The Journal of Effective Teaching
an online journal devoted to teaching excellence

Volume 12/Issue 1/February 2012
Online at http://www.uncw.edu/cte/et/
The Journal of Effective Teaching
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The Journal of Effective Teaching
c/o Center for Teaching Excellence
University of North Carolina Wilmington
601 S. College Road
Wilmington, NC 28403 USA
FAX 910-962-3427

(ISSN 1935-7869 for limited print issues and ISSN 1935-7850 for the online issues)

\(^1\) Recently moved to Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA, 70402

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Effective Teaching is accepting submissions for review for the Fall 2012 issue. Manuscripts will be due May 31, 2012. The expected publication date will be September 30th. Articles will be accepted in any of the Content Areas supported by the journal.
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Manuscripts for publication should:

- Follow APA guidelines (5th Edition).
- Include an abstract and 3-5 keywords.
- Typeset in English using MS Word format and 12 pt Times New Roman
- Articles/essays on effective teaching should be 2000-5000.
- Research articles should be 3000-8000 words.
- Tables and figures should be placed appropriately in the text.

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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief:  
There’s an App for That

Russell L. Herman

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wilmington, NC

Students (and instructors) are coming to class with mobile phones, laptops, tablets, iPods, and iPads. We have entered an age of mobility in which we are all connected through social and information networks. Once again, we are asking, “How can we use the new technologies to enhance our teaching, while informing students about its appropriate use and protecting our privacy in this ever changing landscape?” It is all too easy for us to simply ask our students to leave their technology at the classroom door. We have to accept that mobility is here and students are plugged into it. We will not be able to pull the plug, but can seek ways to use what is out there to our advantage.

Mobile computing has been around for over a decade, even though it seems that mobile devices have just arrived. In the late 90’s handheld devices, such as the Jornada 720, and PDAs, like the Dell Axim, hit the scene. We knew then that the mobile student was on the way. PDAs led to what we now call smartphones. Also, tablet computers appeared at the turn of the century. Those at the forefront of instructional technology worked on developing applications like Student Response Systems and imagined location services applications in which students would collaborate and print their papers from a Starbucks across town. Early studies showed that students easily adapted to the new portable devices. Unfortunately, the world was not ready for PDAs and Tablet computers a decade ago. This was just the beginning. Mobile technology was soon done right by Steve Jobs and others. The iPod, iPhone and now iPad, have lead the way into how mobile technologies would infiltrate the masses and change the way we access information. These devices have made access to Web 2.0 computing (the dynamic elements of Internet and social networks of the last decade) easier and we have entered a new age (Web 3.0) with ever more access to data and programs in the Cloud. (See my October 2009 JET editorial.)

With the rise of mobility, we have recently seen the appearance of the “App.” Apps were introduced by Apple through the iPod Touch and iPhone, and are now more pronounced with the iPad and Android systems. Even Microsoft is getting into the act with their Metro system in Windows 8. So, what are Apps? These are small programs, originally designed for Apple products that can simply link to websites like YouTube, CNN, Netflix, and Facebook; provide full-frledged programs for editing text, graphics or video; manage personal data; or, deliver games and entertainment. There are free apps and commercial

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1 Author's email: hermanr@uncw.edu

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apps from 99 cents to tens of dollars. They run on smart phones and the new tablets. In fact, there are also Web-Apps, which run independently of the devices. At the core, they cater to our need for information access, our shrinking attention spans, and our ever growing need to stay connected while at work, home, during the day, and at night. The problem for educators is to determine if there is any pedagogical use, or even productive use of these apps. Many will prefer to use desktops and laptops for major productive work, but the new devices are designed to aid in how we consume information.

What type of apps are there? There is no limit to what types of apps there are. If you can think of a need, then “there (probably) is an app for that.” Of the hundreds of thousands of apps, many are simple novelties, while some are actually quite useful. (See Figure 1.)

Podcasts – Many podcasts feature audio or video collections of radio programs, lectures, and news items. There is now an app for iTunes U, which brings university courses from many classrooms.

Presentation Software – Apps like Keynote and QuickOffice allow not only the ability to present talks, but also provide simple editing capabilities.

Document readers – Most of our documents are in the form of PDFs or MS Office docs. There are readers and editors for accessing your documents and annotating them.

Note Taking – There are lots of apps for note taking. Students can organize and share their notes. Some even allow the embedding of images or audio record lectures.

File Sharing – You can access your documents from the Cloud through services like Googledocs, or share documents with your other devices through file sharing systems like DropBox or storing notes with Evernote.

Books – There are apps to access your Kindle, Nook, or Audible accounts to E-books.

Papers – There are apps for finding scholarly articles, like ArXiv, or saving citation collections, such as Mendeley.

Mathematics – There are many types of calculators, from emulations of the old HP calculators to apps which run common software worksheets for MATLAB and Maple. There has also been an app for the computational engine – Wolframalpha.

Miscellaneous Programs – One can use Google Maps to create new maps, Codea to program, Video Physics for data acquisition, and pUniverse to explore the night sky.

Compilations – There are many wonderful collections on topics such as Jazz, the Civil War, Cookbooks, and The Elements.

This is just a small collection of app types. There are apps for graphics and video editing, dictionaries, organizing Wikipedia entries, or exploring the night sky. Blogs and wikis can be accessed and edited using a simple app. Many news outlets and featured content can be found such as TIME, NPR, CBC, BBC, TED Talks, and NPR. Live radio programs and movie applications add to the entertainment collection. You can even use Skype, and other Voice over the Internet (VOIP) services. All the while one can keep up with their social networking using the FaceBook app. Finally, you can read and create QR Codes, the codes now being used by shoppers to link to added information. (See the inside cover of this issue.) The growth of apps, access to information 24-7, and all that the apps can do has helped define what we mean by the Information Age and how we will navigate it. How we use and assess apps in and out of the classroom will be up to us.
Figure 1. Examples of Apps for an iPad 2.

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Toward a Measure of Professional Development for Graduate Student Teaching Assistants

Sue Ellen DeChenne\textsuperscript{1a}, Kristin Lesseig\textsuperscript{b}, Shawn M. Anderson\textsuperscript{c}, Sissi L. Li\textsuperscript{c}, Nancy L. Staus\textsuperscript{c}, and Celeste Barthel\textsuperscript{d}

\textsuperscript{a}University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68583-0858
\textsuperscript{b}Washington State University – Vancouver, Vancouver, WA 98686
\textsuperscript{c}Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331-6508
\textsuperscript{d}Wilson College, Chambersburg, PA 17201

Abstract

This study describes the development and validation of an instrument to measure graduate teaching assistants’ (GTAs) learning about teaching during professional development. In the pilot study, exploratory factor analysis of data from 239 graduate students indicates a single factor structure. The second study, involving 177 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) GTAs, confirms the single factor structure of the instrument. The instrument is highly reliable with both populations. The instrument is correlated to the hours STEM GTAs spend in professional development and their self-efficacy in teaching. It is sensitive to departmental differences between GTAs perceptions of their professional development. This instrument has multiple possible users including university faculty involved in GTA professional development as well as educational researchers. University faculty can use it for needs assessment during GTA program development, comparisons among departmental programs, and in improving current GTA programs. It also provides a sensitive measurement of the quality of GTA professional development in multiple program research studies.

Keywords: Graduate teaching assistants, professional development, scale development, scale validation; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, STEM.

Professional development in teaching for graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) is vital to the instructional mission of universities because GTAs play a prominent role in current and future instruction of undergraduates. Universities are heavily dependent on GTAs (Johnson & McCarthy, 2000; Nyquist, Abbott, Wulff, & Sprague, 1991). For example, GTAs provide 91% of biology laboratory instruction at research universities (Sundberg, Armstrong, & Wischusen, 2005) and 84% of counseling psychology programs employ GTAs (Prieto & Scheel, 2008). Many of the first experiences that undergraduates have in their college classrooms are closely associated with their GTAs. In addition to their current teaching duties, GTAs will become the next generation of faculty members. Two-thirds of doctoral students are interested in a faculty career, many in smaller col-

\textsuperscript{1} Corresponding author's email: sdechenne2@unlserve.unl.edu

\textbf{The Journal of Effective Teaching, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2012, 4-19}
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leges where teaching is their primary responsibility (Golde & Dore, 2001). Given the economic state of higher education, this dependence on GTAs as university instructors is not likely to lessen. Costs of higher education, especially at public four-year institutions, are continuing to rise (College Board, 2007) and one way to cut university costs is to have more courses taught by part-time instructors and GTAs (Bettinger & Long, 2004).

Despite a concern for and research on GTA professional development that spans more than 40 years (eg. Costin, 1968; Sandi-Ureña, Cooper, & Gatlin, 2011), there is evidence that most GTAs are still poorly or completely unprepared to teach. Although there are differences between academic fields, in a national study 51% of GTAs have access to a departmental workshop and 46% to university coursework in teaching (Golde & Dore, 2001). There appears to be little overall improvement in the amount of GTA preparation in the last 15 years. In national studies within specific disciplines, 37% of chemistry programs (Abraham et al., 1997) and 32% of psychology programs (Meyers & Prieto, 2000) had no GTA professional development available a little over a decade ago. More recently, that lowered to 18% of counseling psychology programs, however only 62% of the GTAs had received professional development in teaching and for an average of less than three days (Prieto & Scheel, 2008). Sundberg et al. (2005) found the number of biology programs which provided three or more days of GTA professional development had increased in the prior decade from 4% to 15% of research and 6% of comprehensive universities. However, the number of programs offering university coursework in teaching had dropped from 14% to 6% for research and 12% for comprehensive universities, indicating an overall status quo in GTA professional development offered.

Many of the GTAs who do receive professional development find it is not an adequate preparation for teaching (Commander, Hart, & Singer, 2000; Fagen & Wells, 2004; Jones, 1993; Luft, Kurdziel, Roehrig, & Turner, 2004; Prieto & Scheel, 2008; Shannon, Twale, & Moore, 1998). A common format for GTA professional development is a short, pre-term program that focuses on administrative details and university policies and procedures with little time set aside for instruction in teaching and learning (Kurdziel & Libarkin, 2003; Prieto & Scheel, 2008; Rushin et al., 1997). This information is important, but it does little to improve GTA instruction. Instead, best practices indicate that GTA professional development should include: active learning, peer interaction, practice and feedback, formative and summative assessment, reflection, generic and discipline specific teaching information, and should be of sufficient duration to ensure learning occurs (Park, 2004). There should also be an initial program needs assessment and continuing program evaluation (Park, 2004). The following sums up many GTAs’ experience with GTA professional development:

“I have always considered teaching my main reason for pursuing an academic degree. I am amazed at how little preparation I am receiving in how to teach. I am still planning on pursuing a teaching position but am filling in the gaps in my education and preparation on my own time with little encouragement from my academic program.” (Molecular Biology Doctoral Student, Golde & Dore, 2001, pg. 22)
There are many individual professional development programs that demonstrate evidence for improved and/or quality teaching by the GTAs enrolled (e.g. Davis & Kring, 2001; Kurdziel & Libarkin, 2003; Young & Bippus, 2008). However, how are GTAs, faculty preparing and teaching professional development, university administrators, and educational researchers to recognize these programs? The purpose of this study is to present a valid and reliable instrument that can be used to measure GTA’s perception of their learning about important topics in teaching during GTA professional development programs. Such an instrument can be used for GTA professional development needs assessment, evaluation and improvement of current programs as well as in educational research.

**Literature Review**

Improving the teaching preparation of GTAs has many benefits. It provides better instruction to students, demonstrates institutional commitment to the primary mission of excellence in education, and it is also beneficial for the graduate student; providing financial support and an apprenticeship in teaching for future faculty members (Park, 2004; Svinicki, 1995-96). Studies of individual GTA professional development programs indicate quality professional development can build graduate students’ knowledge and skills in teaching (Belnap, 2005; Carroll, 1977; Davis & Kring, 2001; Hadre & Chen, 2005; Trouba, 2009), self-confidence in teaching (Salinas, Kozuh, & Seraphine, 1999), and improve their ability to obtain an academic position upon graduation (Svinicki, 1995-96). GTA professional development can also have a positive effect on student achievement (Childs, 2006; Ezrailson, 2004; Norris, 1991). Many graduate students are interested in academic faculty careers and professional development should help prepare them for future faculty positions (Austin, 2002; Golde & Dore, 2001; Park, 2004). Even if a GTA is not interested in an academic career, the presentation and interpersonal skills learned in teaching can benefit other career paths.

There is evidence that GTA professional development programs can also positively impact self-efficacy in teaching (Komarraju, 2008; Prieto & Altmaier, 1994; Prieto & Meyers, 1999; Young & Bippus, 2008), although not all studies show a significant effect (Liaw, 2004; Tollerud, 1990). Self-efficacy is a central component in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997) and research has demonstrated that when training for a specific skill, self-efficacy tends to be positively correlated with performance (Bandura, 1997; Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989; Pajares, 1996). Self-efficacy in teaching is an instructors’ belief that they will be able to effectively teach a given population of students a specific subject (Bandura, 1997) and has been shown to be a valuable predictor for student achievement, teacher retention, and persistence in the face of teaching difficulties (for a review see Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

Despite the studies of individual programs that improve GTA knowledge and skills, studies that look at GTA professional development across multiple programs often find that professional development is not very effective and GTAs have naïve conceptions about teaching and learning. In multiple program studies, there are no significant effects for professional development on student evaluations of teaching (Shannon et al., 1998) or in some self-efficacy in teaching studies (Liaw, 2004; Tollerud, 1990). Additionally, GTAs
indicate a need for more and better professional development (Commander et al., 2000; Jones, 1993; Prieto & Scheel, 2008). In a national survey on doctoral education, 45% of graduate students feel they are not prepared to teach (Fagen & Wells, 2004). Luft et al. (2004) find that GTAs primarily work autonomously, use direct instruction, and have intuitive views of student learning and motivation. While Saroyan, Dagenais, and Zhou (2009) find that advanced doctoral students hold views of teaching as the transmission of information and preparing and managing instruction.

In quantitative studies, when GTA professional development in teaching is examined across multiple programs, it is either measured as a dichotomous variable (i.e., presence or absence) (e.g. Liaw, 2004; Prieto & Altmaier, 1994) or as the amount of time in professional development (e.g. Shannon et al., 1998; Tollerud, 1990). This type of measure of GTA professional development yields minimal information regarding the quality of the programs and can result in no impact (Liaw, 2004; Shannon et al., 1998; Tollerud, 1990) or low impact for GTA professional development (Prieto & Altmaier, 1994). The actual impact of GTA professional development on teaching is important and having a narrow understanding limits researcher conclusions from the data. It is possible that high quality professional development programs are having an effect in research that includes multiple programs, but low quality programs are washing out or diluting that effect. Rather than measuring the presence/absence or time in GTA professional development, it is important to evaluate the learning of the individual in the program and determine whether that has an effect on the outcome variables of the research. Used this way, the GTAs perception of their learning in professional development becomes a proxy for the quality of professional development programs.

An instrument that measures GTA professional development quality should be based on concepts important in teaching. The instrument should be sensitive to differences in quality between professional development programs and correlate to self-efficacy in teaching. It should also correlate to time spent in GTA professional development, although given the variable quality of such programs the correlation may be low. This study aims to provide such a valid and reliable measure of the GTAs’ perception of their professional development in teaching.

**Methods**

**Instrument Development and Refinement**

The instrument was developed by a team of science and mathematics education doctoral students during a course on quantitative methodology, who were experienced teachers from middle school through graduate school ($M = 8.5$ years teaching experience). There were two goals in developing the items: a short and easy to administer survey, and a broad coverage of important topics in teaching. Ideas were generated during class discussions producing a list of items and categories that were important in learning to teach. Additional item ideas were generated by searching the GTA literature and from literature on effective teaching.
To make sure that no items important to graduate students were missed, five focus groups of three to four graduate students were interviewed. These graduate students were self-selected; flyers advertising a discussion about teaching were posted around the university and sent to departments. Interested GTAs signed up to join the discussion and food was provided. The focus group conversations were semi-structured. The graduate students were asked about their experiences in learning to teach and what they wished they had experienced in GTA professional development. Results from these focus groups were incorporated into the emerging categories of important teaching topics.

Categories of topics important to teaching were narrowed down and refined during classroom discussions among the doctoral students. Finally, specific items for each category were written. To determine face validity, the items were sent to science and mathematics education faculty, additional science and mathematics doctoral students, and other faculty that had experience with either GTA professional development or survey research. After incorporating suggested changes, the clarity of the items was tested with biochemistry graduate students at a university in the Southwest ($N=34$). Responses from those graduate students were incorporated into the items.

The items from the development phase were then tested and further refined through two studies. First, the items on the instrument were pilot tested in a university-wide survey of graduate students’ professional development needs. Then one item was further refined, by splitting it into two items to remove multiple concepts in an item (Tables 1 and 2). Additionally, three items were added; one that dealt with harassment and two that asked about overall professional development experience. The revised items were then used in a study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) GTA teaching to determine perception of learning about teaching during professional development.

**Participants and Administration**

**Pilot Study.** From May to July of 2008, graduate students from 45 departments at a Pacific Northwest university with a Carnegie classification of Research Universities with Very High research activity were contacted by e-mail four times about an on-line survey of graduate student teaching experiences. They were asked to respond to the survey, which included the items about GTA professional development and demographics. Responses were then collated and downloaded using on-line software (Survey Monkey).

**STEM GTA Study.** GTAs from nine STEM departments at the same university as the pilot study were administered the professional development items as part of a larger study of STEM GTA teaching. Data was collected from Fall 2008 through Fall 2009. One of two administration techniques was used depending on the department. Questionnaires were distributed to the GTAs through the department mail system, collected in a sealed container in the departmental office, and then the container was picked up by a researcher. Alternatively, questionnaires were administered during a GTA professional development course and collected by one of the researchers at that time. Additional questions about hours of professional development, self-efficacy in teaching (DeChenne, 2010), and demographics were also included in this analysis.
Analysis

The professional development items were analyzed in the pilot study using principle axis exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with Varimax rotation, Kaiser criterion (Guttman, 1954), and Scree test (Cattell, 1966). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then used to determine whether the variables measured a single factor. CFA of the refined professional development items from the STEM GTA study was also used to examine whether the variables measuring this latent factor provided good fit and demonstrated construct validity. EQS 6.1 software and Satorra-Bentler robust estimation to correct for multivariate non-normality was used for the CFA analysis (Byrne, 1994). Robust corrected comparative fit index (CFI), non-normed fit index (NNFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to assess model fit. CFI and NNFI values ≥ 0.90 and RMSEA values ≤ 0.08 suggested acceptable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Internal consistency of the professional development items in both the pilot and STEM GTA study were examined with Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients. An alpha coefficient ≥ 0.65 indicated that items measured the same concept and justified combining items into a single index (Cortina, 1993).

Using the STEM GTA data, Pearson’s product moment correlations (r) between the STEM GTAs perception of professional development, hours spent in professional development, presence or absence of professional development, and self-efficacy in teaching were determined. According to Cohen (1988) correlations less than .10 are considered small/weak, those around .30 are moderate/medium and those greater than .50 are large/strong. A second comparison of perception of professional development between STEM GTAs who had professional development and those who didn’t was done using a Mann-Whitney U test. An ANOVA was used to compare the GTA perceptions of professional development between departments that had at least ten GTAs participating in the study.

Results

Pilot Study

239 graduate students responded to the survey (12% return rate). Departments reported by the graduate students were divided into three broad content areas – science, engineering, and liberal arts. 45% of the graduate students were from the sciences, 31% from engineering, and 24% from liberal arts. This distribution was not significantly different from the actual graduate student population distribution in each content area ($\chi^2 = 0.35, p = 0.838$).

EFA of the 12 items revealed one or two factors explaining 50% of the variance. Two of the factors had a Kaiser criterion (Guttman, 1954) greater than one. However, a Scree test (Cattell, 1966) and factor plot in rotated factor space both suggested that one factor could be found in the data. Additionally, approximately half of the items cross-loaded
between the two factors and the two factors were highly correlated \((r = .695)\) which also indicated a single factor.

A single factor was confirmed with CFA which demonstrated an acceptable model fit and supported construct validity \((\text{NNFI} = .901, \text{CFI} = .924, \text{RMSEA} = .059, \text{Table 1})\). All variables loaded between .53 and .74 and were significant at \(p < .05\). The GTA perception of needs in professional development was highly reliable \((\alpha = .90)\), all the variables met the criterion of item total item correlations being greater than .40, and deletion of any item did not improve reliability. GTAs indicated that overall these items were helpful in learning to teach \((M = 2.01\) on a 5 point scale of very helpful to not at all).

**Table 1. Factor Loadings for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Graduate Student Perception of Need for Topics in Professional Development.**

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<th>Factor Loadings</th>
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<td>Assisting distressed students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power/authority relationships in the classroom</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching students with different skills/knowledge</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating students</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing disruptive students</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting professionally one-on-one with your students</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning styles</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating group discussions</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting material to a large group of students</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with course lead instructor</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing assignments/laboratories/projects/exams</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
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Mean: 2.01

Cronbach \(\alpha\): .90

1All factor loadings are significant at \(p < .05\). Model fit indices are NNFI = .901, CFI = .924, RMSEA = .059.

2Items coded on a 5 point scale of 1 = very helpful to 5 = not at all.

3-5Errors allowed to co-vary to achieve fit indices.

**STEM GTA Study**

There were 177 returned surveys (54% response rate) from nine STEM departments. Engineering GTAs comprised 61% of the participants with 39% in science or mathematics. Twelve percent of the sample had no professional development of any kind. The STEM GTAs’ perception of professional development was slightly above neutral, indicating that they learned some skills in their professional development \((M = 3.18\) on a 5 point scale of never learned to learned very well). CFA demonstrated an acceptable model fit and
Table 2. Factor Loadings for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of GTA Perception of Professional Development with STEM GTAs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Of the following teaching topics and skills, please rate how well you have learned these in GTA training? (^2)</th>
<th>Factor Loadings(^1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating group discussions</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning styles</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating students</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching students with different skill/knowledge</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing disruptive students</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting professionally one-on-one with your students</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching styles</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching culturally diverse students</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power/authority relationships in the classroom</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting distressed students</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with course lead instructor</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting material to large groups of students</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing quizzes/exams</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Questions on GTA training \(^3\)

| Overall, how effective has the TA training you have received been in preparing you to work with students? \(^4\) | .69 |
| Overall, how effective has the TA training you have received been in preparing you to teach? \(^4\)          | .66 |

Mean |
Cronbach α |

\(^1\) All factor loadings are significant at \(p < .05\). Model fit indices are NNFI = .925, CFI = .935, RMSEA = .083.

\(^2\) Items coded on a 5 point scale of 1 = never learned to 5 = learned very well.

\(^3\) Items coded on a 5 point scale of 1 = not effective to 5 = very effective.

\(^4\) Errors allowed to co-vary to achieve fit indices.

supported construct validity of the STEM GTA perception of professional development factor (NNFI = .925, CFI = .935, RMSEA = .083; Table 2). All variables loaded between .60 and .86 and were significant at \(p < .05\). The GTA perception of professional development factor was highly reliable (\(\alpha = .96\)), all the variables met the criterion of item total item correlations being greater than .40, and deletion of any item did not improve reliability.

There was a significant correlation between the hours the STEM GTA’s spent in and their perception of professional development \((r = .21, p < .01\), Table 3\). The more hours spent in professional development the higher their perception of their learning about teaching. There was a lower significant correlation to the presence or absence of professional development \((r = .17, p < .05\), Table 3\). However, comparing STEM GTAs who had to
Table 3. Correlational Analysis of Teaching Professional Development Instrument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Teaching PD Instrument</th>
<th>Hours PD</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching PD Instrument</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours PD</td>
<td>21 hours</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>88%5</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy in teaching</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level.
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

1All scales were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best in each scale.
2Teaching Professional Development Instrument
3Hours spent in teaching professional development
4Presence/Absence of teaching professional development
5Percentage of GTAs with Teaching professional development

those who did not have any professional development was not significant, but showed a trend for higher scores in those STEM GTAs who had received professional development (No Professional development, \( M = 2.70, N = 14 \); Professional development, \( M = 3.24, N = 144; p = .095; \) Mann-Whitney U test). The GTA professional development instrument also showed higher correlations to GTA self-efficacy in teaching than hours of professional development or a dichotomous variable of professional development (Table 3).

There was a significant difference between the STEM GTAs perception of their learning about teaching in professional development by department (\( F = 3.025, df = 153, p = .008 \)). A Levene’s test indicated that the variances were equal and therefore a post-hoc Least Squares Difference test was used to indicate between group significant differences (Table 4). The Electrical Engineering department was sampled in both Fall ’08 and ’09 during their professional development course which was taught by different instructors each Fall. As indicated in Table 4 the Electrical Engineering department was significantly different than Geosciences, Mechanical Engineering, and Chemistry in ’08 and Geosciences and Mechanical Engineering in ’09.

Discussion

Development, Validity and Reliability

The purpose of this study was to develop an instrument to measure GTA professional development. Essential to this process was to work toward establishing reliability and validity of the GTA professional development measure. The GTA professional development instrument was developed as a result of an extensive dialogue among experienced educators, a review of the literature on GTA professional development, focus group interviews with graduate students about teaching, and reviewed by experienced educational researchers. Two studies were then used to determine the factorial structure, validity, and reliability of the items in the instrument. The first was a pilot study to determine reliability and the factorial structure of the items in the instrument. The second study was a
Table 4. Post-Hoc Comparisons of STEM GTA Perceptions of Teaching Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Comparison Department</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean^2</th>
<th>Significant p values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Engineering ('08)</td>
<td>Geosciences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 38</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M = 3.53</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical Engineering ('09)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Engineering ('09)</td>
<td>Geosciences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical Engineering ('08)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 40</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M = 3.44</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^1One-way ANOVA, $F = 3.025$, $df = 153$, $p = .008$

^2Mean of items coded on a 5 point scales (1 = never learned to 5 = learned very well or 1 = not effective to 5 = very effective, see Table 2).

cross-validation study to confirm the factorial structure of the items, to provide reliability and further the validity of the measure. Assertions related to instrument and reliability must be viewed as sample dependent.

Although the response rate in the pilot study was low, the sample sizes in both studies were sufficient. Costello and Osborne (2005) argued that in exploratory factor analysis, a ratio of at least 10 participants to each item in the instrument provided an average of less than one (0.70) item misclassified on the wrong factor and in the pilot study the ratio was twice that (20 participants per item). It was also possible that some of the participants in the pilot study participated in the STEM GTA study, since they were drawn from the same university, but at different times. The number of GTAs who participated in both studies was probably low because of graduation of some of the graduate students between the studies, and the movement of graduate students out of GTA roles into graduate research assistantship roles which was prevalent in STEM fields. For example, in the largest department represented in both studies (and the university), GTAs were drawn almost exclusively from first year graduate students; therefore these GTAs could not have participated in the pilot study. Additionally, there was no reason to think that the responses of any possible redundant participants would be unique from their peers. Therefore, if they were not different from the rest of the participants, then including them in both studies should not have changed the results.

Factor analysis indicated that there was one dimension to this measure. EFA of the pilot study suggested the possibility of two factors, but given the Scree test, strong cross-loadings in the two factor structure, and the factor plot, a determination of one factor was
made. This was confirmed by CFA with the pilot study data, which provided a good fit using a single factor (NNFI = .901, CFA = .924, and RMSEA = .059). Additionally all factor loadings were above 0.5. Costello and Osborne (2005) state “a factor with...5 or more strongly loaded items (.50) are desirable and indicate a solid factor (p. 5).” After further refinement of the items, the STEM GTA study also indicated a single strong factor using CFA (NNFI = .925, CFI = .935, RMSEA = .083) with high factor loadings. In both studies the factor was also internally highly reliable (r = .90 and .96 respectively).

The GTA professional development instrument significantly correlated with hours spent in professional development (r = .21) and a dichotomous variable of presence or absence of professional development (r = .17). GTAs should be learning about teaching during their professional development. Unfortunately, not all professional development was of the same quality; therefore it was not surprising that the correlations were small to moderate. This was further support by the results of the non-parametric mean comparison between those who had not received any professional development and those who had, which was not significantly different although there was a higher mean for those with some professional development. The sample sizes were vastly different (N = 14 vs. N=144) which may have contributed to the non-significance. It also could have been that the perceived quality of the professional development in some of the programs wasn’t very different from not receiving any professional development. This was supported by the departmental averages (Table 4). Two of the departments, Geoscience and Mechanical Engineering, had means (M = 2.60 and 2.61 respectively) lower than the mean for those GTAs reporting no professional development (M = 2.70).

Results from the ANOVA of perception of learning during professional development with the STEM GTAs had a significant effect (F = 3.025, df = 153, p = .008) indicating the instrument’s ability to distinguish differences among various professional development programs provided in the departments sampled. The post-hoc comparisons indicated significant effects between Electrical Engineering and Geosciences, Mechanical Engineering, and Chemistry (Table 4). Each of the STEM departments in the study had different types of professional development ranging from no required professional development to at least a one quarter course in teaching and learning. Those departments with the lowest scores had little or no required professional development, at most a couple of days before the quarter began. Those with the highest scores all required at least one quarter of a university course in teaching.

The sensitivity of the GTA professional development instrument was demonstrated by the differential correlations with self-efficacy in teaching. The GTA professional development instrument showed the highest correlations to self-efficacy in teaching, with the self-efficacy in teaching correlation to hours of professional development still significant but much lower (moderate versus low, Table 3). When using the dichotomous variable of presence or absence of professional development there was no correlation to GTA self-efficacy in teaching. This pattern is expected because of the variable types of professional development programs offered by the departments in the study. Good professional development programs should increase the GTAs knowledge and skills in teaching and therefore their self-efficacy in teaching. The quality of the professional development
programs was variable (Table 4) resulting in a weaker self-efficacy in teaching correlation to hours and no correlation to a dichotomous measure of professional development. However, the GTA professional development scale distinguished between these differences and thus was moderately correlated.

Interestingly, the graduate students in the pilot study thought the items indicated in the measure would be helpful in learning to teach ($M = 2.01$ on scale of 1 very helpful to 5 not at all, Table 1) but the STEM GTA students were essentially neutral in how well they had learned the items ($M = 3.18$ on a scale of 1 never learned to 5 learned very well, Table 2). This result with the two populations of graduate student at the same university is similar to other research that indicate that GTAs want to learn to teach but don’t feel that they have been taught about teaching and learning (Commander et al., 2000; Fagen & Wells, 2004; Jones, 1993; Piccinin & Fairweather, 1996-97; Williams & Schaller, 1994).

**Implications**

This instrument has various uses; at the university, program, and individual GTA levels as well as for educational research. At the university level this instrument could be used as part of a needs assessment when developing a teaching certification program for graduate students as it was at the university in this study (Table 1). The instrument could be used to determine what areas of teaching are most needed by the GTAs at the university. This information could then be used to help design a more comprehensive certification program. Determining needs is an important first step in developing a GTA program (Commander et al., 2000; Park, 2004). It could also be used to identify successful departmental GTA professional development programs within a university. Other departments could collaborate with these programs to detail what aspects of the programs contribute to their success which could then be adopted across departmental programs at the university. With a tightening of university budgets, it is fiscally sound to invest in GTA professional development that is successful. So having a more nuanced instrument to evaluate GTA professional development learning is particularly important. Additionally, this instrument is easy to administer and evaluate, making it especially useful across programs and with large numbers of GTAs.

The instrument is also useful for departmental programs and individual GTAs. The instrument can be used for a needs assessment within a department prior to developing a departmental GTA professional development program. It could be particularly valuable within a department as an evaluative tool for a current GTA professional development program. With the feedback from this tool, changes could be made to improve the program. Over time, the professional development program should then continue to better meet the needs of the GTAs enrolled. Faculty who supervise GTAs, especially in large numbers, could use this instrument on an individual level to determine where a GTA feels they may need more professional development activities. It could also be used to track an individual GTA’s progress within a GTA professional development program.

This instrument is also highly valuable to educational researchers. Multiple program studies use a proxy for professional development, either presence or absence of professional
development or time spent in professional development. Neither of these proxies gives any indication of the quality of the professional development in the various programs included in the study. Especially when conducting large cross-department or cross-university studies, there is no guarantee of similar quality in the professional development accessible to the GTAs. The measure developed in this study is more sensitive than presence/absence or time spent measures as indicated by the correlations with self-efficacy in teaching (Table 3) and the significant differences in department means (Table 4). Even for the studies that do have a significant effect for professional development, the increased sensitivity of this measure may show a greater effect for professional development, especially if there were many low quality programs in the study. This instrument gives the researcher a measure of the GTAs perception of their learning of important concepts in teaching which is a more sensitive measure of professional development and should provide better results in quantitative studies of GTAs.

Use of this instrument with graduate students at other universities and in other major areas of study will further validate the items in the instrument as will quantitative studies using this instrument. This instrument provided a valuable measure in a study of self-efficacy in teaching for STEM GTAs (manuscript under review) that was not apparent with the other measures of professional development. This measure will fulfill a need for universities, programs, and faculty providing GTA professional development as well as educational researchers studying GTA professional development.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the other members and professor of the quantitative class who helped generate items for the instrument: Greg Kise, Danielle Amatore, and Dr. Larry Flick. We would also like to thank the graduate students who took time from their busy schedules to attend a focus group conversation or respond to either survey. An earlier version of this article was presented at and greatly improved by comments from the 2009 annual conference of the American Educational Research Association in San Diego, CA.

References


An Activity for Teaching the Effects of Nonverbal Communication

Whitney Botsford Morgan,¹a and Eden B. Kingb

¹University of Houston Downtown Houston, TX 77002
²George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 22030

Abstract

This article describes a novel teaching activity that allows students in diversity, leadership, and communication courses to observe the powerful effects of nonverbal communication. The nonverbal experiences female leaders may encounter as they rise through the ranks of organizations are simulated and consequences discussed. Two student volunteers give impromptu speeches acting as “leaders,” while the rest of the students in the class provide positive nonverbal feedback to the first leader and negative nonverbal feedback to the second leader. Data collected in undergraduate student courses demonstrated that, as expected, the leader in the negative nonverbal feedback condition expressed reduced interest in performing future leader-related tasks thereby demonstrating how negative nonverbal reactions to leader behavior have serious consequences. Pre- and post-demonstration surveys clearly indicated that the students’ knowledge of gender, leadership, and nonverbal behaviors increased, and that students found the activity to be both effective and enjoyable. These findings suggest that this activity can be integrated into curricula with positive learning outcomes.

Keywords: Teaching activity, leaders, gender, nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal behaviors are informative, as they communicate feelings to interaction partners (Mehrabian, 2008). Nonverbal cues signal powerful messages that affect recipients’ behaviors. Indeed, a recent meta-analysis demonstrated a positive correlation between intentional nonverbal displays and receivers’ ability to perceive such communication (Elfenbein & Eisenkraft, 2010). For example, one field study explored how emerging leaders perceived, and acted upon responses, from members of a small group (Colbert, 2008). The researchers found that members of small groups unconsciously encouraged the emergent leader through nonverbal cues, ultimately affirming the powerful effect of nonverbal communication on potential leaders. Although empirical research documents the significance of nonverbal communication, it can be challenging for students to understand how such subtle, and seemingly imperceptible, cues influence meaningful outcomes.

¹ Corresponding author’s email: morganw@uhd.edu
Indeed, we have observed in our own classrooms that students don't always understand or appreciate the importance of nonverbal behavior, particularly as it relates to female leaders. Although empirical evidence clearly demonstrates that male and female leaders encounter systematically different nonverbal reactions from their followers (Butler & Geis, 1990; Koch, 2005), students may not fully understand the manifestations and consequences of these differences. Understanding the outcomes of such differences is particularly important given the increase in women in leadership roles and the persistence of subtle sexism. An interactive classroom experience may provide a novel manner through which to convey these issues (e.g., Anderson, 2007; Cook & Olson, 2006; Hande & Hande, 2009; Knight, Hebl, & Mendoza, 2004; Paglis, 2008). Given the powerful effects of active learning (Benjamin, 1991), this article presents a novel teaching activity that simulates the nonverbal experiences female leaders encounter as they rise to positions of leadership. It is important to focus on women in the learning setting, as research suggests women have specific needs and concerns in the classroom (Buttner, 2002). Finally, this article provides evidence of students’ learning and therefore affirms the effectiveness of the activity.

**Brief Overview of Research on Gender, Leadership, and Nonverbal Behavior**

Despite the decline of overt discrimination (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998), women continue to experience subtle forms of sexism (Hebl, King, Glick, Singletary, & Kazama, 2007) that accumulate over time and lead to the underrepresentation of women at the highest levels of organizations (Valian, 1999). In particular, sexism is often manifested through subtle, nonverbal and paraverbal reactions to women when they occupy roles that are incongruent with the feminine gender role (Hebl et al., 2007). At the core of this discrimination is that women’s leadership is unexpected and surprising, as it violates stereotypically feminine norms (Eagly, 1987, Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 1983, 2001). Metaanalytic (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002) and recent empirical (e.g., Johnson, Murphy, Zweidie, & Reichard, 2008) research confirms that the role of leader continues to be perceived as incongruent with the feminine gender role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). There is essentially an incompatibility between the role of leader and woman (Eagly, 1987, Heilman, 1983, 2001; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002) contributing to prejudicial evaluations of women in positions of leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003, 2007). Furthermore, women experience backlash when they act unexpectedly by asserting themselves as leaders (Rudman & Glick, 2001). It follows that women who take on leadership positions evoke a negative response. Consistent with this, Butler and Geis (1990) found that female leaders received more negative than positive affective responses compared to men.

The problematic nature of this covert form of contemporary sexism is often difficult to convey (Hebl et al., 2007). Although subtle discrimination may lead to negative outcomes for stigmatized individuals (e.g., women, African Americans, LGBT), this is difficult for students to understand due to its seemingly innocuous nature. It is challenging for students to believe that nonverbal communication such as reduced eye contact or furrowing of the brow results in “real-world” outcomes (i.e., advancement to positions of leadership). Therefore, an interactive teaching activity can help to reinforce learning, which allows deeper understanding through direct engagement (Benjamin, 1991).
believe this may be valuable in helping students to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of modern discrimination. Thus, the current article presents a novel teaching activity (and an empirical test of its effectiveness) to elucidate these concepts by demonstrating subtle manifestations of sexism and illustrating the potential consequences. In this article you will find the following: 1) learning objectives for the teaching activity, 2) detailed description of the demonstration for the instructor including suggestions for debriefing and classroom discussion, 3) an empirical study demonstrating the effectiveness (learning and liking) of this teaching activity with undergraduate students, and 4) a brief discussion of the implications of integrating this activity into classrooms.

**Learning Objectives of Activity**

There are four learning objectives for the teaching activity:

1. clarify the manifestations of subtle, nonverbal communication,
2. increase understanding of gender role stereotypes, and their influence on women in positions of leadership,
3. elucidate the consequences of negative communication that is generally exhibited towards female leaders, and
4. increase comprehension of modern discrimination in organizations

**Activity Overview**

**Introducing the Activity**

The teaching activity would be ideal to conduct as a kick-off to course material on gender, diversity, communication, and/or leadership. Therefore, the students should receive no prior training as to the role of gender in leadership. Assuming the activity is used in a leadership course, the activity should be introduced after a course discussion on leadership theory and characteristics/traits of leaders, but prior to any discussion on gender differences among leaders. The teaching activity requires the recruitment of two volunteers from the class to act as “leaders”.

The instructor should ask the class for two volunteers that are willing to act as leaders and stand in the front of the class to give a brief presentation. After the leaders have been selected, the instructor should ask these individuals to walk outside of the classroom to receive further instructions. Once the two leader volunteers are outside of the classroom, the instructor should explain that the intended goal is to simulate a leadership-type situation. The instructor should ask the two leaders to prepare and deliver an impromptu speech to the rest of the class regarding their favorite course, with an effort towards persuading the student participants to be interested in taking the course.

After the instructor shares the instructions with the leaders, the instructor should offer to answer questions and confirm that the two leaders feel comfortable with their task. After the instructor receives confirmation from the leaders they understand, and are willing to participate in, the task, the instructor should ask the leaders to prepare their speeches and
wait outside of the classroom for a few minutes while the instructor speaks to the student participants about the requirements for the activity. It is very important the instructor ensures the two leaders are out of earshot to preserve the integrity of the activity.

The instructor should return to the classroom and explain to the student participants that each of the leaders will enter the classroom (one at a time) to present an impromptu speech to the class regarding their favorite course. The instructor should then instruct the student participants to provide only subtle positive feedback (i.e., nodding, smiling) to the first leader and only subtle negative feedback (i.e., distracted, furrowed eyebrows) to the second leader. The instructor should explain that these behaviors should be subtle. For example, the instructor could suggest that students look down and “doodle” on their paper while the leader in the negative feedback condition is presenting. The instructor should ask the class to monitor each leader’s behavior in response to the class’ positive or negative nonverbal communication. The instructor should also inform the class that there will be a full discussion of the activity and related leadership concepts after the leaders give their presentations. At this point, the instructor should invite the first leader to return to the classroom to give their speech.

Action Phase of Activity

The instructor should go outside of the classroom to invite the first leader to return to the classroom to give the impromptu presentation. The instructor should introduce the first leader by name and ask the class to give the presenter their attention, as he/she shares a presentation regarding his/her favorite management class. The instructor should take a seat in the classroom and also provide nonverbal communication in line with the student participants’ communication to the leader. Once the first leader (positive nonverbal condition) is finished with the presentation he/she should be asked to wait outside of the classroom while the second leader (negative nonverbal condition) gives his/her presentation to the student participants. The instructor should introduce the second leader to the class in the same fashion as the first leader. Both leaders will typically open their presentation with enthusiasm and a smile. However, it is typical for the first leader (positive nonverbal condition) to present for a longer period of time, smile throughout the presentation, and exude confidence in her speech compared to the second leader (negative nonverbal condition). Once the second leader finishes the presentation, the first leader should be invited to return to the classroom.

At the conclusion of both leaders’ presentations, they should be asked to stand in the front of the classroom with the instructor. The instructor should ask each participant to describe his/her experience as a leader in the classroom. The leader in the positive nonverbal feedback condition will likely describe his/her experience as pleasant and will be eager to volunteer again in the future, whereas the leader in the negative nonverbal feedback condition will describe his/her experience as unpleasant and will not be eager to volunteer again in the future. After both leaders have an opportunity to fully share their experience and feelings with the class, it is important for the instructor to ask all students (leaders and participants) to participate in the debriefing and discussion of the activity.
**Debriefing and Discussion of Activity**

Student participants and leaders should be fully debriefed about the purpose of the activity. The debriefing section should open with the instructor explaining that when he/she gave the leaders time to prepare their speeches outside of the classroom the instructor was in fact directing the student participants on how to respond to the leaders’ presentations. That is, the instructor should reveal the student participants were instructed to give positive (e.g., nodding, smiling) nonverbal feedback to the first leader, and give negative (e.g., distraction, furrowing of brow) nonverbal feedback to the second leader. It is imperative that the instructor makes it very clear to the student participants, including the leaders, that the feedback the leaders’ received was in no way an evaluation of their capabilities as a leader. This is particularly important to ensure the leader in the negative nonverbal feedback condition does not associate the student participants’ communication with her performance as a leader. After the instructor reveals this information to the class, the instructor should ask the leaders to stand and receive a round of applause from the class for their efforts and participation in making this activity a success. The instructor should offer to answer any questions from the student participants and leaders before moving into a larger class discussion on nonverbal communication to female leaders.

Following the debriefing, the instructor should facilitate a class discussion on the powerful effects of nonverbal communication to female leaders in an effort to enrich the learning experience. During the class discussion, when the instructor feels it is appropriate, it is helpful for the instructor to review theory on gender role stereotypes (see Eagly 1987; Heilman, 1983 for review) and explain how positions of leadership are incongruent with the feminine gender role. This provides the students the appropriate theoretical frame to understand and discuss nonverbal reactions to female leaders.

**Questions for Class Discussion**

The following six questions may be used to facilitate class discussion:

1) How do you think you would have responded if you were the leader in the negative nonverbal feedback condition? Give specific examples.

2) How would you handle a situation where you received negative nonverbal feedback while giving a presentation at work?

3) After this experience, would you want to lead in the future? Why or why not?

4) How does this activity help us understand why women may not advance to the highest echelons of organizations?

5) Now understanding the consequences of gender incongruent behavior, can you translate this principle to other examples in the workplace?

6) Can you make any statements about how subtle discrimination may affect other members of stigmatized groups?

7) What are possible approaches to counteracting these types of negative nonverbal communication in the workplace?
Study Method

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed teaching activity, a survey methodology was utilized to assess undergraduate students’ learning and overall enjoyment of the activity. The following empirical data suggests students’ knowledge of gender, leadership, and nonverbal behaviors increased, and that students found the activity to be both effective and enjoyable.

Participants

Two undergraduate students (both women) volunteered to serve as the “leaders” in the teaching activity. Thirty-five undergraduate students from a psychology of women course at a large Eastern university in the United States participated in this activity. The vast majority of the participants were women (3 men, 33 women). Participants were of mixed races (63% Caucasian, 9% Hispanic, 11% Asian-American, 3% African-American, 3% Native-American, and 9% Other) and years in college (3% 1st, 11% 2nd, 31% 3rd, 51% 4th, and 3% 5th).

An additional 33 undergraduate students from a psychology of women course at the same institution comprised the control group. The large majority of the participants were women (5 men, 28 women). The control group experienced the same syllabus, textbook, and professor as the experimental group but did not observe the activity. Participants in the control group completed the knowledge evaluation items used to test learning in the experimental group.

Procedure

The teaching activity was conducted as outlined and described in the Activity Overview with the addition of collecting pre- and post-demonstration survey items. Thus, prior to the activity students who consented to participate completed the pre-demonstration knowledge questions. Please note the two students who volunteered to serve as leaders did not complete the activity efficacy or pre-and post-demonstration knowledge questions. Following the debriefing and class discussion, the participants completed the activity efficacy, post-demonstration knowledge, and demographics questions.

Measures

Pre- and Post-Demonstration Knowledge. Three items assessed participants’ perception of knowledge of the topic prior to and following the activity (i.e., “How much do you know about…” (a) nonverbal reactions to male and female leaders, (b) the impact of nonverbal behaviors in social interactions, and (c) the impact of nonverbal behaviors on gender differences in leadership) using a Likert-type responses ranging from 1 (not a lot) to 5 (a lot).

In addition, two multiple-choice questions served as the pre- and post-demonstration knowledge items. The first question prompt was “When men and women lead groups, the
group members tend to react”. The response options included: (a) generally the same, whether or not the leader is male or female, (b) somewhat differently, such that male leaders are recognized as more expert than female leaders, (c) somewhat differently, such that female leaders encounter more benevolent treatment than male leaders, (d) somewhat differently, such that male leaders receive more positive feedback than female leaders, and (e) none of the above. The second question was “Men may be more likely than women to hold leadership positions because.” The response options included: (a) men are more easily recognized as leaders than are women, (b) male and female leaders who engage in the same behavior are evaluated differently, (c) male leaders receive more positive nonverbal reactions than female leaders, (d) the role of leader is congruent with masculine role but incongruent with feminine role, and (e) all of the above.

**Activity Efficacy.** Participants completed four items evaluating the effectiveness of the activity in demonstrating the effects of nonverbal feedback on female leaders with a 5-point Likert-type responses ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a lot*). In addition, participants evaluated the extent to which the activity was a positive learning experience with an additional nine items (e.g., “How educational was this activity?”).

**Demographics.** Participants were asked to indicate their gender, race or ethnicity, and year in school.

**Classroom Behavior Check.** Three items were included as a classroom behavior check (e.g., To what extend did the class provide positive or negative nonverbal feedback behaviors in the “positive” and “negative feedback” conditions?) to ensure that the students in the classroom indeed gave positive and negative feedback to the appropriate leader.

**Results**

**Classroom Behavior Check**

The means of the three behavior check items confirmed that the participants in the classroom gave the appropriate positive or negative feedback to the leaders. Responses ranged from 4 to 5 and the means for each of the three items were high ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 0.49$), ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.17$), ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.82$).

**Preliminary Evaluation**

The preliminary evaluation consists of the leaders’ (N = 2) self-reported experiences during the activity as reported by the instructor. The duration of the leaders’ speeches differed; the leader in the positive feedback condition addressed the class for approximately three minutes whereas the leader in the negative feedback condition spoke for approximately one minute. Immediately following the demonstration the leaders discussed their experience. The leader in the positive feedback condition reported that it was “fun and enjoyable” and that she felt as though she could have “kept talking” to the class. The leader in the negative feedback condition reported that it was an uncomfortable experience and when asked (hypothetically) if she would volunteer to lead the class a second
time she replied, “definitely not.” (This individual retracted her statement after the de-
briefing.) These verbal reactions serve as indicators of the immediate affective responses
of the leaders.

Knowledge Evaluation

The knowledge evaluation consisted of two forms: 1) three self-report items completed as
a pre- and post-demonstration knowledge evaluation and 2) two multiple-choice ques-
tions completed prior to the demonstration and 1-month later on a final exam. Both
forms of the knowledge evaluation were completed by the participants \((N = 35)\). The
self-report items were analyzed using paired samples \(t\)-tests and the two multiple-choice
questions were analyzed using Pearson’s chi-square test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Results of Pre- and Post-Knowledge Evaluation.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Demonstration</td>
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<td>Self-Report Items</td>
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<td>Nonverbal reactions to male and female leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of nonverbal behaviors on social interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of nonverbal behaviors on gender differences in leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Multiple-Choice Items | N Correct | N Incorrect | N Correct | N Incorrect | \(\chi^2\) (35) |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| When men and women lead groups, the group members tend to react | 17 | 18 | 32 | 3 | 27.2 |
| Men may be more likely than women to hold leadership positions because | 10 | 24 | 25 | 10 | 18.2 |

\(*p < .05, **p < .01\)
The three pre- and post-demonstration knowledge evaluation self-report items assessed students’ learning (see Table 1). A paired samples t test of the first item, “How much do you know about nonverbal reactions to male and female leaders?” revealed that knowledge was significantly higher, \( t(35) = -5.05, p < .01 \), after the demonstration (\( M = 4.00, SD = 0.84 \)) than before the demonstration (\( M = 3.14, SD = 1.06 \)). A paired samples t test of the second item, “How much do you know about the impact of nonverbal behaviors on social interactions?” revealed that knowledge was significantly higher, \( t(35) = -4.58, p < .01 \), after the demonstration (\( M = 4.31, SD = 0.76 \)) than before the demonstration (\( M = 3.49, SD = 1.12 \)). Finally, a paired samples t test of the third item, “How much do you know about the impact of nonverbal behaviors on gender differences in leadership?” revealed that knowledge was significantly higher, \( t(35) = -5.07, p < .01 \), after the demonstration (\( M = 4.09, SD = 0.70 \)) than before the demonstration (\( M = 3.06, SD = 1.03 \)). In summary, all three of the self-rated items revealed that knowledge was significantly higher after the demonstration than before the demonstration.

In order to test the students’ learning over time, two multiple-choice questions were given immediately prior to and one month after the activity (see Table 1). On both questions, the students were significantly more likely to correctly answer the multiple choice questions after the demonstration than prior to it, \( \chi^2(1, 35) = 27.25, p < .01 \) (Before demonstration: 17 correct, 18 incorrect; After demonstration: 32 correct, 3 incorrect), \( \chi^2(1, 35) = 18.25, p < .01 \) (Before demonstration: 10 correct, 24 incorrect; After demonstration: 25 correct, 10 incorrect), respectively. Furthermore, the students who participated in the demonstration were significantly more likely to correctly answer the multiple choice questions on the midterm examination than the students who did not experience the demonstration (control group), \( \chi^2(1, 33) = 7.30, p < .01 \) (Experimental group: 26 correct, 12 incorrect; Control group: 12 correct, 21 incorrect), \( \chi^2(1, 33) = 4.81, p < .05 \) (Experimental group: 37 correct, 1 incorrect; Control group: 27 correct, 6 incorrect).

**Activity Efficacy**

Activity efficacy was also captured using two forms 1) participants’ (\( N = 35 \)) ratings of the leader in the two conditions and 2) survey items asking their perceptions of the activity. Paired samples t-tests were performed on participants’ ratings of the extent to which the leader in both conditions appeared to show four outcomes of interest: confident, comfortable, enjoyed the activity, and wanted to be the leader again. For all outcomes of interest, participants rated the positive feedback condition significantly higher than the negative feedback condition. Specifically, the leader in the positive feedback condition appeared more “confident” and “comfortable,” and reported that they would “want to be the leader again” and “enjoy[ed] the activity” (see Table 2). Thus, students successfully identified the potential negative outcomes of nonverbal reactions on leaders.

Participants also provided feedback on the overall effectiveness of this activity. Means on each the nine overall effectiveness items were very positive, ranging from 3.89 to 4.97. Overall, students’ affective responses indicated they “enjoyed” the activity (\( M = 4.46 \)), found it “interesting” (\( M = 4.46 \)), “educational” (\( M = 4.37 \)), and that it made them “think critically about gender and leadership” (\( M = 4.31 \)) and the “impact of nonverbal...
Table 2. Results of Activity Efficacy for Positive and Negative Feedback Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Efficacy</th>
<th>Positive Feedback</th>
<th>Negative Feedback</th>
<th>t(35)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( M )</td>
<td>( SD )</td>
<td>( M )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy the activity</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to be the Leader Again</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01

behaviors” \((M = 4.43)\). Students also reported that they felt the activity was “valuable” \((M = 4.37)\), and would “recommend” \((M = 4.57)\) this activity in future classes.

Discussion of Activity Effectiveness

The current results suggest that the proposed teaching activity conveyed the importance of nonverbal responses toward leaders. In particular, students learned about the subtle ways in which contemporary sexism is manifested and its consequences for female leaders. Participants’ knowledge of gender, leadership, and nonverbal responses improved as a function of their participation in the class activity and discussion that followed. In addition, participants reported that the study was not only effective, but also enjoyable and interesting. Participants observed that the female leader who received the negative nonverbal feedback did not enjoy her leadership experience nor did she wish to pursue other leadership positions, making salient the power of nonverbal responses. As such, this activity allowed students to observe and experience the nonverbal responses that women in leadership often receive firsthand.

Limitations

Despite the overall success of this demonstration, there are several potential limitations. First, the leaders may not truly be perceived as such by the participants. Given that the leaders volunteered for the activity, there is some difficulty in believing that they are indeed leaders. Second, the vast majority of the participants were women, as were the leaders. However, in our experience both male and female volunteer-leaders respond poorly to the negative nonverbal feedback. Finally, unlike a real-world setting, participants were directly asked to deliver only positive or negative feedback. Therefore, the degree to which the feedback was occurring was more extreme than what would occur in a real-
world setting. However, unlike other research designs, the purpose of this activity is to make salient the process by which this effect occurs, thereby clarifying this effect for students’ learning.

**Implications for Classroom Integration**

Given the prevalence of nonverbal behavior as a form of communication (Mehrabrian, 2008) and the influence of such behaviors on perceivers’ judgments, it is increasingly important to address this general topic in classrooms. Specifically, students’ participation in such an activity elucidates the challenges that diverse individuals face in the workplace and strengthens understanding of these topics. We encourage the integration of this activity to elucidate and make salient key theories that the students can apply to future scenarios. Active learning activities such as this one provide meaningful experiences that help students make the shift from memorizing concepts to actual learning and future application. This teaching activity serves to enhance the education and experience of students and should therefore be considered as a teaching tool in a variety of courses.

There are several applications of this teaching activity. There is a clear fit for this activity in gender, diversity, communication, or leadership courses. A more broad application could be in any introductory, organizational behavior, psychology, or communications course. Depending on the nature of the course, the teaching activity could be adapted and focused on gender-specific topics, or topics such as diversity, discrimination, leadership, or nonverbal communication.

**References**


Understanding Student and Faculty Incivility in Higher Education

Kristen A. Frey Knepp1
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0436

Abstract

In recent years, faculty have seen an increase in latecomers, sleepers, cell phone addicts, and downright discourteous students in their courses. Classroom incivility is the disruptive behavior that occurs in higher education learning environments at an alarming rate. Incivility is often a reciprocal process; both students and faculty may contribute to a climate of disrespect for one another or the learning process. University students are increasingly diverse, unprepared for college-level work, juggling multiple life roles, and facing tremendous pressures to perform in large, impersonal classes. Faculty are often trained as researchers and struggle to effectively manage their classrooms. Millennial Generation students (and their parents) present a new set of challenges for faculty, including consumerist attitudes toward higher education and a failure to take responsibility for their own learning. Overall, uncivil behavior violates an unspoken or implied understanding of respect for the learning process and the academy. If not dealt with swiftly and effectively, it can have detrimental effects on teaching and learning. The purpose of this paper is to review academic literature about classroom disruptions, including the causes of incivility and strategies to manage negative student behaviors. In particular, young, female, low-status, and minority instructors face the greatest challenges. Recommendations for faculty include presenting engaging lectures at a moderate pace, respectfully interacting with students, gathering student input in the development of a classroom code of conduct, communicating clear expectations, and familiarizing oneself with classroom incivility research, as well as sharing this research with students.

Keywords: Student incivility, faculty incivility, classroom management.

On Wednesday morning at 10:00, half of the 100 Introductory Psychology students are in their seats. The instructor, an assistant professor in her early 30s, begins class on time. Fifteen students stagger into the lecture hall between 2 and 20 minutes late. One student sitting near the side wall is sleeping. The student next to him is reading the newspaper. Several students in two different groups are discussing their weekend plans, despite the instructor’s impatient stares and pauses in the lecture. Ten students are text-messaging on their cell phones. Twenty students have laptops that are open to Facebook or email. Four students leave between 5 and 10 minutes early, while the professor is still speaking. Other students pack their backpacks so that they are ready to leave five minutes before the end of class. Then, noticing that their

1 Corresponding author's email: kfknepp@vt.edu

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classmates have packed their belongings, the remaining students begin to do the same, creating quite a disruption as they noisily gather books, computers, and papers.

Disruptive, uncivil behavior in higher education takes many forms. In this paper, uncivil behavior will be defined and categorized. The likely causes of and contributors to incivility will also be discussed. Lastly, the paper will describe strategies that can be used to manage and prevent student and faculty incivility.

What is Incivility?

Incivility, as defined broadly by Berger (2000), refers to any “speech or action that is disrespectful or rude” (p. 446). Clark (2008) expands on this definition by noting that incivility indicates “disregard and insolence for others, causing an atmosphere of disrespect, conflict, and stress” (p. E38). In a seminal study conducted by the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University (2000), incivility was described as “contrary to the well-being of the classroom community, including behaviors that distract the instructor or other students, disrupt classroom learning, discourage the instructor from teaching, discourage other students from participating, [and] derail the instructor’s goals for the period...” (as cited in Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). In the context of higher education, Clark proceeds to note that incivility “may be demonstrated by students or faculty and...violates the norms of mutual respect in the teaching-learning environment” (p. E38). Clark points out that when students and/or faculty fail to recognize and obey these norms of mutual respect, emotions such as fear, anger, hostility, and resentment may develop between the parties involved.

Incivility in higher educational contexts is commonly grouped into categories, although the categorical labels vary. For example, experts have grouped uncivil behaviors into more serious and less serious behaviors (e.g., Connelly, 2009). Less serious behaviors are simply annoyances to most instructors, although it is important to note that labeling the severity of such behaviors is a subjective task (Alberts, Hazen, & Theobald, 2010). In other words, a behavior that one instructor considers rude and disruptive (e.g., a student eating his or her lunch during class) may not bother – or even enter the awareness of – another instructor. Connelly (2009) provides several examples of less serious behaviors:

- sleeping in class
- disapproving groans or sighs
- acting bored or disinterested
- not attending class
- challenging the instructor’s knowledge or credibility
- dominating class discussion
- not taking notes during lecture

On the other hand, more serious student behaviors may involve expressions of hostility or threat toward the instructor. Alberts and colleagues (2010) claim that such threatening
behaviors have been on the rise in U.S. college settings since the 1990s. More serious behaviors include:

- stalking (in person or electronically)
- intimidation
- unjustified complaints to a professor’s superiors (e.g., department chair, dean)
- unwarranted negative feedback on an instructor’s teaching evaluation
- cheating or other academic integrity violations
- personal comments or verbal attacks against faculty or classmates

The most serious form of incivility, however, occurs when students threaten the instructor or classmates with violence. Clark (2008) notes that, while acts of violence on college campuses are rare, they do occur, and such incidents have been given substantial media attention in recent years. Notably, Connelly (2009) labels various classroom disruptions related to technology, such as sending inappropriate emails to the instructor, using one’s cell phone during class, and using a computer for purposes unrelated to the class as more serious uncivil behaviors.

The specific uncivil behaviors that faculty and students consider disruptive often overlap with one another. In particular, both faculty and students are bothered by individuals who hold side conversations with classmates that are loud and disruptive (Feldmann, 2001; Alberts et al., 2010). Faculty and students are also annoyed by students who make sarcastic remarks or express boredom or displeasure in a noticeable way (e.g., groaning, sighing). Another behavior that faculty and students have cited as uncivil is making loud emotional outbursts during class.

Faculty tend to consider the following student behaviors uncivil:

- failing to participate or express interest in the course
- coming to class unprepared
- making demands and unreasonable requests toward the instructor (e.g., extended deadlines, make-up exams, extra credit opportunities)
- disrupting class by arriving late or leaving early

While classroom incivility is often discussed from a faculty perspective, research (e.g., Center for Survey Research, 2000) has shown that instructors engage in uncivil behavior that is noticed and reported by students. Specifically, students are bothered by faculty who engage in the following behaviors:

- presenting lectures at a fast pace with little to no student involvement or interaction
- acting in an aloof, distant manner toward students, or conveying to students that they are a burden
- surprising students with unannounced assessments or unanticipated exam questions
- arriving late to class or canceling class without prior notice
permitting students to belittle or ridicule classmates

More recent research has examined student perceptions of incivility committed by other students. A study by Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) revealed that students consider the following uncivil behaviors to be the most serious:

- “continuing to talk after being asked to stop”
- “coming to class under the influence of alcohol or other drugs”
- “allowing a cell phone to ring”
- “conversing loudly with others” (p. 16)

In addition to severity, the study investigated the frequency of uncivil behaviors. Students reported that text-messaging and packing up belongings before the end of class occurred the most frequently, while “continuing to talk after being asked to stop” and “coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs” occurred the least frequently (p. 16). The researchers found a significant negative correlation between severity and frequency of uncivil behaviors, suggesting that respondents perceived the most serious classroom behaviors as taking place on a less frequent basis. In contrast, the disruptive behaviors that students reported as occurring most often were typically classified as moderately uncivil in terms of severity.

Clearly, as a result of uncivil behavior on the part of students and faculty, the learning environment may be seriously compromised. However, classroom incivility can lead to further adverse effects, in addition to a disruption or harming of the learning environment. According to Bjorklund and Rehling (2010), when incivility occurs, students’ affiliation with and respect for their institution may decrease. Respect for the instructor often diminishes as well, as students expect the professor to take control of the classroom and curtail disruptive, disrespectful behaviors. Instructors with little or no training in dealing with incivility may lose confidence in their abilities to teach effectively and manage their classrooms, potentially leading to a continuous cycle of uncivil student behaviors. Although colleges and universities recognize the occurrence of incivility on their campuses, administrators who are concerned about the institution’s public image may be reluctant to address the problem (Nordstrom, Bartels, & Bucy, 2009). Consequently, incivility continues on these campuses, as a prevailing attitude of acceptance and approval is conveyed to students.

### Why Does Classroom Incivility Occur?

Classroom incivility has been the focus of increased attention in higher education circles, and is commonly labeled as a “growing problem” (Morrisette, 2001, p. 3). Many blame the deterioration of civility in society at large for the problem (e.g., Connelly, 2009). Nonetheless, experts still struggle to answer the following question: Has incivility always been a problem on university campuses, or has it become worse in recent years? According to Nilson (2003) and Nilson and Jackson (2004), many of the widespread uncivil behaviors seen in college classrooms today were virtually nonexistent through the mid-
1980s. Only in the last two decades has classroom incivility been recognized and labeled as a national concern in higher education.

**Student-Related Causes and Contributors**

According to Alberts et al. (2010), in the U.S., many students are not challenged academically before they enter college, and as a result, they possess inaccurate expectations and ideas about the nature of college-level work. Additionally, Alberts et al. claim that today’s generation of college students – the Millennial Generation (i.e., those who graduated from high school in 2000 or later) – present unique challenges to university instructors, in part due to “permissive parents, overly lenient school environments, and a regular diet of instant gratification entertainment” (p. 440). Professors of the Millennial Generation often bemoan this cohort’s short attention spans and affinity for multitasking, which makes engaging students throughout a 75-minute lecture a formidable task.

In addition, Nordstrom and colleagues (2009) present several interesting theories for why incivility on college campuses may be on the rise. Anecdotally, some faculty have noted that today’s college students seem to possess a sense of entitlement. Specifically, Nordstrom et al. claim that some students believe they should put forth minimal effort in their courses. Rather than wanting to acquire knowledge for its own sake, an increasing number of students simply want to be entertained in class. Students may also feel that the instructor should reward them with high grades simply for class attendance. Faculty now view themselves as largely responsible for students’ learning, while students themselves have become comparatively passive. In summary, characteristics of the Millennial Generation may make this particular group of students more prone to classroom incivility than previous generations.

Lastly, Kuhlenschmidt and Layne (1999) mention the following student-related factors as potential causes of classroom incivility:

- medication or other substances students may be taking
- illness (both physical and mental)
- fatigue
- stress (e.g., feeling overextended)
- emotional challenges (e.g., loss of a loved one, break-up of a relationship)
- emotional immaturity and poor problem-solving skills
- attention-seeking
- redirected aggression (i.e., when a student becomes upset with a professor due to an unrelated event that occurred outside the classroom)
- vision and hearing problems, or other disabilities

In regard to stress, college students are often juggling multiple roles. Some students may have full- or part-time jobs, in addition to taking a full course load. Kuhlenschmidt and Layne claim, “As time pressures [for students] increase, civility is often lost” (p. 51).
Faculty-Related Causes and Contributors

Nilson and Jackson (2004) claim that a byproduct of the increase in university size and specialization is the fact that adjunct instructors and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) often teach courses, labs, and recitation sections, rather than full-time faculty. Certain demographic or personal characteristics of the instructor may foster an environment of incivility. For example, traits such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, and status within the university can affect the frequency of student incivility. Specifically, instructors who are female, young, non-White, and low status (e.g., adjuncts, lecturers, or GTAs) may experience more incivility issues than instructors who do not possess these qualities. Nilson (2003) notes that students tend to view the college professor in the traditional sense: as a mature, White male with a deep voice and commanding presence in the classroom (she refers to this as the “professorial stereotype” – p. 56). When students encounter an instructor who does not fit these characteristics, they may experience resistance, and hence, are more likely to act in an uncivil manner.

Alberts and colleagues (2010) conducted a study with early-career geography faculty based on the belief that younger, less experienced professors are more likely to experience incivility in the classroom than their veteran counterparts. The findings showed that almost all of the early-career instructors surveyed had experienced some form of incivility in their classrooms. However, the researchers also found that incivility was significantly more problematic for certain subgroups of respondents, especially women. Female faculty members reported incivilities at a considerably higher rate than male professors. Some female instructors reported that students were reluctant to accept them as authority figures. Other female faculty respondents noted that students treated them more casually and informally (e.g., calling them by their first names instead of “Dr.” or “Professor”), as compared to their male faculty colleagues.

Relatedly, one troubling finding of Alberts et al.’s work revealed that female faculty were significantly more likely than male faculty to experience the most serious form of classroom incivility. That is, female faculty members were more likely than their male counterparts to be the targets of openly hostile behavior. Instructors of color, as well as international faculty members, were also more likely to be targets of incivility, as compared to their White, American-born colleagues. Interestingly, although non-White and international instructors reported comparatively high rates of incivility, they were less likely than other instructors to confront disruptive behavior in their classrooms.

Irrational or unrealistic faculty beliefs may contribute to incivility. Faculty tend to believe that students should be attentive, respectful, and interested in the course material at all times. Further, some faculty assert that students should blindly accept their authority and expertise. As a result, faculty may behave in an uncivil manner toward students when these unrealistic expectations are violated. The tendency of faculty to behave uncivilly only adds fuel to the fire when it comes to student incivility.

On a related note, Berger (2000) notes that more uncivil behaviors occur in classrooms with faculty members who do not exhibit prosocial behavior (i.e., these faculty members
do not practice *immediacy*). Prosocial behaviors such as asking the class, “Do you understand?” (p. 446), as well as nonverbal indicators of immediacy (e.g., eye contact, leaning forward when a student asks a question) can promote civility in the learning environment. Teachers who do not possess these prosocial skills are often viewed as standoffish, distant, and callous in the eyes of students. When students suspect that the professor does not care about them, they are more likely to engage in incivility. Other uncivil faculty behaviors (e.g., delivering lectures that are too fast-paced or do not involve students, discouraging questions or comments, lacking approachability, showing a disregard for office hours outside of class) suggest to students that the faculty member is a deserving recipient of uncivil acts.

**Institution-Related Causes and Contributors**

Nilson (2003) takes a slightly different approach in examining the potential causes of incivility. She points not to characteristics of students themselves, but rather, a larger paradigm shift that has taken place within the academy over the past 20 years. First, Nilson argues, college campuses have become increasingly diverse, and that diversity brings a broad array of student attitudes and expectations about learning and the academic environment. Nilson and Jackson (2004) claim, “Many traditional-age students experienced success in high school without practicing the courtesies that college-level faculty expect” (p. 4). Therefore, evidence suggests that today’s college students are arriving at universities unprepared for the culture and environment of the academy. Nilson (2003) also cites the increasing specialization of faculty interests. Faculty who are primarily research-focused may lack the resources and/or interest to invest time and effort in teaching and classroom management techniques.

Nilson notes that universities have exacerbated classroom conduct and incivility problems in their own right. For example, universities only tend to sanction the most serious forms of uncivil behavior. Nilson and Jackson (2004) argue that universities have such a strong desire to retain their students that some uncivil behaviors may be overlooked. Further, universities are continuing to grow in size, and class sizes are becoming larger. The authors assert that incivility is more likely to occur in large enrollment classrooms, where a student may feel like a “number” rather than an individual learner. When students believe they can act anonymously, they are more apt to behave uncivilly. Overall, Nilson and Jackson characterize today’s university environment as “impersonal” and “indifferent” (p. 4).

Alberts et al.’s (2010) study conducted with early-career geography faculty examined whether characteristics of the institution may contribute to incivility. Indeed, the study found that instructors who taught at public institutions reported significantly higher rates of incivility (29.6% of respondents), as compared to faculty at private institutions (8.3% of respondents). The hostility form of classroom incivility was more frequently reported by instructors at research-oriented universities, as compared to other types of institutions. With regard to class size, findings showed – in support of Nilson and Jackson (2004) – that instructors of large lecture courses were more likely to experience classroom incivility than instructors of smaller courses and seminars. The authors reasoned that this find-
ing may have been observed because interaction between the instructor and students is greatly facilitated in classes with fewer learners.

**Other Contributors to Incivility**

Alternatively, Kuhlenschmidt and Layne (1999) assert that uncivil behavior in the classroom may have nothing to do with the instructor. The authors claim that, when students exhibit disruptive and rude behavior, instructors often personalize it. On the contrary, Kuhlenschmidt and Layne point out that behavior tends to be time-contingent. For example, disruptive talking between students commonly occurs near the end of class. Instructors can plan activities or administer assignments near the end of the period to combat this problem. Also, incivility may sometimes occur after graded exams or papers are handed back; therefore, instructors should reserve this until the final minutes of the class session. In addition, Kuhlenschmidt and Layne indicate that disruptive behavior often occurs because it has been rewarded previously. For instance, in high school, a student may have received attention from his or her teacher for acting in an uncivil way (e.g., talking in class, regardless of whether the student said something relevant to the discussion).

Moreover, students may not realize a behavior is disruptive to the professor or other students; not every uncivil behavior is performed with malicious intent. On the other side of the coin, sometimes students are bothered by uncivil behavior that the instructor does not observe or recognize (e.g., two students talking in the back of the room). If the behavior continues to occur without the instructor’s awareness, and as a result, the instructor does not address the behavior, he or she loses some credibility as a manager of the classroom.

**Consumerism**

Berger (2000) and Nordstrom et al. (2009) discuss the issue of consumerism in higher education today, and how consumerist attitudes contribute to incivility. The underlying assumption behind the consumerism mentality is that students (or their parents) are paying for an education in order to obtain a final product: a degree. Consequently, Berger notes that students believe they “…are in the best position to know what they want and to decide whether the education they are getting is relevant and worthwhile” (p. 447). Students who subscribe to the consumerism mentality believe they are owed something for the tuition dollars they pay. As perceived consumers, students may pressure faculty to satisfy their demands and requests, and may blame the professor for an unsatisfactory grade. In short, Berger claims that consumerism “…promotes an anti-scholarly approach to higher education” (p. 447).

Some professors argue that today’s college students in large part view their higher educational experience as a “means to an end” (ProfPost, 2009). College is regarded as a four-year experience that one must endure for the primary purpose of attaining a higher-paying job. In support of this assertion, Nordstrom et al. (2009) cite a 2006 report conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute. The report showed that 69% of students claimed they attended college in order to earn more money; in contrast, just 21% of
students in 1976 endorsed this as their primary reason for attending college. Empirical work by Nordstrom and colleagues showed that students who scored higher on a 16-item consumerism scale were more likely to report engaging in incivility, as compared to students with lower consumerism scores. Some students were more likely to hold consumerism beliefs than others, including males, those attending college part-time, and students who were not planning to attend graduate school.

**Modern Technology**

Many faculty note the contribution of technology to incivility in the modern-day university classroom. Some faculty believe that, because technology is so widely available to students, incivility in the classroom simply “looks different” than it did 20 years ago (Fowler, personal communication, February 3, 2011). Nworie and Haughton (2008) report that about 99% of undergraduates own their own PC. In addition, nearly all (99.9%) students use email, and 80% of students use some form of instant messaging daily. More than 90% of students use technology to assist with their learning assignments and activities (e.g., writing papers, developing presentations).

Nworie and Haughton claim that recent advances in technology have both greatly helped and harmed the practice of college teaching. In particular, the authors state that learning technologies have brought novelty, originality, and flexibility to higher educational settings – online and face-to-face. At the same time, the progression and development of technology has potentially led to several unanticipated consequences, including new forms of classroom incivility. In particular, students may be more likely to engage in incivility because electronic devices promote inattention and distraction. In particular, student cell phone usage in the classroom is an issue that many instructors have experienced. When a student’s cell phone rings, beeps, or vibrates, instructors may “lose their train of thought in that instant and the attention of other students is diverted” (p. 54). Further, if a student elects to take the call and stands up to leave the classroom, the attention of fellow learners is further disrupted. In larger courses, in which learners remain relatively hidden and anonymous, some students may actually take the cell phone call while remaining in their seats.

However, the use of cell phones goes beyond simply taking calls or sending text messages in class. Increasingly, students are using cell phones to assist with cheating and academic dishonesty. As most cell phones are equipped with camera technology, students are able to take pictures of exams or their neighbors’ answer sheets, as well as record moving images (e.g., class lectures). Podcasting has also gained popularity, and its uses have expanded. For example, podcasting was initially applied to higher educational settings for the purposes of supplementing class lectures. After listening to a lecture in class, students would be able to download a podcast and review the lecture for clarification and reinforcement of key points on their own time. However, more recently, several unintended uses of podcasts have emerged. According to Nworie and Haughton, “students are seeing the technology as a substitute for class attendance” (p. 55), thereby contributing to various forms of incivility. Additionally, the uncivil use of technology in the classroom has the potential to impact the student-teacher relationship and interaction pat-
terns (i.e., by forming a barrier between instructor and student), and raises the cost of classroom technology for colleges and universities.

Nworie and Haughton point out that the use of technology in higher education also raises questions regarding the ownership of intellectual property. That is, instructors may not be “able to predict and/or control where [course] content will end up and how it will be used” (p. 55). Online teaching and learning environments have illuminated various new possibilities with regard to incivility. If students are taking an online course, they may also be taking assessments online, and therefore, cheating is considerably easier than in a face-to-face course. The Internet has made it possible for students in both online and face-to-face courses to download papers and assignments; thus, the potential for plagiarism and other academic integrity violations is greatly enhanced.

How Do Instructors Deal with Classroom Disruptions?

In their study of early-career geography faculty, Alberts et al. (2010) found that 86.2% of respondents used “friendly, verbal reminders” (p. 450) to deal with classroom incivilities once they had occurred. Almost three-fourths of instructors had spoken privately with the offending student outside of class. In general, respondents rated these strategies as quite effective in managing classroom disruptions. On the other hand, about 70% of instructors had attempted to avoid dealing with student incivility by including classroom behavior-related policies in their syllabi. The authors found that, among this particular sample of faculty respondents, the more personal the response from the instructor (e.g., speaking with the offending student in private), the more effective the strategy was in the management of incivility.

One especially effective strategy endorsed by several survey respondents was learning students’ names – even in large enrollment courses. Not only should instructors learn students’ names, but respondents also noted that faculty should call on students frequently during class. This sends the message that participation and active involvement in class are important and expected. Further, as previously noted, students are more likely to behave in an uncivil fashion when they feel like anonymous members of a large, impersonal course, rather than crucial components of a learning community.

Another (potentially less effective) strategy endorsed by some instructors in dealing with student incivility was shaming or embarrassment. Shaming was described as a manner in which discipline and order in the classroom could be maintained. In a few cases, shaming was even described as “confrontational” and instructors actually reported “yelling” at students (p. 452). Interestingly, however, all of the faculty members in the present study who reported using shaming were male. Female instructors seemed more hesitant about using such punitive approaches. Some respondents pointed out the importance of one’s teaching evaluations, particularly for pre-tenure faculty. In this way, using a strong disciplinarian approach to address incivility in the classroom could backfire for some instructors.
How Can We Prevent Incivility in Higher Education?

In Alberts et al.’s study, some respondents suggested that the most effective way to deal with incivility in the classroom was to take a proactive, preventive approach. To that end, incivility experts have suggested multiple ways to prevent uncivil behavior in the classroom. First, Nilson and Jackson (2004), as well as Morrissette (2001), recommend that instructors include classroom conduct policies in their syllabi. Specifically, instructors should outline in a written document “…what kinds of behaviors will be considered inappropriate and deserving of sanctions, as well as why (e.g., that these behaviors annoy other students in the class as well as the instructor)” (Morrissette, 2001, p. 4). Instructors should describe grading policies in regard to tardiness, attendance, participation, missed or late assignments, and make-up exams (Nilson, 2003). Faculty members might consider listing their policies regarding sleeping, inattention, side conversations, cell phone usage, and showing disrespect toward the instructor or other students.

Another approach instructors can take is to focus on desired behaviors, rather than undesired behaviors. For example, instead of writing, “Please refrain from holding side conversations during class with your neighbor; it is very distracting to your classmates, as well as the instructor,” faculty members may write, “Please show respect toward the instructor and your fellow students by listening attentively during class discussion.” Regardless of whether desired or undesired behaviors are emphasized, Morrissette (2001) advises that instructors clearly delineate their expectations and policies in the syllabus, noting that students can become hostile and resentful when syllabi are ambiguously written.

With regard to technology, Nworie and Haughton (2008) advise instructors to include statements in their syllabi regarding the improper use of electronic devices in the classroom. These policies should include warnings about cheating, as well as the ways in which technology may be used appropriately. Instructors’ policies should complement and reference the university’s policy. Nworie and Haughton further recommend that orientation sessions for both students and faculty should address acceptable and unacceptable uses and purposes of technology for teaching and learning.

Bjorklund and Rehling (2010), in their study of student perceptions of classroom disruptions, assert that instructors should share with students the research on incivility. In particular, research on student views of classroom incivility should be highlighted. The authors write, “…the knowledge that one’s fellow students, as well as the professor, are likely to view particular behaviors negatively can educate students in community expectations and bring considerable pressure to discourage uncivil behavior” (p. 17). In an associated vein, both Alberts and colleagues (2010) and Nordstrom and colleagues (2009) point out the role that other students can play in stopping or preventing incivility. Nordstrom et al. assert that subjective norms can work to an instructor’s advantage. If a professor communicates behavioral standards to his or her students, students’ attitudes about appropriate classroom behavior – and thus, the students’ behavior itself – will change.
One way for faculty to enforce behavioral standards, aside from including a civility policy in the syllabus, is to have a discussion with students during the first few class periods about appropriate classroom conduct. Furthermore, faculty can solicit student assistance and input into this issue by developing a classroom code of conduct; such a project would represent a joint effort between learners and the instructor. A behavior contract is effective because of the “peer pressure” effect it exerts on students. According to Nordstrom et al., even if students are unconcerned with whether the instructor is disturbed by their uncivil behavior, chances are they will care about their classmates’ opinions and respect the wishes of their fellow learners. If their classmates view particular behaviors as annoying or disruptive, students will be less likely to engage in them.

In order to develop a class code of conduct, the professor holds a discussion with students early in the semester about uncivil behaviors they frequently see other students performing. The instructor takes notes on the discussion, then compiles a document that all students will review and sign at the next class session. By signing the code of conduct, students agree not to engage in the behaviors outlined in the document. Nilson and Jackson (2004) find that students who develop such a code end up patrolling their own behavior to a large extent.

Moreover, instructors should consistently enforce such policies and address them immediately when they are violated. Often times, instructors ignore uncivil behavior, hoping that it will go away. Unfortunately, the uncivil behavior usually does not vanish on its own, and in fact, it may even become worse. If a faculty member fails to acknowledge classroom incivility, students may interpret the faculty member’s silence as assent. Furthermore, Morrissette (2001) states that, when faculty fail to respond to incidents of student incivility, “…students can begin to capitalize on their new sense of power within the classroom and attempt to intimidate faculty” (p. 4).

According to Morrissette, faculty can exercise certain communication skills, such as active listening, to deal with disruptive and problematic students. Specifically, Morrissette offers the following recommendations:

- use civil language
- maintain inclusive attitudes
- teach students how to disagree with one another (and the instructor)
- listen to students in a respectful manner
- model respectful and empathetic behaviors

Students can often learn which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate simply by observing faculty role models. Morrissette advocates that faculty speak with students, instead of speaking at them. Faculty who exercise good listening and interpersonal skills can decrease the chances of encountering uncivil behavior from students in their classrooms.
Summary and Conclusion

Incivility in higher education undoubtedly takes many forms. What exactly constitutes uncivil behavior depends on both the instructor’s perception of the behavior and whether it is disruptive to the learning environment. Incivility experts (e.g., Nilson, 2003) make the case that uncivil behavior in the classroom has been an increasing problem over the last two decades. In recent years, advances in technology and its availability to students (e.g., cell phones, laptops) have arguably fueled the increase in classroom incivility (Braden & Smith, 2006; Nworie & Haughton, 2008). Such devices often serve as distractions to the students operating them, and negatively affect the learning processes of other students. Moreover, the consumerism mentality that many modern college students and their families seem to possess has likely contributed to the rise in incivility. Some students believe they are entitled to a degree because of the tuition they pay; therefore, they reserve the right to challenge and defy the authority of their professors, especially with regard to grades.

Additionally, research (e.g., Clark, 2008) has shown that faculty contribute to a climate of incivility just as much as students do. In fact, students are more likely to display uncivil behavior in courses taught by faculty members who have demonstrated some form of incivility toward students. Further, faculty who possess certain characteristics that do not match the traditional professoriate stereotype may be particularly vulnerable to incivility in their classrooms (e.g., instructors who are young, female, non-White, or of international descent). However, various prevention strategies have been put forth to combat classroom incivility. In particular, a student-generated code of conduct has been employed with success in an effort to target incivility. In sum, the rise in classroom incivility has many potential causes. With careful management and planning, techniques can be employed to reduce disruptive behavior and promote an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect. Colleges and universities should continue to acknowledge incivility within their institutions, and should continue to seek and develop innovative, effective ways to target the ever-growing problem.

References


Using Storytelling Strategies
to Improve Student Comprehension in Online Classes

Rasby Marlene Powell1 and Ottis Murray
University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Pembroke, NC 28372

Abstract

Previous research shows that presenting class material in story formats can improve student learning in lecture classes. This pilot study of eight sociology classes investigates the efficacy of using storytelling as a means to improve student comprehension in online classes. Our findings show that when material is presented in story format rather than traditional textbook format, student comprehension of difficult theories and concepts improves and grades improve. This paper outlines the storytelling strategies we tested and makes suggestions for using storytelling across disciplines in online classes.

Keywords: Student comprehension, teaching strategies, online teaching strategies.

A major frustration of online teaching is that even when assignments are structured so that students must read class material, we are not always certain that they comprehend what they are reading. Unlike with face-to-face lectures, we cannot gauge facial expressions in online classes to determine the students’ level of understanding. Additionally, online students often fail to ask relevant questions because they believe they understand the material until a poor test score proves them wrong. Thus, we often fail to identify and resolve misunderstandings and misinterpretations until after graded assignments or exams. Because of this, some students fall behind and have a difficult time catching up.

As we struggled to find ways to improve student comprehension in our online classes, we analyzed which, if any, of our lecture methods might translate well to the online format. While discussing our classroom successes, we discovered that both of us rely heavily on illustrating lecture material with storytelling in our face-to-face lectures. One difference we quickly identified was that although we both employ ample examples in our online discussion boards, neither of us told “stories” as we do in the classroom. Aside from the fact that both of us successfully use stories as a means to improve comprehension in our lecture classes, a short perusal of the literature convinced us that many others use storytelling to improve student comprehension.

1 Corresponding author's email: rasby.powell@uncp.edu
Teaching Through Storytelling

Teaching through storytelling dates back thousands of years (Kosa, 2008). According to Coulter, Michael, and Poyner (2007) and Sanchez (2005), storytelling offers much more than casual entertainment within academic settings. Instead, storytelling is a tool that helps students understand the world around them. Storytelling enables students to visualize themselves in similar situations as the characters of the story (Combs & Beach, 1994) and see the relevance of concepts (Eldridge, 2009). Harris (2007) posits that stories allow us to see similarities in our experiences even when we are divided by cultural differences. In addition, stories make learning more fun and help students remember relevant material (Frisch & Saunders, 2008).

Kosa (2008) asserts that one benefit of storytelling is that stories help teachers reach students of all skill levels because even challenging concepts and theories are easier to understand in story format. Educators ranging from kindergarten teachers through college professors claim that storytelling helps improve student comprehension (Bonney, 1985). For example, Hadzigeoriou (2006) uses storytelling to help create a sense of anticipation and curiosity about difficult concepts in his physics classes. Grose (2010) teaches her law students not only to construct legal arguments, but also to deconstruct the stories they hear from clients and other attorneys through storytelling. Carruthers (2008) claims that storytelling benefits teachers as well as students because it forces teachers to think more critically about the material they present.

Since both our personal experience in the classroom and research literature indicates that storytelling can help students learn, we decided to test the effectiveness of storytelling in our online classes. Since we were uncertain about how well storytelling would work in the online setting, we conducted a pilot study that would not reflect on any of our students’ grades. We recruited volunteers from eight Introduction to Sociology classes to take part in the experiment. Because theory is one of the more difficult and misinterpreted subjects we teach, we tested the effectiveness of our strategy by using two sociological theories as the subject matter.

Data and Methods

We recruited 112 volunteers: 88 females and 24 males from eight undergraduate sociology classes. Our volunteers were directed, through email, to a set of documents on Blackboard that contained the instructions, theories, and quizzes for our project. Volunteers were instructed to read two sociological theories posted online. One theory was copied directly from a theory textbook, and one was rewritten as a story. The storytelling version relied heavily on analogies, metaphors, and short examples from everyday life. The stories had named characters engaged in situations that illustrated the explanatory power of the theory. We used Hochschild’s (1979) concept of surface acting as Theory 1 in our experiment. Table 1 illustrates the difference between the standard text format and the storytelling format that we presented to students.
Table 1. Test Theory 1 in Standard Text and Storytelling Format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory in Standard Text Format</th>
<th>Theory in Storytelling format</th>
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<tr>
<td>In surface acting, the expression on my face or the posture of my body feels “put on.” It is not “part of me.”</td>
<td>Arlie Hochschild claims that all of us do a certain amount of acting to manage our feelings. Did you know that a large part of being successful in your career will depend on your ability to become an accomplished surface actor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surface Acting</strong> To show through surface acting the feelings of a Hamlet or an Ophelia, the actor operates countless muscles that make up an outward gesture. The body, not the soul, is the main tool of the trade. The actor’s body evokes passion in the audience’s soul, but the actor is only acting as if he had feeling.</td>
<td>Surface acting is when we act like we feel something we don’t really feel. Let’s look at the following example of surface acting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is surface acting—the art of an eyebrow raised here, an upper lip tightened there. The actor does not really experience the world from an imperial viewpoint, but he works at seeming to. What is on the actor’s mind? The audience, which is the nearest mirror to his own surface.</td>
<td>Sally works in the music department at Barnes and Noble. During the rush of the Christmas holiday, the department was very busy, and check-out lines were long. One customer was very upset because he had to wait about five minutes while Sally helped another customer. He complained loudly so all of the people around the counter could hear him. He said things like: “I can’t believe how slow this girl is. Her middle name must be Snail.” and “They need to get some competent help in here.” Sally could feel herself getting angrier and angrier, but she knew she couldn’t let it show because the store had a policy about treating customers nicely. She didn’t want to risk her Christmas bonus just to say what she really felt. When the man got to the counter, Sally pasted a big smile on her face and was extra helpful to him.</td>
</tr>
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<td>According to Stanislavski, the famous Method acting teacher, the limitations of surface acting are that it is less profound than beautiful. It is more immediately effective than truly powerful. It acts more on your sense of sound and sight than on your soul. The effect is sharp but not lasting.</td>
<td>Sally was surface acting. She was acting friendly and nice when she really felt like yelling at the man and slugging him in the nose. Surface acting is presenting an emotion to the public that we don’t really feel.</td>
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</table>

Four classes read Theory I in the traditional format and Theory II in the storytelling format (we used Elias’ (1978) theory of the civilizing process as Theory II). The presentation was switched in the other four classes with Theory I (surface acting) presented as a story and Theory II (the civilizing process) copied from the text. Our rationale was to...
make sure any difference in scores between traditional and storytelling presentations was not the product of a particular theory.

After reading Theory I, volunteers immediately took a short online quiz. Following that quiz, they read Theory II and immediately took another short quiz. The quizzes were the same for each theory regardless of the presentation style. The questions were multiple choice questions designed to evaluate overall comprehension of the theory. All of the questions focused on the main premises and concepts of the theory.

**Results**

We found that females scored higher on the quizzes regardless of presentation style (see Table 2). On the traditional text quiz, females scored an average of 63% and males, an average of 54%. On the storytelling quiz, their respective scores were 79% and 67%. Overall, students scored higher when material was presented as stories (77%) versus the traditional text format (61%). We also found that students who scored higher on the story format quiz showed a greater improvement in their scores than the students who scored higher on the traditional format. The greatest improvement with the storytelling format was 60 points compared to an improvement of 43 points for the traditional presentation. This suggests that stories may be more effective than a textbook presentation, alone, in helping students improve their understanding of complex concepts in the online format. As a result of these findings, we increasingly use stories as a strategy to illustrate theories and concepts in our online classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Format</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>All Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story Format</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Format</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
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**Our Storytelling Strategy**

Although we do not consider ourselves “master storytellers” or even suggest that our storytelling strategies are the only or best methods for use in online teaching, the following strategies have helped us improve student comprehension in our online classes. A key feature to a good story is the *hook*. A hook should draw the reader into the story by arousing their curiosity and making them want to hear more (Freeman, 2010; Buchholz, 2011). To accomplish this, we use surprising statistics, provocative questions, or interesting contradictions to introduce the stories. These capture our students’ attention by illustrating that what “everyone knows” may not be accurate or by presenting ideas they had never considered. For example, in our storytelling version of Hochshild’s theory, we create curiosity by asking students whether they realize they will need to use surface acting to be successful in their careers. Provocative questions such as that motivate students to invest
their time and energy in learning the answers. We find that introducing them to some of the interesting contradictions within scientific research also works as a successful hook. Once we gain their interest, we provide a connecting framework so the students can understand the material. Students find it easier to understand new material when we connect it to something they already understand. Our stories use plenty of analogies and metaphors designed to help students connect new material to previous course material. In addition to connecting our concepts to previously learned sociological concepts, we also point out the connections among sociology and other disciplines. For example, we may point out that nurses, teachers, and even judges must master the skill of surface acting to be successful in their positions. This helps students grasp the idea that the theories and concepts from one discipline are not isolated facts that have no bearing on other disciplines.

We also use the “show, don’t tell” strategy promoted in creative writing classes. Good stories capture the audience’s imagination by showing them the unfolding of a scene and not by describing the scene (Jerz, 2011). Although educators must tell some facts, there are several ways to show our facts, as well. Instead of simply describing how a process works, we use vignettes in which personal examples or news stories illustrate social processes. Students especially enjoy the vignettes when we use them as the main characters. Using students as characters in the stories allows them to engage the material as active participants rather than passive observers, which increases their interest in the topic. One important caveat for using students in stories is to present them as honorable characters so as not to cause harm.

Finally, we craft assignments that turn our students into the storytellers. Discussion boards are especially useful for this strategy. We have good success with assignments that present a theoretical claim or concept and direct students to use a personal example or an example from everyday life to illustrate the concept. Requiring students to be storytellers improves their analytical and critical thinking skills because they must use analogies and draw comparisons among concepts. Asking students to imagine the consequences of various actions and conditions helps them understand how to apply what they are learning to their everyday lives. When students become the storytellers, they must learn to do more than simply memorize definitions and regurgitate material from the text.

**Storytelling Across Disciplines**

Acknowledging that some disciplines are more suited to stories than others, we believe most subject matter can be adapted to a story format to some degree. In fact, professors are already using storytelling to teach classes ranging from history, law, physics, biology, and more (e.g. see Cateforis, 2009; Eldridge, 2009; Frisch & Saunders 2008; Grose, 2010). Based on our own experiences and the strategies employed by others, we offer the following strategies for using storytelling across the disciplines.

First, situate the concepts and theories in an everyday context. For example, recent research indicates that seemingly random terrorist attacks can be predicted through mathematical patterns (Braconnier, 2011). While abstract concepts about mathematical patterns...
and their predictive power may not capture student attention, discussions of real terror victims typically do. Second, populate your story with characters with whom your students can either identify or understand. Students do not identify with statistics about fatalities as well as they do to stories about how the research can impact real victims. Next, show the students how the theory works by having the characters act out the process by which the theory works. Finally, we highly recommend turning your students into storytellers to see how well they understand the material.

Conclusion

While storytelling is not a magic panacea, we find it helps our online students improve their understanding and retention of the material. Although our pilot study was conducted with volunteers and relied on exposure to only two theories rather than the more prolonged exposure of a semester long storytelling experience, the difference in scores convinced us of the efficacy of using more storytelling in our online classrooms. As a result, we have incorporated storytelling as a regular feature of our online classes. The average test scores have improved as have the average overall grades in our classes by as much as 10 points in some classes.

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Using Films as a Tool for Active Learning in Teaching Sociology

Yaffa Moskovich\textsuperscript{1a} and Simha Sharf\textsuperscript{b}
\textsuperscript{a}Zefat College, Israel
\textsuperscript{b}Western Galilee College and Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, Israel

Abstract

This study aims to examine and demonstrate practices, elements and techniques employed by the action research method. It examines the use of films in sociology instruction in college, and the influence of films on the development of students’ understanding of human nature. Based on the professional experience of the authors films utilize and enhance the teaching-learning process, the study describes two courses that incorporate film viewing. The class discussions following the screenings were guided by the teacher, and involved student response and interaction. The study addresses the use of films as a teaching method employed to facilitate the comprehension of sociological concepts by specific instruction, to ensure a better outcome in the classroom.

Keywords: Films as educational tool, active learning, learning by watching films.

The purpose of this study is to examine and demonstrate practices in using elements and techniques employed by the action research method to derive a better classroom outcome. This article is an exemplar of how to structure the instruction in such a way so as to ensure a better outcome when a lecturer uses films as a tool for active learning in teaching sociology. This study attempts to introduce a means to meeting the challenge of teaching sociology in a complex classroom, using films as an educational tool.

The purpose of this study is to describe the didactic mode of using films in active learning of sociology in academic colleges. The multimedia classroom is seen here as a space of opportunity, where general terms can be related to the students’ world (Morze, 2008). The main intention of the study is to show human behavior as an exciting experience in all its social dimensions, revealing structure and perspectives of social behavior. When appropriately accepted by teachers, films can provide an entertaining and unique way of addressing cognitive and affective instruction objectives. Films can demand that students develop the ability to analyze, synthesize, and offer criticism by connecting what they see to sociological concepts and theories.

\textsuperscript{1} Corresponding author's email: mosko777@gmail.com

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Literature review

Characteristics of the population studying in academic colleges

The principle characteristic of the population of the universities and colleges in the USA is the enormous variance in race, religion, and culture, and the multi-cultural nature of most of the campuses (Banks, 2003). In Israel, public policy has adopted a social goal, providing equal opportunities to students of different sectors, by establishing academic colleges in the periphery. Higher education has become more available and has brought about an increase in, and diversity of, the populations represented in academic education. Establishing the colleges in the periphery encouraged students from a low socioeconomic background, new immigrants, and minority sectors, to study in colleges, particularly because of the accessibility of the college to where they lived (The Council for Higher Education, Planning and Budgeting Committee, 2000). Dispensations in college entrance requirements, similar to the process which has occurred in the USA (Duke, 1998), have contributed to the increase in the number of students who do not meet minimum university entrance requirements (Davidovitch & Iram, 2005; Davidovitch, 1993).

The population in the colleges in northern Israel includes Jews, immigrants from the CIS and Ethiopia, and large percentages of Arab students, who view higher education as a channel for social mobility and professional advancement (Soan, 1999). The great variation in the students’ cultural-demographic background, and the naturally low acceptance statistics, lead the higher education institutions to recognize, that one teaching method of lectures for all the students, does not suit the academic requirements, and that the teaching methods must be adapted to the facts as they exist (Hatva, 2000a; 2000b). One of the teaching methods which suits colleges in the periphery is using films as a tool for active learning.

Learning by watching films

The social studies curriculum is composed, for the most part, of theories and abstract concepts which require concretization, and to achieve this, various pedagogical strategies are employed, among them the use of visual media. Viewing film in the classroom (not in "film" studies) gives visual representation to abstract thoughts. It helps students gain in-depth knowledge, develops critical interpretation, and actively involved students in their studies (Morze, 2008). When using films in the social studies classroom, instructional goals like reasoning, critical thinking, retention and understanding, self-regulation, and refraction of the curriculum are developed. Authentic activities can include: problem-based learning, hypermedia (media), role-play, debates, and collaborative learning (Driscoll, 2000). Allen (2005) explains that examining films can promote social thinking and awareness of social perspectives. According to the meaningful learning theory, students are allowed to interpret their new experiences and make connections with their prior knowledge (Ausubel, 1962; Glaserfeld, 2000). Engle (2003) suggests that decision making is at the heart of social studies, with students learning the decision-making process and not focusing on content memorization. Film can help provoke a meaningful inquiry of a social event, thus allowing students to make insightful decisions based on what they
viewed and what the teacher does to support the curriculum. Allen (2005) sees two benefits in using films in the social science classroom: First, films have been found to bring students closer to the people, events, concepts, and theories, and help them come alive academically; second, films correct, improve, and simplify social content by enhancing long-term memory and retention and generating abstract thinking (Benedict, 2006).

**Methodology**

The research methodology is based on elements and techniques using some demonstrable best practices in the implementation of action research and the Self-Case Report documented by the writers (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Shulman, 1992), and qualitative methods using interviews with students who participated in this process (Shkedy, 2003).

The interviews were open without a questionnaire, and were mainly conducted after the lesson in a friendly manner. We interviewed 30 students, and used films as a teaching method once during each semester, for several years. The data was collected from three small colleges in the Galilee (northern Israel).

Action research demonstrates the importance of the involving impetus for action together with the reflective process of progressive educational inquiry (Hayman, 2003). Teacher-action researchers have contributed educational methods from multiple studies about effective learning (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009). The present research is an interactive, spiral-steps model inquiry aimed at revealing the main problems and demonstrating applicable ways to cope with the learning problem and resolving them by remembering, understanding, and internalization of abstract terms to improve learning (Hayman, 2003; Levin, 1996; Zimran, 2003).

Zelermeer (2001) describes the features of action research as collaboration, reflectivity, dialectics, plurality, risk, and apposition.

**Collaboration.** Students are required to actively participate in the educational-learning process, with vivid dialogue between teacher and students about contents, methods, commentaries, meanings, and implications. In the present study, the researchers participated and were involved in the educational process (Cohen & Manison, 1989), and reported their personal experience, including comments and interpretations about all occurrences in the classroom (Shulman, 1992).

**Reflectivity.** Assessments were made at each stage, giving the opportunity to make any necessary changes. The research was self-reflective: researchers analyzed and explained the learning process which involved development of testing and self-evaluation (Shkedy, 2003).

**Dialectics.** The dialectics is the ongoing interaction between the research action itself and the data collected in the field (by watching films).
**Plurality.** Disclosing participants’ opinions and attitudes while watching the film and taking part in the discussion. During the time of film analysis there is reflection, and different attitudes toward the explanatory process of understanding the sociological concepts are manifested. Such learning processes help individuals become more aware, more just, and more sustainable (Sherman & Torbert, 2000; Torbert, 2004).

**Risk.** Researchers cannot foretell whether the films will achieve the didactic aims (Zelermeer, 2001). This study examined and demonstrated practices in action research, concerning the use of films to teach sociology in an academic college.

**Procedure**

This article describes the films that the authors used to increase students’ abilities to summarize, strengthen, and stabilize identification and internalization of theoretical sociological content. Films were screened once a semester in different sociology courses: introduction to sociology, organizational behavior, Israeli society, sector organizations, gender, feminism, and films study. Prior to screening each film, students got a worksheet with reviewed terms and relevant sociological concepts in order to prepare them for attentive viewing. This "unit sheet" (Wilson & Herman, 1994), which is a pre-made worksheet about the specific film aims to (a) relate to the relevant learning subject, (b) stimulate expectations and reinforcement of motivation, and (c) focus on foundations and principles. The concealed target of the paper was to attract attention so that students would think about the written concepts. The worksheet was used three times – before screening, during screening, and after it.

1. **Pre-screening:** At the first stage the aim was to guide, direct, and advise the students; introduce them to the new vocabulary; clarify cinematic terminology; and discuss what is required during the screening.
2. **During screening:** At this stage the worksheet aimed to push the student to collect data from the film in relation to the written concepts.
3. **Post-viewing activity:** Class discussion and debate, and students’ evaluation of the film.

This three-stage practice promotes *timeliness* – learning with moment-to-moment intentional awareness of the outside world of nature and human institutions. The discussion took place immediately after the screening in the class, and reflected the process of learning and implementation of sociological concepts.

Following are documented examples of two Israeli films that proved to be an effective educational method. The examples include the appropriate worksheets.
Findings (based on two class self-reports)

Case Study 1. "Beit Shean: A War Film" (Chror & Chubery, 1995)

The film was screened in an introduction to sociology course, where we taught basic theories and such words as culture, status and roles, socialization, communities, groups, organization, and stratification (Meshonies, 1999). Before watching the film we gave the students instruction and questions about the film, relating to theories and sociological concepts.

Worksheet for watching the film "Beit Shean: A War Film"

1. What is the culture that characterizes the people of Beit Shean?
2. What are the processes of socialization reflected in the film?
3. Explain the statuses and roles that appear in the film.
4. What are the types of communities and relations in the film according to Toennies (1963)?
5. Offer at least one sociological theory to explain the plot.

According to the film, the focus of the people of the town of Beit Shean is the local football team. The interaction described in the film shows a strong emotional involvement of the townspeople in the actions of the team. The plot gives the viewer an opportunity to get to know the local lifestyle, which is described in an ironic manner with comic situations.

Post-viewing discussing: The first question that always rose is whether the citizens of Beit Shean are interested only in football games. This question usually causes a great deal of excitement in the classroom: Some of the students claim that the film is biased and reflects the producers’ prejudice; other students reject this notion, claiming that the film is very close to reality. We directed the discussion toward a sociological theory – the theory of symbolic interaction (Berger, 1979), which claims that it is difficult to find one objective reality. We can explain and understand reality based on subjective meaning, and thus make sense of events in our lives according to our views and perspectives. The film reflects the subjective world of its producers. These examples clarified the complexity of sociological theory as symbolic interaction and represented a concretization of abstract thinking in one fundamental sociological theory.

The students described the local culture of Beit Shean: "In the film we can recognize traditional Mizrahi (pertaining to Jews from Arab countries) and religious elements. The relationships between the sexes are not equal. The women in the film perform domestic roles like cooking and cleaning, and do not work outside their homes. They always serve their husbands and give them food. In the film their role was marginal; males were the center of the plot. This situation is an example to the concept of sexual socialization (Shapira & Ben Eliezer, 1987), a concept that concretizes the way parents educate their children for male or female behavior.”
Other examples from the film helped to understand the term *participatory socialization* (Meshonies, 1999), meaning that children imitate their parents because they are exposed to several patterns of behavior and they can then internalize the values and behavior. The fathers taught their sons to play football because they had played in a football team in their youth. One of the fathers in the film forced his son to practice the game for long hours. Another father, an owner of a small shop, said that he had been a goalie, and was guiding his son to succeed in this position. His demonstration of his past skills, moving his hands and body, caused laughter in the audience.

The film demonstrated the terms "provincial community" (*Gemeinschaft*) and “urbane community” (*Gesellschaft*; Toennies, 1963). In the movie we saw two communities: the football team, and the citizens of Beit Shean. The students claimed that the local people were strongly involved in the football team, and that the boundaries between the communities were blurred. Every one of the locals thought that he has the ability to give advice how to run the team. They attacked the manager when the team lost the game, and demanded his resignation. This episode demonstrated the nature of provincial community without role differentiation and specialization, and characterized by social relations that are based on friendship, clothes, and strong emotions. This society is in contrast to urban communities where roles and statuses are more clearly differentiated, and human relations are characterized by formality and social distance.

Most of the students said that the best explanation of the film is through the conflict theory, which views the world as a battle field with fights and conflicts interest and desire between humans (Meshonies, 1999). Many episodes in the film describe confrontations between the locals and the football team, among the players themselves, and very strong competition between the football teams. The people of Beit Shean used the word "war" for any game the team played. Some students claimed that the film can also be understood by the symbolic interaction theory, which emphasizes the meaning of making sense of reality. As an active lecturer, the teacher commented that the best approach to explain the film is an eclectic approach, which combines several theories explaining the same situation from several points of view. The students also asked whether the producer presented the citizens of Beit Shean in ethnocentric and stereotype manner, one which caused viewers to make fun of the locals.

The students who were interviewed said, that the discussion after watching the film helped them understand the sociological concepts, and it promoted contemplation and awareness of social perspectives by seeing them live in the film. They claimed that before watching the film the sociological terms had been vague, but after the three stages in the classroom they had become much clearer and more concrete. One of the students said: “the film helped me academically by simplifying the social content”. Another student was excited after he recognized some of the figures in the film; he was from Bet Shean (a small place in northern Israel). This student criticized the producer and claimed that the film caused his hometown damage by labeling Bet Shean as a backward and primitive area. He was convinced that the producer had twisted reality in the film.

*Case Study 2. "We are Doing Business – Stu Landers" (producer and year unknown)*
The film was screened in an organizational behavior course, and used to help internalize concepts such as organizational culture, organizational climate, leadership, management styles, and organizational success. The focus in this case study was on those hidden elements of culture of which only members of the organization are aware, and the open elements that are recognized by the environment (Bar-Haim, 1994; Samuel, 1996).

Pre-screening worksheet for “Stu Landers”

1. What are the open elements of organizational culture in the film?
2. What are the hidden elements?
3. Can you find a connection between the open elements and the hidden ones? Give one example from the film that demonstrates the connection?
4. Is organizational culture used in the film as management instrument?

The film presents Stu Landers, a large store, which is family owned and run. Following the screening, the students referred to the success of the store by analyzing the values, beliefs, and norms of the members of the organization (in this case, the family that owned the store and local workers). The store owner has values, and believes in achievement, liability, and excellence. He was fond of saying that if an item was not something he’d give to his mother, he would not offer it to his clients.

The students noted the main norm – the customer is always right, and demonstrated it by describing segments of the film. They noted that the store personnel was warm to customers, and paid careful attention to their requests and demands. The good climate in the store was reflected by the active involvement of the customers in running the store, for example, by recommending products the store should stock. The store held debating groups of customers and staff, and management style was unusual. The students demonstrated the value of openness in managing style. One example was when the clients asked that fresh fish be kept on ice and not in plastic bags and the owner accepted this idea. Customers suggested that bread and cakes be baked on the premises, and the owners heeded their advice. These are just two examples demonstrating the willingness of management to react and respond to clients’ demands.

In the film, proprietor Stu Landers explained how his ability to listen to his customers improved store management. When a customer complained that the milk was not fresh, Stu Landers argued with him, the customer became angry, and never returned to the store. Stu said: "the customer is your best friend, he is telling you what you need to correct." This incident taught him to listen to customers, not argue with them, and to benefit from their knowledge. His attitude became more tolerant.

The students recognized another important value in running the store – pleasure and fun. This was demonstrated by showing how Stu Landers and his family created a climate of entertainment: they had an indoor amusement park in the store with several attractions, giving a carnival-like feeling (pattern of behavior). This example helped the students understand the connection between the open and hidden aspects of organizational culture.
The students learned effective norms for running a store: enthusiasm, liability, achievement. As a manager, Stu Landers was a role model. He said: "my enthusiasm affects other salesmen and creates a happy atmosphere, and the result is better selling."

This story concretizes abstract concepts in organizational behavior. After class discussion, we summarized the students’ ideas, and thus revised sociological knowledge and helped them internalize new theories and terms (Kunda, 2000; Raz, 2004).

The students that were interviewed were excited about the management's techniques as reflected in the film. Some of the students worked as senior executives; one told me that he wants to bring the film to other managers to demonstrate effective methods of management to them. Another student told me that he can now internalize the levels of organizational culture, and can see the connection between the hidden and overt levels. The students’ responses to this film were similar to the previous one. Most of the students very much enjoyed and were involved in the class and encouraged me to continue with this teaching method.

Results and Discussion

A standardized universal procedure for using film in the classroom has yet to be designed. However, researchers have developed basic guidelines for teachers to follow when using films in classroom to maximize student performance and learning. In the present study, the authors want the students to use their own sensory and emotional systems to learn elements of social human behavior.

The discussion and the deliberations after the screening exposed how abstract concepts become understood and comprehensible, and how they deepen students' critical interpretations (Morze, 2008). Using films in the classroom facilitated a high level of self-involvement and cooperative learning. Screening films as an instructional tool intensifies retention and understanding, reasoning and critical thinking (Driscoll, 2000). For example, students criticized the film director of "Beit Shean: A War Film" for being biased. The students claimed that the film presented the citizens of Beit Shean in a manner that was stereotypic and one-dimensional.

The commutative theory (Meshonies, 1999) got new and deep meaning. Students understood that art, including film, presents the world from the subjective perspective of the person who produced it. For example, the episodes in the film can be interpreted by the conflict theory (Shapira & Ben Eliezer, 1987), as the entire situation is presented as a battle. As such, it supports the worldview of the conflict theory, according to which life is a constant power struggle between people. The film also supports the symbolic interaction approach (Berger, 1979), referring to the fact that fans used symbols – salt, sugar, and water – as various signs for winning a game. The film succeeds in demonstrating and concretizing these theories.

Viewing the films contributed to the deep understanding and the conceptualization of social formations, as students used different sociological theories to analyze the films. The
variety highlighted the limitations of leaning on one theory only, and the students learned that each theory supplies one conceptual system and ignores all other concepts derived from others theories. The conflict theory sees the world from a perspective of confrontation and ignores harmonious situations. The functional theory (Shapira & Ben Eliezer, 1987) explains the world by balance and harmony without considering conflicts. In such open discussion students could understand the eclectic approach in sociology, and the validity of introducing a number of theories to the analysis. The result of the learning process was deep, abstract, pluralistic, and open thought.

"Stu Landers" demonstrated owner’s creativity and self-criticism (reflection) as a fruitful management style. Students were motivated to think creatively. They came up with more examples of unusual, interesting, and challenging ways to run a company for greater profitability. Stu Landers had consulted his customers on how to run the shop, what product to buy, and how to present the goods in an attractive way. This film is a case study on raising management’s consciousness of management and personnel involvement; and improving organizational culture and organizational climate (Kunda, 2000; Raz, 2004; Samuel, 1996). The film succeeded in concretizing the curriculum. In addition, it supplied many situations that illustrated sociological theories and concepts, such as values, patterns of behavior, and norms that are elements of organizational culture. We estimate that the film provided students with the opportunity to internalize the conceptual framework emotionally and artistically. The students use action-reflection cycles of expressing concerns, developing action plans, acting and gathering data, evaluating the influences of action, modifying concerns, ideas, and action in the light of the evaluations. The films brought concepts and theories to life (Allen, 2005).

Following the procedures outlined in this study, it is important to determine that a "Use of Films" survey using elements and techniques employed by action research, does not match all classical models and principles (Hachohen & Zimran, 1999; Hayman, 2003; Levin, 1996; Zelermeer, 2001, Zimran, 2003). The models and principles characterize action research as a way of dealing with an educational problem or a subject for study, and by presenting some solutions. There is only one element which does not match appropriately. The teaching method "Films as an educational text" is not presented as dealing with one specific problem, as it is required and used by the pure action model. A film tells a story and describes several issues. Others features of the model were relevant and presented in our study: collaboration and cooperativeness, pluralism, and reflexivity. The process of learning, as was described, contributes to open and multiple thinking. The manner in which we used the model integrates elements from "Action Research" by enriching the learning and educational experience of the students, and these enhance identification and internalization by developing appreciation for abstract subjects of the social study curriculum.

Conclusions and Suggestions

When teaching abstract material in multicultural academic colleges, it is especially important to create a classroom climate that encourages all students to bring their own au-
thonic selves to the classroom. In such a climate, the instructor works hard to bring her or his whole self to the classroom.

This study claims that the use of film is useful in the non-film course, because it contributes to the involvement, collaboration, pluralism, creativity, assessment, and evaluation of the students. It is important that teachers preview any film they plan to show in class, and prepare the forms for the students. This article demonstrates how to practically implement this method using three steps of instruction to ensure a better classroom outcome.

With all their advantages, films can be effective but teachers are reluctant to use them, as teaching visually takes a greater effort and demands more time. Yet, as the present study reveals, they enable students to make the connection between theory and real-life situations. This example provides a positive experience, one which will hopefully encourage other teachers to use film for active learning in school, college, and university.

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Media Literacy Education at the University Level

Hans Schmidt¹
Pennsylvania State University, Brandywine, Media PA 19063

Abstract

In recent years, the media literacy education movement has developed to help individuals of all ages acquire the competencies necessary to fully participate in the modern world of media convergence. Yet media literacy education is not practiced uniformly at all educational levels. This study used a survey to compare the extent to which students are exposed to several basic elements of media literacy education at the high school and university levels. Results suggest that students are exposed to more course content related to media use and creation in high school, but more course content related to media analysis in college.

Keywords: Media literacy, media education, high school, college, university.

Each day, the average American watches over five hours of television (Nielsen, 2010a), and spends almost one and a half hours viewing Web pages (Nielsen, 2010b). Social networking has become the most popular online activity, with Facebook claiming more than 500 million users (Wortham, 2010) and Twitter claiming 105 million users (Chacksfield, 2010). The trend continues even when the connection is wireless, with the average teen sending or receiving a staggering 3,705 text messages per month (Nielsen, 2010c). It is clear that, as Lundby (2009) recently wrote, traditional media, new media, and mobile media are “everywhere, all embracing,” (p. 2) or as Duran, Yousman, Walsh, and Longshore (2008) suggested, “ubiquitous and unavoidable in the modern world” (p. 52).

In light of the media saturated nature of modern life, it has been widely acknowledged that today’s students need to develop new media-related competencies that will prepare them to live and participate in the world of the present and future (Avery, 2007; Jenkins, 2006, 2008). Accordingly, the very idea of what literacy entails has begun to evolve. While literacy has traditionally applied specifically to written or spoken applications (Brown, 1998), today the concept has come to involve a wide variety of contexts in which meaning creation can occur. These new multiple literacies include, among other things, media literacy.

Media literacy has many applications within many contexts (Hobbs, 1994). But at its core, one widely accepted definition suggests that media literacy involves possessing the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms

¹ Corresponding author's email: hcs10@psu.edu
(Aufderheide, 1993). Building on this general definition, the National Association for Media Literacy Education developed a list of key ideas associated with accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and communicating media:

1. All media messages are “constructed.”
2. Each medium has different characteristics, strengths, and a unique “language” of construction.
3. Media messages are produced for particular purposes.
4. All media messages contain embedded values and points of view.
5. People use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.
6. Media and media messages can influence beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, and the democratic process. (National Association, 2007)

Learning about such issues is especially important for individuals today. In addition to the practical fact that media literacy competencies are increasingly necessary for gainful employment, such competencies are also needed to understand, appreciate, and participate in social life in the modern world. As Jenkins (2006) highlighted, contemporary society is characterized by media convergence. This convergence involves an active culture comprised of engaged, participative consumers who create, share, and seek out new information related to activities such as forming affiliations (e.g. social networking), expression (e.g. producing new creative media), collaborative problem-solving (e.g. Wikipedia entries), and circulation (e.g. blogging). In order to fully participate in this culture of media convergence, individuals must simultaneously possess a mix of both analytical and creative competencies.

Such participation not only allows individuals to develop cross-media creativity (Deuze, 2007), but also encourages individuals to reimagine their role with media. In the process, this can also lead to the development of a more complicated and analytical relationship with media institutions and, as Jenkins (2008) wrote, “reconstruct their images of the ‘audience’ as co-creators rather than as (passive) consumers” (p. 7). In a world of media omnipresence, the importance of defining the nature of this relationship becomes especially important.

The movement to address such issues has gathered considerable momentum in recent decades. This has especially been the case at the K-12 level, where growth has been evidenced by increasing practical application and academic research.

First, there has been a significant growth in the number and scope of courses related to media literacy which are offered to students. This has especially been the case within secondary schools, where media literacy is often incorporated into elective or vocational classes. As Hobbs (2004) suggested, the growing popularity of this subject can be evidenced by the fact that there are over 10,000 journalism teachers and 1,500 media specialists in K-12 schools in the United States, and about half of the nearly 16,500 high schools in the nation have media production facilities (National Center, 2010).
Additionally, there has been a dramatic and important growth of scholarly research in the past two decades regarding media literacy education at the K-12 level. Such research has considered a broad array of programs designed to help primary and secondary students develop media literacy competencies. For instance, research at the K-12 level has considered the effectiveness of media literacy programs designed to teach about decoding media messages (Behson, 2002; Brown, 1991), analyzing advertisements (Austin & Johnson, 1997; Gonzales, Glik, Davoudi & Ang, 2004; Hindin, Contento & Gussow, 2004), understanding body-image issues related to media images (Fuler, Damica & Rodgers, 2004; Irving & Berel, 2001; Irving, DuPen & Berel, 1998; Levine, Smolak & Schermer, 1996; Piran, Levine & Irving, 2000; Wade, Davidson & O’Dea, 2003), interpreting television images of crime and violence (Rosenkoetter, Rosenkoetter, Ozretich & Acock, 2004; Scharrer, 2006; Vooijs & van der Voort, 1993), and identifying main ideas, purpose, target audience, and construction techniques (Hobbs & Frost, 2003).

However, while there is clearly a new emphasis on media literacy education at the K-12 level, evidence suggests that such competencies are often not built on or addressed further at the college level. Research into the extent to which media literacy is addressed at the university level is challenging for a variety of reasons, including the cross-disciplinary nature of media literacy objectives. However, what research has been conducted suggests just how limited media literacy education programs are in colleges and universities.

Mihailidis (2006) conducted an analysis of 48 journalism and mass communication programs in the U.S., and found that just 18 institutions included in the sample offered courses with the phrase “media literacy” in their title. The following year, Stuhlman & Silverblatt (2007) completed a survey of 1400 colleges and universities in the U.S. A total of 242 institutions participated in the survey, and just 158 reported offering media literacy courses (see Silverblatt, Baker, Tyner, & Stuhlman, 2002). Thus, while media literacy education may have a foothold within higher education in the US, its growth remains slow. Further, additional research in the area is needed. As Mihailidis (2008) recognized in an analysis of existent research related to media literacy in higher education, “More empirical evaluation of media literacy outcomes in the university is needed. Post-secondary media literacy has suffered from a substantial lack of empirical data . . . ” (p. 11).

A new way to measure the growth of media literacy programs within higher education is to survey students to determine the extent to which they perceive that they are exposed to coursework which addresses media literacy competencies. Because competencies associated with media use, creation, or analysis may be addressed in courses not labeled specifically as “media literacy” courses, because some educators may reject the use of a label, and “because it is difficult if not inadequate to attempt to tease out learning outcomes from syllabi and course overviews” (Mihailidis, 2008, p. 10), a student survey provides an alternative way to determine the extent to which such objectives are being addressed within higher education.
Such a consideration of college-level media literacy coursework should be conducted within the context of the entire educational system. University-level education does not happen in isolation, but rather constitutes a stage in the educational career of a student. As such, a comparison of what students learn in higher education should also consider students’ learning experiences prior to entering college in order to determine the way in which their university-level experiences do, or do not, build on their prior learning.

Accordingly, this topic can be explored by considering the following research question: To what extent do students perceive being exposed to course content related to media literacy within high school and college?

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were selected from a sample of students enrolled in courses at a four-year public university. Approval was obtained from the university’s Institutional Review Board prior to sending out email invitations, and a total of 736 participants responded and participated in a Web-based survey. After eliminating data from participants who completed fewer than 80% of the questionnaire items or indicated they were graduate students, incoming first-year students who had not yet taken any college courses, or below the age of 18, a sample of 409 participants remained, accounting for 4.01% of the undergraduate student population at the university involved in the study. The 8.5% response rate is within acceptable limits for Web-based or email questionnaires (Schonlav, Fricker & Elliott, 2001). The mean age of participants was 21.14 years, 70.1% (n = 284) were female, and 29.9% (n = 121) were male.

**Measures**

Defined by Creswell (2003) as a method which “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 153), the questionnaire has a long history in social scientific research and is an established means for gathering data among student populations and in educational settings (Accrediting Council, 2004; Parsons, 2007; Singleton & Straits, 1999). Accordingly, a 14-item Web-based questionnaire was designed to study student exposure to course content related to media literacy. Students were asked questions about their exposure to course competencies in both high school and college in order to provide some comparison between different levels in the educational system. The Web-based format was used to make participation both convenient and anonymous.

The media competencies addressed in this questionnaire focused on video and Web-based media. Such new media are particularly relevant for two primary reasons. First, such new media are increasingly important in the modern era of media convergence (Avery, 2007; Jenkins, 2006, 2008). Second, a focus on such new media is consistent with the attention that media literacy scholars and practitioners frequently place on media with a visual and multimodal nature (Jewitt, 2005; Sefton-Green, 2006) and digital and Web-based applications (Livingston, 2004).
The questionnaire consisted of demographic background questions, a rating scale which asked students to identify if they have been exposed to certain types of media education in high school and college, and one open ended response question. The open ended response question was included in order to provide participants the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences and provide additional information regarding the way in which they have learned about media over time. Gathering such qualitative data adds an important dimension to educational research and allows for the lived experiences of individuals to inform the researcher, and potentially provide additional, rich insights into a particular environment or culture which might have otherwise been overlooked.

To validate the measure, a trial study ($N = 22$) was conducted at a community college in southeastern Pennsylvania. After revising questions based on participant feedback to improve clarity, the measure was administered to study participants.

The Cronbach’s alpha test was used to establish the reliability of the measure. Analysis during both the trial study and the study indicated that the measure had good internal consistency ($\alpha > .70$). Specifically, in the trial study, the measure had an alpha coefficient of .935, and in the actual study the measure had an alpha coefficient of .941.

**Results**

Data suggest that media literacy competencies were addressed more often in high school than in college (Table 1). Results might be divided into three categories of competencies associated with media literacy: learning about media use, learning about media creation, and learning about media analysis (Wulff, 1997).

Regarding the first category, questionnaire data demonstrated that students reported using video and Web-based media in high school (77.4%) more often than in college (73.4%). Specifically, more student participants reported taking courses in high school that involved video use (68.7%) and Web use (86.0%), than students reported taking courses in college that involved video use (61.9%) or Web use (84.8%).

The trend was more dramatic for the second category of media literacy competencies. When considering student exposure to courses that involved media creation, students reported creating video and Web-based media in high school (48.3%) more often than in college (31.1%). Specifically, students reported taking courses in high school that involved video creation (53.4%) or Web creation (43.1%) more frequently than students reported taking courses in college that involved video creation (29.0%) or Web creation (33.1%).

The third category considered learning about media analysis. Here the trend was reversed, and students reported taking fewer courses in high school regarding media analysis (43.4%) than in college (57.6%).

Thus, while 14.2% more students reported exposure to course content regarding media analysis in college than high school, 24.4% fewer students reported exposure to video
Table 1. Participant Exposure to Media Literacy Education in High School vs. College (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Use</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Use</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Creation</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>-24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Creation</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>-10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Analysis</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>+14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

creation and 10.0% fewer students reported exposure to Web creation in college than in high school.

These data were backed up by comments provided by student participants when asked an open-response question. One first-year undeclared student, when writing about her experiences learning about media in college, compared it to her previous several years in high school. She wrote, “This is my first year I have not done anything yet.”

Another first-year finance student compared his experiences creating new media in high school and college, noting that, while high school involved creating a film documentary, course content related to new media in college has focused exclusively on PowerPoint. This student wrote, “During my senior year in High School, I had to create a documentary of my mission to Mississippi to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Also, for Spanish AP, and Entreprenuershop [sic] class -- I had to create powerpoints to present to our class about a certain topic. Now at [this university], I had to create a PowerPoint about Film Festival and present it about 40 students.”

To check the students’ perspective, the university’s course catalogue was also searched. While there was one graduate-level education course which focused on media literacy, there were no named “media literacy” courses listed in the university course catalogue. While some course titles appeared to deal with certain elements of media literacy, including “Television Production,” which deals with media creation, and “Interpreting Film,” which deals with media analysis, there was no indication that there were any structured courses – or series of courses – which were designed to comprehensively address all categories of media literacy competencies. The phrase “media literacy” was not included in any curriculum documents available on the university’s Web site.
In contrast, the public school district in the same municipality as the university considered in this study included media literacy as a central element of its “Literacy Mission” document, stating that students need to develop visual literacy, media literacy, multicultural literacy, and information literacy.

**Discussion**

Data demonstrate that student participants in this study are exposed to less media-related coursework in college than they are in high school. Further, data suggest that university level educators may place a special emphasis on the analytical dimension of media literacy while neglecting topics related to media creation and use.

While such results cannot be interpreted as suggesting that this same issue exists everywhere, such findings do suggest a concerning trend. Even if college is effectively meeting the goal of promoting critical thinking, it is difficult to imagine why it would be appropriate to ignore media use or creation. All three categories of competencies are interrelated: fully developing any one requires possessing other competencies as well. Furthermore, this trend is alarming because students who learn about media creation in high school may lose these competencies if they are not reinforced in college. Thus, despite the efforts of educators at the K-12 level to promote media literacy and engage students in the type of new media creation that will be important for the future, these competencies may be lost by students who are not encouraged to use them during their college years.

Such findings are not, however, entirely surprising. Rather, data gathered in this study confirm what other media scholars have suggested: the implementation of media literacy curricula in post-secondary higher education is still in its infancy stages (Aufderheide, 1993; Brown, 1991; Stuhlman & Silverblatt, 2007). As Wulff (1997) wrote: “In higher education the progress towards the incorporation of media literacy as an essential ability in higher education appears minimal” (p. 124).

There are several reasons why this may be the case. The slow growth of media literacy curricula in higher education may be because of: (1) confusion among faculty regarding what media literacy actually involves, (2) a general perception that students are “digital natives” who do not require media training, or (3) a lingering belief that media courses do not have a place within a liberal arts program of study.

First, faculty members may be confused regarding what media literacy involves in part because media literacy competencies may be addressed in a variety of disciplinary contexts in a decentralized fashion with little or no theoretical focus (Schmidt, 2011). Thus, because media literacy may be “a child known by many names” (Hobbs, 1994), with many applications within many contexts, it can be difficult to identify or coordinate coherent objectives.

Second, students are often overrated as being more media savvy than they actually are (Hargittai, 2010). As Kennedy, Judd, Churchward, Gray, and Krause (2007) noted,
It is assumed that the technological experiences of students are more or less homogeneous and that most, if not all, incoming university students are digital natives. Not only is it assumed that these students will have had broadly universal experiences, but that they will also have a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of information and communication technologies (ICTs). (p. 109)

However, research has demonstrated that college students are familiar only with certain everyday media technologies, and are significantly less comfortable with a broad array of other technological, media, and digital applications. Despite widespread perceptions to the contrary, the “digital native” generation is “native” only to a very limited subset of technologies.

For instance, Salaway, Katz, Caruso, Kvavik, and Nelson (2006) conducted a survey with 28,724 respondents across 96 colleges and universities and found that while college students are regularly involved in basic media use (such as sending email, conducting online research, downloading music or video files, or social networking), students only infrequently engage in more complicated activities which require a greater extent of media literacy competencies: about three quarters of students indicated that they had either minimal or no experience editing or creating Web pages, using audio or video editing software, or blogging.

Similarly, after publishing the results of a study for the Pew Internet and American Life Project, Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, and Purcell (2010) concluded: “Adolescents have been called ‘digital natives,’ but data suggests that they are both comfortable with new technologies, and yet not always as technically savvy as we collectively believe them to be.”

Third, despite the fact that some faculty “still cling to the notion that studying media and pop culture is not a serious or worthy academic pursuit” (Silverblatt et al., 2002, p. 5), coursework related to media literacy competencies can have a place in a liberal arts education. In addition to helping students develop the ability to better understand the world in which they live, media literacy courses often have goals which bridge the gap between the sometimes competing functions of providing both a liberal education and training students to gain marketable professional skills (Christ & Potter, 1998; Mihailidis, 2006).

Indeed, there are several potential reasons why media literacy education is avoided at the college level. Nevertheless, media literacy education can have a meaningful role in a university setting (Considine, 2004; Lipschultz & Hilt, 2007). In addition to the professional relevance of media literacy competencies, media literacy also helps to foster a set of abilities necessary for an engaged citizenry. As Masterman (1985) suggested, media education can play a critical role in fostering stronger democracies in which engaged citizens have the ability “to wield power, make rational decisions, become effective change-agents, and have an effective involvement with the media” (p. 13). Further, as Mihailidis (2008) suggested, college and university classes are often the last formal educational setting in which individuals can develop competencies related to both understanding and creating media, and consider an array of issues which can help them to participate in a
democracy shaped by the modern era of media convergence (Jenkins, 2006). Mihailidis wrote:

How do we understand our community as a reflection of media? What does it mean to be “informed”? Where and how can we find diverse, credible and independent information? What are the avenues for participation in the civic process? How can we appreciate media’s necessary role for civil society? Through such inquiries, media literacy stands to bring added value to existing media disciplines in higher education (p. 3).

**Limitations**

This study used a student self-report questionnaire to measure the extent to which media literacy competencies are addressed at the university level. This method was selected for several reasons. First, it made possible the comparison of student experiences in both high school and college. Second, this method allowed for the measurement of what is learned as opposed to what is supposed to be taught. Third, it allowed for the reporting of all instances where media literacy competencies were addressed, regardless of whether such activities were labeled as “media literacy” or not. However, there are limitations associated with this method. First, self-report questionnaires rely on the memory and honesty of participants. However, because this survey did not deal with personal or sensitive matters, such self-report bias should be minimal. Another limitation of this study is the sample size. While the study did consider a cross section of students enrolled in classes at a public university, the results may have limited generalizability due to socioeconomic or geographic factors associated with the high schools which students attended.

**Directions for Future Research**

Additional research into media literacy at the college level is needed. Specifically, such research can consider both faculty and student perceptions. First, studies of faculty perceptions can consider reasons why faculty members include, or avoid, media literacy topics in their classes. Such data would offer a fresh perspective, and provide first-hand accounts of the challenges that are faced by educators regarding media education.

Second, new research can consider university student media literacy competencies. While this study has shown that university students are only infrequently exposed to media literacy coursework, new research can consider if they are developing media competencies elsewhere. Having a better appreciation of student media competencies will allow educators to better understand which media literacy goals are most important to focus on. By continuing such research, and learning about the needs of university students, it will be possible to ensure that colleges and universities are successfully meeting the needs of the modern age.
Conclusion

There are real benefits associated with helping today’s college students develop new media literacy competencies. However, the current trend to avoid comprehensive media literacy programs at the college level has serious implications for society. In a world characterized by digital media and visual culture, media literacy has developed an importance akin to that of traditional alphabetic literacy. Because of this, it is important that all members of society develop competencies related to media use, creation, and analysis in order to both participate in a democratic culture and compete in the modern workforce.

Yet, if this is to happen, then it must first be recognized that media literacy education is not the domain of K-12 educators alone. Instead, college-level educators in all disciplines do well to consider new ways to help develop this array of competencies among students. Suggestions on how to accomplish this have already been made (Blanchard & Christ, 1993; Tan, 1999), and some strides have been taken to explore and develop standards which could potentially help guide the implementation of multimodal assignments in courses across the college curriculum (Simons, Baird & Watts, 2010). Yet it is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing media literacy competencies for college students. While the optimal solution may vary from institution to institution, the need does not: today’s college students require continual exposure to media-related coursework. If the educational system – at the primary, secondary, and university levels – is going to continue to adjust and adapt to the changing needs of modern life, it is important to consider new ways to adjust, adapt, and integrate new media better into existing curricula.

References


A Service-Learning Project:  
Linking an Art Museum, Honors Students, and the Visual Arts  

Leda Cempellin¹  
South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD 57007  

Abstract  

This article focuses on the structure, challenges, and outcomes of a service-learning project experimented by an art historian in an innovative special topics course Museum Experience, cross-listed with an Honors art appreciation course. 

The discussion includes: creating a new course content planned according to a multidisciplinary perspective uniting elements of art appreciation, museum studies and art history research methodologies; planning a mutual dialogue of theory and practice by structuring a partnership with the art museum and graphic design in a service-learning project, consisting in both essay and layout of an exhibition catalogue. 

The syllabus structure is fully explained, as well as timeline challenges and how they have been won by enhancing the design component of the project. Finally, the students’ reception of the course activities, timeline challenges, and innovations through qualitative data coming from an end-of-Semester questionnaire will be discussed as well. 

Keywords: Service-learning, Lynn Thorpe, art appreciation, museum experience, exhibition catalogue.

Academic efforts towards creating first-year courses, with a diversified set of assignments “that are designed to build conceptual and applied skills” is not new in the arts and sciences, as a sociology study reveals (Steuter & Doyle, 2010, p.66). However, an art history faculty serving as a generalist in a visual arts department faces the challenge to design ways to foster the diverse creative approaches of fine arts, art education and graphic design students within an academic discipline. In its traditional modernist structure, art history reflects a “‘transmission’ model of communication,” which involves “a linear process of information-transfer from an authoritative source to an uninformed receiver,” where “knowledge is seen as objective” and the message as “received more or less efficiently, and in the same way by all” (Hooper-Grenhill, 2001, p.15). This authoritative, content-oriented art historical discipline seems to struggle against attributes of creativity more familiar to art students, such as “originality,” “persistence,” “independence,” “searching for alternatives” (Gomez, 2007, pp.36-38). Indeed, visual art students are used to learning through class discussions and critiques: “In the arts the method of critiquing

¹ Corresponding author’s email: Leda.Cempellin@sdstate.edu
student work is more democratic than most other learning situations. Usually a student presents work as if in a private showing to a group for discussion. The students will then offer suggestions and other commentary, as part of the critique” (Aievoli, 2003, p.91). The approach in the class art critiques reflects a postmodern “cultural approach” (Hooper-Grenhill, 2001, p.20), a model that “understands communication as a set of negotiated processes of making meaning as part of the complex and unequal culture of everyday life. It accepts that there are many, sometimes conflicting, perspectives from which to explain the world” (Hooper-Grenhill, 2001, p.22). How can this open and much more student-centered method be accommodated by the structural rigidity of content-based academic learning, which is required by the art historical discipline?

The course that allows the greatest amount of interaction between theories and practices is art appreciation: taught by both art faculty and generalist art historians, it may assume hybrid forms to a certain extent. There are a few published examples of courses involving the integration of theory with experiential learning components, such as through hands-on activities and field trips to art museum and campus galleries (Register, Bullington & Thomas, 2007; Innella 2010).

In spring 2011, the Visual Arts Department at South Dakota State University cross-listed lower-division Honors students of art appreciation with advanced visual arts students who were choosing a new special topics course Museum Experience as an elective. The proven suitability of art appreciation for pushing the boundaries between theory and practice was coupled with the exploration of a discipline outside the Department’s regular offering, namely the field of museum studies. In partnership with the Art Museum, the art historian articulated a service-learning project, consisting in having students write and design an exhibition catalogue on a local artist scheduled for exhibition in late spring. Acting as the Project Director, the course instructor applied for and was awarded a mini-grant by the Teaching Learning Center, towards covering the publication costs. This service-learning activity would fit the mission of the art museum, along with the goals of the course.

A dialogue between the course instructor and the museum curator produced the idea of assigning the class a solo exhibition, whose unified vision would become relatively easier than a collective exhibition. Artist Lynn Thorpe was chosen for three reasons. Firstly, her exhibition was scheduled at the Art Museum for April: this would give the class more than two thirds of the Semester to mature in both those theoretical and applicative skills necessary to successfully complete the task of writing and designing the catalogue. Secondly, the formal qualities of her art, which looks representational, but is actually an abstraction in disguise, would provide a great opportunity for exploring visual and conceptual complexities. Finally, but very importantly, this artist was scheduled as part of a series promoting the artistic talent within our State, and therefore would fulfill the Art Museum’s mission.
Service-Learning as a Cohesive Class Factor and as Partnership with the Art Museum

Was the envisioned project adequate to the particular composition of the class?

A very recent study at the Widener University in Pennsylvania reveals that when offering a service-learning opportunity to both Honors and non-Honors sections, students “acquire competence and leadership skills, and increase their desire to make a difference through participation in short-term service projects by the end of the term, regardless of whether they were in the Honors or non-Honors course” (Simons, Williams & Russell, 2011, pp. 6, 13, and 15). This finding substantiates that a cross-listed experiment can be beneficial to both groups: on one side, lower-division Honors students are part of a community that intrinsically emphasizes leadership; on the other side, advanced graphic design students experience leadership through the competitive professional environment in which they operate. Additionally, Honors students are endowed with precocious scholarly competence and a fresh open mind, while advanced visual arts students possess highly trained visual skills and some basic knowledge of art historical content accumulated in previous survey courses. At least at a theoretical level, there seemed to be all the ingredients for a complex and multi-faceted project involving both scholarship and practice.

“Service-learning enhances a “traditional learning” course by allowing students the opportunity to link theory with practice, apply classroom learning to real-life situations, and provide students with a deeper understanding of course content” (Ballard & Elmore, 2009, p.70). The service-learning project needs to be deeply integrated into the course structure. First, the course instructor needs to identify a potential community partner, which in this case has become the Art Museum. Then, the instructor needs to locate a project within the mission of the chosen institution that can reach the academic level of students and the course goals, thus becoming an application of what learnt in class.

When planning a service-learning project, the course instructor encounters the challenge to strike a good balance between innovation and structure. On one side, “Service-learning wants to roam free across disciplines, across institutions, across society. It wants to change and transform any and all obstacles in its path. It wants freedom” (Butin, 2006, p. 491). On the other side, “Higher education is a disciplining mechanism, in all senses of the term. And that is a good thing. For to be disciplined is to carefully, systematically, and in a sustained fashion investigate whatever one is interested in doing” (Butin, 2006, 491). The instructor of this course decided to incorporate some elements of art appreciation, examples of art history investigative methodologies, selected content from museum studies, and team layout practices in the graphic design area.

A partnership between an academic course and an art museum presents a number of challenges. The first is the museum’s exhibition schedule, which does not necessarily match the academic rhythms of the semester. If the exhibition is already mounted when the semester starts, students will not be able to follow all the planning stages leading to their exhibition catalogue. If the exhibition starts after the semester is over, students will not be able to view the results of what they have been working on. A partnership opportunity...
may present once as the product of fortuitous circumstances; otherwise, it may take much longer to combine a regular offering of a new course and a museum exhibition schedule which is planned years in advance. The second major challenge is the exhibition typology. Group exhibitions, especially if composed of pieces coming from 20-30 artists, present innumerable artistic and historical influences. It would be too challenging for the faculty to assign such disproportionate task to students with modest to no competence in art history content and methodologies, and at the same time to structure the diversified outcomes into a unified vision, as necessary for an exhibition catalogue. Instead, a solo exhibition provides a much more promising scenario, namely the possibility to break the project into smaller units (such as individual paintings, or artistic influences), and assign each of them to individuals or groups within the class.

There is an additional advantage in choosing a solo exhibition on a living contemporary local or regional artist: the fact that the artist chosen may obviously not have yet accumulated a significant record of secondary sources. With the artist statement as the only primary source, plus a few hints given during an initial correspondence with the artist, students are given a great amount of freedom in building up the stylistic and historical connections (Spring 2011).

The Service-Learning Syllabus: Course Objectives, Structure, Assessment, Activities, and Outcomes

Further steps, during the course structuring, required the accomplishment of a wide variety of tasks, listed by Patricia L. Powell as “writing goals and objectives, defining the needs of the[ir] project’s community partner, assessing that community partner’s needs, defining potential strategies to meet those needs, designing a project timeline, estimating budget requirements, and assessing potential liability issues” (Powell, 2008, p.99).

In order to meet the goal of an exhibition catalogue, the course instructor decided to unite several components, where lectures would alternate with field trips to the museum (see Appendix). The project timeline included several activities. Their alternation throughout the semester provided a variety that kept the students’ interest alive, and allowed them to progressively mature on the various levels required by the sophistication of the service-learning activity. The instructor applied for a service-learning mini-grant to cover the publication costs for the catalogue. Liability issues were prevented by requesting the artist permission to upload images of her work in the course’s electronic reserves: students were allowed to access the images from there; a copyright note warned them to use such images exclusively to pursue the activities designed within this course. At the end of the course, the artist signed a much more detailed permission, including having her work reproduced in the catalogue; students also co-signed acceptance and publication of the essay in its edited and collaborative form.

All the planned course activities must be appropriate to the students’ level: “Students in an introductory class might need more help getting started with a service-learning project. More advanced students might benefit from experiences that are directly related to their discipline” (Ballard & Elmore, 2009, p.72). The instructor of the Museum Experience
course knew that some of the advanced graphic design students in the cross-listed class had already built the skills necessary to create the layout of a book. In order to allow the mini-grant to cover the publication costs, the layout project had to be a *pro bono* work, thus another form of community service. The instructor divided the two cross-listed classes into four groups, each under the leadership of an advanced graphic design student.

Each team would produce a competitive layout. This assignment was meant to simulate a real-like situation within the academic environment: advanced graphic design students would be provided with an opportunity to thrive in a competitive environment similar to those they are accustomed to; all the other students, including Honors, would have an opportunity to see some specific leadership skills in action.

When planning the syllabus, it is also necessary to create a good match between the objectives of the service-learning project and those of the course (Ballard & Elmore, 2009). Writing the essay for an exhibition catalogue and observing the parallel curatorial stages of the exhibition require a degree of familiarity with visual analysis, which is the main goal of art appreciation. For this reason, the instructor scheduled five class sessions to allow Honors students to quickly catch up with the advanced visual arts students in this area. Class discussions would allow advanced visual arts students to share their already acquired competence, and Honors students to provide their fresh insights and new perspectives.

Next, it was necessary to make the students acquainted with the major partner in the service-learning project, namely the Art Museum: its mission, the staff members and their functions, the exhibition spaces. With this purpose in mind, five days were planned either at the Art Museum, or in the company of museum staff visiting the class to give talks or demonstrations. Since the activities involving the art museum were totally unfamiliar to both groups of students, the course instructor matched them with eight basic and reader-friendly essays on museum studies, which have been lectured, summarized or assigned as home readings, each one in parallel with an activity involving the art museum and/or staff members.

At the end of January, students received a complimentary copy of the catalogue *Textural Structures*, a group exhibition that was currently on display at the Museum (co-curated by the museum curator and the course instructor), so they could connect the concept of this exhibition, as outlined in the catalogue essays, and its actual realization in the museum space. The assignment was complemented by a visit to the art museum, where the curator explained the layout of the actual exhibition, potential and limits of the display space. After that, students were assigned the task of writing an assessment paper of this show, while reading an essay addressing the various stages of development of an exhibition, including the last phase, the assessment by the visitors. In this way, students were able to connect new theoretical knowledge on a broad theme (organizing an exhibition from start to end), a more specific theoretical knowledge provided by an interdisciplinary catalogue (organically blending elements from art education, art history, art criticism) and practical aspects of an exhibition actually on display at the museum. Assigning the task to become acquainted with the variety of methodological approaches combined in the *Textural*
Structures catalogue would provide students with alternative resources than focused and discipline-specific art history, thus preparing them to ‘survive’ the future challenge of writing the catalogue essays for contemporary artist Lynn Thorpe.

During the eleventh week, the instructor taught elements of exhibition design, explaining the differences between integrated and segregated spaces and discussing with the class the typology of spaces in the art museum. In another class meeting, the museum curator brought in class three virtual layouts for the Lynn Thorpe exhibition; students discussed the layout options by applying basic visual elements (line, shapes and colors), learned earlier in art appreciation within one artwork, to the relationship between two or more artworks, which increased their awareness of art placed in the context of an exhibition area. One student expressed appreciation for this activity: “I enjoyed…the opportunity to give John feedback on the various layouts” (Spring, 2011).

Later on, students were welcomed by the curator of collections, who explained preservation issues by showing them the artworks in the storage areas, normally closed to the public. In the end-of-semester questionnaire, while almost all the students expressed their appreciation for the activities that occurred at the art museum, two specifically indicated the trip ‘behind-the-scenes’ with the conservator as one of the most enjoyable course activities (Spring, 2011).

In one of the last weeks, the class was visited by the Art Museum’s marketing specialist, who explained some diverse techniques she employs to reach a diverse audience (for instance, radio advertising in the evening hours, to target the mothers of children that were wanted for specific museum didactical activities). Students were assigned a parallel reading in museum studies to learn about several typologies of museum visitors, and how to address their diverse needs through differentiated marketing strategies. In the last week of class, such knowledge came forward, when students performed the guided tour of the Lynn Thorpe exhibition to a group of high school students.

A satisfactory assessment of student performance through the course needed to respect the variety of the activities planned. The grade was distributed as follows:

- A 5% for in-class discussions, which came very naturally.
- Two papers: one (15%) assessing the group exhibition that we had already in place, Textural Structures, and another one (25%), as individual contribution in preparation of the Lynn Thorpe catalogue.
- A small grade percentage (5%) would be an additional incentive to work towards the catalogue layout: the same grade would be awarded to all the members of the team.
- A 10% of the grade was saved for the guided tour of the Lynn Thorpe exhibition in the last week of class. Since the exhibition featured fourteen paintings by Lynn Thorpe, the week before each student chose a different painting, and became prepared to talk specifically on that one. The day of the tour, each student was positioned in front of his/her assigned painting: the instructor moved the group clock-
wise and across, and as the group arrived in front of a painting, the student assigned to it would share content and stylistic connections.

- A 20% grade was finally assigned for both Midterm and Finals. The examinations consisted of a number of broad questions. The Midterm was differentiated, focusing on material learnt from the art appreciation discipline for the Honors students, and readings on museum studies for special topics students. The Finals was the same for everybody, and consisted on a number of questions on the most recently covered museum studies assignments: exhibition layouts, the delicate relationship between museums and contemporary artists; the conservation profession and challenges with ephemeral art; typology of museum visitors and related marketing strategies. In these two intensive-writing tests, a few students have progressively and spontaneously integrated the content of the assigned readings with the real-life situations experienced in the exhibitions *Textural Structures* and *Lynn Thorpe: Earth and Sky*, evidence of the high level of maturity achieved in connecting theory and practices.

### From Essay to Layout: The Exhibition Catalogue as the Core of the Service-Learning Project

The exhibition catalogue *Lynn Thorpe: Earth and Sky*, planned as service learning activity, consisted of both essay and layout.

The essay was originally envisioned by the course instructor as a big project, to be broken into smaller individual student projects of 700 to 1,000 words. The instructor asked each student to choose two to three artworks by Lynn Thorpe among the fourteen selected for the exhibition scheduled at the art museum, and apply a formal analysis to them (art appreciation). Then, each student would choose one major modern artist, and become acquainted with his/her work by reading two to three scholarly books or articles (art history). Finally, each student would compare and contrast the work of Lynn Thorpe with that of the chosen artist, looking for correspondences that would gain new insights on her work. “Because these design principles and elements themselves are abstract and difficult to conceptualize, bringing them to light is best done by concrete example.” (Aievoli, 2003, p.90). That is what the instructor of the *Museum Experience* course tried to do, by providing lectures of art appreciation and then requiring students, through the service-learning project, to apply them to a real-life situation.

Instead of giving a crash-course in art history, the course instructor opted to focus one lecture on the assignment, by providing practical demonstrations on how to set up a research goal, choose another artist with intuitively perceived similarities and pursue a comparison between the two. One example made in class was Peter Claesz, whose XVIII century still-lifes have an element of *vanitas* that recalls one of Thorpe’s paintings. The practical demonstration included envisioning a research idea that connected the work by the two artists (for instance, a perceived sense of death), and showing students how to look through the library resources online by expanding and narrowing the key-word. In order to provide further guidance, the instructor prepared a list of readings from a number of artists and styles, ranging from Georgia O’Keeffe, to Mark Rothko, René Magritte,
Salvador Dali, Joseph Cornell, Audrey Flack, and the American Luminists. Some students added De Chirico and Anselm Adams as their own choice (after all, high achieving students are capable of independent thinking), and decided not to pursue some other artists suggested by the instructor, if beyond their individual competence, vision, or interest.

When the instructor collected and read the short essays, she decided to group them by artists used for comparison: one on De Chirico (which was broken and used for the introduction and the conclusion, to frame the structure); four for Rothko; two on Dali; two on Magritte; and finally, three for O’Keeffe united with one for Anselm Adams, as they worked well together. In its final form, the catalogue had four essays, plus an extensive introduction and a brief conclusion. A few Honors students, without any prior art history background, have been capable of seeing affinities between the color fields of Mark Rothko and Lynn Thorpe’s figurative work! Patrick Aievoli reflects on the fact that, when his students see an abstract work and ask him how did the artist “come up with that?,” they are trying to find something that they can recognize, “They are looking for something to hold onto, some kind of previous knowledge or reference point in their life to help them relate to what they are viewing. In essence, they are looking to relate metaphorically to the artwork.” (Aievoli, 2003, p.91) The same comparative analysis was structured so that students started with something visually relatable to them (the figurative-looking work by Lynn Thorpe); then, they would progressively move into the unfamiliar (the abstract work of Rothko); finally, by comparing the two, they would find that there are visual similarities, such as “large fields,” challenged or dissolved borders, and color variations to suggest the intangible (Bahmani, Griffin & Shay, 2011).

Even though being an assignment scholarly in nature and at basic level, the essay on Lynn Thorpe exercised the creative side of students, with particular regard for the “originality” defined by Jose G. Gomez as “the ability to produce unusual ideas, to solve problems in unusual ways, and to use things or situations in an unusual manner. Sometimes, originality is viewed as uncommonness of response, the ability to make remote or indirect connections.” (Gomez, 2007, p.36) Amanda Little and Anne Hoel (2011) suggest that, “Guiding students outside of their comfort zones in researching unfamiliar topics is part of the process” (p.43). Indeed, in the end-of-Semester questionnaire one student defined the process of looking for connections between the work of Lynn Thorpe and other artists “like a treasure hunt” (Spring, 2011).

The phase of the exhibition layout acquired more importance and demanded more time than originally anticipated. Once students were divided into teams, a class session, not initially planned in the syllabus but later felt necessary, was devoted have students initiate a discussion on the layout and take the first steps; then, students were allowed to meet independently in the following days to complete the task as homework. The layout project allowed graphic design students an opportunity to test some of their creative qualities, including “discover problems” and “generate alternatives,” (Gomez, 2007, p.38) into a complex project requiring the application of multiple elements learned in their graphic design courses. The project, at least in its initial phases, was an attempt of “collaborative learning,” which “emphasizes the interdependence of the learners and the communal nature of the process as knowledge is negotiated and co-constructed through dialogue and
problem-solving” (Cormeaux, 2010, p.63). As Karrie A. Jones and Jennifer L. Jones (2008) claim, a cooperative learning method allows student to gain crucial interpersonal and communication skills necessary in their careers, by working with team members of diverse backgrounds.

After the four layouts were completed, the instructor inserted another previously unforeseen activity: each project manager would make a presentation of his/her group layout, explaining the overall vision, the choices in terms of image, typo and color for the cover, and the challenges encountered during the creative process, while the rest of the class would be able to participate by asking questions or providing feedback, like in an art class critique. This new activity was similar to what Patricia Cormeaux (2010) has defined “Debate-Discussion Learning Project,” in which the “facilitators”, each student project manager would lead the discussion, “while the rest of the class members (along with the instructor) become participants in the discussions” (p.66). The four competitive layouts were collected by the course instructor and distributed, with the names of the layout team members removed, to three professionals in the area of museum and graphic design within our campus, who served as the jurors for the best layout to be published.

The course instructor planned the layout as a goal in itself, but did not anticipate that the layout was actually an activity that would provide an opportunity for discussion on creativity and rules. After the jurors met for a blind peer-review session of the four proposed layouts, she was informed that although exceptional in quality, the layouts could be further improved through a class critique. A sudden and necessary change in the schedule, in which unfortunately the class missed the hanging of the Lynn Thorpe exhibition, allowed an opening for two visits by the senior graphic design faculty, co-juror of the layouts, who provided in each session professional feedback on the layouts, while students were taking notes. The guest faculty correlated what has been actually done in the layouts with information that are generally covered in graphic design courses: for instance, the faculty counted how many hyphens were occurring at the end of the lines in an entire page, and asked the class how many hyphens maximum are allowed. If that page contained more than the required number, it would be necessary to have the modifications made manually in Photoshop or In Design. These two sessions became invaluable opportunities for reflection on applied graphic design. The course instructor was extremely surprised and pleased with this unexpected outcome (Figs. 1-4), as “The presence of the interdisciplinary faculty member reinforces the importance of alternative viewpoints and perspectives to a much greater degree” (Little & Hoel, 2011, p.42).

**Course Assessment: Strengths and Challenges**

For the duration of the Semester, nine students out of fourteen in regular attendance had zero absences! This exceptional attendance record is an indicator of high student interest and motivation towards this class. Students understood that all the components of the syllabus were essential for the success of the course and the service-learning project, and that there was not a substitute to any of them.

The following are qualitative data from the end-of-course questionnaire, which involved five lower-division Honors students from diverse academic backgrounds and nine special topics students (most of them from the upper-level) coming from a variety of visual...
backgrounds. The comments reported suggest that the combination of theory and practice was perceived as a major strength in this course.

In terms of course structure, in general and with a few exceptions, Honors students appreciated the fact that the course’s objectives and goals were made clear from the beginning, and that they have been given the tools and activities to meet those goals; one special topics student appreciated the fact that the course “incorporated many ways of learning and fulfilled the needs of a variety of students.” (Spring, 2011). Some Honors students were happy about what they have learnt, while some visual arts students appreciated more the way the two diverse classes have been combined and the experience stemming from it.

Regarding the course’s pace, almost all the scheduled activities have been covered in a satisfactory way and timely manner. Besides the deadline pressures during the period of the catalogue preparation, the instructor never felt rushed in trying to keep up with the schedule: the course pace was just perfect. With only a few exceptions, students felt the same way: the course’s activities have been generally rated as “well-balanced” and the overall course structure as “well-planned,” with a good correlation with the museum’s timeline (Spring, 2011). Only a few Honors students felt that sometimes changes occurred with a short notice, “but overall, we were given enough notice to adjust and prepare” (Spring, 2011).

Instead visual arts students, generally of the upper-division level, were able to intuitively perceive that sometimes changes were necessary, in order to make challenging situations work out for the better: one compliment came on the instructor’s flexibility “when needed;” another student added that “It was well planned/anticipated, but as an experimental class, it organically changed as the semester progressed;” another student commented that “The syllabus given at the beginning of the semester was well laid out providing enough structure for students to plan and stay on task while allowing room for changes;” “Both planned and unplanned activities were useful and vital to the success of the course;” and finally, “There were inevitable problems that occurred. The class always found a solution.” (Spring, 2011).

In terms of the planned activities, with one exception, Honors students particularly appreciated the correlation between the lectures and the field visits, uniting some theoretical and practical aspects. While the guided tour was perceived as improvisational and scary for a few Honors students, from the visual arts students came the comment that the tour allowed them to complete each other: “we each used our different strengths to complete the activity” (Spring, 2011). Best activities were considered, for Honors students, the visits to the art museum, meeting the staff, learning about the ‘behind-the-scenes,’ being directly involved in feedback and decision-making when the curator brought three possible layouts in class, writing the essay and the publication. Visual Arts students appreciated visiting the museum as well, but also seeing aspects of preservation of artworks, the experience of showing what they have learned in the course, the class critique of the layouts (Spring, 2011). Instead, among the course activities that raised more concern, was for the Honors students writing the essay and the guided exhibition tour, mostly for performance
and competence anxiety, while some visual arts students lamented the redundancy of the art appreciation classes for them, and wished they could have observed the exhibition hanging, which we missed.

Innovative aspects of the course, that were particularly appreciated, were for the Honors students gaining new insights about art museums and getting involved; also the “good learning opportunities” provided by the combination with advanced visual arts students of the special topics class, a comment that came from some students of the other group as well (Spring, 2011). Students from both classes enjoyed the end product of a catalogue, one of them adding that “designing what I’d written about was a great experience.” From the special topics students came a positive comment on the opportunity to follow a project from start to finish through the semester. Another special topics student provided a comment on the amount of “freedom” granted in the course as innovative, because it “made each person’s learning different,” and expressed enjoyment towards the catalogue project: “It was extremely interesting to see the different approaches each student took for the same project” (Spring, 2011). Finally, another student commented that, “Studying and doing some activities is different from any class I have ever taken” (Spring, 2011).

Conclusion

The outcomes of this service-learning multidisciplinary experiment show that it possible to foster creativity in a course whose primary purpose is to deliver theoretical content, by seeking solid partnership with other faculty and institutions that can provide opportunities to practice course content through forms of professional involvement. The innovative learning environment balances indoor and outdoor activities, alternatively giving space to the instructor, to the guest speakers and to students; while most of the content is delivered during the indoor activities, the outdoor events become opportunities for intense discussion. The course instructor uses most of the class time to build up the theoretical ground in a few disciplines, such as art appreciation and museum studies. During the trips to the museum or visits to the class by guest speakers, students reflect on the content previously absorbed in class and search for connections between theory and practice. In this way, “students could help construct knowledge in the museum as part of community service that would serve their learning, their peers, and the public” (Innella, 2010).

Acknowledgments

Lynn Thorpe, artist, Rapid City, SD; Lynn Verschoor, Director, South Dakota Art Museum; Dr. Timothy Nichols, Dean, Honors College; Prof. Tim Steele, Acting Department Head, Visual Arts; John Rychtarik, South Dakota Art Museum; Dr. Kevin Sackreiter, Director, Teaching Learning Center; Hilton M. Briggs Library and Instructional Design Services, South Dakota State University.

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Appendix: Museum Experience Syllabus

**Tentative Course Schedule:**
(It may be subjected to changes)

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY:**
(All the assignments will be graded solely by the course instructor).
5%: in-class discussions or acts of participation through the term;
15%: first term paper assessing the *Textural Structures* exhibit
25%: second term paper (service learning: catalog) graded by the instructor;
5%: proposed layout of the exhibition catalog.
10%: guided tours of the exhibit by students during the last week of class.
20% + 20%: Midterm and Finals (wide questions based on the assigned weekly readings).

**Week 1 (Jan. 10)** • **Thursday, Jan. 13th:** CLASSES BEGIN. Introduction to the course structure and sched-
ule, syllabus, access to D2L (those students adding after the first day of class, please ask the instructor about access to D2L).
Explanation of the term project: exhibition catalog on Lynn Thorpe.
The assignment will require the combination of:
- analysis skills (art appreciation),
- some light scholarship in art history
- some application of the basic knowledge on museum studies accumulated throughout the Semester.

**Week 2 (Jan.17)** • **Tuesday:** Behind an exhibition: meet the SD Art Museum Staff:
- Lynn Verschoor, Museum Director
- John Rychtarik, Museum Chief Curator of Exhibits
- Lisa Scholten, Curator of Collections and Archivist

**Week 3 (Jan.24)** • **Tuesday:** VISUAL ELEMENTS. Chapter 7, light and color (Sayre 114-146) – part I.
**Thursday:** VISUAL ELEMENTS. Chapter 7, light and color (Sayre 114-146) – part II.
Reading: Sayre, chapter 7.

**Week 4 (Jan.31)** • **Tuesday:** TEXTURAL STRUCTURES. The Concept of the Exhibition.
**Thursday:** TEXTURAL STRUCTURES. Visit the exhibition at the South Dakota Art Museum: explanations, challenges, possibilities in designing the objects placement. Presented by John Rychtarik.
Reading: essay in the catalog *Textural Structures* (students will receive one complimentary copy of the catalog).
Week 5 (Feb.7) • Classes cancelled both TUESDAY and THURSDAY for Faculty attendance to the CAA Conference in NY City.

Reading and writing assignment substituting for these two classes:
- ASSESSMENT PAPER (15% GRADE): Reflect on this reading, in relation to the acquaintance with the professional roles of the SD Art Museum’s staff members met during the second week, and the Textural Structures exhibition development explained during the fourth week. Write a 3-4 pages feedback to assess the exhibition Textural Structures:
  - Its overall goal/s (see the catalog essay).
  - If, how and to which extent has the exhibition met the SD Art Museum’s mission goals (see: http://www.sdstate.edu/southdakotaartmuseum/Visit/mission.cfm).
  - The exhibit concept’s strengths and weaknesses (see the catalog essay).
  - The degree to which the exhibit design has met the room’s potential and limits (see the visit to the exhibit room in the Art Museum).
  - If, how and to which extent has the exhibition met the cultural needs of the Brookings and the State of South Dakota’s community.
  - Positive or innovative aspects, in the overall exhibition, that could be retained and used again in future exhibitions.
  - Any suggestions for improvement.

By performing this task, you will be responsible for the ASSESSMENT PHASE of the exhibition (Dean 200). The paper must refer to the listed reading. The paper will be assigned 15% of the overall grade for this course.

Week 6 (Feb.14) • Tuesday: Chapter 8, other formal elements (Sayre 147-162).
  • THURSDAY, Feb. 17: classes cancelled for ART 200 PROGRESS REVIEW (Department Activity).
  Reading: Sayre, chapter 8.

Week 7 (Feb.21): • Tuesday: Chapter 9, principles of design (Sayre 163-189)
  • Thursday: LYNN THORPE. Creating the exhibition concept. Look at the works to include in the exhibit. Leda Cempellin and John Rychtarik (Special guest).
  Reading: Sayre, chapter 9.

Week 8 (Feb.28): • Tuesday: exhibition and art history: influences on LYNN THORPE, part I.
  Readings for the term catalogue project will be listed and explained in separate document.
  • Thursday, March 3rd: MIDTERM exam. 20% of the grade for this course. General essay questions covering the readings.
  Reading: each student will be assigned 2-3 articles or chapters, to read in preparation of the catalog text (see list in the Term Project document). Students will start drafting their portion of the catalog essay (ca.700-1000 words, 2-3 pages), by uniting the historical references of their readings and the formal
Week 9 (March 7):  **MARCH 7-11: SPRING BREAK. No classes this week.**

Week 10 (March 14):  End of the first part of the Semester. Deficiencies due in Webadvisor.

- **Tuesday and Thursday:** exhibition and art history: influences on LYNN THORPE, parts II and III.
- Readings for the term catalogue project will be listed and explained in a separate document.

  **Reading:** finalizing the catalog essay.

Week 11 (March 21):  

- **Tuesday:** **LYNN THORPE.** Virtual exhibition design demonstration on computer (Special guest: **John Rychtarik**).

- **Thursday, March 24th:** term projects (catalog essays) due for grading and for incorporation in the extensive catalog essay (Editor: Leda Cempellin). 25% of the grade for this course.

  Elements of exhibition design theory

  **Readings:**


Week 12 (March 28):  

- **Tuesday:** Leda will distribute the finalized catalog (essay and images) to the students of the class for working on the competitive catalog layout. **LYNN THORPE.** planning the exhibition catalog: essay, illustrations, reproductions permissions, labels for the exhibit.

- **Thursday:** **SD Art Museum’s collection. Preservation aspects. Special guest: Lisa Scholten.**

  **Reading:**


Week 13 (April 4) 

- **Tuesday, April 5th:** competitive catalog layout due for grading and jurying.

  Catalog layout: **5% of the overall grade for this course.** Catalog layouts submitted for external jurying and selection of the best one. **LYNN THORPE.** Installing the artworks in the gallery. Potential issues and challenges will be explored in situ. Observation of **John Rychtarik**, exhibition designer.

- **Thursday:** **LYNN THORPE.** Installing the artworks in the gallery. Potential issues and challenges will be explored in situ. Observation of **John Rychtarik**, exhibition designer.
ESTIMATED DEADLINES (to get the exhibition catalog printed before the guided tours):

1. MARCH 24th: term projects (individual contributions to the catalog essay) due to the instructor.
2. MARCH 24th – 27th: Dr. Cempellin will edit all the contributions into a big file, and if possible, mail it to students by Monday morning, March 28th.
3. MARCH 28th (Monday) – APRIL 3rd (Sunday) small groups meeting to work on the layout and apply to the big file.
4. APRIL 4th (Monday, 9.00am): big file, with proposed layout, due to Dr. Cempellin by email (Leda.Cempellin@sdstate.edu), to be forwarded to the jurors.
5. APRIL 4th – APRIL 8th (Friday): jurying of the catalogue layouts, and selection of the best one. Forward choice to Dr. Cempellin.
6. APRIL 9-10 (weekend): Dr. Cempellin makes last minor adjustments/revisions.
7. APRIL 11: catalog, in the finalized layout, due to the Print Lab
8. APRIL 20th: catalogue printed.
9. APRIL 21st: catalogue distributed to the students, in order to prepare for the guided tours.

Week 14 (April 11) • **Tuesday**: in-class discussion on the exhibition LYNN THORPE and the service-learning project.

**LYNN THORPE EXHIBITION: April 12 - August 14, 2011**

• **Thursday**: Art Museums and contemporary artists.


Week 15 (April 18): • **Tuesday and Thursday**: Addressing the diverse needs of museum visitors and marketing strategies. Special Guest: **Dianne Hawks**. Proclamation of the winning catalog layout, distribution of the catalog.

**Reading**:
- Lynn Thorpe, exhibition catalog: each student will receive one copy, and will read the entire essay in preparation for the guided tour.

Week 15 (April 26): * **Tuesday and Thursday**: guided tours at the Lynn Thorpe exhibit run by students. 10% of the overall grade for this course.

Week 16th **FINAL EXAMINATION**:

**THURSDAY, MAY 5th**: 12.00noon-1.40pm, in the classroom. 20% of the final average grade for this course. General essay questions covering the readings after Midterm.

Grade Reporting

Grades will be reported to the Registrar’s Office within **Wednesday, May 11th**, and therefore should begin to be available on Webadvisor after that date. Partial grades or the final average grade will be disclosed by the instructor to the student only individually and in person, not by phone, email or any other indirect form of communication.