2016 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference and Track Summaries

2016 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Heidi Souerwine, *Director of Meetings and Conferences*

The 13th APSA Teaching and Learning Conference (TLC) was held February 12–14, 2016, at the Marriott Portland Downtown Waterfront Hotel in Portland, Oregon. This year's program committee organized a dynamic program of sessions and workshops around the theme "Rethinking the Way We Teach: High-Impact Methods in the Classroom," focusing on effective practices and innovative methodologies for the political science classroom.

The conference was preceded by a morning preconference short course "Core Knowledge and Assessment Strategies in Advanced Placement and Introductory University Courses on US and Comparative Government" sponsored by the APSA Committee on Teaching and Learning. The course explored the alignment and assessment of core knowledge in AP and university introductory government courses.

The program opened with the keynote address presented by C. Edward Watson, the director of the Center for Teaching & Learning at the University of Georgia. Watson spoke on future challenges in the classroom affecting higher education, including rising costs, student debt, assessment and accountability, MOOCs, changing student populations, and more. This interactive keynote examined the most compelling trends in higher education today and paired them with things we empirically know about learning and cognition. The audience was asked to consider what teaching and learning in higher education will look like in 2020; to consider how to create a vision for the future, grounded in learning theory and the realities of higher education; and to answer the question: what is the future you want to make?

For the first time, the TLC also included a plenary lecture on the second day, delivered by Andrew Seligsohn, the president of Campus Compact, a national coalition of nearly 1,100 colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. Seligsohn encouraged attendees to think about ways to develop students' citizenship skills and forge effective community partnerships. He closed his remarks with recommendations for enhancing public engagement among students.

At the TLC, papers are presented in a collaborative working group environment, in which the participants in a theme learn about and discuss each other's research for the duration of the conference. This working group model has proven to be highly effective at enhancing the instructional effectiveness and scholarly productivity of conference attendees.

This year sessions were organized into 10 content tracks and two dedicated professional development workshop time slots, in which attendees presented research on pedagogy and discussed best practices for engaging students and training them to think critically, write effectively, and evaluate, consume, and generate knowledge of political science successfully, integrating digital techniques and traditional methods. The program committee spent a great deal of time debating the important trends in the discipline and crafted new and revised tracks to focus attendees on key challenges in the classroom.

Looking ahead, the research presented and the ideas generated and shared at the 2016 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference provide the unique opportunity to stimulate and create conversation in the discipline about pedagogical research and innovations.

2016 TEACHING & LEARNING CONFERENCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- Audrey Haynes, University of Georgia
- Chera LaForge, Indiana University East
- Sara Moats, Florida International University
- Chad Raymond, Salve Regina University
- Dick Simpson, University of Illinois at Chicago

TRACK SUMMARIES

Track summaries of the 2016 Teaching and Learning Conference are published in the following pages. These summaries include highlights and themes that emerged from the research presented in each track. The summary authors also issued recommendations for faculty, departments, and the discipline as a whole—providing suggestions for new strategies, resources, and approaches aimed at advancing political science education throughout the discipline and beyond. The 10 tracks are listed here and their track summaries are featured below:

- Civic Engagement Across the Disciplines and Across the Campus
- Core Curriculum/General Education
- The Inclusive Classroom
- Integrating Technology into the Traditional, Hybrid, or Flipped Classroom
- Online Learning
- Simulations and Games: Applications
- Simulations and Games: Evaluation
- Teaching How to Teach
- Teaching Democratic Theory Today
- Teaching Research Literacy

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES AND ACROSS THE CAMPUS

Elizabeth A. Bennion, *Indiana University South Bend*
Mary McHugh, *Merrimack College*

The Civic Engagement Across the Disciplines and Across the Campus track was a gathering of old and new track participants. This allowed us to advance quickly beyond questions about the value of civic engagement and instead jump into meaningful discussions of how political science can take advantage of the opportunity to be in the center of university discussions regarding the direction of civic engagement movements across our campuses.

Shawn Healy discussed ways to close the achievement gap. Healy noted that civic knowledge is the strongest predictor of engagement, replacing civic duty. While declines in a sense of civic duty among young people are troubling, the importance of knowledge in facilitating engagement means that civic education matters. Demography is not destiny. The key is to distribute opportunities more equitably.

Schools should encourage—and provide institutional support for—deliberative pedagogy that requires students to engage in informed and civil deliberation about critical political issues affecting their lives.

J. Cherie Strachan also discussed the importance of deliberative pedagogy, asking how we shape social identity to create an ideal, civil, and inclusive public sphere. Strachan stressed that identity is shaped in part by how people treat you, and she noted the troubling double standard facing women who speak out on political topics or enter the public sphere. Strachan argued that deliberation should be the core of a liberal arts education. Deliberative pedagogy introduces students to the basic features of deliberation and collective decision-making. However, we must be careful that some students are not silenced in the process. Women often talk less than men during political discussions and pull back when discussions become combative. Simply telling women to participate in the competitive "game" of politics is unsatisfactory. While training students to participate in contemporary political discourse, we must be careful not to preserve its most troubling characteristics.

John Theis agreed with Strachan that most students are familiar with expert (authoritative) or adversarial (competitive) approaches to political discussion, rather than with more deliberative (collaborative) approaches. Theis encourages students to wrestle with "wicked problems"—unstructured real-world problems that defy simple solutions and disciplinary boundaries. Theis, and his coauthor, Carly Mayes-Jones, recommend using peer-led team learning as part of a public achievement curriculum to educate and engage students. James Simeone continued this discussion by describing ways to move beyond understandings of knowledge as memorized facts and to encourage students to tackle unstructured problems that requires work with community partners to solve community-defined problems. Simeone described Illinois Wesleyan University's Action Research Center (ARC). ARC projects span multiple years and embed students in social networks. Importantly, ARC pairs a seminar with grant writing and internship classes and reaches students in the humanities, natural sciences, and fine arts, maximizing the types of projects in which students can get engaged. Simeone and Deborah Halperin found that ARC students are more knowledgeable than nonparticipants about how social networks shape community work and that ARC graduates see themselves as collaborators or catalysts, not as "white knights." ARC alums also report using multiple engagement skills in daily life and work after college (at double the rate of the average IWU alum).

Sally Anderson and Mahalley Allen highlighted another high-impact program that encourages students learning through direct service to the community. The Community Legal Information Center (CLIC) at California State University, Chico provides a unique internship program for paralegal students, offering a hands-on experience in a law office environment assisting actual clients. Under the supervision of four state bar licensed faculty attorneys, CLIC provides free legal services to members of the community who might otherwise be unable to afford it. CLIC provides valuable legal services in a wide range of areas providing students with a remarkable range of options and experiences.

While Simeone, Anderson, and Allen focused on encouraging long-term relationships with community partners outside the classroom, Ari Kohen discussed the importance of internal thought and reflection, testing the impact of personal narratives on student engagement in social justice education. Kohen encourages students to think deeply about how the history of the Holocaust relates to contemporary human rights. Although current evidence is anecdotal,

Kohen and Connor Prickett expect that further assessment will reveal that students are more likely to utilize office hours, talk to friends about the class, attend lectures on related topics, volunteer, and join advocacy groups when pushed to make personal connections to the course material.

While encouraging individual students to connect course material to their own lives can be empowering for the small number of students in these courses, Chad Litton and Mark Springer reminded us that the key to exposing all students to civic education and engagement opportunities is to incorporate civic education into the core curriculum. They discussed the impact of a responsible citizenship course required of all students, linking liberal arts and professional school faculty to create citizen participation projects involving students from multiple disciplines. For example, an occupational therapy student proposed a handicap-accessible playground in her local community. She worked with a team on the proposal, gave a presentation to the city council, successfully securing funding. She used this success to apply for her competitive profession and got a job immediately after college.

Departments and program would like more alumni success stories like the student noted above. Mary McHugh focused on the importance of understanding the long-term impact of experiential learning activities. As director of the Service Learning Center on campus, she wonders if her work is really having an impact. McHugh and Russell Mayer surveyed alumni from 2000 to 2015 and found that alumni who had participated in a service learning experience reported significantly higher levels of electoral engagement, nonelectoral political activity, following politics, and serving on a community board than other alumni.

One particularly promising approach to connecting students to post-graduation service and work is credit-bearing internships. While valuable for the hands-on practice they provide, internships are most effective as learning experiences when students have an opportunity to reflect upon what they have learned. Jennifer Pahre described an innovative way to deepen student learning, while also benefiting future interns and strengthening program assessment of the internship program. As director of a legal externship program, Pahre sends students out into the field to work with legal professionals. While a strong community-based learning experience requires reflection, students may resist standard guided reflection formats as busy-work. To address this problem, Pahre requires students to complete a "letter to successor" that describes the placement mission and activities. Students must explain to future interns what was most interesting and challenging about the internship and also tell their successor what they wish they had known before they began. The Letter demands that the student reflect upon their experiences in order to inform others. Student reflections have greatly increased in depth and quality since taking a "letter to successor" approach.

John Berg seconded Pahre's endorsement of the "letter to successor" as a powerful reflection tool for internship students, while considering a variety of best practices for fostering civic engagement, disciplinary education, and résumé-building through well-designed internships. Berg stressed the importance of avoiding low-quality internships and discussed ways to assure quality (and learning) in credit-generating internships. Berg stressed that civic engagement and internships should be academically situated. They should start with a learning contract with specified learning objectives. To make internships worthwhile, Berg suggests a site supervisor contract, a learning contract, weekly or bi-weekly reflective journals (including links to readings or coursework), a required articulation of transferable

skills, a midterm evaluation, a final evaluation, student evaluation of the site placement/supervisor, and a letter to successor. Finally, Leda Barnett reminded us all that more research is needed to understand the best ways to boost political efficacy through service-learning and internship experiences, especially among first generation and underrepresented students. This brought us full circle to Healy's presentation on the need for high-quality, hands-on approaches to civic education that are widely available and equitably distributed.

In reviewing what we learned (through the keynote, the papers, and vibrant discussions), we catalogued some steps that each of us could implement upon returning to our own schools, including serving on general education task forces, creating and publicizing a campus civic engagement calendar, promoting voter registration drives, and working with our college presidents to sign the Campus Compact Civic Action pledge. We also discussed opportunities for our discipline to take the lead in civic engagement work on our campuses and nationwide. We appreciate the APSA's recent focus on providing strategies and resources for campuses. *Teaching Civic Engagement: From Student to Active Citizen* is now freely available to all interested readers, and a follow-up book is underway. The *Journal of Political Science Education*, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, and the *Political Science Educator* newsletter provide avenues to share our work. The Consortium for Inter-Campus SoTL Research provides valuable opportunities to learn from each other and move this work forward. The restructuring of the annual meeting should provide more opportunities to share this work beyond the "choir" that attends the TLC. Political science is ideally positioned to partner with Campus Compact, the American Democracy Project of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities to help institutions better educate citizens for democracy. As colleges and universities face increased pressure to use high impact practices to retain and graduate students, community-based learning provides an ideal opportunity to meet these goals while also proving higher education's continued worth. General education curriculums, cross-disciplinary partnerships, PTR standards, and accreditation standards are all evolving to reflect this importance of this work. We believe that political scientists should place themselves at the center of these efforts, partnering with local elected officials to make sure that civic education efforts do not widen the gap between volunteerism and political engagement.

CORE CURRICULUM/GENERAL EDUCATION

Kelly A. Clancy, *Nebraska Wesleyan University*
Ray Mikell, *Jackson State University*
Everett A. Vieira III, *Temple University*

In the pages of a previous issue of this journal, we asked the question: "Are we teaching if our students are not learning?" (Gentry et al. 2012, 526). This is something all good educators ask themselves when assessing and evaluating their students. However, a related question should be asked as well: "How can I engage and retain my students to help them learn?" The three themes that emerged from the General Education track at the 2016 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference wrestled with the topics of how instructors can encourage critical thinking and higher-order learning through assignments, teaching, and curriculum design. The three major themes that emerged from the session were engagement and retention, assessment, and how the different curricular designs scaffold across institutions and the curriculum.

Retention and Engagement

Two of the presentations emphasized the importance of engaging and retaining students from the first moments of contact between them and the institution. One example of this is the summer bridge program at Arizona State University. The Early Start Program targets first-year students at most risk for attrition, and provides them with a three-credit residential political science course before the fall semester starts focused on study skills and basic principles. Woodall et al. evaluated the Early Start Program to determine if that attempt to mitigate attrition and increase retention was effective. Their initial findings suggest Early Start participants are on par with the general population of students in regard to level of political knowledge when they begin classes, have more positive coping mechanisms, and are more socially integrated into the university, thus effectively mitigating attrition and increasing retention. While this program involves a concerted two-week effort and requires intensive departmental and university resources to be successful, these preliminary findings offer an example for other institutions to replicate.

The importance of early intervention to retaining students was echoed in the French and Westler paper. To account for different drop and withdrawal rates across classes at a university, and to provide tools for the demand side of the teaching equation, French and Westler suggest preliminary findings that support engagement strategies for the classroom. By approaching this issue from the student perspective, their research found a substantive lecture on the first day and putting students "on the spot" correlated with much higher drop and withdrawal rates. However, a more professional appearance correlated with lower drop and withdrawal rates. As they collect more data, they expect to find a correlation between student-centered pedagogy, attempts to cultivate rapport, and engaging/entertaining students and higher retention rates. This led to a conversation about "best practices," and whether students can accurately identify good teaching practices.

Keeping costs down for students is a major challenge for colleges and universities, particularly those with diverse student populations. Seeking to counter the rising costs of textbooks, some institutions have begun to use open source resources. Lawrence and Lester's study sought to determine if open source versus traditional textbook selection has any effect on student performance and satisfaction. They found a decline in overall satisfaction with the online open content textbook, as well as a roughly comparable objective student performance. However, coupled with student confusion, faculty challenges, and sustainability issues, more research needs to be conducted before a move to open source textbooks can be recommended or discouraged.

Curriculum Design and Assessment

After departments and professors lay the groundwork for retention and engagement, how do we know if our students are learning? How can we measure whether or not they "get" it? One area of focus was on how testing practices may influence learning. Haynes, Domezi, and Neuharth-Pritchett examined how the use of practice tests taken from "chunks" of text, rather than multiple chapters in just one examination, can encourage deeper understanding of material, as opposed to harmful surface-level study practices. An experiment suggested that students who were required to take the practice tests did not ultimately perform better on exams than students who voluntarily took them. The presence of practice tests nevertheless appeared to improve student performance on

the whole. Mikell's experiment with context-dependent, scenario or vignette-oriented multiple-choice questions suggested that encouraging students to think about problems as they occur in the real world had a modest effect on learning outcomes in introductory comparative politics education. These papers reminded the instructors in the working group that mindfully designing and administering assessment matters a great deal.

Of course, we are interested in fostering and assessing both basic knowledge and skills and higher-order thinking in political science classes. Clancy structured her curriculum in an upper-level democratization course around a series of five student-led debates. The students enjoyed them, and indicated in surveys that they would most appreciate seeing them implemented more broadly in higher-level courses on topics that are not overly controversial. While Clancy found debates strengthened critical thinking skills and were an exciting, competitive change of pace from the normal curriculum, she also found logistical considerations and a need to experiment with the format for lower-division courses that may include nonpolitical science majors or students not as well-versed in the literature.

McClellan reported a particularly wide-ranging senior capstone course. His course involves an examination of different conceptual approaches to the discipline, first through major books, and then application to and analysis of real-world cases, including elections, political controversies, and judicial decisions, and then fictional films. Student performance was assessed through writing and research, oral presentations, and major field tests. The only major issue with this, McClellan noted, was that the assessment applied only to seniors. Early diagnostics, he suggested, should be more of a priority in regard to critical thinking.

The move to accurately assess student learning occurs on the university level as well. Dixon and Drammeh presented something of a cautionary tale in their discussion of the implementation of a university-mandated Quality Enhancement Plan that required assessment of writing. Their department was required to implement this in all introductory American government courses. Faculty buy-in, the amount of work required in grading essays, and a lack of enough instructional staff to carefully assess the writing of all students turned out to be major issues, particularly in large classes.

Johnson engages students in original research, having them conduct a public opinion poll and critically analyze the results. He utilizes the fact that they live on the border of North Dakota and Minnesota to discuss differences in the expected and nonexpected responses to the surveys. Students thus learn how to design a research project, collect original data, and analyze the results of the study. He then gives students the task of identifying correlations and providing some sort of causal link between the findings.

Scaffolding and Translation: Speaking across Contexts

One of the conversations that emerged between discussants and presenters focused on the question of applicability and of scaffolding curriculum both across courses in the political science curriculum, among two-year and four-year institutions, community college, liberal arts, and research institutions, and from high school to college. This mirrored the keynote presentation by Eddie Watson, where he discussed the difficulty of making "scale" work: even as we learn more about best practices in undergraduate and graduate education, the pressures put on higher education often dictate the opposite.

The conversation about how to consciously create connections occurred across panels, and a few papers directly spoke to this theme.

Luedtke and Byrd use a global approach to teach American politics in order to appeal to their student body in one of the most diverse districts in the world. Bennett is an excellent example of scaffolding as he observes the challenges of teaching constitutional law in Washington State and Eastern Kentucky. He observes that paying close attention to the structural constraints of the class (class length, term length) and the student body (preparation, traditional vs. nontraditional students) provides the opportunity to create learning outcomes that speak to unique student experiences. These papers reminded the track members that learning in political science is context-dependent.

As universities and colleges continue to move courses online, we must pay close attention to the advancements and challenges of virtual learning. Gilmour went from teaching more traditional, lecture-oriented American and Texas state government courses to adopting more innovative, active-learning oriented techniques, ones driven and shaped by new technology. She found, however, that her evaluations suffered somewhat, and the courses ended with a higher percentage of low-performers. These findings are especially important for those instructors who teach both online and in the classroom, as we need to find the right balance in assignments and assessments between these learning environments.

References

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THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

Nathan Combes, *University of California, San Diego*
Sara Parker, *Chabot College*
RG (Royal Gene) Cravens, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

Introduction

The past year has seen the US Supreme Court rule on marriage equality, nationwide protests in response to killings of Black Americans by police, and presidential primary elections which one party's frontrunner is a woman and the other party's nominee has advocated the building of a wall between the United States and Mexico and temporarily banning all Muslims from US entry. At the same time, college and university classrooms continue to diversify across all manner of identities. Diversity in and of itself does not demand inclusivity, yet political science instructors—particularly those whose trade is contemporary American politics—can hardly avoid addressing the pedagogical issues it engenders. As faculty members who teach about power, we are in a pivotal position to empower students and create inclusive spaces.

Through conversations in "The Inclusive Classroom," a track that is new to the TLC, we grappled with how to ensure that our teaching practices can address the challenges of inclusion and the problems of exclusion. The paper presentations and ensuing conversations led to a number of proposals that addressed some of the concerns raised by instructors who are often unsure about how to address issues of diversity, which can include race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ableness or disability, age, and veteran status, among others. We discussed how to reframe classes by including texts that give breath to a greater range of voices, interrogating biases in assigned materials, and confronting our own teaching styles and approaches by asking ourselves how these might inhibit or encourage different students to learn. We also concluded that to create an environment that is engaging and welcoming to all

students is a challenging goal, and because discussions around race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation can be highly sensitive topics, faculty should conscientiously prepare for strong emotional reactions that may disrupt a class but could lay the groundwork for deeper understanding.

Some of the overarching themes that emerged from our discussions speak to the importance of mindfully bringing in diverse voices to our teaching practices, expanding the base of interest of "inclusive teaching" in our field, helping identify and share valuable resources, and better preparing faculty for the challenges of inclusive teaching both in the classroom and through institutional structures.

Common Issues

Neglecting to Weave Inclusiveness throughout the Curriculum

Courses in American politics tend to compartmentalize issues of race and gender by treating them as stand-alone topics. Race might be covered during a week designated for the civil rights movement, or women's political involvement might be addressed in reference to the women's suffrage movement. Little might be said about them otherwise, sometimes because professors assume that in-depth conversations about these issues will occur in topics courses that students intentionally select, such as "race and politics" or "women/gender and politics." While not intentional, this segmentation of our courses sends the message that there is a proper place in which to discuss issues of race and politics and that it is improper in other spaces. We discussed the importance of teaching a holistically inclusive curriculum, beginning with the Framers of the Constitution and early American political history.

Confronting Existing Biases

To bring issues of race and gender to the forefront of our classrooms, we must begin by being cognizant of the ways in which our own study of politics is skewed by bias. Readings that elevate historically marginalized voices must be prioritized. Scott Abernathy pointed out in his presentation on "Narrative, Visibility and Invisibility in American Government Textbooks" that textbooks poorly capture the complexity of identities; overwhelmingly they are unrepresentative with respect to gender, sexual orientation, and race and ethnicity, for example. Lack of diversity begins with authorship, and as Daniel Mueller shows, today's most popular political science textbooks are mostly written by Caucasian men (70–80%). Moreover, as Mueller also pointed out, the visual representations (mostly photographs) used in these textbooks are predominantly of Caucasian men who are in positions of or exercising political power, thus reinforcing stereotypes that "politics is a white man's realm" rather than a dynamic and inviting arena to the student who is reading the book.

Do these subtle cues have an impact on the way that women, racial or ethnic minorities, homosexual, or underprivileged or marginalized individuals of any type engage with our courses or the materials in them? The general consensus of our track was that those who hold a "minority view" or have uncommon life experiences tend to be less likely to engage fully in a course, shying away from answering questions in a crowded classroom, for example, or fearful of being made an example based on an identifying characteristic. Those who feel uncomfortable sharing their views may be more conservative students on liberal campuses, or conversely, liberal students on conservative campuses. The dilemma raised by this situation is that individuals who feel intimidated from engaging are essentially losing out on their fundamental right to be equally educated.

Raising Challenging Issues

In her short-term class focused on the Iowa Caucuses, presenter Carly Foster identified the challenge of getting students to engage in challenging conversations around gender and the presidential race. This may be because students can tend to adhere to a generic narrative that "things are getting better" and/or because they have been taught to view discrimination as confined to individualized cases.

Nina Kasniunas finds that there are wide discrepancies in the ways and degree to which political science faculty incorporate minority voices. While 48.2% of American government instructors in her sample said it is "very important" to incorporate Black or other minority voices into their courses, nearly the same percentage (48.8%) said they do not attempt to do so through course readings. When asked to identify topics with which they found the most difficulty incorporating Black and other minority voices, 40% of respondents identified the bureaucracy, roughly 30% identified the topic of federalism, and just under 30% identified the topic of the Constitution. As a group we discussed the challenges involved for instructors to teach students how political, social, and economic systems serve to advantage Whites, and how teaching about overt racism can be easier than teaching about systemic racism. Furthermore, as Lindsey Smith discussed in her presentation, "Dynamics of an Inclusive Classroom," instructors may bear the brunt of resistance from students when teaching about these issues. At the same time, instructors can open up a space for dialogue with students who might not otherwise have a faculty member or a venue to engage in these important conversations.

Solutions

How can we create classroom environments where all students feel comfortable participating, regardless of the topic? One solution is to address the situation head-on. Syllabi should include statements about civility. Students can be tasked with collaboratively creating a "rubric of respect" so that they think critically about the importance of a safe environment in their classrooms and feel as if they own the rules for engaging each other. Students can be encouraged to change their seats on a daily basis, because left to their own devices, students tend to sit in the same chair and consequently only become familiar with the two or three students nearest them. Seat-changing may encourage a stronger sense of community (a "safe space"), encourage more varied exchanges, and prevent more introverted students from isolating themselves. For students who are less comfortable speaking out loud in class, there are alternative methods for generating conversation: small groups, "think-pair-share" activities, asking for students to respond to questions in writing, or allowing students to text questions during class.

For instructors who are struggling to amplify the softer voices in their classes, students can be assigned to play the role of a character. The act of inhabiting and imagining another's voice, whether scripted or unscripted, takes the pressure off individuals to represent their own views and can lessen the fear of being adversely or unfairly judged by their peers.

Although more time-consuming to establish and organize, high-impact and experiential learning practices can provide all students with valuable educational opportunities. Juli Minoves-Triquell's excursion to meet the governor of Baja California helped Latino and non-Latino students understand American political concepts more deeply and to engage in critical conversations about the Mexican-American border. Matthew Crosston shared the results

of an academic endeavor to support student publications about national intelligence and international security in a peer-reviewed digital magazine. He shared that two-thirds of the articles accepted for publication have been written by women, which may suggest that offering innovative and challenging publication opportunities and avenues to students may encourage new levels of productivity.

As noted earlier, we also agreed about the importance of including many voices in our course readings. To counteract the typical textbook's focus on privileged, white men, Abernathy suggests using narratives and other primary sources as a means to enrich content, complicate the issues, and make things more interesting for students. As a group, we compiled a list of readings on American politics that include more diverse images and content (which can be found at the conclusion of this summary).

For those who have less freedom to choose a textbook, we suggest that instructors deliberately use more diverse images and references in their own course slides, taking care to ensure that their Power-Point slides are more, rather than less, representative. Instructors can also supplement textbook readings with articles or primary sources from women and people of color. We suggest that instructors do this beyond the standard civil rights unit (where one is expected to include Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"), and infuse an entire course with voices from people of color, women, and other underrepresented groups.

Underrepresented groups might also include those who are "non-traditional" students, although Wendy Muse Sinek finds that the term tends to be used as a "catch-all" for many types of students, including commuters versus noncommuters, first-generation students, and returning students, for example. Regardless of "category," however, her research shows that students who feel connected to or networked with other students are far more likely to complete their degrees. Her findings suggest that creating learning communities in our classrooms could improve student experiences not only within courses, but also extend beyond it to affect their larger college or university experience.

Lastly, we suggest that instructors deal with the issue of inclusivity (or lack thereof) in society head-on. To illustrate: use the lack of inclusivity in a textbook as a lesson, directly pointing out to students the overrepresentation of certain groups in textbook images, or asking them to catalogue the characteristics of persons visually represented in their books. Ask them why such biases might exist. Alternatively, ask students to keep a log of all the media they use in a 24-hour period to identify which sources are informing their worldview. Use these exercises as opportunities to teach students about privilege and the ways in which oppression is built into the historical and contemporary institutions of government.

Precautions

Each of these solutions are easier said than done, and instructors may be contributing to systemic discrimination unintentionally and unconsciously through their teaching approaches. Many instructors themselves come from groups of privilege (white, male, older, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgender, etc.), but being aware of potential biases allows instructors to be more deliberate about their pedagogical choices, and not acting as a source of authority about someone else's lived experiences.

Finally, it is critical to anticipate the potential impact of active learning exercises. For example, in a "privilege walk," all participants begin the exercise in a horizontal line. When a moderator reads an item from a list of privileges that a person might enjoy (such as being White, being born into a wealthier family, having parents that have never gone to jail, etc.), the participant takes one step forward. The exercise is designed to highlight difference and privilege (everyone ends up at a different spot), which can be distressing for some participants. The privilege walk should be preceded by trust-building exercises and followed by conversations about the causes of systemic discrimination or solutions to the problems, rather than on the feelings they produce.

Conversations about systemic privilege can be difficult. Few political science instructors have been trained in facilitating discussions about issues that are sensitive and volatile. This deficit speaks to a more general inadequacy in graduate programs with respect to teacher preparation, and we recommend that APSA devote resources to identify tools that will enable graduate students, instructors, and professors to help their students grapple with uncomfortable issues constructively, and reshape their practices, syllabi, and classrooms to achieve higher levels of inclusivity.

Resources

- National Conference of Black Political Scientists
- http://www.tolerance.org/

Books

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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CLASSROOM

Leslie Caughell, *Virginia Wesleyan College*
Anthony Chergosky, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
Jennifer Curtin, *University of Auckland*
Chera LaForge, *Indiana University East*
Sovathana Sokhom, *California State University, Dominguez Hills*

The Integrating Technology into the Classroom track examined numerous types of technology that can promote effective teaching and learning in political science courses. From the presentations

and discussions throughout the conference, a key theme emerged: technology has the power to facilitate what we know students need to excel as learners. Students thrive when they are frequently quizzed, asked to explain relationships among concepts, and prompted to "grapple" with course content through the exchange of ideas, the generation of new insights, and the critical assessment of claims, arguments, and theories. Participants in the track noted how the educational technologies discussed could promote those activities. Innovations and developments in educational technology possess the power to enhance student learning outcomes in political science courses. Fully realizing the benefits of the diverse range of these technologies, however, will require openness on the part of instructors to take risks and be vulnerable, careful selection and application of those technologies, and a willingness from educational institutions to provide support for innovative uses of technology in the classroom.

The track highlighted how instructor's hesitance to use new platforms and programs remains a barrier to using technology in the political science classroom. For most of us, the source of this hesitance is our unwillingness to integrate something that we have not yet mastered. We often perceive it wiser to be safe in our use of traditional tools, including lectures and course management software, which we have always used or which our institutions provide support for themselves. However, technology promises to help us to achieve learning objectives and reach underserved groups in our classrooms. Multiple paper presenters demonstrated that with a willingness to try something new and with flexibility in our implementation of it, our students learn both content and important professional skills.

Using new technologies often means that we are learning alongside our students. While we certainly have mastery over the academic content we are presenting, we may not have mastery of emerging technologies. To use these technologies in the classroom, instructors can admit the limitations of what they know and select technologies with existing support. To this end, Chang, Caughell, and Crawford intentionally selected easy-to-use blogging platforms that have free online support resources, while supplementing these resources with introductory sessions to relieve anxiety and maintain student engagement. Instead of troubleshooting problems, participants noted instructors may be better off directing students to outside resources and encouraging collaboration to solve problems. By showing our students how to seek out information, we demonstrate to them how learning and problem-solving skills will aid them in their professional life beyond our college classrooms.

Using technology in the classroom, for most people, involves a willingness to embrace vulnerability. We will not always be prepared for the questions that students ask. We will not always know the right answer. Sometimes we may learn from our students; sometimes we may learn right alongside our students. At the same time, failure when we use technology in the classroom happens and sometimes this willingness to take a risk does not pan out. As Grusendorf noted, her forays with digital argument mapping showed no benefit over previous assignments. Experimenting with technology should be seen as just that, experimentation. Some tools may prove to be successful, while others may be abandoned. However, presenters highlighted how these "failures" helped them to identify better ways to reach students or to achieve their learning objectives. If we are willing to embrace vulnerability, to be flexible in our assignments, and to learn from failure, technology provides us a way of teaching

our students both course content and important professional skills in new and entertaining ways.

The track's papers reminded us that, although technologies are important tools for teaching, they do not replace thoughtful pedagogy. In other words, what matters is not just what technology we choose to use, but how and why we choose to use it. Decisions are informed by pedagogical principles, learning objectives, and assessment goals. As noted by Robert Crawford in his reflection on the use of blogs by students, when instructors can provide clear and compelling reasons why such assignments provide value beyond more traditional assignments, students are open to the use of technology.

Integrating technology into the classroom helps to facilitate students' engagement and application of course materials and to aid students in learning content. Sweet-Cushman's and Woodall and Lennon's use of Twitter outside and inside the classroom highlights how tying new technology to meaningful assessment can encourage participation and empower students to think more broadly about political knowledge and civic engagement. Technology can also expand opportunities for collaboration and student engagement, even in large, anonymous settings. The use of classroom response systems, for instance, can be leveraged to provoke group discussions, as indicated by Curtin. Moreover, as Chergosky and Roberts reveal, in-class conversations that follow quizzes enable instructors to continually adjust their teaching and learning decisions to support student learning. And, as is noted in all the papers, scaffolding assignments is an integral component to successful take-up of technology.

Multiple presenters highlighted how technology may offer promise in serving groups of students who often struggle, including students who have English as a second language or first-generation and minority students. Jennifer Curtin found that clicker quizzes helped bridge language barriers and encouraged classroom participation. This same clicker technology helped Anthony Chergosky and Jason Roberts improve the performance of students in large introductory lecture courses, allowing them to provide individual instruction and assessment. Swati Srivastava found similar positive implications for posting review podcasts of her political science courses. Such interventions in early courses likely provide distinct benefits for first-generation and minority students, who may struggle with the adjustment to college. These three examples demonstrate the many ways in which technology can help instructors provide resources to their students.

Underlying our discussions throughout the conference was the overwhelming amount of technology available to instructors and students, though we know gaps do exist. While Blake and Morse provided us with an overview of several useful and free open-source technologies for teaching political science, others showed us that developing our own technologies can also be useful. The TwoRavens project by D'Orazio and Honaker was developed to help explain data analysis and model creation. Daniel Smith has worked to create a more dynamic, online simulation for his law courses, which mimics real-world legal activities. Finally, Howe's Project Duverger 2.0 was born out of a desire to make teaching electoral systems easier. Their innovation showed track discussants how valuable it can be to collaborate with others (sometimes outside of academia) to develop new tools that help meet our learning objectives.

As educators, we play a crucial role in preparing our students to become global citizens. No longer can instructors monopolize knowledge, lecture, and allow students to passively consume what

we deliver. While some may be uncomfortable or apprehensive in embracing technology, the reality is that it is here to stay, and our presenters demonstrated that there are multiple ways to embrace and integrate into our pedagogy. As professors, we need to pay attention to new teaching and learning technologies that can help students who may otherwise struggle in our class. While acknowledging utilizing new technologies is important, our concluding discussions also noted that it is up to our institutions to aid faculty in adapting and integrating technology into our classrooms. Not only is support necessary, but faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders should be involved in the process of selecting (or developing) new technology products that can enhance student learning at an appropriate cost to students and the institution. Finally, instructors should be aware of student privacy concerns when utilizing third-party technologies. As students navigate away from our learning management systems, they expose their personal data and information to outside entities. Institutions and instructors should work to mitigate concerns about student privacy, even if state or national laws do not exist.

ONLINE LEARNING

Aubree Calvin, *Tarrant County College*
Sara Moats, *Florida International University*
Christine Sylvester, *Binghamton University*

The 2016 APSA Teaching & Learning Conference Online Learning Track was extremely productive. Vigorous conversation centered on exploring the challenges and best practices in teaching in a highly technological age when our students may never set foot in our physical classroom. The diverse set of papers as well as the engaging discussion focused on realistic strategies to make the online environment just as meaningful as the face-to-face classroom. As higher education institutions continue to expand their online offerings it is the burden, privilege, and responsibility of us as political scientists to ensure that the courses we create are rigorous and challenging. Our courses must be instructor oriented, while also creating an environment that is welcoming to students. The track expressed the need to ensure that faculty are given the creative freedom and control to shape our individual courses in the way that best suits our various instructional styles and maximizes student success. The online student population is intergenerational and often communicates differently than more seasoned academic instructors. This may be especially true with the millennial generation.

In today's online environment, it is not enough to only provide academic content and assessments. Online instructors, similar to face-to-face instructors, need to use their classrooms to teach students skills such as research, information analysis, and forms of communication that transcend understanding our baseline content such as political institutions or behavior. One area of agreement among track participants is that younger generation of students has access to more technological tools than ever before without any real idea how to use them to effectively enrich their knowledge or understanding of civic matters. Many of the ways we can rethink our online courses for the better require little more than some minor tweaks to our approach or our delivery.

Attrition is a growing concern when teaching online, and it stems from differences in how knowledge is acquired. Jerome Sibayan (US Army War College) contrasted how we, faculty, found information in the library or from lectures in class, while students now find most of their information online. Students are no longer passive receivers of knowledge. Rather, they prefer to have control of their learning and want to be in the driver's seat of their education. Teaching this new type of student, millennials, requires providing more flexibly to include their ideas and interests into course material and has the potential to provide a number of direct benefits to students. Several simple steps can be taken to enhance the online learning environment for millennials, including online office hours with a live video chat and online course blogs (where students post readings of interest to them and explain why these are useful readings).

In addition to incorporating new approaches when teaching online, it is also important to look more closely at who we are teaching online. Kerstin Hamann, Philip H. Pollock, and Bruce M. Wilson (University of Central Florida) found that web-enhanced courses had the highest success rates. From this analysis the authors found that older students tended to take more online courses and that as an individual takes more online courses their success rate declines. Analyzing the impact of age, gender, and race, the authors noted that purely online courses have lower success rates and that older and Caucasian students fared the worst. Ultimately, white men and Hispanic women have the lowest success rates for online courses compared to their performance in face-to-face courses, telling us that our traditional approach to online teaching is not serving these two groups well.

Many educators are attempting to educate students to be lifelong learners. Audrey Neville and Robert Pahre (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) found that the best class design approach to turn a one-semester course into a lifelong experience is to use a blended experiential design. While attempts can be made to mitigation weaknesses of face-to-face, online, or experiential learning, the best approach for eliminating these weaknesses is the combination of multiple formats. Blending can come at a high cost. Recorded lectures take a great deal of time to develop, produce, and edit. Additionally, student engagement with online lectures can make overcoming low levels of connection to the environment challenging, but ultimately a blended approach results in better student retention and success.

Communication in an online class is extremely important. The method and tone of communication is key to ensuring student success. Rebecca Glazier (University of Arkansas, Little Rock) studied the impact rapport building has on student retention in the online learning environment and found it has a positive impact on student retention rates and success. Building a positive rapport humanizes the course and allows the student to connect with the instructor. In fact, one of the most important aspects of humanizing the course is video lectures. Steven Rothman (Ritsumeikan Asian Pacific University) found adding a video lecture to a course, whether online or in the traditional setting greatly improves engagement and retention. Additionally, Amber Dickinson (Oklahoma State University) analyzed e-mail messages from multiple online courses and found that e-mailed responses to student's questions that had a friendly tone, called the student by name, and included words such as "please" and "thank you" resulted in a 15% increase in student success rates compared to courses with less personalized communication.

In addition to improved communication, there are several tools that may be incorporated into a course to increase engagement and success. Activities such as simulations, wikis, live classes, and online chats greatly improve student engagement and student learning outcomes. However, as Mat Hardy and Sally Totman (Deakin University) found, some professors are not adequately using these tools. A survey of international relations professors in Australia revealed professors were not using the online tools collaboratively.

Upon further investigation, the authors found time constraints to be the largest factor for not integrating more engaging tools into the course. Instructors often have heavy teaching and research responsibilities and also feel the time needed to research and incorporate new tools will not lead to adequate increases in student success rates. However, research shows that students are more enthusiastic about course material and are more likely to actively participate in class when such tools are used effectively. In a separate study, Mat Hardy discussed the value of simulations in online learning. The Middle East Politics simulation is used as an online component of a large face-to-face course and runs for two weeks. Students not only reported high levels of satisfaction with the course, but also reported becoming incredibly absorbed with the material as the simulation developed. Thus, incorporating tools to create an active learning environment increases student engagement and, as Richard Tanksley (North Idaho College) found, it can also reduce academic dishonesty. Tanksley's study showed that course assessments that are tailored to each student both reduce the opportunity to cheat and increases course engagement.

As instructors add additional tools to increase engagement and improve communication channels in their online classrooms, many are also incorporating elements of the online environment to enhance their face-to-face classes. Bellevue University professor Matthew Crosston presented an interesting study in which he merged the online and traditional classrooms by allowing students three different methods to attend class. Students could attend the lecture in the traditional lecture hall, view the lecture streamed live online, or view the recording online within 48 hours. Allowing students to select their individual method of class attendance enhanced the class overall by improving course flexibility. In fact, instructors are increasingly adding online components to their traditional classroom. For instance, Craig Albert, Stacie Pettit, and Christopher Terry (Georgia Regents University) discussed their success with a flipped classroom. By posting a recorded lecture, textbook module content, and discussion questions online prior to the scheduled class, they were able to utilize actual class time to engage students further with the material. Additionally, Paul Rama and Troy Smith (Brigham Young University at Hawaii) found a flipped classroom model can enhance critical thinking skills. Posting the material online in advance freed up valuable class time in which students were able to practice their critical thinking skills.

As the conference concluded, one theme emerged from the discussion: the instructor is the central figure in today's online class. In the past, the digital instructor played a more passive role, basically serving as a discussion board moderator and grader. Today, the instructor needs and desires to be more active. How the instructor fosters the online learning environment is just as important as the delivery of content. However, online instructors often feel there is a disconnect between faculty, mid-level instructional designers, and administrators regarding online instruction. It is important to note there is no "cookie cutter" model for online teaching, just as there is no "cookie cutter" model for traditional face-to-face classes. All faculty have different teaching methods and strengths in their classrooms, whether teaching online or face-to-face. Forcing faculty to adopt a classroom template or particular syllabus format stifles creativity and removes academic freedom.

The theme of this year's APSA Teaching and Learning conference focused on rethinking the way we teach. This is certainly true in today's classroom. As academic institutions increase their online course offerings and incorporate new technology into their face-to-face classes, the distinction between online and traditional classes become less and less defined. Elements of both the online and traditional learning environment have been combined to create an enhanced learning experience for the students. Additionally, we as educators have an opportunity to enrich our teaching styles through mutual mentoring as graduate students, junior faculty and senior faculty work together to blend the learning environments.

SIMULATIONS AND GAMES: APPLICATIONS

George A. Waller, *University of Wisconsin Colleges, Fox Valley*
Adam Wunische, *Boston College*

One of the particular problems that was highlighted at this year's conference was the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of simulations for enhancing student learning. For several of the papers presented, success was measured by either student self-assessment or student satisfaction. If students reported that they felt the simulation enhanced their understanding of course material, the simulation was judged to be effective. It was noted that, while this data is important and helps make the case for the use of simulations in political science classrooms, administrators and detractors often need more convincing objective evidence that simulations do, in fact, generate greater student understanding of course content. Discussion on this topic during the paper presentations centered around three things: 1) that the major advantages of simulations include the development of soft skills such as empathy and active learning, which are difficult to measure in the first place; 2) that subjective student assessments of simulation effectiveness may not equate to objective measures of student learning; and 3) that the measurable impacts may be more long term and can only be observed in subsequent classes, beyond the normal timeframe for a posttest. Although presenters and attendees agree that simulations are fun and appear to enhance student engagement and satisfaction, more work needs to be done to explore ways to measure the actual impact of simulations on student learning.

A pivotal question, which was taken up by several of this year's papers, was when and how simulations might best be utilized. Some types of simulations are perhaps best employed early in a semester or term, while others may be most effective or useful at midterm or near the end of a course. Simulation placement is an important consideration for instructors and should be tied directly to learning objectives for the course and for particular units/modules of the course. One paper proposed the idea that simulations might be more effective for entry-level students, or for students in introductory courses, rather than advanced students who have presumably already developed the soft skills and abilities that simulations are thought to foster. Another paper solved for this by adjusting the rules, roles, and sophistication for higher-level students to ensure the simulation remains challenging. Explaining the purpose of the simulation or game also helps to convince older or more nontraditional students that the games have academic value, increasing willingness to participate and the likelihood of successful outcomes.

It was also noted that increases in length and sophistication can serve as deterrents to both students and instructors. More complex simulations involve a good deal more care in design, planning, and setup by instructors who use them and often require a significant element of "troubleshooting" if things don't go according to plan. Simulations that take place over multiple class sessions (sometimes even multiple weeks) must be carefully monitored and adjusted when problems arise or when expectations or objectives are not

being realized. Some instructors solve for this by dividing simulation work into iterations to give students, and the instructor, time to reset and reflect. Others solve for this by using social networking software to streamline the process of interactions to reduce the instructor's workload. While longer term, more complex simulations can be very well designed and implemented in some courses resulting in significant student and instructor satisfaction, shorter, simpler simulations can be quite effective for augmenting important course concepts and require less time and fewer opportunities for unexpected developments. In any case, whether to use longer, more complex, simulations or shorter, simpler ones is an important consideration that needs to align with course (or course unit) learning objectives.

Iterations and variety were employed by a number of track presenters. For the longer term extended simulations, the tasks and events in the simulation were spread out over time. For a particular paper presented on a campaign budget activity, events in the activity are spread out through the term and are supplemented by traditional lecture techniques. Other strategies include icebreaker type simulations that are short and simple. These get students, who otherwise might only be accustomed to nonactive teaching methods, to become familiar with the process before being overwhelmed by a resource-intensive, longer, or more complex simulation. These shorter simulations can also serve multiple functions. Students can learn about how multiple iterations of the prisoner's dilemma change the outcome, while also meeting and working closely with their fellow students thus building the foundations for future group work.

Debriefing is an essential component of simulation pedagogy. Debriefs were mentioned as a way to mitigate some of the possible negative effects of simulations, and also to consolidate student learning. Possible negative effects of simulations include students losing "the game" and being upset or angry about that, or that the simulation fails to achieve the desired learning outcome. Debriefs can highlight the learning opportunities that come from both negative and positive outcomes and what lessons should have been learned. Debriefs can also help shift a student's focus on personal shortcomings to the actual learning objectives of the simulation. Debriefs should clarify how the simulations are connected to course learning objectives, and what that means for the broader course curriculum.

SIMULATIONS AND GAMES: EVALUATIONS

Joseph W. Roberts, *Roger Williams University*
Nancy E. Wright, *Long Island University, Brooklyn*

Simulations and games have long been a key element of the university classroom. These active learning tools are designed to engage and motivate students. Complex topics that may not be as clear in assigned readings are presented in ways that encourage students to think critically, solve problems, and ask deeper questions. The key question is how do we, as educators, know that simulations are doing what we expect them to do? In 2016, as in previous years, the track was a lively mix of discussion and practice. Four critical themes emerged from the discussions: 1) What does success mean?; 2) Context matters for simulations; 3) Tradeoffs of using real versus imaginary simulations; and 4) Rigorous assessment is needed but that does not mean only quantitative assessment.

What Is a Successful Simulation or Game?

If we ask the question "Do simulations work?" we may or may not get a useful answer. In fact, this may not be the best question to ask,

because different learning objectives, classroom configurations, and time or other resources, as well as instructor skill and other factors may impact the success of the simulation or game. For Simon Usherwood, the better questions to ask are "How do you design effective simulations?" and "What are effective implementations of simulations?" The key is building pedagogical tools and teaching simulation design to improve learning. Moreover, there is a need to bring the body of literature on teaching and learning to plan and implement high impact learning tools. Both of these questions relate to the real versus imaginary question below. Michelle Allendoerfer discussed the outsourcing of the design process to two upper-level undergraduate students, Tianshan Fullop and Jacob Warwick, in an independent study. The simulation was then used in Allendoerfer's comparative politics class. This is an incredibly rich opportunity to develop deeper student knowledge of the issues (for both groups of students but particularly the two designers) and to show students collaborative work between professor and students. The success of the simulation must be thought of in terms of learning outcomes. Erin Baumann and John FitzGibbon discussed the use of crisis simulations to teach and approach the issues of effectiveness and motivation from both a perspective on the scholarship of teaching and learning and a perspective of cognitive psychology. For Baumann and FitzGibbon, the design of simulations must work within the broader context of learning outcomes. Including a different and important body of literature enhances the discussion of fidelity (closeness to reality) and systematization (increasing regularity of interactions even in a crisis environment)

Amanda Rosen and Nina Kollars explored ways to implement active learning and simulations in a methods classroom. The traditional laments by students in methods courses include that it is abstract, boring, and difficult. Rosen and Kollars address this by taking a local restaurant's simple claim to have the best breakfast in town and ask the students to determine where the best breakfast is using the methods of political science. Students operationalize definitions, collect data, analyze the data, and complete a final paper. Rosen and Kollars do not have clear data on the effectiveness of the project save for course evaluations and expressed student interest (see below). There is no one best way to judge effectiveness.

Context Matters

When using simulations in class there are many issues that a professor needs to consider. Who are the students? What do they bring to the table? What type of simulation or game (i.e., low skill versus high skill; long simulations versus short simulations versus games; or in-class vs. online versus hybrid) meets the learning outcome needs of the professor and the students? The participants used different kinds of simulations or games to reach students in different ways. Victor Asal, Josh Caldon, Andrew Vitek, and Susan Bitter demonstrated and discussed a game taking no more than 10 minutes to play, the Running Game. Depending on the classroom or even university, students will have wildly different starting points in their understanding of inequality. This short game is extremely effective at getting students to understand the concepts of inequality and structure particularly in places where some forms of diversity might be more limited. In contrast, Joseph W. Roberts employed a multi-day simulation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Given the breadth and depth of the issues in the conflict, the simulation is, by necessity, larger and more complex. However, this simulation was extremely effective in the small course (20 students) in which it was used because the number of roles for students was limited.

A significantly larger classroom environment would be much more difficult. A third model of simulation size is shown in the paper by Andrew Schlewitz on the Washington Model Organization of American States (WMOAS). Any large-scale simulation of international relations (WMOAS, MUN, Model Arab League, Model EU, etc.) will have a real impact on learners from multiple institutions. With extensive survey data from student participants, Schlewitz showed real learning but in a largely extra-curricular role that supplements rather than supplants coursework.

Gretchen Knudsen Gee showed the unique challenges for professors in larger classes to get and keep students engaged. Simulations allow for greater involvement of students in and across large multisection courses. Simulations may also provide for some continuity between sections, because though active learning techniques require more confident instructors, there may be a real fear of trying new things. Moreover, Gee's paper shows that the resources for creating simulations are important to providing more realistic experiences.

Chad Raymond and Sally Gomaa provided a cautionary tale about context. The authors showed the pitfalls of using online tools for simulations in classrooms. In this case, the use of Flash video caused problems because of security settings, removal of Flash from computers, or other issues. Moreover, the original plan for the simulation experiment failed because the planned site was removed from the Internet. When planning a simulation, it is important to have backup plans and to test the systems well in advance.

Tradeoffs of Real vs. Imaginary Scenarios

Most participants agreed that both approaches are valuable in different ways. On the one hand, developing simulations around actual events imparts to students the opportunity and motivation to conduct research outside the classroom in an effort to learn more about the simulation's assigned countries and events (see Gee, Roberts, Rosen and Kollars, or Schlewitz, for example). On the other hand, those students not as familiar as others with a region of the world where the simulation is taking place may be intimidated, especially if others are familiar. Moreover, focusing on actual events, especially current happenings, can draw students so much into the day-to-day progression of what is taking place that they may overlook the broader significance (e.g., acquisition of negotiating skills or empathy) that is the purpose of the simulation itself.

Nancy Wright combined certain elements of both the real and the imagined, with the former as the case of a project to harness electricity from methane gas in Lake Kivu, Rwanda, and indigenous displacement in the Central African Republic, and the latter as scenarios of the pre-colonial era in each of those countries, which especially in the case of the Central African Republic has very little data available. One of Wright's key findings is that students can harness facts to place specific issues and events in a larger context, and where data are scarce, students can harness their imaginations to re-create historical situations and then reflect on why they imagine them the way that they do. Wright also points out that understanding students' preconceived ideas can influence simulation design and operation particularly to counter the tendency to link a country solely to a particular crisis or atrocity.

Rigorous Assessment Does Not Have to Be Quantitative

The increasingly established trend of equating rigor with quantitative assessment is likely to obfuscate the evaluation of rigor in other equally meaningful ways. This is true for two reasons: quantitative analysis cannot explain everything, and it depends on data that may not always be available. There are other ways to assess the value of simulations and games beyond mere quantification. For example, Rosen and Kollars noted that while reliable data actually measuring the effectiveness of games on learning were not available, they did report that course evaluations, often cited as low for methods courses compared to other courses, were consistently high in the methods course that employed several illustrative games, and in fact a significant number of students wished for a second methods course, an outcome attributed to the use of games. Similarly, Roberts used the knowledge domains assessment model (Pettenger, West, and Young 2014) that is based on learning outcomes. By focusing on learning outcomes, the assessment better reflects the goals of the course, though such means of evaluation would not necessarily be counted in the context of traditional empirical assessment.

Nicholas Vaccaro is critical of the experimental and overtly empirical assessment models that are proposed by Baranowski and Weir (2015). Vaccaro notes that their use of "show and tell" infantilizes the process of disseminating useful and helpful pedagogical tools. Description has value and this should not be overlooked. Discussion about potential flaws in experimental design methodologies is critical. Is a pre/post or control/test group model necessary to show learning? Is it fair for one group to engage in high-impact practices and another not? Does the model proposed limit the assessment to environments that can establish two or more test groups? For example, in a small liberal arts university, a course might be taught biennially. This does not lend itself to testing effectiveness of a technique years apart. Ultimately, the issue comes down to the question "Is the medical clinical trial model an appropriate model for social science research?" The general consensus is that it is not always a useful model for research in teaching and learning.

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TEACHING DEMOCRATIC THEORY TODAY

Thomas C. Ellington, *Wesleyan College*
Khristina Haddad, *Moravian College*
Alison Staudinger, *University of Wisconsin, Green Bay*

Participants in the Teaching Democratic Theory Today track noted a valuable interplay between the abstraction inherent in democratic theory and concrete problems of students' lived experiences. As one participant said, being a theorist means never having to apologize for being abstract. Abstraction creates critical distance, which in turn creates an opening for discussions of sensitive topics that may be difficult to engage more directly. It also can create situations in which students can be coaxed into stepping outside of their subjective experiences via various techniques (e.g., asking students to "try on a text") rather than committing to defending or refuting ideas that may be brand new to the student.

Despite theory's abstraction, many of the papers exposed the emotional labor required to engage difficult subjects, both for the instructors and for the students, particularly those who have experiences of trauma. That this labor or triggered trauma is not equally distributed but rather falls more heavily on the marginalized

(both faculty and students) mattered greatly in our conversations. For example, Khristina Haddad's "Teaching Machiavelli to Saudis: What Subjects of a Contemporary Monarchy See in The Prince" exposes the danger and power of teaching students under tyranny. For all students, we wondered about the risks of pushing them to confront their potential implications in unfreedom and oppression, as we re-posed the classical questions of whether it is ethical to lead people out of the cave.

What teaching democratic theory in an embodied way shows us is how porous the seemingly impervious classroom walls really are; conflicts, hierarchies, and of course power suffuse the classroom. These conflicts were sometimes major and geopolitical, as was true in Tamar Arieli's paper "Engaging Jewish and Arab Students in Political Theoretic Discussion around Historic Events and Anniversaries in Israeli College Classrooms" and in a different way in how Haddad's Saudi students brought the context of the regimes and their political socialization with them. Arieli worked to create a space of dialogue about narratives and worldviews around holidays in the relatively secure space of the classroom, and in this made the way in which the Israeli/Palestinian conflict was already embedded in the worldviews of students and thus the classroom.

The exposure of these embedded and embodied relations was also evident in more local political context, as with Alison Staudinger's "Exploring Democratic Theory in a Community-based Learning Project." Staudinger's students staged a performance meant to excite the campus into an intersectional conversations about homelessness, sexual assault, and violence against black Americans. They discovered quickly that the space they had assumed was theirs to speak in was only available to say certain sort of things.

When we teach democratic theory this way, we invite students to start to map these terrains of power. This mapping, as when Staudinger's students discovered the spatialized dimensions of free speech on campus, can be alarming and prove a performative critique of some democratic theory that is perhaps too sanguine about the ability of marginalized or traumatized subjects to speak. At the same time, we can become conscious of how disciplines themselves map onto ways of knowing and teaching. In Howard Sanborn's paper "Borrowing Lessons from Art History in East Asia and China Coursework," the importance of thinking beyond these borders was clear. In this project, Sanborn explicitly borrowed reflective pedagogy and projects of "making" from the humanities to push his students to deepen their critical engagement. This sort of drive to enact and experiment with democratic theory was central to every presentation. Nearly all the speakers attempted to shift the pedagogy and practice of the classroom itself into a more democratic space. The traditional classroom space is hierarchical in character, and while there are challenges associated with empowering students, participants generally felt that teaching democratic theory without enacting it at some level would be something of an empty exercise.

When feminist theorists teach democratic theory, the stakes are particularly high for both students and instructors. It is clear that political science must actively reimagine its students. One function of democratic theory is to allow those with less or no power come to study oppression and liberation. Participants discovered that the emotional strains of teaching and studying democratic theory rise in startling fashion when our students have been or are victims of overt violence or more subtle constant oppression. This theme is a constant for feminist theorists teaching political theory. The emotional labor can be exhausting. The importance of both naming and theorizing oppression—and also sensitively engaging the student

who comes to class and there recognizes harm in new terms—poses the challenge of how to teach the traumatized, be it the victim of war, sexual violence, or wholesale political censorship.

Teaching democratic theory necessarily hits nerves. Flexible and patient approaches are needed to make classroom encounters intellectually productive in the face of personal and collective trauma. Arieli directly confronted the problem of inviting the traumatized from different sides of a conflict into shared conversation. Comparing dialogue groups with political theory discussions, Arieli found that the political theory classroom with its pre-existing commitment to learning and discussion was a better space of encounter than dialogue groups singularly dedicated to bringing together Arabs and Israelis.

For Haddad, it was the needs and political situation of international students from Saudi Arabia that brought the potential dangers of teaching democratic theory to the surface by highlighting the risks of inviting particular students into democratic practices of mind and action that might be penalized when the student returns home. While theory was a safer space for Arieli's students to meet, Haddad questioned whether studying political theory was safe in the long run for her students from Saudi Arabia.

Overall, discussions require conscientious cultivation of a culture of learning and sharing that neither shies away from tough subjects nor brutalizes those students whose personal suffering may be only the theoretical concern of other learners. Most instructors take extra time to communicate with students affected directly or in a threatening way. Recognition and support are needed for instructors who strike out in this delicate but important territory. Important work is happening in these classrooms, but there is an excess beyond the usual academic labor that is rarely registered and which weighs heavily on mostly female instructors thus posing additional challenges to women in the academy.

There was an unmistakable level of excitement and dedication to teaching democratic ideas in our group. Overwhelmingly, participants believe that teaching political theory can and must serve democratic political purposes, whether the approach is explicit (studying democratic political theory) or implicit (studying political theory from the point of view of democratic commitments). Christine Keating, Zein Murib, and Liza Taylor presented their innovative work on "Coalitional Pedagogy" in which the enactment of democratic commitments unfolds in and between classrooms and even across institutions. Coalitional pedagogy allows political theory to become the encounter of the other and the discovery of shared interests transcending identity.

Studying-by-enacting—doing theory—yielded many profound insights for students and decentered the classroom for instructors by keeping them in dialogue with colleagues. For Alison Staudinger ("Exploring Democratic Theory in a Community-Based Learning Project"), applied approaches to theory in the classroom spilled over into spontaneous episodes of political action by students and created larger tension and dialogue at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, particularly regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech.

As with the projects of Arieli and Haddad, studying theory can loosen existing identities and positions enough to make new connections, identification, and insights possible. In its abstraction, there is an opening for learning and recognition. Where the concrete suggests immutable closure, theory's suggestiveness provides real opportunity for evolving encounters inside and outside of the classroom. In the political theory skill set, instructors found abundant productive lessons for students, including patience. Patient reflection

slows political judgment and conforms to academic commitments of truth-seeking. On the other hand, the organic unfolding of political discussion and action butts up against the institutional time discipline of the university, and instructors reported both frustration—a pragmatic impatience—with the unpredictable tempo of student-driven projects and also delight with conversations and actions originating in the classroom but taking on lives far and long beyond it.

In his keynote address to the conference, C. Edward Watson advised attendees to find out where students are and teach accordingly. The students of this track's participants are diverse in background and experience, yet there was a commonality in that effectively presented democratic theory can help them to develop tools and strategies for understanding and coping with concrete expressions of power in their own lives. This exercise is not free of risk, so instructors have a duty to be cognizant of any practices that might expose students to undue harm. At the same time, participants reported excitement among students in their classrooms, especially in innovative settings in which democratic theory became as much a part of lived experience as it was an academic subject.

TEACHING HOW TO TEACH

Caleb Miller, *University of California, Santa Barbara*
Colin Brown, *Harvard University*
Levente Szentkirályi, *University of Colorado, Boulder*
Joshua Dean, *Cal Poly Pomona*
Jake Eschenburg, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

Fueled by Voodoo donuts, conference-hotel coffee, and a passion for teaching, the members of the Teaching How to Teach track gathered for three days in Portland, Oregon to raise questions and share ideas relevant for improving both the techniques we use to engage undergraduates and the status of pedagogy more broadly within the discipline. The mood, however, was torn: while panel members were excitedly optimistic about the ways in which both undergraduate and graduate education could be enhanced, they also shared some degree of pessimism as to whether departments were actively invested enough in teaching to prioritize those sorts of changes. This led many of our conversations to focus on what kinds of small measures departments might be convinced to take to make our professors and graduate students more effective educators, as well as ways in which those measures could be empirically assessed to judge their value.

Overall, the papers presented tended to fall into one of two categories, primarily attending to either undergraduate teaching or training graduate students for the classroom. Those in the former category concentrated on the difficulties instructors face with boosting knowledge retention; making complex and abstract course material more approachable and relevant; promoting critical thinking skills and habits of critical self-reflection; improving students' abilities to work collaboratively and to provide constructive feedback on the work of their peers; and cementing stronger academic writing skills.

Andrew Wender highlighted that students often begin courses with preconceived understandings of the ideas central to those courses—including, the modern state, globalization, and secularism, etc. He emphasized the importance of having students critically evaluate the meanings, relevancies, and implications of these contentious and often normatively laden concepts from the beginning of the course. In a similar vein, Robert Forbis claimed that students' misconceptions and biases concerning controversial issues, like environmentalism,

can be replaced by educated judgments through critical reflection. With their focus on teaching grand theories in international relations, Rhonda Calloway and Julie Harrelson-Stephens argued that conventional approaches toward teaching abstract course material to undergraduates are ineffective. They insisted that our failure to present difficult principles like constructivism or neo-Marxism in more popularly accessible ways undermines our students' comprehension of course material and their longer term knowledge retention—which subsequently hinder their academic performance and engagement in the classroom.

One of the common suggestions to overcome such problems was to structure our curricula in ways that require students to teach themselves by teaching others. The benefits of carefully structured group work were explored by Bernadette Wright and Steven Wallis; Terrie Groth and Ronda Talley; and Stephanie Holmsten and Charlie Seidel. Wright and Wallis suggested that by cooperatively mapping concepts and integrating these maps with those of other groups, students improve their understanding of these ideas and their bearing on related subjects. Groth and Talley claimed that pairing students together to work collaboratively throughout the semester not only creates greater accountability for successfully completing class assignments, but also creates important social connections that promote the personal development of our students. In exploring the effectiveness of group work in larger courses, Holmsten and Seidel reiterated the accountability and sense of community that "team-based" learning can foster, and also maintained that when students engage in critical deliberation with their peers to solve complex problems, they improve and internalize transferrable critical thinking and writing skills.

With a specific focus on the writing and revision processes, Joshua Dean echoed the significance of having students assume substantive teaching roles in collaborative work with their peers—noting that when students participate in peer-review workshops and evaluate the research projects of their classmates, students improve their capacity to critically reflect on their own writing and, thus, improve their writing abilities. Analogously, discouraged by the assumptions we commonly make about our students' critical thinking and writing skills, Lev Szentkirályi insisted that students need to be given specific, formal training in principles of good academic writing, which would require them to apply these lessons in critically evaluating political science literature, the writing of their peers, and their own working drafts of paper assignments.

Among those papers presented concerning graduate education, one of the central themes to emerge was the shared desire among both graduate students and professors to improve pedagogical training within doctoral programs. While graduate students have a strong interest in developing their teaching skills, in an effort to make themselves more marketable by presenting themselves as classroom-ready, departments also have an interest in ensuring that new faculty hires do not need time and additional training to develop their teaching skills. Despite this apparent agreement as to the value of improved training, there is a disconnect in practice: political science departments face both structural and financial restraints on resources they can allocate. Furthermore, both students and departments face the challenge of overcoming a professional norm that tends to relegate pedagogical training to, at most, a minor concern. As such, an emphasis was placed on finding low-cost solutions with empirically demonstrable value.

The paper by David Jones and Jennifer Woodward provided an initial framework for discussion, posing the question of how best

to balance the student demand for increased training programs in graduate school with the resources departments are willing and able to offer. A paper by Lee Trepanier further argued that the best way to ensure a supply of resources is to develop pedagogy into its own recognized subfield within the discipline. However, difficulties with establishing a new subfield were also discussed, both in terms in reallocating resources within departments as well as the consequences of focusing on pedagogy in a highly competitive job market.

As a result of these significant obstacles to any large-scale changes to the field's approach to teaching, our discussion turned to potential solutions that individual departments could implement. Papers by Colin Keuhl, Caleb Miller, and Jake Eschenburg and by Janni Aragon focused on how teaching assistant (TA) training and mentorship programs can influence graduate students' teaching and develop a "teaching culture" within departments. Keuhl, Miller, and Eschenburg's study questions the extent that TA training programs improve self-perceptions of teaching efficacy, but also note that other types of training, specifically university-level certificate programs, may provide effective nondepartmental opportunities for success. Aragon shows how individual mentorships by faculty members can have a positive impact on the quality of teaching provided by TAs as well as their interest in teaching as an aspect of their future careers. Both papers ultimately argue that the dedication of one or a few faculty members toward improving pedagogy is crucial for the success of any teacher training program; how this "community of teachers" can be cultivated, however, especially against prevailing professional norms, remains to be seen.

While the issues raised over the course of the conference remain far from solved, the panel did reach some broad agreements concerning both undergraduate and graduate education. In regards to the former, emphasizing critical reflection of course titles and commonly held preconceptions can stimulate discussion of normative assumptions implied by concepts integral to political science. Further, incorporating works of pop culture into our curricula may not only highlight relevance, but also make difficult theoretical principles more accessible to students. Finally, in an effort to improve writing skills, incorporating peer-review workshops—as well as requiring students to defend their responses against possible objections from their peers—can not only hone students' writing skills, but also create a sense of community that enhances performance in the classroom.

Concerning the latter, TA training programs should be improved by shifting the focus away from course logistics and toward effective pedagogical principles, like student engagement and assessment; this should include mentorship programs that provide opportunities for co-teaching or video evaluations. Hopefully, these mentorship programs will generate more attention toward teaching more generally. Furthermore, to more effectively argue for increased training, studies need to focus on elaborating the tangible benefits that department receive from a focus on pedagogy. A proposed example involved examining course evaluations and tracking the placement of graduate students that have completed pedagogical training. We also agreed that the more quickly these structural changes are implemented in the higher ranked, R1 schools that act as cultural leaders in the profession, the faster they will be adopted by the broader discipline, even if these departments are often less quick to embrace pedagogy training.

The points raised by the papers presented and the grander discussions they provoked left our panel with the sense that, though persuading others to commit to improving political science education is often an uphill battle, it is still a goal worth pursuing, and

one which benefits students and professors alike. By developing inexpensive, measurable means of both engaging with our undergraduates and training our graduate students to be more effective educators, we hope to further this goal before meeting again next year to tackle these issues anew.

TEACHING RESEARCH LITERACY

Nina Srinivasan Rathbun, *University of Southern California*
Anne Pitsch Santiago, *University of Portland*
Alexandra E. Infanzon, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

Introduction

The Teaching Research Literacy track reemphasized many of the same themes that have challenged past attendees: designing appropriate course content for research methods, covering content thoroughly in a single semester course, scaffolding and reinforcing research methods skills across the curriculum, using technology to enhance methods instruction, and assessing progress. Practitioners continue to grapple with the same problems: lack of student interest in research methods, fear among students over learning and applying statistical methods, and making research skills relevant to students who do not see themselves as researchers in their careers. Major differences exist between larger and/or research institutions that can offer either multiple courses in research methods and/or expertise in teaching quantitative methods within the political science department; and smaller and/or liberal arts institutions in which departments often can offer only a single course in research methods. This divergence in institutional approaches is evident in the reconceptualization of the track title from "Teaching Research Methods" to "Teaching Research Literacy." This reconceptualization encapsulates a major transition in the discipline over what it means to teach research at the undergraduate level. This year's track presentations and discussions provide some path forward.

Rethinking Research Methods: Is Teaching Research Literacy the Answer?

The discussions related to how best to teach research methods focused on the difficulty of trying to teach a full methods course within a single semester, balancing qualitative and quantitative methods, and engaging students in methods in a way that interests them. Parsons suggested that political science departments can play an essential role in teaching broad social science research literacy whereby the goal is students understanding a variety of research approaches, including their specific applications and limitations, rather than a mastery of specific methodologies. Chambers, Sternfeld, Pavolik at Indiana University of Pennsylvania have also redesigned their research methods course to focus on research literacy, including understanding the challenges and complexities of the research process itself. Nordyke and Gerrish fundamentally redesigned the University of South Dakota's research design course to focus on information literacy, particularly the ability to find relevant information, differentiate different informational sources, and structure existing research into effective literature reviews. Similarly at the University of Portland, Santiago also has transformed its course into more of a traditional "Scope and Methods" course that includes concepts related to the philosophy of science, theoretical framing of research, introduction to different methodological frameworks, and practical exercises that teach critical thinking and analysis skills. To better prepare students for upper

division courses and to better understand research methods in general, this course transformation has included integrating the expertise of an entire department through short video modules, podcasts, and screen captures. All of the participants emphasized that expecting mastery of multiple methodologies is too much to demand of a single semester undergraduate course. Learning goals were seen as essential for designing courses that are specific to the needs of each institution, and participants did not emphasize the need for consensus across undergraduate programs in skills gained in research methods courses.

In contrast to those who transitioned to thinking about research methods courses as research literacy courses, a number of departments have continued to emphasize teaching quantitative skills within their departments, and participants implemented a number of innovations to improve skill acquisition. At Grand Valley State University, students can earn either a BA or BS in political science depending on whether or not they pursue a quantitative methods track. Kilburn introduced a data inquiry lab that allows students to troubleshoot methodology questions with faculty and staff. Brayton and Wiedlocher utilized peer mentors at Blackburn State to assist in teaching students methods while also leveraging the expertise of resource librarians to help students in their skills mastery.

Scaffolding Research Methods: Utilizing Research Skills across the Curriculum

While institutions differ on whether or not to teach research methods in one or a series of courses divided into quantitative and qualitative methodologies, most agree that faculties need to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of moving to a core research or information literacy course and how to balance that decision with modifications throughout the curriculum. Nordyke and Gerrish detailed the University of North Dakota's decision to transform the core research methods course into an information literacy course due to the inability of students to demonstrate basic research skills in upper division major courses. The new information literacy course allows for greater attention to research fundamentals and the inclusion of active learning strategies. Powner emphasized the necessity of scaffolding within the curriculum after research methods courses are transformed into research or information literacy courses, as has been the case at Christopher Newport University.

By building on the knowledge and skills developed in earlier introductory class(es), students have the opportunity to (re)learn the skills in theoretical context through experiential learning. Freeze explained Carleton College's strategy of integrating methods into introductory level non-methods courses using canned data sets, which later builds into an integrative senior honors thesis employing independent research skills. Kilburn's data inquiry laboratory and Widlocher and Brayton's peer learning model using student work-study positions both provide excellent models to assist faculty to successfully employ research assignments across the curriculum. There was strong agreement that research and data librarians provide a integral, but underutilized resources to support these efforts both within and outside the classroom. Rathbun and Bozovic employed a data-based project in upper and lower division international political economy courses at the University of Southern California. They found that allowing students to "get their hands dirty" in data-mining during these projects helped increase students' confidence in using data during research projects. These data projects, assigned in substantive subject courses, assist in scaffolding the knowledge gained in methods courses, potentially leading to stronger long-term

impacts. Reinforcement of research literacy skills needs to carry over into diverse upper division courses that purposefully build upon the skills, research design, and literacy training provided in research methods core course(s).

Assessment: Setting Appropriate Goals and Assessing Research Methods

Assessment of learning has continually bedeviled educators at all levels. While academics have often tried new assignments and changed structures in classes in an effort to improve student learning, it has been very difficult to assess the impact of those different pedagogical techniques with reliability. Measurements such as end of the course student evaluations and overall student grades suffer from serious internal validity problems. This is particularly critical as methods instructors grapple with how best to structure and implement research methods classes. Declining enrollments in political science make this effort even more critical as departments attempt to persuade potential majors of the benefits of the political science curriculum.

Siver and Haeg make substantial progress in demonstrating the benefits of the political science curriculum on information literacy, as compared to non-majors. They assess the impact of research methods and upper division political science classes on students' ability to demonstrate information literacy through assessment tests taken by students from a wide variety of backgrounds. They base their assessment on the recently released framework of information literacy standards developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries. By dividing students in political science majors and non-majors, Siver and Haeg measure the impact of the additional research methods training provided to political science majors. Their results suggest that the information literacy training that political science majors receive in their research methods courses and other upper division courses provides them with a stronger basis in information literacy fundamentals. Fundamental changes to the research methods core course could benefit from a similar type of curriculum assessment, based on objective measures of students' ability to find and evaluate information.

Rathbun and Bozovic employ panel survey data pre- and post-assignment to assess the impact of quantitative data projects on students' self-reported openness to using data in the future and comfort levels using quantitative data. While this method suggests a possible way forward for assessments, challenges remain. The assessment relies on students' self-reported skills rather than some objective method of assessing those skills. As with most classroom assessments, it does not employ an experimental design with random assignment of students into different types of assignments, particularly experiential versus traditional assignments. Nevertheless, this type of assessment would allow academics to evaluate the impact of changing assignments and changes to research methods classes.

Conclusion

Significant changes are underway in the teaching of research methods. The transformation of research methods courses into research literacy or scope and methods courses is gaining momentum. The track participants agree that these changes involve difficult trade-offs. However, significant improvement may be achieved by bridging the methodological silos in the political science discipline, increasing the scaffolding and reinforcement of research methods and assignments into the entire curriculum, and by better utilizing

the existing resources of the research librarians. Scaffolding has been demonstrated frequently to be a fundamental requirement for student mastery of research methods. While assessment remains a concern, significant progress has been made introducing different methods for evaluating the value added of methods training for political science majors and assessing the impact of assignments. Reducing student apprehension of methods training and increasing the fun and clear connection between research literacy and the substantive interests of majors remains the top priority for track participants. ∎