyceum culture went beyond mere duplication of the U.S. lyceum and sought to evolve its own culture appropriate for a colonial context and its attendant challenges (112).

Also included in the book's second half is a study of the early Mormon Church and the means by which it developed a distinctive means of knowledge production; an examination of Gertrude Kellogg, whose success as a performer of dramatic prose reframed conversations about female identity in the nineteenth century; and a study of Hindu monk Swami Vivekananda and his role as a "pluralistic prophet" who was able to realize new connective pathways among various religions, cultures, and ideas.

In the introduction, Ray and Stob argue that their histories "can offer new insights and more nuanced perspectives on how difference enhances the human project of thinking together" (19), suggesting that the volume will have implications for thinking together in the twenty-first century as well. And indeed, it does; however, it would perhaps have been useful for Carolyn Eastman to expand further on those implications in her conclusion. Otherwise, the conclusion is excellent, pointing out the ways in which the book reaffirms the study of the spoken word as a "truly interdisciplinary field" (191) and sets the stage for an "invigorated study of platform culture" (199).

BOOK REVEIWS — CONTINUED

Book Review: Edin, K. K. *The Measurements of Decay*. Metempsy Publications (2018), 588 pp. ISBN: 978-1732062207

By Jeffery Vail, Boston University

The Measurements of Decay, the first novel by K. K. Edin (a former student of mine), is an ambitious and brilliant work, a novel of ideas, centrally concerned with philosophy, technology, morality and the problem of free will. Published last year (2018) by Metempsy Publications, it spent time as the number-one-selling science fiction novel on Amazon.com, won the 2018 NYC Big Book Award's Distinguished Favorite in Science Fiction prize and has spawned passionate discussion groups online.

Occurring across multiple planets in different epochs, the story is told from three points of view: that of Sielle, a woman unstuck in time and space who learns to teleport herself through the cosmos at will; Tikan Solstafir, a wandering nonconformist in humanity's spacefaring future; and the narrator, an angry, misanthropic intellectual outsider whose journey ultimately takes him from twentieth-century Paris to points far distant indeed. This last character is in the tradition of such works as Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground*, Hamsun's *Hunger* and Ellison's *Invisible Man*: an intelligent, passionate extraordinary loner who directly addresses and sometimes confronts or antagonizes the reader. The plot concerns the fate of the human race, whom we witness gradually succumbing to two technologies that annihilate individuality and freethinking: the procrustus (a computer implanted inside everyone's brain) and the metempsy (virtual fantasy worlds within which our descendants spend almost all of their waking lives). Tikan and Sielle become involved in a desperate plan to free humankind from its enslavement by machines, corporations and a shadowy, all-powerful puppet master.

Edin's prose is daring, beautiful and against the grain of contemporary fiction. The closest stylistic parallel that I know of in recent decades is *Blood Meridian*, by Cormac McCarthy, which itself is redolent of Melville's style in *Moby-Dick*. In an era when fictional prose inclines toward the stripped-down, dumbed-down or babblingly hyper verbal, Edin's writing is darkly baroque, lyrical and full of blood and thunder, while at the same time disciplined and polished. Whereas some readers accustomed to either bare-bones, matter-of-fact descriptions at one extreme or the undisciplined, manic prolixity of what the critic James Wood called "hysterical realism" at the other might find Edin's prose difficult, lovers of nineteenth-century authors such as Poe, Dostoyevsky, De Quincey or Dickens will feel right at home. It is a joy to behold a young writer who is brave and brilliant enough to pull it off.

Though the future (and past and present) that Edin depicts is full of darkness and horrors, the novel is inspired throughout by a deeply humanistic vision. There is nothing fashionably fatalistic or nihilistic about this story. An underlying sympathy with and forgiveness of the sins and idiocies of humanity glows throughout the book. Edin has an Olaf-Stapledon-like ability to imagine even great species-wide disasters as mere episodes in a vastly longer timeframe, combined with an Aldous-Huxley-like urgent concern with the technologically accelerated decadence and degeneration of human culture. The narrator is philosophically literate, and Edin is confident enough in his readers to assume they will not be put off by references to Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, John Stuart Mill and so on. A dreamlike account of a descent into the tomb of Immanuel Kant in Kaliningrad's Königsberg Cathedral is a turning point in the novel and a tour de force of surreal description. Edin has lived in several countries and cultures and effortlessly evokes the feel of Parisian hotels and Russian city streets. Other unforgettable sequences include a disturbing portrait of a nightmarish automated city of the future filled with fully degenerate humans; a shocking scene of brutality in a hotel cloakroom; and a terrifying final confrontation that reminded me of both the final canto of Dante's *Inferno* and *The Wizard of Oz.*

Some readers have apparently blanched a bit at the novel's occasional scenes of grisly violence, but I find the novel no more violent than countless cable TV shows and movies that millions of people watch with perfect equanimity. It is doubtless a testament to Edin's talent that the killings and mutilations he describes are felt so viscerally by the reader. If there is anything about Edin's writing that one could imagine improving in subsequent efforts, it would have to be the dialogue, which on a few occasions becomes a shade too declamatory and grandiloquent. There is very little humor, but I count that a strength: None of Edin's grand and moral vision is ever undermined by anything like cheap postmodern irony. From the earliest pages, images and concepts from Greek and Roman myth suffuse the narrative, and for those readers who recognize them they are yet another element of this extraordinary book to savor.

This is a novel of rare power and depth. It ought to be read by anyone who loves great writing and deep, serious meditations on where the human race is heading and how thoroughly the road to hell can be paved with professedly good intentions. *The Measurements of Decay* ought to be classed with the best novels of 2018, and one of the best science fiction novels of the century so far.

PREVIOUS ISSUES

- Vol. 1, No. 1, Summer 2012
- Vol. 2, No. 1, Winter 2013
- Vol. 2, No. 2, Summer 2013
- Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 2014
- Vol. 3, No. 2, Summer 2014
- Vol. 4, No. 1, Winter 2015
- Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer 2015
- Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter 2016
- Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 2016
- Vol. 6, No. 1, Winter 2017
- Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 2017
- Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter 2018
- Vol. 7. No. 2, Summer 2018
- Vol 8. No. 1, Winter 2019
- Vol 8. No. 2, Summer 2019

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