The Journal of Effective Teaching

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an online journal devoted to teaching excellence

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The Journal of Effective Teaching
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The Journal of Effective Teaching is accepting submissions for review for the Fall 2014 issue. Manuscripts will be due May 31, 2014. The expected publication date will be September 30th. Articles will be accepted in any of the Content Areas supported by the journal.
INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

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Manuscripts for publication should:

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- 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: MOOCs - How Are They Doing?

Russell L. Herman¹
The University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wilmington, NC

In the September 2012 issue we looked into MOOCs, Massive Open Online Courses (Herman, 2012). These are open, free to many, courses delivered online, ideally with no requirements or prerequisites to join, taken by thousands of students at a time from all over the globe. The year 2012 was referred to as the “Year of the MOOC” (Pappano, 2012; Siemens, 2012), and some had predicted that MOOCs would lead to the decline of “brick and mortar” institutions (Jordan, 2014). A year and a half later, we ask, “how are these courses doing?”

The number of MOOCs and the extent of coverage has been steadily increasing. Coursera, the largest provider, has over 6.8 million students, 625 courses, and 108 partners. In 2012 we reported that Coursera had 1,502,351 students, 195 courses, and 33 partners². According to their blog, as of 2/14/14 they have 22 classes in French and 46 mathematics classes. Following the numbers reported at the Coursera website for 24 hours, we see a steady number of enrollments at a rate of 523 per hour. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. A plot of the number of students registered at Coursera during a period on March 6-7, 2014 as a function of time.

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² In January 2013, a year after Coursera began, the enrollment was 2.5 million (Koller & Ng, 2013).
In 2012, the typical Coursera course enrolled between 40,000 and 60,000 students, of whom 50-60% attended the first lecture. In classes with required programming or peer-graded assignments, around 15-20% submitted an assignment for grading. Of this group, approximately 45% successfully completed the course. Overall, about 5% percent of students who signed up for a Coursera MOOC completed the course. (Koller, Ng, Do, & Chen, 2013a, 2013b)

As a comparison, edX, a nonprofit provider, has over 150 courses have granted over 100 certificates for completion of coursework. There have been several reports released with initial data on the performance of MOOCs (Ho, et al. 2014; Jordan, 2014; Kolowich, 2013, Stein, 2013). Ho, et al. (2014) describe the first 17 MOOCs given by HarvardX and MITx with 841,687 registrations resulting in 43,196 (5%) earning certificates. Many of the reports describe the numbers and demographics of students and what had been learned to date.

Rayyan, Seaton, Belcher, Pritchard, and Chuang (2013) describe the first physics MOOC from MITx, which ran for sixteen weeks in Spring 2013. The course was based on the lectures of Walter Lewin on electricity and magnetism for calculus-based physics. The videos were broken into smaller chunks and the course was supplemented by machine graded questions and homework, simulations, problem solving sessions, exams, and threaded discussions. The initial enrollment was 43,758 of which 1878 (4.3%) completed the final. They found that 84% of surveyed enrollees were male, 40% were from the U.S., and consisted mostly of high school and undergraduate students. The rate of retention dropped exponentially throughout the course, a trend typically seen with many MOOCs.

Duke University also reported on their first MOOC (Belanger & Thornton, 2013). In that course, which used the Coursera platform, 12,000 students enrolled from over 100 countries. This dropped to 8,000 who logged on the first week and 313 (2.6%) students successfully completed the course. The report describes the development and delivery of the course, the types of students participating, learning outcomes, student and faculty experience, and the barriers to completion. The most common of these barriers were lack of time and mathematics background.

The findings of these reports are similar to those noted in other reports, such as the recent report from the Penn Graduate School of Education (Stein, 2013). Jordan (2014) conducted a study of enrollment trends in MOOCs based on data aggregated from class-central.com. The study was confined to the big three providers, Coursera, edX, and Udacity. This included 91 courses with enrollments of 45,000 to 276,652. It was found that the average MOOC had 42,844 students enrolled with a completion rate of 6.5%. Noting from Koller and Ng (2013), a majority of students already had degrees. They had reported 42.8% had bachelors, 36.7% had masters, and 5.4% doctoral degrees (Jordan, 2014).

A study of 103 professors who had taught a MOOC at that time was published in the Chronicle of Higher Education (Kolowich, 2013). In that study, the mean number of students enrolled in a MOOC was 33,000 with a 7.5% completion rate. This study went further to discuss the attitudes of the professors teaching these courses. Typically, an in-
struc
tor spent 100 hours in preparation for the course and spent 8 hours a week during the course. Most do not require students to purchase materials, including textbooks. They found that 55% of the professors noted that time was taken away from their academic responsibilities to run the course and many did this on top of their usual course loads. Before running the class, a third of them were skeptical about MOOCs, but afterwards 90% were enthusiastic. 79% believe that MOOCs are worth the hype, but 77% do not believe that students should get credit for the course from their university.

There are still many things to be learned from MOOCs. For example, Koller, Ng, Do, and Chen (2013a) have written about peer assessment models. In particular, they investigated how large scale peer grading can be made more accurate, dependable, and efficient.

For a more detailed discussion about peer assessment and MOOCs, NPR’s Math Guy, Keith Devlin, has offered his thoughts based on his course, “Introduction to Mathematical Thinking” in interviews (Lederman, 2013) and blogs (Devlin 2013a, 2013b) and at a panel discussion at the AMS-MAA Joint Mathematics Meetings in Baltimore this year. In these he discusses MOOCs and how they are more about the success of the students who complete the classes, as opposed to focusing on the dropouts. A traditional class reaches only 25 students, of which one worries about the few who drop the course. However, if only a few thousand complete the course, those are students who you would never have reached otherwise.

His course is even more challenging as it is important for students to learn to fail in doing mathematics in order to learn mathematics. This is part of the process - learning does not stop at turning in assignments, but also in giving students the opportunity to recognize correct mathematics by looking at the work of others. Thus, he sees peer grading as an important component of the course. He recalls that even though he was an A student in calculus, he never really understood calculus until he was a graduate TA looking at other students’ work and trying to explain it to them. In the same way, he sees peer grading as an important part of the learning process. The challenge is to design this process on a mass scale. He has found that students have found this as the most important part of the course, claiming to have learned the most during this phase of his course and he is working on improving this part of his course.

From these reports on the first MOOCs we are getting a glimpse of how students learn and what motivates them to succeed in online classes. However, there are many questions still to be answered: Will MOOCs lead to a transformation of traditional education? Will students still prefer face-to-face learning in an intimate seminar setting, or will they favor the social networking model of MOOCs? Will universities find a way to grant credit to MOOCs and eventually include them in some programs? Will MOOCs help to remove remedial work from campuses?

References


http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/retention-and-intention-massive-open-online-courses-depth-0.


The Squeaky Wheel *Needs* the Grease: Perceptions of Teaching and Learning in Graduate Education

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this international study was to contrast the differences in graduate student perceptions of professor pedagogical content knowledge, individualized consideration, Student-Professor Engagement in Learning, professor intellectual stimulation, and student deep learning. Sixty-seven graduate business and 70 graduate education students from two professional associations and four universities responded to the survey. The results indicated there was a significant difference between business and education students’ perceptions on Student-Professor Engagement in Learning and deep learning.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical content knowledge, transformational teaching practices, student engagement, deep learning, graduate.

Teaching must become a priority in higher education (Boyer, 1990; Bain, 2004) and professors must use pedagogical approaches that prepare students with knowledge, skills, and values to conquer the challenges in their fields (McGuire, Lay, & Peters, 2009). Burnett, Philips, and Ker (2008) concluded that teaching students how to integrate knowledge into the real world continues to challenge educators across disciplines. Similarly, Hacker and Dreifus (2010) reported that professors spent too much time on research due to the incentive structures in higher education, and they had little or no time to focus on teaching. A contribution to effective college teaching and learning would result if professors were more actively engaged in assessing their own approaches and their impact on student outcomes (Bain, 2004).

Jang (2011) noted that scholars seldom study college students’ perceptions of professor pedagogical content knowledge, and there has been a greater emphasis on the development and students’ perceptions of secondary teacher pedagogical content knowledge (Tu-an & Chin, 2000). It was reported that pedagogical beliefs, decisions, and judgments in the college classroom were more frequently researched than in previous years, however, more research is needed (Major & Palmer, 2006).

Research revealed that transformational leadership behaviors such as charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration produced increased performance and satisfaction (Harrison, 2011). Bolkan and Goodboy (2011) affirmed that findings on pro-

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fessor transformational leadership behaviors in the classroom corresponded with previous research on effective teaching and students’ perceptions of effectiveness. New research can generate discussions among professors and students regarding effective educational practices, education as an evolving process (Bain, 2004).

The purpose of the study was to investigate the differences in graduate students’ perceptions of professor pedagogical content knowledge, individualized consideration, Student-Professor Engagement in Learning, professor intellectual stimulation, and student deep learning.

**Theoretical Framework**

*Deep Learning*

Marton and Säljö (1976b) posited that deep learning is a notion based on an explicit and significant connection between students and content. Deep learning takes place when students are provided opportunities to become actively involved in the learning process in order to construct meaning, connect concepts, utilize problem-solving skills (Hacker & Niederhauser, 2000; Weigel, 2001), analyze and explore underlying meaning, participate in cross-referencing, imaginative reconstruction, and independent thinking (Warburton, 2003). Deep learning reflects student internal motivation with the intention to understand rather than earn a desired score (Marton & Säljö, 1976a). Studies have shown (Trigwell & Prosser, 1991; Prosser & Trigwell, 1998) that deep learning approaches are associated with high quality teaching, independence in choosing concepts to learn, clear objectives and goals, and higher quality learning outcomes (Marton & Säljö 1997). Additional research suggests that in order to obtain deep learning, students must engage in student-centered activities in which a professor acts as a facilitator. Floyd, Harrington, and Santiago (2009) concurred that colleges and universities have transitioned from traditional lecture-based pedagogy in favor of learner-centered and collaborative activities because these styles will enhance student-learning experience. As a result, students will adopt significantly higher levels of understanding (Fink, 2003; Majeski & Stover, 2007; Floyd, Harrington, & Santiago, 2009).

Nelson-Laird, Shoup, & Kuh (2005) examined how deep learning varied by discipline area. Participants were college students who studied various disciplines such as (a) arts and humanities (16 percent), (b) biological science (7 percent), (c) business (18 percent), education (10 percent), engineering (6 percent), physical science including mathematics (4 percent), professional fields, such as architecture, urban planning, or nursing (6 percent), social science (15 percent), and other fields, such as public administration, kinesiology, or criminal justice (18 percent). All students completed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2001-13) to measure deep learning (Nelson-Laird et al., 2005). The results indicated that students occasionally used deep approaches to learning across all disciplines. Overall, deep learning approaches were positively correlated with student outcomes (Nelson-Laird et al., 2005).

from passive, instructor dominated pedagogy to active, learner-centered activities promised to take students to deeper levels of understanding and meaning as they apply what they are learning to real-life examples in the company of others” (Tagg, 2003). Prior to this study, Dennen and Wieland (2007) found when a professor consistently facilitates real world experience; students are more engaged in learning.

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

Colleges and universities require professors to be experts in their academic discipline in order to be effective. In the 1970s, this was challenged by educational sectors and the improvement of college teaching was initiated using professional development for professors (Major & Palmer, 2006). Shulman (1986; 1987; 1991) was the first to recognize that professor knowledge includes several layers including both subject and pedagogical knowledge.

Cochran, DeRuiter, and King (1993) clarified that in higher education, pedagogical content knowledge and teaching are different; “teachers differ from biologists, historians, writers or educational researchers, not necessarily in the quality or quantity of their subject matter, but in how that knowledge is organized and used” (p.5). Pedagogical content knowledge in higher education entails having a well-developed yet flexible plan to teach specific content in order to bridge the gap between professor knowledge and student understanding (Rahilly & Saroyan, 1997; Shepherd, 2009). Kreber and Cranton (2000) added that pedagogical content knowledge requires an understanding of four elements such as learning style, cognitive style, the cognitive learning processes, and group dynamics.

Shepherd (2009) found that professional development initiatives, such as continued training, ongoing engagement with training, use of reflection to inform teaching, use of various teaching methods, and general professionalism, contributed to increased pedagogical content knowledge and improved student learning outcomes. Jang (2011) evaluated college students’ perceptions of professor pedagogical content knowledge development using a new instrument and workshop intervention. Students’ perceptions of the professor’s pedagogical content knowledge after the pre-test were compared to the post-test, and indicated the factors that contributed to changes in professor’s pedagogical content knowledge after self-reflection and participation in the workshops. The students recognized that the professor's content knowledge was rich in both tests. However, they also noted that professor's knowledge of student understanding needed improvement. It was clear that the workshops and questionnaires provided the professor with a deeper understanding of pedagogical content knowledge for students according to their level. Additionally, these intervention strategies helped the professor use more appropriate analogies to explain abstract concepts to students, improve teaching objectives, revise the difficulty of test items, and make connections to the course content (Jang, 2011).
**Individualized Consideration**

According to Bass (1985), individualized consideration is a behavior in which a leader acts in support of followers with thoughtfulness and concern for individual needs (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011). Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, and Spangler (2004) determined that one who practices individualized consideration addresses issues of competence and encourages perpetual individual development (Modassir & Singh, 2008). A professor who practices individualized consideration represents professor willingness to provide help outside of class (Pounder, 2008). Bolkan and Goodboy (2011) further examined individualized consideration according to student responses and determined specific professor behaviors that convey individualized consideration. These professor behaviors include availability, individual feedback, verbal immediacy, and personalized content, conveying interest, special considerations, remembering student history, and promoting participation. Harvey, Royal, and Stout (2003) found that individualized consideration proved to be the largest indicator of student involvement in the classroom.

**Student-Professor Engagement in Learning**

Astin (1984) contended that student involvement, or engagement, is a major contributor of student-learning outcomes. Student involvement and student engagement theories served as theoretical frameworks for Student-Professor Engagement in Learning, in which students and professors are both active in the learning process (Astin, 1984). Researchers (Petress, 2006; Weaver & Qi, 2005) regarded participation as a way to bring students together to become more active in the educational process. Ultimately, participation results in increased student motivation (Junn, 1994), improved communication skills (Berdine, 1986), group interactions (Armstrong & Boud, 1983) and self-reported gains in character (Kuh & Umbach, 2005). Further, participation enhances critical thinking (Crone, 1997; Garside, 1996) and sophisticated learning including interpretation, analysis, and synthesis (Smith, 1977). Sidelinger and Booth-Butterfield (2010) reported, “The entire responsibility for student involvement should not fall on students alone” (p. 166). Professors must promote a supportive and connected learning environment for students to be academically successful. Furthermore, professors need to connect with students, as well as provide opportunities in the classroom for students to connect with one another.

**Intellectual Stimulation**

Intellectual stimulation results in enhanced learning outcomes when linked to intrinsic motivation theoretically (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006) and empirically (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Bolkan and Goodboy (2009, 2011) postulated that if transformational leadership produced positive learning outcomes in an organization when associated with intrinsic motivation, it is likely that the same will occur in the classroom. Therefore, it is theoretically possible that professors who engage in intellectual stimulation have the ability to encourage intrinsic motivation in students (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011). Accordingly, Harvey et al. (2003) found that intellectual stimulation predicted student perceptions of professor performance and proved to be the largest indicator of positive student in-
volvement in the classroom. Similarly, Bolkan and Goodboy (2011) concluded that challenging students through class discussion encourages intellectual stimulation. During this activity, students can engage in scholarly conversation and simultaneously stimulate one another by sharing various perspectives. Overall, intellectual stimulation leads to innovative ways of thinking (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011).

**Data Sources and Research Methodology**

The data for this quantitative study originated from a dissertation study conducted by Jennifer Economos in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Dowling College, School of Education, Department of Administration, Leadership, and Technology (2013). Permission to conduct this research was obtained through the Internal Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) at Dowling College, two professional associations, and one university. Permission to survey graduate students was not required for the three remaining universities, as student contact information was published online.

The original survey instrument was adapted from research literature (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2004; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011) and two published questionnaires with permission from the authors (Shepherd, 2009; NSSE, 2001-13). The instrument asked graduate students to rate their level of agreement of each statement regarding graduate student perceptions of actual professor charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, pedagogical content knowledge, and deep learning. A five-point Likert scale with the possible responses accompanied the statements.

Both paper and electronic surveys were distributed to graduate students. The paper surveys were distributed to graduate students by United States Postal Service mail with an invitation letter to participate in the study and a self-addressed stamped return envelope. An electronic copy of the paper survey and invitation letter was created using Survey Monkey and distributed to students via e-mail. A total of 3,232 female and male graduate students currently enrolled in full-time and part-time business and education programs were invited to participate in the study. Of those students, 1,055 were graduate business students and 2,177 were graduate education students. The total response rate was 360 with 359 usable surveys (11 percent). Responses from graduate business students totaled 67 while responses from graduate education students totaled 292.

A factor analysis of 359 participant survey responses was employed to determine if each item measured the variable that it was designed to measure. The items were analyzed using principal component analysis extraction method and varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method. The rotation converged in 35 iterations. The results yielded seven of five, interpretable variables and five were selected for this study. Following the factor analysis, the dimensions of the study were subjected to reliability testing. Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of internal consistency was computed to assess the reliability of each of the five variables in the survey instrument. The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients for the factors ranged from .752 - .881. Finally, the entire response pool was randomized in order to minimize the chance for type one or two error. After the data were randomized,
67 useable surveys were from graduate business students and 70 useable surveys were from graduate education students. A total of 137 surveys were used for data analysis in this study.

**Data Analysis**

**Research question**

When graduate students are separated into graduate business and education programs, how do they differ in their perceptions of professor pedagogical content knowledge, individualized consideration, Student-Professor Engagement in Learning, professor intellectual stimulation, and student deep learning? The research question was analyzed using independent samples $t$ tests to contrast the groups.

**Results**

Table 1 reports the group statistics and independent samples $t$ tests results between groups for each of the five variables surveyed. The variables in the study were analyzed to determine which variables are perceived differently among graduate students and within business and education programs.

**Table 1. Independent Samples $t$ tests for Comparing the Differences of Graduate Students’ Perceptions.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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Overall, Table 1 shows that graduate education students reported higher mean scores (M) consistently. There were no significant differences among the variables except Student–Professor Engagement in Learning ($p = .048$), and deep learning ($p = .011$). Graduate business and education students agreed that their professors participate in Student–Professor Engagement in Learning, and they themselves also participate regardless of their business (M = 20.48) or education (M = 21.54) distinction. However, business students reported they somewhat agreed and agreed that they engaged in deep learning while education students reported they agreed that they engaged in deep learning. In order to determine which items were significantly different between graduate business and education students, a frequency analysis was conducted for the variables Student–Professor Engagement in Learning and deep learning.

Table 2 presents the frequency analysis for comparing the difference of graduate students’ perceptions based on Student-Professor Engagement in Learning items. One of five items were responsible for the significant difference between the groups. The table illustrates a trend between business and education students who agreed and strongly agreed.

**Table 2. Frequency Analysis for Student-Professor Engagement in Learning Item 4.**

*I experienced professors who keep up to date with the latest developments in the content area.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) somewhat agree</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>34.3</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>41.4</td>
<td>42.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>42.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>98.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 3 – 4 present the frequency analyses for comparing the difference of graduate students’ perceptions based on deep learning items. Two of six items were responsible for the significant difference between the groups. The tables demonstrate a trend between business and education students who somewhat agreed and disagreed.
Table 3. Frequency Analysis for Deep Learning Item 10.

*I learned how to integrate diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>22</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) strongly agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>31.4</td>
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<td>34.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Frequency Analysis for Deep Learning Item 30.

*I reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of my own views on an issue in an effort to consider different perspectives.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) somewhat agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>34.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>71.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) strongly agree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) somewhat agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) agree</td>
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<td>41.4</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>59.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) strongly agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38.6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions and Scholarly Significance

There was a significant difference between graduate business and education students on Student-Professor Engagement in Learning even though both groups appeared to share similar perceptions. Merrill (2002) found that students that engaged in the course and learning activities agreed that they applied knowledge, and integrated new
knowledge into their world. Similarly, Nelson-Laird et al. (2008) reported that deep learning approaches resulted from greater student engagement and satisfaction. A frequency analysis showed that a greater amount of business students disagreed and strongly disagreed than education students did on Item 4: *I experienced professors who keep up to date with the latest developments in the content area.* McArthur, Hudson, Cook, Spotts, & Goldsmith (2001) reported that students from marketing, general business, accounting, finance, and graphic arts worked together to design and market postcards for their higher education institution. Because of the content change, student-learning outcomes included effective management skills, team leadership, interpersonal communication, project planning skills, sales skills, and oral and written presentation skills. In conclusion, business programs would greatly benefit from such initiatives.

There was a significant difference between the groups on deep learning, in which business students somewhat agreed or agreed, and education students agreed and strongly agreed. As previously noted, Nelson-Laird et al. (2005) examined how deep learning varies by discipline areas. Nelson-Laird et al. found that students occasionally used deep approaches to learning across disciplines, which supports the finding in this study reported by business students, but does not support the finding reported by education students. Nelson-Laird et al. also found that students who studied social sciences had the highest score on the deep learning scale, just as education students in this study. In contrast, Braxton and Hargens (1996) found that faculty members promote deep learning regularly across academic disciplines (Braxton & Hargens, 1996).

A frequency analysis showed that a greater amount of business students disagreed or strongly disagreed on Item 10: *I learned to integrate diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, and political beliefs, etc.) into class discussions or writing assignments.* The research literature indicates that integration or transfer of learning leads to learning outcomes such as making connections, application, and synthesis (Barber, 2012), otherwise known in this study as deep learning. In Barber’s (2012) qualitative study, it was reported that a student made connections among her courses as well as with her experiences abroad, in which she integrated knowledge from a class called Race and Ethnicity to obtain a deeper understanding of Plato in her literature class. Another student reported how a new course he was taking allowed him to compare and contrast varying religious and scientific ideas, and synthesize them into his own belief system. In conclusion, if graduate professors integrate diverse perspectives such as race, religion, and politics into their courses, graduate students will likely obtain a higher level of deep learning.

The frequency analysis revealed that Item 30: *I reflected on my strengths and weaknesses of my own views on an issue in an effort to consider different perspectives* contributed to the significant difference between the groups. Waddock (1999) and Ramasamy (2002) found that many business students approached reflective learning tasks with skepticism, and regarded them as irrelevant. As a result, students were disengaged and professors perceived reflective practices as a waste of time due to little or no impact on student learning outcomes. Moon (1999) found that reflection facilitates the problem-solving process, presents students with solutions to problems with no right or wrong solution. Reflection also allows students to use prior knowledge to make judgments and investigate...
knowledge rather than accept all knowledge as valid information. Bisman (2011) studied the use of structured reflective journals as part of a journaling project in a graduate management accounting course, and found that learning objectives such as improved higher-order thinking, content mastery, and better quality learning experiences were achieved to varying degrees. Students also demonstrated a shift from surface learning to deep learning. In conclusion, if graduate professors encourage reflective practices in the classroom, students may find ways to consider new perspectives and will likely learn deeply.

**Implications for Graduate Classrooms**

This paper postulated that pedagogical content knowledge, transformational teaching practices, engagement, and deep learning are important to ensure the quality of college teaching and learning. However, Young and Shaw (1999) found that consensus in the definition of effective teaching may not be possible, as effective teaching varies according to subject, class size, student ability, and assessment practices. It has been noted that there is much diversity in the research literature regarding the specific components of effective teaching in higher education (Devlin, 2007; Devlin & Sanarawickrema, 2010). Several attempts to identify the characteristics of effective teaching have been made using different theoretical perspectives, qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and various disciplinary perspectives (Devlin & Sanarawickrema, 2010; Vulcano, 2007), although some scholars believe that there is no universally accepted definition of effective teaching in higher education (Devlin & Sanarawickrema, 2010; Paulsen, 2002). Devlin and Sanarawickrema (2010) added that effective teaching consists of a set of skills and practices that meet particular requirements of the context in which it takes place.

While the definition of effective teaching remains controversial, there are similarities between previous research literature and this study that challenge the notion that universal effective teaching practices are not possible. Kane, Sandretto, and Heath (2004) studied 17 exemplary science professors and identified several attributes that are common among professors, such as (a) subject knowledge; (b) skill; (c) interpersonal relationships; (d) teaching-research connection; (e) personality; and (f) reflective practice. Participants maintained that for professors to be excellent, they need to:

- maintain their subject matter knowledge;
- keep up to date in the content area;
- demonstrate clarity (clear communication);
- make real-world connections between the subject and student experience;
- stay organized and prepare accordingly;
- remain adaptable;
- be life-long learners;
- communicate subject matter in meaningful ways;
- act as mentors who show empathy, trust, and the ability to understand students’ issues;
- connect research to practice and integrate research into teaching;
- demonstrate enthusiasm;

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• be humane;
• be approachable;
• engage in purposeful reflection

This study, along with Kane et al. (2004) found that keeping up to date in the content area; making real-world connections and integration, and reflection are common practices that yield positive student learning outcomes and teaching excellence. These similarities suggest that perhaps there are common effective teaching practices to ensure the quality of college teaching and learning.

Implications for Graduate Education

The results of this study also suggest that the quality of graduate education needs improvement. All graduate students described that they somewhat agreed and agreed that their current professors demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and deep learning in their current program. Despite the fact that graduate students agreed and strongly agreed on Student – Professor Engagement in Learning, there is room for improvement in graduate education to help prepare students for the future. Research (Wendler et al., 2010) suggested that graduate programs played a significant role in preparing students to become productive members of society and leaders of the global economy. By 2018, approximately 2.5 million jobs will require a graduate degree (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011). By 2020, efforts to improve the preparation of 21st century professors will be in effect in some institutions, although, a national effort is needed (Wendler et al., 2010).

Lastly, the findings of this study may benefit graduate students, graduate professors, prospective graduate students, and professors by providing valuable information for teaching practices in graduate courses that promote deep learning outcomes. Once there is insight into graduate student perceptions of teaching and learning, the information can enhance graduate business and education programs.

Limitations and Recommendations

The dispositions of those entering a graduate program were not assessed in this study, and this may have affected the findings. This study was limited to male and female graduate students enrolled in graduate business and education programs from the United States and other unknown countries. It was unknown if the participants were attending a teaching or research-extensive university. The class size in which the graduate students were enrolled was unknown.

Subsequent research should be conducted to determine whether perceptions identified in this study are applicable to other regions or academic disciplines. The researcher suggests that future researchers replicate this study in other academic disciplines within research universities and teaching universities to determine if each have a unique impact on graduate students. In addition, it is also recommended that the study be replicated in...
online learning programs to determine if graduate students enrolled in distance learning perceive the variables differently.

**References**


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Student Perceptions of Dual-listed Courses

Katia Balassiano¹, Kurt A. Rosentrater, and Sara B. Marcketti

Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011

Abstract

Academic departments regularly offer dual-listed courses in which one course has two course numbers, yet are taught in the same place, at the same time, by a single instructor, and in one department to undergraduate and graduate students. While universities discourage their use by subjecting such courses to more rigorous approval processes, academic departments often offer these courses to solve logistic and resource concerns. Little empirical research has examined students’ perceptions of dual listed courses. This pilot study presents quantitative and qualitative findings (n = 781) of a survey sent to students enrolled at a Midwestern, land-grant University. The findings reveal that students perceive many benefits of dual-listed courses. Undergraduate students benefitted from exposure to graduate school expectations through interaction with graduate students. Graduate students benefitted from refreshing their knowledge of basic material and learning how to structure undergraduate courses for their future academic careers. Recommendations for improving dual-listed courses are provided.

Keywords: Dual-listed, paired, co-listed, perceptions, students.

The purpose of this research was to understand how graduate and undergraduate students perceive dual-listed courses. Students’ opinions of dual-listed courses, the advantages and disadvantages of such courses based on past experiences, can help instructors and university curriculum committees create better, more worthwhile courses. Courses structured to facilitate substantial interaction between graduate and undergraduate students, that is, those with the characteristics of dual-listed courses, expand the breadth and depth of learning (Jayaram & Swartwout, 2012; Hoalst-Pullen & Gatrell, 2011; Miller, Witherow & Carson, 2012). But, how do students perceive these courses? Do students find courses with a diverse student body beneficial to their academic experience? And, to what degree do the benefits and challenges differ between graduate and undergraduate students? Reported and analysed within this article are the responses from an online survey conducted of graduate and undergraduate students enrolled at Iowa State University (ISU) during the spring semester 2013.

A dual-listed course is comprised of two courses with different course numbers that are listed separately in university catalogs and that restrict registration to qualifying students. In practice, a dual-listed course is a single course taught in the same place, at the same time, by a single instructor, and in one department to undergraduate and graduate stu-

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Student Perceptions of Dual-listed Courses

Students. Iowa State University’s Biological Systems Engineering (BSE) 480/580, Twentieth Century Fashion History (TC) 356/556, and Community and Regional Planning (CRP) 416/516 are only a few examples of dual-listed courses. Undergraduates register for the lower course number; graduate students for the higher of the two course numbers. Such courses may also be referred to as “paired” and “co-listed” courses. The term “dual-listed” is, however, not interchangeable with “cross-listed”, i.e., two courses offered by different departments that are taught together. Nor does dual-listed, as used within this paper, have anything to do with “dual-degree” or “combined-degree” programs, i.e., a program that allows students to enter an institution of higher education as an undergraduate and exit with a master’s degree. However, many university departments that offer accelerated degrees – or those that combine an undergraduate and graduate degrees may regularly offer dual-listed courses.

Beyond dual-listing a course and allowing both graduate and undergraduate students to register, instructors often have the freedom to allow undergraduates to register for graduate courses, i.e., “with the instructor’s permission.” While we do not explore how students perceive this option, we recognize that these individual, instructor-initiated decisions also result in more diverse classrooms. However, in all likelihood the course structure or syllabus is not designed to account for these decisions, i.e. undergraduates accepted into graduate-level courses are not accommodated with different assignments, etc., and therefore this classroom model (that also results in a blended student body) is not the same as dual-listed courses.

Universities usually have specific procedures for approving dual-listed courses. For example, Appendix G of the ISU Graduate College Handbook specifies that the Graduate Curriculum and Catalog Committee must approve dual-listed courses, but does not indicate how course proposals are evaluated. Departments seeking approval of a dual-listed course are advised: “In reviewing proposals for dual-listed courses, this [Graduate Curriculum and Catalog] committee needs to understand the department’s rationale for offering the course. When a department submits a request, an explanation should be given of the purpose served by the course and the criteria used by the department to determine if the course is suitable for dual-listing.” This policy, and the policies of other universities, sounds flexible, but implicitly suggests that dual-listed courses will be subject to a more rigorous review; and thus, dual-listing is not encouraged.

Little empirical research has been conducted regarding dual-listed courses, although a review of course catalogs from diverse schools quickly reveals that such courses are offered widely. Because the literature on the subject is limited, we examine dual-listed courses by means of a pedagogical framework associated with interaction among diverse students as well as discussion of purposes for creating dual-listed courses. Following the framework, the survey methodology is explained and findings reported. The article ends with possible strategies for instructors assigned to teach dual-listed courses. Our research should appeal to instructors of dual-listed courses looking to better structure their classrooms and syllabi, and to university policy-makers tasked with determining whether dual-listed courses could play a larger role in the future of higher education.
Pedagogical Framework

A university or college may have both pedagogical and resource reasons for dual-listing a course. Dual-listing a course provides opportunities for students with different skill sets and life-experiences to interact. The greater the difference among students, the more the classroom resembles a real work environment. In 1988, Carnevale, Gainer, Meltzer, and Holland identified the following skills “employers want”: ability to acquire knowledge, listening, oral communication, problem solving, creative thinking, self-esteem, goal setting / motivation, personal and career development, interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation, organizational effectiveness, and leadership. By 2012, that list of transferable core proficiencies had changed little, and included: basic literacy and numeracy skills; critical thinking skills; management skills; leadership skills; interpersonal skills; information technology skills; systems thinking skills; and work ethic disposition (Rosenberg, Heimler & Morote, 2012). Both the skills in 1988 and 2012 recognize that jobs generally require different people to work together creatively, productively and with the ability to negotiate interpersonal conflict.

Some course instructors attempt to hone collaborative and interpersonal skills with team-based discussions and problem-solving. Proponents of “team-based learning” go through great lengths to create teams of students that are diverse from a socio-cultural perspective (Sweet & Michealsen, 2012). Besides offering an opportunity to practice interpersonal communication skills, diversity among students facilitates more creative thinking and learning. Emphasizing the diversity of skills, Kotval (2003) recommends faculty “distribute the talent and assign students so that each team has individuals with leadership skills, writing skills, and design skills” (p. 303). Diversity in the classroom has positive results. Miller, Witherow and Carson (2012) demonstrate enhanced student learning in biotechnology laboratory-intensive courses when lab partners are of different academic levels. Similarly, an online course involving “virtual teams” was found to have promoted personal and professional exchanges in which students shared experiences and visions for the integration of technology into a variety of educational situations (Espinoza, Chambers, & Justice, 1998).

While the potential learning outcomes of dual-listing courses have not previously been documented, certain pedagogical approaches that can be applied in dual-listing, including team-based learning, peer teaching or tutoring (Hoalst-Pullen & Gatrell, 2011; Topping, 1996) and learning “soft skills” associated with juggling many responsibilities (DeBartolo & Hensel, 2004), are well-documented. The class formats that promote learning through extensive interaction among students and exposure to skills useful outside of the classroom are also preferred by students. From the students’ perspective, the “millennial generation” values in class activities that build connections between students and linking academic material to students’ lives (Kraus & Sears, 2008).

Financial and programmatic reasons, the need to stretch limited resources, response to low course enrollment as a result of fewer high school graduates, and recognition that graduate and undergraduates occasionally require similar course content, also drives departments to dual-list courses (Eppes, et al. 2008; see also for example Amata, 2005).

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From a more positive perspective, Miller, Witherow and Carson (2012) make a case for dual-listing when universities want to offer highly specialized courses that may never attract large numbers of students, i.e. “specialized ‘boutique’ courses in which student enrollment may be low, but specialized equipment and faculty expertise is needed” (p. 331). This might also be a strategy for new or experimental courses that are being tested prior to their becoming a regularly offered course. Malin’s (2007) recommendations for “paired courses” prepared for San Francisco State University’s Graduate Council alludes to research designed primarily to guide internal university policy. The integrity of graduate education can be maintained in “paired courses” when graduate students are assigned work that asks them to engage in larger scholarly conversations within the field, provides opportunities for practicing leadership or the mentoring of undergraduates, requires advanced level writing, and engages students in graduate-only extended class discussions. The undergraduate response to courses that implement these recommendations is unknown.

Although little has been published documenting the negative aspects of dual-listing courses, universities appear to implicitly recognize the temptation of creating too many dual-listed courses. Many schools have policies that govern, and thereby limit, the practice of dual-listing (see for example, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, 2009 “Rubric for Dual-Level Courses MS in Biology and MS in Microbiology”; California State University San Marcos Undergraduate and Graduate Dual-Listed Courses Procedures). University policies generally make approval for dual-listing courses more rigorous to obtain than single listed courses by requiring additional review. Iowa State University limits the number of dual-listed course credits that may be used to meet the requirements for an advanced degree. Perhaps such policies are guided by overarching ethical concerns for students’ welfare, but there exists little documentation to support that hypothesis. The authors argue that student perceptions could help guide decisions associated with dual-listing, and as such, contribute to the practice of teaching.

**Method**

During the spring 2013, an online survey was sent to all undergraduate (n = 25,553) and graduate (n = 4,607) students of Iowa State University (numbers based on fall 2012 enrollment) through SurveyGizmo. The questionnaire contained 16 close-ended and 5 open-ended questions. The questions included demographics: What is your gender; What is your current classification; What are your experiences with dual-listed courses: Have you enrolled in a dual-listed course; If you were a graduate student, which of the following additional assignments did you complete; and perceptions of dual-listed courses: Do you learn more or less when the classroom has students of various academic levels. The open-ended questions provided an opportunity for students to further respond to the positives, challenges, and perceptions of dual listed courses. The survey was developed independently by the three authors as derived from their understanding of best-practices in current scholarship of teaching and learning literature. The authors worked together to consolidate similar questions and clarify wording. An early version of the survey was pilot-tested with approximately 15 undergraduate and graduate students in one of the authors’ classes. Based on their suggestions, the survey was further edited for clarity.
Recognizing that students receive many university-based notices and surveys (and electronic communications, in general), our expectations for a high response rate were low. We attempted to boost responses by keeping the survey short and by offering participants who completed the survey a chance to receive a $20 certificate to a local coffee shop through a random drawing of emails. Additionally, the initial request for participation in the survey was followed up with a reminder email, such that the survey was ultimately available for completion for a total of four weeks. As expected, the response rate was low. While this is a limitation of this study, we thus characterize this research as exploratory. Ideally, lessons learned from this research can help generate a more robust response rate in the future.

A total of 1,678 students completed or substantially completed the survey, representing an effective response rate of approximately 6%. Of those respondents, 781 students stated previous enrollment in a dual-listed course and, thus, their responses were used for the purpose of analysis. At the time the respondent took the dual-listed courses, 566 students were enrolled as undergraduates and 208 as graduate students. Of the total respondents, 262 were male and 417 were female.

Results were analyzed in Excel for frequencies. The qualitative results were analyzed through theme analysis. According to Leininger (1985) themes are identified by “bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone” (p.60). The authors first independently analyzed all student statements and placed them into themes. Next, the researchers worked together to compare, discuss, and finalize the placement of these themes utilizing a back-and-forth process of interpretation (Spiggle, 1994). The researchers achieved a 100% agreement level through this process. Although the response rate was low, the data analysis process revealed saturation in which concepts became redundant (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Findings

Three themes emerged from the analysis of the results, including:

1. Students responded positively to dual-listed courses;
2. The benefits of dual-listed courses stem from interaction among students and exposure to advanced ideas and more rigorous expectations;
3. Problems with dual-listed courses emerge when different student abilities are not taken into account, i.e., undergraduates complain of unreasonably high expectations, whereas graduates complain that courses are “dumbed down.”

Recommendations for instructors of dual-listed courses derived from the survey are included in the paper. Survey questions and raw results are illustrated in Table 1.

When asked if they recalled learning from their classmates in a dual-listed course, 65% or 497 respondents stated yes. When asked if they recalled helping classmates learn, 62% or 475 students stated yes. The idea of helping one another learn is firmly rooted in best practices of learning. Respondent #931 provided an example of the positive interaction
Table 1. Survey instrument and complete results from the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  While at Iowa State University, have you enrolled in a dual-listed course - for example CRP 416/CRP 516 - that has both undergraduate and graduate students in the same class and is offered by a single department (or program)? (These courses are often taught at the same time and in the same location). If yes, please proceed with this survey, if no, thank you for your time.</td>
<td>Yes 787  No 897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Were you an undergraduate or graduate student at the time you enrolled in the dual listed course?</td>
<td>Undergraduate 566  Graduate 208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  If you were a graduate student when you were enrolled in the dual listed course(s), which of the following were additional assignments that you needed to complete. Please check all that apply.</td>
<td>Exams 101  Readings 135  Assignments/Projects/Pres 212  Additional meetings with grad students 43  Additional meetings with instructor 34  Other 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Do you recall learning from your classmates?</td>
<td>Yes 497  No 196  Can't Recall 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  If yes, from whom?</td>
<td>Graduate 80  Undergraduate 64  Both 319  Uncertain 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Do you recall helping your classmates learn in the classroom?</td>
<td>Yes 475  No 162  Can't Recall 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  If yes, whom did you help?</td>
<td>Graduate 31  Undergraduate 163  Both 254  Uncertain 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Do you recall the course being different from courses where there were only grads or undergrads?</td>
<td>Yes 229  No 436  Can't Recall 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  If yes, how was it different?</td>
<td>Open-ended responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10  Was interaction among students encouraged and/or required by the course instructor?</td>
<td>Encouraged 375  Required 36  Both 216  Not Encouraged or Required 88  Can't Recall 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11  Do you recall understanding the course material better or worse specifically because the students were a combination of grads and undergrads?</td>
<td>Better 272  Worse 51  Can't Recall 414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12  Do you prefer being in a classroom with students at the same academic level?</td>
<td>Yes 258  No 68  Doesn't Matter 413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13  If you had the chance, would you take a dual-listed course again?</td>
<td>Yes 337  No 46  Wouldn't Affect 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14  Do you learn more or less when the classroom has students of various academic levels in the classroom?</td>
<td>More 243  Less 73  Same 386  Can't Recall 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15  Were you subject to higher or lower standards as a result of having classmates with different academic levels in the classroom?</td>
<td>Higher 263  Lower 69  Same 349  Can't Recall 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16  What pros/benefits have you experienced from taking a dual-listed course?</td>
<td>Open-ended responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17  What cons/problems have you experienced from taking a dual-listed course</td>
<td>Open-ended responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18  How would you change dual-listed courses in order to make them more effective?</td>
<td>Open-ended responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19  What other perceptions do you have about taking dual-listed courses?</td>
<td>Open-ended responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20  What is your current classification?</td>
<td>Undergraduate 453  Master's 106  Doctoral 104  Other 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21  What is your gender?</td>
<td>Male 262  Female 417</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

between undergraduate and graduate students. She stated:

The class I have taken was a mixture of different majors (e.g. planning, engineering, supply chain), thus, even as an engineering grad, I could still learn some basic ideas from planning/supply chain undergrads. On the other hand, I could show them more advanced information, which allowed me to apply the knowledge I learn as an engineer.

Another opportunity for helping each other was provided by respondents #882 and #779. They stated:
Often upper level students will ask questions which lead to further, insightful discussion which the undergrads would not necessarily have gotten to be a part of, but conversely, undergrads are more likely to ask questions of clarification which grad students would otherwise not feel like asking for fear of looking stupid.

I found that the undergrads were more open about concepts they didn't understand and were more active in asking questions that maybe some of us grads were scared to ask because we thought we should know that already. Also, the class atmosphere is more fun and light with undergrads present- they remind us to keep science fun.

These responses clearly indicated that the interaction between undergraduate and graduate students provided valuable learning opportunities; leading to finding #2.

**Finding 2: Benefits Stem from Interaction**

The benefits of dual-listed courses related to interaction between students. An overwhelming 78% of students, or 627 out of 803, stated interaction among students was encouraged and/or required by the course instructor. According to respondent #228, the dual-listed course “gave us a more dynamic learning environment, allowing us to learn from the different backgrounds and experiences of graduate students.” Respondent #258 indicated: “Other students have a variety of backgrounds that can be beneficial for learning or projects.”

Undergraduates, in particular, reported benefitting from dual-listed courses. These benefits centered on insights as to what graduate work might entail, often ensuing in confidence that they could pursue graduate school. Typical comments were as follows:

- It was beneficial to have graduate students in the class, as it increased my learning experience and helped me network with students that can also give me advice for my future. (Respondent #116)

- The insight into graduate classes while an undergraduate student. This has helped me decide to pursue more education. (Respondent #171)

- I have seen what a graduate course looks like and this will help me decide if I want to go to graduate school in the future. (Respondent #322)

- Makes me feel like grad school would be something I could do. (Respondent #924)

- The dual-listed courses I have been a part of absolutely increased my urge to continue onto graduate school (it made graduate education less intimidating). (Respondent #1241)
Undergraduate students also wrote that dual-listed courses were more challenging than single-listed courses. These challenging environments were motivated externally (provided by the instructor) and internally (motivation to “keep up” with graduate students). The opportunity to “rise to the challenge” helped increase undergraduate students’ confidence.

Since I was held to a higher standard, it gave me a reason to work even harder so I could keep up with the grad students. (Respondent #721)

I felt challenged in the class, and determined to prove that I could compete with grad students as an undergraduate. And then proud when I did well in the class. (Respondent #498)

When I'm surrounded by people who know what they’re talking about and take their academic work seriously, it pushes me to work harder as well. (Respondent #1162)

I was first frustrated that I was the only undergraduate and had to meet the expectations set for the graduate students. However, by midway through the semester I was confident in that my participation and work was meeting if not excelling that of some of the graduate students. (Respondent #1240)

Our findings are similar to those reported by Hoalst-Pullen and Gattrell in their 2011 study of a course involving both graduate and undergraduate students from different institutions. They wrote: “[Undergraduate] students found the experience of working with graduate students especially beneficial to their understanding of the discipline (by working with students with advanced knowledge and training within the discipline) and to their work ethic and final project results (by being challenged to work at a level expected for graduate students). For some undergraduate students, this led to a new, or renewed, interest in graduate school.” (p. 259).

The stated benefits graduate students experienced were different from the undergraduates and often included learning how to structure undergraduate student courses for their future teaching careers and an opportunity to refresh their knowledge of basic concepts.

I learn how simplify and clarify my instructions/explanation, allowing me to refine my teaching skills. (Respondent #397)

Helped me realize that we take a lot of concepts for granted as grad students. Revisiting them helps immensely. Also it provides new perspectives on the topics being covered since the instructor tries to make it more accessible to everyone. (Respondent #1161)

I got to interact and know some undergraduate students who were in my area of study. It was interesting to have their perspective on the material we learned. It al-
so challenged me to make sure I understood the material well enough that I could explain it to them at their level. (Respondent #687)

Being a graduate student in all dual-listed courses, I have learned from the under-graduates with basic material that I had forgotten or had not learned. It was nice to have them in the classroom so that some more basics items were covered or at least checked for understanding/comprehension. (Respondent #591)

Finding 3: Problems Stem from Not Taking Different Abilities into Account

While the majority of respondents expressed positive perceptions of the benefits of dual-listed courses, a minority expressed dissatisfaction. Undergraduate students’ complaints included material that was too advanced and feeling left out of course discussions.

I feel sometimes a little intimidated by the graduate students, almost inadequate compared to them. I also feel that I must be held to a far higher standard than classes with undergrads. (Respondent #1410)

Having graduate students taking the same class can be intimidating. It also becomes scary when most of them are graduate students and when the instructor asks if everyone understands the material, since the graduate students make up the majority, a lost undergrad can become overlooked. (Respondent #1720)

Cons were that the class was a lot harder because the standards and curve were set a lot higher. And undergrads were expected to test/write like grad students. (Respondent #375)

For the graduate student respondents, problems included “dumbed-down” instruction and increased time spent reassuring undergraduate students. Examples of such perspectives are as follows:

The abilities of lower-level students dragged the class down. They were not as skilled, prepared or familiar with some of the issues, and we had to cover what seemed to be basic material to bring them up to speed. (Respondent #1380)

There is some immaturity associated with having the younger students. More time was devoted to going over the rules multiple times/making sure everyone knew what the homework assignments were and understood them fully/etc. that often is a given and a student’s responsibility in graduate level classes. (Respondent #99)

There is a little bit more “housekeeping” that has to be done that takes up class time, reassuring undergrads they do not have to do additional assignments and explaining them to the graduate students that again takes away from discussion. Maybe with increased IT solutions (i.e. Blackboard) this time can continue to be reduced. (Respondent #1562)
Many of the respondents indicated potential ways to enhance the positives and mitigate the problems experienced in dual-listed courses.

**What Students Recommend for Instructors of Dual-Listed Courses**

The survey asked the students: “How would you change dual listed courses to make them more effective?” Many undergraduate students expressed interest in why graduate students returned to school, what their studies entailed, and the coursework and rigor required. Two typical suggestions that would result in undergraduates learning more about the “graduate school option” are as follows:

I think from just general conversation the undergrads knew the grad students had more required of them in the course to qualify for graduate credits. It would have been nice for the undergrads to see the extra work, perhaps as a presentation from the grad students. I think it would have been insightful. (Respondent #1443)

More interaction with graduate students. Presentations of their projects, backgrounds, mentoring if they have professional experience. (Respondent #898)

This finding suggests that instructors may consider requiring graduate students to share their projects with the undergraduate students in the course. Further, providing formal mentoring experiences may benefit undergraduates as they are exposed to graduate school opportunities and benefits to graduate students as they are provided opportunities to hone their skills as future educators. Respondent #680 specifically recommended that this interaction needed to be fostered by the instructor. He stated, “Dual-listed courses can provide opportunities for grads to ‘teach’ undergrads thus reinforcing the material for both parties, but that interaction is less likely to happen unless a professor enforces ‘mixed’ groups.”

An additional recommendation for instructors was to provide increased opportunities for differentiation of instruction. This recommendation is in keeping with most university policies for dual-listed courses. Iowa State University’s policy, for example, as described in the 2012-2013 course catalog suggests, “This extra work may take the form of additional reading, projects, examinations, or other assignments as determined by the instructor.” The amount and type of “extra work” is at the instructor’s discretion, as is the format of such courses. The present study asked graduate students to reflect on the additional work required of them (Table 2).

**Table 2: Additional Work Required of Graduate Students in Dual-listed Courses.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Additional Work</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments / Projects / Presentations</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Meetings w/ Grad Students</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Meetings w/ Instructor</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Of the 534 responses, 39% reported additional assignments, projects, or presentations and 25% indicated additional readings were required of graduate students in dual-listed courses. In their qualitative responses, several graduate students recommended additional rigor for their assignments, not just “busy work” as indicated by respondent #1149, “Have more separate work between levels, not just add to what the upper level students have to do.”

**Implications for Practice and Policy**

Practical lessons gleaned from this research can be drawn directly from the recommendations survey respondents’ offered. Organized thematically, the two major recommendations are that dual-listed courses meet the intellectual needs of a diverse student body and that instructors of dual-listed courses facilitate interaction among students. Pedagogical research recognizes that student learning is improved when student preferences are matched to pedagogical approaches (Gregore, 1979; Okebukola, 1986; Van Auker, Campell & Wells, 2009), but of course, matching teaching methods with learning styles is more difficult when student difference is exaggerated. The survey reveals that students generally have a nuanced understanding of the complexity of these courses and perceive both their advantages and disadvantages. One of the respondents captures the difficulty of meeting the needs of diverse students perfectly:

> Undergrads, even very motivated and skilled undergrads, need a different level of support and direction from faculty than do graduate students. Similarly, masters students, particularly those who do not have the experience of conducting or presenting research, need different kinds of support and direction than do undergrads, master’s students with research experience, and PhD students. PhD students should not be bogged down (or, worse, dumbed down) to classes that meet the needs of the lowest performing student. This requires a nimble faculty member. (Respondent #1380)

We recommend an initial assessment of learning styles, teaching that caters to a variety of needs, and a choice of student assessments. For example, pairing readings, with in class discussions, and the use of PowerPoint slides can satisfy the needs of students who learn by reading, those who respond best to visuals, as well as those who learn best through listening and discussing. Similarly, we recommend that students be offered a choice of assessments. For example, instead of only requiring the submission of a written essay to demonstrate learning, instructors can alternatively offer an in class exam or submission of a poster. As for facilitating interaction; the student-centered teaching literature has many well-researched and tested techniques that instructors could adapt (see for example Wright 2011; Estes 2004). Survey respondents’ positive perceptions reinforce the best of what instructors are doing, i.e., encouraging discussion and differentiating aptitude in testing and grading.

In terms of implications for university policy, survey respondents suggest dual-listed courses enhance learning; therefore, dual-listing should not be subject to controls that deter based solely on administrative rigor or complexity. Review and approval processes
should likely examine not only departmental reasons for such courses, but ensure that syllabi both differentiate among students and incorporate schema for facilitating interaction. Differentiation may include (as many already do) additional requirements of graduate students, but also an explicit grading mechanism that subjects graduates and undergraduates to different standards. Options for facilitating interaction among students can be borrowed from the existing team-based, peer learning, tutoring, etc. approaches. A more thorough review of curriculum policy is needed to determine whether policies are actually improving the quality of such courses, or whether instructors are independently developing syllabi that intentionally cater to the needs of a diverse student body. Most importantly, similar to the research findings associated with peer resource learning (Grant & Manuel 1995), instructors of dual-listed courses must negotiate expectations and responsibilities regularly throughout the course. Realistic objectives and precise guidance pertaining to course goals and assignments can prevent misunderstandings. Students graduating today need the same critical thinking skills and interpersonal skills as they did twenty years ago. Properly designed dual-listed courses not only provide such skills, but can make learning more enjoyable.

Acknowledgments

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“Friending” Vygotsky: A Social Constructivist Pedagogy of Knowledge Building Through Classroom Social Media Use

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Abstract

Social media and web 2.0 technologies are an attractive supplement to the higher education experience and are embraced as a way to foster intra- and extracurricular knowledge generation among a class community. However, these collaborative media require a rethinking of the theoretical framework through which we engage student communities of practice. This paper offers a social media-age rethinking of Vygotsky’s (1978) conceptualization of social constructivism within learning communities by presenting two case studies of instructor uses of social media platforms through a Facebook community of practice and a wiki-based, student-generated exam. Each examines the pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of incorporating social media in course curricula through the development of social constructivist-based best practices in Web 2.0 course environments.

Keywords: Interactive learning environments, media in education, pedagogical issues, teaching/learning strategies.

The implementation of technology into the classroom presents educators with a myriad of options that were not available as little as a few years ago. While using various technologies to supplement learning is attractive, the use of these tools is not always intuitive. It can be difficult for instructors to maintain best practices of pedagogy while continuously learning and relearning how to incorporate emerging technologies. This has prompted a perpetual lamentation that advances in pedagogy have not kept up with the rapid introduction of new technologies in the classroom (Boling & Robinson, 1999; Notar, Wilson, & Montgomery, 2005). This is likely due to the fact that those routinely employed to implement these technologies are not educators, but more commonly technical consultants and IT staff. Their primary goal is to make the technology function properly and effectively, not necessarily to think of issues such as student learning outcomes or best teaching practices. The remedy to this dilemma is to identify salient features of hardware and software technologies that instructors wish to use, and then use theory to understand how to develop practical pedagogy to maximize the likelihood of successful learning outcomes.

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One group of technologies that is increasingly of interest to instructors is social media. Social media are web-based platforms that facilitate collaboration, interaction, and exchange of user-generated content (Surowiecki, 2005). These media fall under the rubric of what O’Reilly (2005) termed “Web 2.0”, and are characterized primarily by a shift from viewing the web as a site of information retrieval, to the perspective of the web as a participatory platform. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, FourSquare, and various wiki-style sites are integrated firmly into the personal lives of most students, allowing faculty the opportunity to customize course material to facilitate and accomplish learning expectations and goals (McLoughlin & Lee, 2008).

In terms of usage, social media are indeed popular. A 2010 study conducted by the Pew Research Center revealed 93% of United States teens (ages 12 through 17) and young adults (18 through 29) are online. Of online teens, 73% have used a social networking site (SNS), a figure that has climbed steadily since 2006. Young adults share a similar relationship, with 72% having frequented a social media site (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Considering the pivotal role the internet plays in the lives of late-teens and 20-somethings and the cost-effectiveness of these technologies alongside ever-tightening budgets for higher education, it is not surprising online courses have become in demand (Allen & Seaman, 2008; Kim & Bonk, 2006). Nor is it surprising that the use of social media as pedagogical tools should be considered (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008) as colleges and universities strive to maintain “flexible, inclusive, collaborative, authentic, relevant, global and effective” learning environments (Felix, 2005, p. 86).

At the very heart of social media is the ability to generate connections. The community behavior and values that develop in virtual spaces form what Hung and Der-Thanq (2001) term a “community of practice,” a communicative forum where an organization can collaborate in order to articulate its common goals and act to achieve them (Guasch, Alvarez, & Espasa, 2010, Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009). The learning curve associated with various social media does not seem to present overt barriers for the larger body of traditional students and instructors who use them; however, developing a theory of social media use in the classroom in order to maximize student learning outcomes requires further research. Pedagogically speaking, the theory of social constructivism, with its emphasis on groups in the construction of knowledge to promote learning, is a natural pairing for how to use social media.

**Social constructivism**

A body of literature has developed recently that links social constructivist theory with the use of new media technologies in terms of pedagogical best practices. Some have examined this relationship in the context of web-based and computer-mediated learning environments (Felix, 2005; Hung & Der Thanq, 2001; Pear & Crone-Todd, 2002; Woo & Reeves, 2007), asynchronous distance learning environments (Millard, 2010), virtual learning environments (Guasch et al., 2010), blended learning (Heinz & Procter, 2006), and various social media and networking sites (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Romero-Frias & Montano, n.d.).
Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, regarded as the father of social constructivism, believed that knowledge was constructed through dialogue and interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). He argued that knowledge is co-constructed in a social environment and that in the process of social interaction, people use language as a tool to construct meaning. The use of language between individuals in an environment as an interpsychological tool is central to social constructivist thought on the learning process. Successful learning is said to result in an internal dialogue as an intrapsychological tool that can be used in the future across varying situations (Marsh & Ketterer, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978). This scaffolding can be stored in memory and used by the learner to make sense of his or her environment at a later date.

It is important here to make a distinction between knowledge and learning. According to social constructivist theory, knowledge is co-constructed in the environment (interpsychologically) with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Although learning may occur through collaboration, it is still an internal mechanism within the individual (intrapsychologically). Learning, therefore, occurs at the individual level and is a product of knowledge creation through collaboration, whereas knowledge is co-created in the environment. Internalization of information is regarded then as both an individual and social process (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

As members of a community negotiate meaning, they not only impact the intrapsychological processes, but impact the interpsychological group processes (Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Vygotsky proposed that individual-level learning occurs within the zone of proximal development (ZPD) or the area in which intellectual development is still in progress (Marsh & Ketterer, 2005). The ZPD may be defined as “the functions that have not yet been learned – they are the “buds” of development, not the “fruits” of development” (Marsh & Ketterer, 2005: 2; Vygotsky, 1978: 87). These “fruits” refer to already learned knowledge that exists in the zone of actual development (ZAD). From Vygotsky’s standpoint, learning may be defined as an expansion of the ZPD into the ZAD.

The ability to learn through dialogue and interaction with others is central to knowledge generation. The benefit of using social media such as Facebook or wikis is that these technologies connect with students where they spend much of their time, thus creating virtual communities of practice and a virtual public sphere for discussion (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009). Since each student brings a unique set of experiences to the classroom, the participatory nature of social media allows them the opportunity to take ownership of their scholarship by becoming active in the knowledge-creation process.

For those used to a more traditional classroom, this may be quite a change. When using social media, the role of the instructor is not solely to disseminate information, but rather to moderate the trajectory of user-generated content and community knowledge-sharing (Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009). Although sites such as Facebook or wikis may be familiar to student users who use these technologies in their day-to-day lives, students’ conceptual transformation of these sites from social media to pedagogical agent may be
unclear. Just as the classroom needs its teacher, social media spaces require a skilled moderator for effective learning to occur during the collaborative knowledge creation process (Lazonder, Wilhelm, & Ootes, 2003). With a mediator to keep discussion on track, the community of practice takes a sense of ownership over its own knowledge, while at the same time working within the framework of the instructor’s course objectives. In a sense, the endpoint may be the same, but the different approach to generating knowledge can benefit the student learning community in ways beyond simply achieving course objectives. Student response and interest in specific topics allow for more in-depth coverage of select areas of coursework beyond those originally slated for discussion. Ultimately, course learning objectives are not only met (through scheduled course plans), but exceeded based on the discussion direction taken by students and consensus.

Yet, the question of the students’ relationship to technology is central to developing best pedagogical practices. Traditional students, the so-called “Digital Natives” born after 1980 (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 1), are the first generation that has never known a world without the internet. The generation’s youngest understand the internet as a mobile phenomenon (Gabriel, 2011). If the social and cultural identity of Digital Natives is constructed through these media, then it is important that instructors carefully leverage the possibilities of these technologies for collaborative knowledge building in tandem with the benefits of traditional classroom instruction.

**Methodology**

To explore the possibilities of Web 2.0 in forming more relatable and accessible learning environments from which information can be processed into knowledge structures, the authors offer two case studies – one using Facebook, the other using a wiki platform – that illustrate the implementation of social media into traditional-style classrooms to develop communities of practice. Although the specificity involved in the case study method has been debated (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993; Yin, 1993, 1994), contemporary proponents argue the method provides the contextual knowledge for individuals to acclimate themselves to an entire issue or situation instead of having to rely on personal, preexisting knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Furthermore, in certain disciplines, the case study method appears to flourish as it “strives to highlight the features or attributes of social life” (Hamel et al., 1993, p 2). The field of education is no exception, with the case study method used to address, among other topics, asynchronous learning in mediated environments (Hawkey, 2003; Martini & Cinqué, 2011).

Yin’s (1994) definition best defines the spirit in which the following case studies were written. He defines the case study method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident,” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). Much like Martini and Cinqué (2011) explore the role of Ning (a platform for creating community websites) in their case study analysis, this article uses two primary case studies to illustrate the implementation of social technologies into the classroom. Real-life context is supported by the fact that no additional hardware technologies were needed other than computers, which students have access to either in residences or in campus labs and are
required to use daily in other courses. With regard to the social media technology (Facebook) used in Case #1, all participating students already had a viable, active account and utilized it regularly. Conversely, a training session was held for students in Case #2, as most had not previously used wiki technology in a participatory collegiate environment.

The objects of study, as defined by Hamel et al. (1993) in Case Study #1 and Case Study #2, are the reactions and outcomes of using Facebook and wikis in the respective classrooms. However, the fields in which these objects, or more precisely, these processes, are studied are equally important, providing necessary contextual information. Thus, the case studies are written to be explanatory as well as descriptive (Yin, 1994).

When drawing conclusions about the success of the social media usage in the following case study classrooms, care was taken to employ a sense of objectivity, particularly because two of the authors were directly involved with teaching the courses. Survey results and responses from open-ended questions allowed data to be triangulated (Maxwell, 2005; Yin, 1993, 1994) thereby strengthening the validity of the conclusions and applicable theoretical connections. In addition, the authors took care to examine critically social media use in order to better improve their personal pedagogical techniques. Students also offered critiques in response to the open-ended questions posed to them. A sampling of those critiques accompanies each case study.

**Case Study #1: Facebook as a Collaborative, Student-driven Platform**

Media Literacy is a freshman-level communication studies course of 36 students. The roster pulls from numerous majors at varying levels in the university. This is an asset to the course, particularly as students learn to critically analyze media and deconstruct media messages. Students typically are interested in the material presented, yet they become frustrated and disengaged when discussions must be paused repeatedly to explain major-specific material or kept at an elementary level. Likewise, time constraints permit only a small percentage of students to contribute to course discussions.

**Objectives and goals**

To encourage continued student discussion, the professor for the course in Case Study #1 created a Facebook page. The students were required to respond via Facebook to specific questions posed during the traditional class period. The professor then asked students to engage in a virtual discussion intended to clarify more advanced comments in a non-threatening, time-unrestricted environment. To further encourage active participation in the course, the professor also asked students periodically to post examples that best represented key concepts and terms. Students were graded on their Facebook participation via a similar rubric to traditional class participation.

Unlike some courses that are taught exclusively online, this particular course was a hybrid of traditional and online components designed to achieve the following goals:

- **G1.** Increased participation among students.
G2. Ownership in not only course content, but also course design and structure.
G3. A shared learning experience where students were encouraged to learn from one another and about one another, the latter serving to increase the diversity of viewpoints.

The professor did not inform the students of the specific goals intended to be met through the use of Facebook. At the conclusion of the course, 30 of the 36 students completed a 29-question survey that spoke to the aforementioned objectives.

Facebook as a community space.

Created in 2004, Facebook reports more than 500 million active users, with approximately half logging on daily (Facebook, 2010). Considering 71% of 18- to 29-year-old SNS users use Facebook (Lenhart et al., 2010), it was not surprising that every student in this particular section of Media Literacy had a Facebook account. Admittedly, the popularity of Facebook played a major role in choosing it for course usage. There was an expectation that students would be familiar with it and could navigate it with ease, thus eliminating a potential learning curve. In the truest sense of social constructivism, students would, as a group, construct the knowledge that was to be processed individually. The Facebook page served simply as the venue for social interaction.

That students were familiar with Facebook did not make its transition from social medium to pedagogical tool any easier. Some were reluctant for their social and academic lives to cross paths; others questioned how the site could benefit their education. In an effort to allay concerns and offer students a more participatory role in course logistics, students, with the professor serving as facilitator, collectively created rules applicable to their work on the Facebook page. This process was a learning experience for both students and professor. An immediate concern involved language, grammar and punctuation use on Facebook. Although the professor favored Standard English rules, students quickly countered that the ‘point’ of Facebook was for quick message transmission. The discussion ended with a partial fulfillment of G2, and a list of nine class rules for Facebook use, one of which was:

While abbreviations, emoticons, etc. are OK to use on the Facebook page, they are NOT OK to use in class assignments, papers and exams. In anything other than Facebook, I (the professor) expect good grammar, spelling, word use and punctuation.

This process further enforced the idea of community-based learning as students essentially became teachers when they reminded the professor that community norms and social etiquette of Facebook allow for – and indirectly encourage – the use of informal vernacular.
Implementation and results

Learning as a collaborative activity.

Students (n = 30) who participated in the survey at the semester’s end acknowledged the intended shared learning experience, but most readily noted their increase in awareness of classmates’ opinions. Fourteen students believed they had learned more from the class because of their participation with Facebook, while 10 were unsure. When asked about their knowledge of other students’ beliefs, 27 believed they learned more about other’s opinions, while three did not believe that knowledge had increased because of Facebook. Students also responded to open-ended questions regarding Facebook and learning levels. The following represent some of the responses:

- It was quick and made me think about certain media. I saw how different people interpreted different messages.
- It helps me to see other’s opinions…a lot of people in the class do not interact with one another (in class).
- It allow[ed] me to see my classmates’ views on controversial topics. People posted things of all kinds, such as a wide range.[sic] I loved being able to post something I’d seen in my day.

Students’ uncertainty regarding the potential to generate knowledge through Facebook was not surprising, as only one of the 30 students reported taking a class that used SNS with regularity. Students had to decide for themselves if they believed a potential existed to gain knowledge from a technology that had previously been relevant only for socialization purposes. Even with instructor guidance, not all students embraced the process, though few elaborated on their reasoning.

- I read some of what people wrote, but I usually became distracted by looking at other things.
- Didn’t like it. Seemed like a waste of time.

A shared learning environment (G3) was achieved with the course Facebook page not serving merely as a discursive space, but as a mechanism for allowing students to operate within their own zones of proximal development (Cole, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). In addition to course discussion being richer and analysis deeper than what was presented in the text, students were able to apply their understanding of the information to their Facebook posts. If a student posted an incorrect or incomplete example, more advanced students were able to correct, clarify, or add to the statements via responses directly underneath. Of course, the professor had to monitor the site to ensure the correct information was being conveyed. If a discussion point became particularly confusing, the professor entered the conversation to provide the appropriate information.

Student involvement in course logistics, particularly as it pertained to Facebook usage and implementation, decreased the potential disconnect between professor and students and distinguished the different protocols between Facebook and non-Facebook assign-
ments. Guidelines established by the initial students served as a template for future students to change, modify and/or accept. They also acted as a starting point for discussion between students and professor. In addition, Facebook postings and comments provided students with more explicit ownership of the examples used, and topics discussed, in class.

**Increased participation.**

The Media Literacy course had six objectives with an overarching theme encouraging critical thinking. Three of those objectives included being able to:

- Recognize and discuss the importance of critically analyzing media;
- Identify how mass media have shaped, reinforced, and/or challenged personal perceptions of society and its inhabitants; and
- Articulate arguments (and counter arguments) regarding the need for media literacy and critical analysis of media.

Because critical analysis and articulation were key factors to successful completion of the course, students had multiple opportunities to practice those skills in order to fulfill successfully G1. Course readings, homework and semester projects helped sharpen those competencies but still provided limited settings and practical opportunities for students to use their newfound knowledge. The very nature of Facebook encourages brief discursive exchanges among participants, thereby forcing students to articulate their thoughts clearly and concisely. Because of its popularity, Facebook provided a familiar alternate space for sharing opinions.

Students were asked also to report their overall participation in the course. Fourteen believed they participated more in the course overall; 11 were unsure of their participation; and five felt they did not participate more. A majority of students (26) admitted to lurking on the course Facebook page, reading comments and exploring links, but not personally posting. Students also were asked to gauge their comfort level in sharing (potentially) controversial ideas in a classroom. Twenty students described themselves as very comfortable; three felt nervous; two each did not participate because they did not feel intelligent enough or felt as if others would think negatively of them if they showed disagreement; and five did not participate because they felt others would get angry with their responses. In open-ended questions, students shared the following:

- I think many students use Facebook and it (is) convenient for them. It’s another way for students to get involved outside of class, especially those who may be hesitant in the classroom.
- It gives students more (opportunities) to raise their grade. It also relates to students because it’s something we all use.
- I feel it was a good way to gain participation for those students that find it difficult to participate in class. I like to express myself in writing better than verbally, so I felt more confident in my Facebook responses.
Even if the Media Literacy students did not have an aversion to participating in class discussions, they recognized that other students might. Confidence gained through online participation seeped into in-class discussions, providing an overall richer learning environment. Students and the professor served as teachers of material, enabling the messages and concepts to be conveyed at various levels, at various times, and in various settings. “Vygotsky proposes the parallel between play and school instruction: both create a ‘zone of proximal development’ … and in both contexts children elaborate socially available skills and knowledge that they will come to internalize,” (Cole, John-Steiner, Schriber, & Souberman, 1978, p. 130). Facebook allowed applicable knowledge to be obtained, debated and retained by students in a non-confrontational atmosphere and then continued in a more formal, traditional, classroom setting.

Case Study II: Wiki-based Collaborative Knowledge Building

Our second case study involves Communicating for Social Justice, a required introductory course for Communication majors at a small, liberal arts school and the establishment of best practices for using a student-driven course wiki. The class, mostly first- and second-year students, utilized several evaluative strategies, including both synchronous and asynchronous testing, writing activities, journaling, and collaborative production projects through this technology.

The wiki is a web-based technology that allows for what Tapscott and Williams (2006, p. 7) call “peer production”. The practice of collaborating in an online setting in order to develop community-based, user-generated content speaks to Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of social construction of knowledge through discourse and dialogue. While most web users are familiar with Wikipedia, the web-based, user-edited encyclopedia, the term ‘wiki’ is commonly used to describe a simplified, web-based architecture that creates a networked discursive community. User-editing of online content is possible through a number of different software platforms, but what separates the wiki is that it uses a web-based, WYSIWYG interface that allows for open and equal access to all participants. Each user has the same level of privileges to create, modify, add to, or delete content from any of the site’s pages, and all previous versions of the page are saved on the site, allowing for users to view and, if desired, to revert to any previous version of the page. In a sense, the wiki-based space of production is a collaborative environment whose content is almost entirely derived from students through the extra-classroom community, within an open-format structure of pragmatic management guidelines developed by the instructor.

Technological possibilities and best practices

One of the challenges in the implementation of new technologies is developing best practices for classroom use. As wikis afford the flexibility of an open platform, they allow for a wide range of applications in course direction and management. The professor experimented with several uses of this technology; however, this case study focused on the application of user-generated content to the creation of course exams as a class community.
Implementation and evaluation

The professor’s use of the wiki for class purposes applied the principles of user-generated content or, in a sense, incentivized crowdsourcing (Howe, 2006) to allow students to develop a bank of questions and multiple-choice options for an exam, of which a percentage would be selected for inclusion in the actual evaluative measure. In other words, the students would create their own exam.

Students received detailed instructions: Each exam question submission to the wiki page would consist of the question itself, four or five multiple-choice options, followed by an identification of the correct answer and a few sentences on not only why this answer was correct but also why the other choices were incorrect, along with a page number or lecture reference. There was also a discussion section for each question, where the class community could deliberate over errors or ambiguities in question content or wording, correct misleading answers, revise questions, or provide better alternatives for the multiple-choice options. Students were told it was their responsibility to fact-check and discuss their peers’ submissions, and that the instructor would not be involved in the deliberation over right/wrong answers (although in the final selection of questions for inclusion, the instructor would not choose any with incorrect answers, unclear choices, or ambiguous language).

The bank of possible questions was researched, generated, and policed by students, themselves. The class was asked to come to a consensus as a community on how many questions would be on the exam and settled on 40. The professor then asked for at least 80 questions to be submitted into the question bank.

Furthermore, the process of submitting questions was incentivized. Students received extra credit equivalent to one missed question if their submitted questions were selected for inclusion on the exam (in addition to the benefit that the student would hopefully get the question correct on the exam, were it selected). This not only encouraged an increase in quantity of questions submitted but also in terms of quality. The better designed one’s question and multiple-choice alternatives, the more likely it would be selected by the instructor.

The professor informed students in advance that several days before the exam, submissions would be closed, and the correct answers and discussion removed from the wiki, leaving only the possible questions and multiple-choice answers. The instructor would mix in several additional questions to fill in the gaps where the goals for student learning outcomes were not addressed, which further required students to study, and also solved the problem of students simply saving the correct answers on their home computers. Creating questions and studying for the exam served as a material-reinforcement tool, and one that was guided by the course objectives set out by both the instructor and by the students themselves.
Evaluating results

An anonymous, voluntary post-test evaluation of the process consisting of qualitative open-ended survey questions was administered after the students had received their scores. In an analysis of the qualitative responses to this survey, of the 24 respondents, 22 responded that their experience with the wiki-based, user-generated exam was positive, with two not responding. Twenty presented comments that this form of developing tests helped them to learn, retain, or reinforce course concepts better than a traditional exam (four not mentioning), and 11 respondents’ comments highlighted that their test performance was better or that they were more prepared for this exam than a traditional exam (13 not mentioning). Of the remaining analysis, 8 mentioned that they better internalized comments or didn’t just memorize the answers, four mentioned that this approach facilitated collaboration in generating questions or studying with their peer community, and eight mentioned that it was challenging to develop questions and answers.

From the instructor’s perspective, the use of collaborative social media-based activities was advantageous and offered a different approach to meeting classroom objectives than traditional testing methods. These media and activities offered several advantages, highlighted here alongside qualitative student comments from post-test surveys.

First, collaborative, student-generated exams encouraged active student learning by granting ownership over course material through social media collaboration, as well as incentivized student participation in the direction of the course. By putting the responsibility of developing the exam in the hands of the students, their investment in the course went beyond the traditional teacher-student power dynamic. Some excerpted comments:

- The more we are involved, the more we want to read and learn, especially for people who need a more hands-on approach.
- Posting the questions prior to the exam gave us more motivation to study because it feels like the exam was primarily in our hands.

Furthermore, having students collaborate to develop their own exam question bank encouraged a careful and guided re-evaluation of course material at exam time rather than simple memorization of assigned text concepts.

- I was able to aptly study and be prepared … Creating and studying for this exam definitely helped reinforce the concepts because we were constantly looking up the answers to these questions.
- I was forced to go back to the readings and re-read things … so I got more out of studying for the exam [than in traditional exams].
- It seems to almost mandate student participation in the exam.

This social media-based approach encouraged engagement with course material through the collaborative discourse, dialogue, and deliberation of course concepts, as well as extracurricular exposure to course material. Through discursive interactions, students were learning from each other. The peer-interaction made possible by the wiki allowed stu-
dents to debate, correct and work in a collaborative environment to scaffold information while expanding their zones of proximal development. In constructing potential exam questions and debating possible answers, an online community of peer education developed. When paired with the professor-led classroom instruction to guide students toward key concepts, a dual-approach to learning was established, and based on student responses, was also effective.

- I was able to remember more because even after the exam, I was talking to my peers about what questions they had … I had to stay on my toes by checking the wiki every day to see if someone posted a new question.
- It was more interactive with students being able to give answers, making them more prone to study … interaction helps you learn instead of just possible memorization.

Finally, this approach provides an alternative approach to measuring student learning outcomes, and one that takes into account the student perspective (alongside the guidance of the instructor). By putting the responsibility for generating the course exam in students’ hands, the reward of points creates an incentive for students to more firmly engage with course material than they might have otherwise.

- I feel like the democratic process involved in creating the exam really facilitates learning. It forces students to work together.
- I felt that no one babied the questions, which was beneficial because the subject matter was challenging. I was forced to go back into the materials that we were assigned … in writing and studying the questions.
- This reinforced course materials more because it was from the perspective of the students.

The strategies utilized by the professor illustrate how SNS technologies can be paired with theory and transformed into a pedagogical tool. As this case study demonstrates, there are many possibilities that allow students to collaborate, peer-produce, and scaffold course material, and – perhaps most importantly – allow for increased student interaction, ownership, and community building. If students are given broad ownership over the way in which they wish to address course material, it serves as one additional reinforcement strategy, and one that takes the lessons from the classroom into extra-curricular territory by reconceptualizing the traditional separation of students from teachers in the generation of knowledge through the application of social media.

**Discussion**

If, as Vygotsky (1978: 88) stated, “human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them,” then the relevancy of social media such as Facebook and wikis as pedagogical tools is even more apparent. Yet like with any technology, it is important to remember that social media technologies should not be considered to replace traditional guided instruction (whether online or offline), nor are they to be thought of as a cure-all for unsound teach-
ing methodologies. Potential classroom applications of these technologies – so ubiquitous in the non-academic lives of students – are many, but the larger challenge for the development of a pedagogy for social media integration is to encourage research, conversations, and collaboration regarding best practices for classroom use. It also means soliciting student feedback to determine what does and doesn’t work.

We advocate for the continued discussion on how the application of established theories of learning facilitate SNS integration in a variety of contexts in order to help minimize guesswork and enrich student learning. It is important to note that social media integration need not be an all-or-nothing shift: Hybrid courses, such as those presented earlier in the case studies, allow the instructors to retain the ability to include selectively the strongest attributes of both traditional and online pedagogical elements to create an atmosphere that encourages the social construction of knowledge. Of course, it can be somewhat harrowing for the instructor to cede control of one’s classroom in terms of direction, particularly when the burden of generating content becomes decentralized, more “authentic,” and left to the crowd (Davydov, 1995: 13). But granting students the privilege of information gathering comes with the expectation that this opportunity will be used responsibly and that if community standards are violated (either in terms of social decorum or academic veracity), these violations will be remedied by the community itself. In the event of misconduct, the role of the instructor as the mediator of discussion and content would simply need to reassert authority in guiding the community back on track.

Advantages of social media technologies

The lessons learned from the two cases presented in this paper highlight the pedagogical advantages of capitalizing on affordances inherent in social media technologies and pairing them with theory to create virtual communities of practice and generate positive learning outcomes. First, student involvement in course logistics, including the discussion of course concepts and material, immediately created a sense of ownership among students. In the case of Facebook, the deliberation and negotiation process between students and professor as to acceptable Facebook behavior aided in the fulfillment of G2: ownership of course design, content and structure. In addition, the accompanying profile pictures and biographical user information associated Facebook postings, as well as the ‘Getting to Know You’ page on the course wiki, allowed a human touch to be associated in students’ online personae. These humanizing touches allowed students a more direct and long lasting sense of ownership to their words, and allowed the professors to incorporate more identifiable and popular in-class illustrations by culling student examples. In Vygotskian terms, these affordances also facilitated the development of a community of practice.

Secondly, the time and space advantage that social media offer allows instructors to extend the traditional course period beyond the synchronous meeting, allowing students to engage in asynchronous learning at times that are not only convenient to them, but to (potentially) participate more frequently and organically as ideas or questions manifest themselves. With the flexibility of Facebook and wikis in particular, conversations can be
initiated and maintained more easily than similar interactive areas in specialized but hierarchically controlled course management systems such as Blackboard, ANGEL or WebCT. Thus, the implementation of Facebook, wikis, and other social media is not just about the ‘cool’ factor (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008), but about the pedagogical relevancy of these media as active, communal learning spaces.

Third, the social benefits of implementing these media into courses that previously may have been taught using more traditional pedagogical techniques (ex. lecture, discussion, group work, etc.) manifest themselves in the shared experiences, discussions and self-disclosure of the students. Students may learn from one another at their own pace in a potentially less-threatening environment and then process and digest that information on their own. Vygotsky (1978: p. 57) notes that “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level.” Thus, an interpersonal learning environment transforms into an intrapersonal one.

Finally, due to the privileged status as grade-giver and evaluator of student work, the instructor retains the free hand to guide student conversations in certain directions while steering away from others. Some courses, particularly where topics may be controversial, lend themselves to the increased discussion environment that these case studies afford. Facebook also has proven to be a successful space for large group discussions and helpful for times when students must come to a consensus on certain material and/or issues prior to class. While we would argue that Facebook should not necessarily take the place (or space) of in-class debates, it does provide an alternate forum so discussions need not conclude at the end of a class period. Similarly, the democratic access of the wiki, along with the open forums for sharing links, web pages, videos, and discussion points, allows students the ability to think about certain course materials outside of the classroom context. Controversy is not always welcome in some settings, but generally speaking, these communities of practice seem to police the boundaries of what is appropriately and inappropriately controversial. In any case, instructor intervention is always a valid option should the direction of these contributions move outside of appropriate realms.

Yet this status can also present a challenge. While hybrid or blended courses increase in popularity (Kim & Bonk, 2006), the use of social media in the classroom remains somewhat new, for both instructors and students. Often, the student is most uncertain of these new technologies in the classroom as the medium where their work will be evaluated. As most students had been conditioned to being evaluated by examinations, written papers, group projects, or other traditional measures, our experiences found a number of students who encountered a degree of internal discord, as they were less certain of how to navigate a successful grade in producing work in an evaluated social media environment. In essence, some students were uncomfortable when they did not know precisely what was expected of them, a response similar to what Heinze and Procter (2006) found in their work on blended-learning environments.

Similarly, professors, themselves, may encounter a degree of uncertainty in terms of instructing students and providing clear and reassuring guidelines for online activities. Based on a preliminary analysis of personal experiences, the more specific the instruction
is, the more productive and rich the student response. Facebook instruction and assignments proved most helpful when a specific task or question was posed. This is consistent with the observations of other scholars that have used computer-mediated class supplements (ex. Lazonder et al, 2003), and recognize the importance of an instructor or tutor to mediate discussion when necessary to improve the quality of conversational exchanges. Conversely, when students were asked to simply “continue their conversation on Facebook,” results were much more mixed. The experience was similar with the use of wikis, where students had to be reminded that even though it looks and feels very much like a website where they might make comments or informal conversation with their peers, in reality, this is simply a different medium through which to turn in academic-quality work. Though students are familiar with social media sites, their familiarity consists almost exclusively of these as social, non-academic sites. To remedy this situation, instructors may wish to provide examples of acceptable and non-acceptable responses to discussion topics early on in the semester. Doing so will help to build the necessary scaffolding for what constitutes an appropriate academic response within the learning community.

As illustrated by the aforementioned case studies, it is clear that these social media offer many possibilities as relatively new pedagogical tools to be used aside traditional classroom techniques, and our experiences have shown a number of applications that have furthered student learning beyond what could be achieved otherwise. Most exciting, however, are the applications that have not yet been considered and the ideas that have yet to emerge. In this continuing dialogue on the place of social media in the class, it is important to remember that the very nature of social media allows a micro-level, user-based generation of content, the community as a whole body contributing together to give shape to an abstract collection of bits of information. Benefits also include positive outcomes that are more abstract, such as student investment in course material, understanding of broader course concepts, and retention of specific course material. When applied to the classroom setting, the body of information that emerges from this collective community of practice is often greater than the sum of its parts. It is up to the instructor to leverage the uses of these technologies in order to create new spaces for learning, new opportunities for students to use these media as the stuff of integration between established learning objectives and student contribution to the individualized and collective completion of these objectives.

It is also helpful at the instructional level to use theory to guide the development of courses for those wishing to implement social media as pedagogical tools. ‘Guide’ is the key word, however. Although social media may lend themselves as communities of practice, their use as pedagogical tools is far from exclusive. It would be a mistake to assume students will immediately embrace engaging in critical discussions in forums where banal chatter is much more commonplace. An instructor may need to require specific online assignments, or provide examples particularly early in the course, until the students feel comfortable using the social media as a discursive space. However, if a goal is to use the space as a true center for social interaction and meaning construction among students care must be taken by the instructor to facilitate the process only to the extent necessary. Using social constructivist theory in this context has the ability to clarify the roles of stu-
dents and instructors, develop a community of practice, foster inter- and intrapsychological processes, and maximize learning potential.

Acknowledgements

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¹ This concern was not lost on the professor who designed a second Facebook profile specifically for academic purposes.

² The one student who noted she had taken a course that utilized a SNS with regularity acknowledged that she was only currently in that class, thus making her familiarity with the pedagogical aspect of the tool limited.
Promoting Social Change through Service-Learning in the Curriculum

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Abstract

Service-learning is a high-impact pedagogical strategy embraced by higher education institutions. Direct service based on a charity paradigm tends to be the norm, while little attention is paid to social change-oriented service. This article offers suggestions for incorporating social justice education into courses designed to promote social change through service-learning. The article delineates the characteristics of social justice education, discusses ways to incorporate social justice and service-learning components into appropriate courses, and provides a blueprint for constructing the syllabus.

Keywords: Advocacy, charity paradigm, social justice education, syllabus preparation.

Institutions of higher education embrace service-learning as a high-impact pedagogical strategy designed to enrich the curriculum, foster civic responsibility, and improve communities (Bringle, Hatcher, & McIntosh, 2006; Felten & Clayton, 2011; Kuh, 2008; Meyers, 2009). This strategy may be employed in all disciplines and in a variety of courses, from anthropology to zoology. Service-learning connects community service to course content and translates theory into practice.

Although service-learning also creates an avenue for promoting social change (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999; Lewis, 2004; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Mitchell, 2007), students tend to restrict themselves to direct service within community agencies, based on a charity paradigm (Bringle et al., 2006; Cone, 2003). Students do so perhaps because direct service usually allows them to see immediate outcomes. For their part, some faculty members and administrators place students only in direct service settings because of their own concern that social action/social change situations are too “political” (Maas Weigert, 1998, p. 8).

While acts of charity are desirable and even admirable, participation through political processes seems necessary for social change. Furthermore, service-learning without a focus on social justice “can perpetuate racist, sexist, or classist assumptions about others and reinforce a colonialist mentality or superiority” (O’Grady, 2000, p. 12). Course instructors who never link social justice education to service-learning limit the potential and promise of the pedagogy.

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This article offers suggestions for incorporating social justice education into courses designed to promote social change through service-learning and provides a blueprint for constructing the syllabus. The twofold purpose of the article is to (a) encourage faculty to accept the dual role of social justice educator/service-learning practitioner and (b) assist instructors in developing a feasible, change-oriented service-learning strategy.

First, the concepts of social justice and social change are defined, the characteristics of social justice education are delineated, and the relationship between social justice and service-learning is examined briefly. Next, the essential elements of the syllabus for a course with social justice and service-learning components are outlined. Finally, the practical application of the recommended social justice model is illustrated.

**Defining Social Justice and Social Change**

Social justice is defined as the movement of society toward greater equality, economic fairness, acceptance of cultural diversity, and participatory democracy (Warren, 1998). Goals of social justice include empowering marginalized communities and changing unjust institutional arrangements (Lewis, 2004). Such outcomes reflect social change, which is the ultimate goal of social justice. Social change implies beneficial advances in society.

**Social Justice Education**

Promoting social change through service-learning in the curriculum requires attentiveness to social justice education. Instructors who already employ service-learning have an opportunity to incorporate social justice education into their courses and thereby foster students’ understanding of the social issues underlying the human needs to which students respond through service. Social justice education involves increasing students’ awareness of social inequalities, identifying the roles that individuals and institutions play in maintaining such inequalities, and taking corrective action (Meyers, 2009).

Social justice education is student-centered, experiential, collaborative, intellectual, analytical, multicultural, value-based, and activist (Wade, 2001). These characteristics reflect the interrelated, pedagogical dimensions of social justice education (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004, p. 56):

- **Student-centered and experiential**: Social justice educators recognize and value students’ ideas and experiences as part of the curriculum.
- **Collaborative**: Students learn and serve together and work with community members to effect change.
- **Intellectual and analytical**: Instructors ask students to engage in research; students examine multiple perspectives as they analyze the causes of injustice and explore their own roles in relation to social problems.
- **Multicultural and value-based**: Students address issues from diverse perspectives and recognize possible value conflicts; instructors (while respecting students’ individual views) encourage students to come up with reasoned opinions and explain how their ideas support social justice.
- **Activist**: Social justice educators encourage students to take action that supports the rights of people who are dominated and deprived.

A social justice orientation redirects the focus of service-learning from charity to social change and connects awareness to action. Charity involves responses to immediate need, usually requiring repeated actions. The charity paradigm entails the provision of direct, palliative service, such as stacking shelves at a food bank or serving food at a homeless shelter. By contrast, social change involves long-term responses that address the root causes of social problems. The social change paradigm calls for social action (e.g., community organizing and legislative advocacy to address the causes of hunger). Effective action transcends “providing help” – often with a Band-Aid approach – by engaging students in initiatives that contribute to changing conditions that create social exclusion.

**Social Justice/Service-Learning Nexus**

Service-learning should do more than provide students with multiple “introductions to the community”; it should “help students understand that civic action involves more than direct service and that systemic problems require systemic solutions” (Cone, 2003, p. 15). Through change-oriented service-learning, students seek systemic solutions to issues of concern. They attempt to redistribute resources, empower communities, and create more-equitable institutional structures in the society (Marullo & Edwards, 2000). Pursuing an empowerment goal means calling into question the institutional arrangements in the society and refining or reshaping institutions so they can serve all citizens more equitably (Martin, Bray, & Kibler, 2006). This is a daunting task. Students should be cautioned that it is unrealistic to expect social change as an outcome of their work over the course of a semester or even a full academic year.

Social justice education and related service-learning activities allow students to explore the historical, sociological, cultural, and political contexts of the social issues they address in the community. In the process, students develop the civic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for a role as agents of social change.

**Advocacy.** A curriculum that encompasses social justice education and service-learning generally offers students opportunities to build advocacy skills. Advocacy is “the act of arguing on behalf of a particular issue, idea or person; giving voice to an individual or group whose concerns and interests are not being heard” (Berke, Boyd-Soisson, Voorhees, & Reininga, 2010, p. 28). It involves active, public support of a cause, proposal, or policy. Effective advocacy increases the power of people to make institutions more responsive to human needs, and it influences public policy and decisions regarding the allocation of resources.

Examples of advocacy activities are letter-writing campaigns, petitions, and presentations to legislators, corporations, and funding agencies. As they participate in advocacy projects, students engage in consciousness-raising around the social, political, and economic issues involved in each case being addressed. Further, students learn to present their concerns clearly and precisely, and to suggest viable solutions. They may even be able to ef-
fect solutions through social action, such as voter registration drives in underserved communities or public protests over environmental hazards.

**Preparing the Syllabus**

A syllabus does more than provide basic information regarding a course (e.g., textbooks and course policies); it also serves to sell the course to students and to welcome them into the learning experience by using positive and encouraging language (Ballard & Elmore, 2009; Thompson, 2007). A well-crafted syllabus shows consistency between course goals and course requirements, and it has a warm tone that encourages positive student outcomes (Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Thompson, 2007). These features are particularly important when the course has a service-learning component, because students may feel overwhelmed by a new instructional approach that requires both classroom- and community-based work. As Thompson recommends, the syllabus should be used to address students’ fears and to temper the challenge of service-learning with words of encouragement.

A review of the characteristics of social justice education will help course instructors prepare the syllabus as a curricular tool to support the promotion of social change through service-learning. Instructors who are mindful of the *intellectual and analytical* dimension, for example, may state in the course description that students will discuss the interplay of inequality, marginalization, and powerlessness.

The syllabus should make it clear to students that service-learning is an integral part of the course, with the same academic rigor as lectures, required readings, and course material. Student learning is best documented through critical reflection activities (Bowen, 2008; Felten & Clayton, 2011). Indeed, reflection is the *sine qua non* of service-learning; therefore, structured reflection activities and a clear description of these activities in the syllabus are especially important (Ballard & Elmore, 2009).

**Elements of the Syllabus**

What follows is a summary of recommended elements of the syllabus for a course in which social justice and service-learning components are appropriate. There are seven recommended elements: course description, goals and objectives, course content, community-based work, assignments and critical reflection, assessment criteria, and support.

**Course description.** State the purpose, indicate the design, and summarize the features of the course. Indicate that the course is student-centered and collaborative and that it has an experiential (service-learning) component.

**Objectives.** Enumerate specific objectives (e.g., describe three action-oriented strategies for improving child nutrition) – perhaps in addition to general goals, which could be part of the description (e.g., consider the impact of poor nutrition on children’s lives). Objectives should cover the social change-related knowledge, skills, and competencies that
students are expected to develop. Some scholars (e.g., Cashman & Seifer, 2008) recommend outlining both service and learning objectives in the syllabus.

**Course content.** Indicate the breadth and depth of the content of the course by listing the textbooks and required readings on specific issues, social justice/change, and related subject matter.

**Community-based work.** Explain the nature and process of the community-based work; also explain issue identification and community partner selection or service site placement. In addition, clarify whether students will complete work individually or in groups, and specify the time requirement (i.e., number of service hours).

**Assignments and critical reflection.** Outline student assignments and reflection activities (e.g., preparing journal entries, writing a research paper, and making a public presentation). It is recommended that the required reflection be structured to include description, analysis, and synthesis.

**Assessment.** Articulate the criteria, methods, and procedure for assessing student learning. Highlight the use of critical reflection and the products of such reflection (e.g., journals, essays, and exhibits) as part of the assessment.

**Support.** Encourage enthusiasm and sustained interest among students by describing the resources and support mechanisms as well as the diverse learning opportunities available to them on campus and in the community.

**Applying the Social Justice Education Model**

Service-learning, as already mentioned, may be employed as a strategy in all disciplines and in a variety of courses. Similarly, a variety of courses may be framed using a social justice education model. Prime candidates for this model are courses that have a sharp focus on social problems/issues. Some common issues are poverty, unemployment, hunger, homelessness, crime, domestic violence, pollution, and racial discrimination.

Appropriate courses are typically in sociology, social work, and the health sciences. The social justice education model is applicable also to courses in psychology, public policy, and religious/theological studies as well as to education courses that prepare teacher candidates for the challenges of addressing multicultural issues. Examples of how components of a social justice-focused service-learning strategy have been, or can be, utilized in the curriculum are presented below.

The first example comes from public health, which has been described as a profession committed to social justice, with an emphasis on eliminating disparities in health status (Cashman & Seifer, 2008). The community partnership was with a local or state health department, where students were placed to work on issues related to a high incidence of low birth weights among newborns. A learning objective was to identify the conditions that contributed to babies being born with low birth weights; the service objective was to
render supportive services to mothers and their newborns through the department’s Healthy Start Initiative. Students were required to work with advocates to write a policy statement aimed at ensuring that an adequate and accessible supply of primary prevention and health promotion services was available for women.

For the purposes of reflection, students kept a journal in which they recorded their thoughts and feelings about why women found themselves unable to obtain recommended prenatal care. Students might ponder why a certain array of services was more available in some communities than in others, why some women might distrust the public health establishment, or why certain women entered child-bearing years healthy and fit while others entered with their health status compromised (Cashman & Seifer, 2008). The students engaged in small-group discussions, sharing their perspectives and experiences, and exploring their own values, beliefs, and stereotypes.

Faculty and students were required to assess and comment on the course. In addition, health department personnel and community beneficiaries were invited to give systematic feedback.

The second example is an interdisciplinary program called the Citizen Scholars Program. Focused on social justice/change, this four-semester service-learning program (Mitchell, 2007) consisted of four core courses, an elective, and 60 hours of service in the community each semester. One of the courses, Research as a Tool for Change, included readings and discussion through which students developed a framework for analyzing social problems and the process of social change. Below is the outline of course goals stated in the syllabus.

By the end of this course, you will have:

- Considered how knowledge is a form of power, and explored some of the ethical dilemmas involved in creating and accessing knowledge.
- Generated new knowledge in collaboration with a community organization, to help them address community problems.
- Developed and used skills in community-based research.
- Developed and used skills in working as part of a team.
- Explored social justice theory, and used the theory to analyze your research project, your service experience, and your own social position.

(Research as a Tool for Change, n.d.)

In the last two semesters of the program, the students were required to research a community issue in-depth and then implement a plan of action to work for meaningful change. Mitchell (2007) reported that students collaborated on a recycling program for a local elementary school, organized a tutoring workshop to get parents more involved in teaching their young children to read, and worked alongside community housing advocates to create a series of forums designed to raise awareness and encourage action regarding affordable housing.
The third example is offered as a suggestion to environmental science course instructors. Service-learning can be effective in stimulating students’ concern about environmental injustice. In designing such courses, instructors could use elements of the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (2008) Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS) model. The CPS model is composed of the following elements: (1) Issue Identification, Community Vision, and Strategic Goal Setting; (2) Community Capacity-Building and Leadership Development; (3) Consensus Building and Dispute Resolution; (4) Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and Leveraging of Resources; (5) Constructive Engagement by Relevant Stakeholders; (6) Sound Management and Implementation; and (7) Evaluation, Lessons Learned, and Replication of Best Practices.

Ideally, these elements are treated as interdependent and are utilized in a strategic, iterative manner, especially when dealing with complex factors that could compound environmental justice issues. However, specific elements may be used in specific situations. For example, in a service-learning course that addresses environmental pollution, the instructor could consider the fifth element. Accordingly, constructive engagement by relevant stakeholders could encompass research and issue analysis by students, awareness raising and community mobilization by civic organizations (community partners), technical support from industry or business, and policy changes by the government.

The Model as Applied in Sociology

An undergraduate sociology course entitled Social Problems, Social Justice, and Social Change (developed recently by the author) illustrates the social justice education model. In essence, the course is an analysis of social problems, exploration of social justice, and evaluation of strategies for social change.

As stated in the syllabus (see Appendix), students are expected to identify the causes and consequences of social problems; explore their own values, attitudes, and behaviors in the context of a diverse, multicultural society; and recommend possible solutions to social injustices. Further, students discuss readings and presentations and also engage collaboratively in a service-learning project geared to producing social change. This description indicates that the course encompasses social justice education with its various features – intellectual and analytical (e.g., understanding of concepts, analysis of social problems), multicultural and value-based (exploration of personal values in a multicultural context), and student-centered and experiential (student engagement in service-learning).

One of the goals of the course is the assessment of the work of social justice/change advocates and activists. Assessing activism prepares students for an activist role.

Topics outlined in the syllabus cover particularly the multicultural, intellectual and analytical, and activist features of the social justice education model. Among the topics are marginalization and oppression in a multicultural American society. A video focuses on contemporary issues that raise philosophical questions about individual rights and responsibilities; and, through a case study, students consider the perennial problem of hunger.
The community-based work (or service-learning project) is student-centered, collaborative, and experiential. The group reflection assignment also is collaborative; students are assigned to five-member teams. Students engage in intellectual and analytical work through inquiry/research; they are encouraged to critique the status quo or question prevailing practices. The individual assignment demonstrates student-centeredness as well – students make connections between course work and the community-based assignment, and they make meaning of the overall experience.

An assessment of the outcomes of this course is beyond the scope of this article. The purpose of this article, as stated above, is to offer suggestions for incorporating social justice education into courses designed to promote social change through service-learning.

Conclusion

This article offers guidance to course instructors interested in developing and implementing an effective, change-oriented service-learning strategy. Surely, not every course is well-suited for service-learning that engages students in social change activities. Instructors are advised to consider such factors as the limitations of time and curriculum resources, student preparedness, intended course outcomes, and community partner priorities. Moreover, they should be cognizant that social change, as evidenced by genuine community empowerment, for example, is not guaranteed.

Course instructors nevertheless have a responsibility to facilitate meaningful social justice experiences through students’ service-learning participation. By paying attention to the essential elements of the syllabus and the fundamental features of social justice education, instructors equip themselves for the dual role of social justice educator/service-learning practitioner, shifting students’ focus from feel-good charity to effective social change.

References


Appendix

Sample Syllabus*
SOC 323: Social Problems, Social Justice, and Social Change

Course Description

An analysis of social problems, exploration of social justice, and evaluation of strategies for social change.

The course includes a review of concepts germane to the systematic study of social relationships, with emphasis on social stratification, social institutions, and collective behavior. Students will identify the causes and consequences of social problems; explore their own values, attitudes, and behaviors in the context of a diverse, multicultural society; and recommend possible solutions to social injustices. Students will discuss readings and presentations and will also engage collaboratively in a service-learning project geared to producing social change.

Goals and Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and competencies as outlined below.

1. Define concepts related to social justice
2. List major social problems and describe their causes and consequences
3. Explain the principal roles of nonprofit/social service and government agencies in addressing social problems
4. Assess the work of social justice/change advocates and activists
5. Analyze policies and programs to determine whether, and to what extent, they support or inhibit social justice/change
6. Recommend strategies and programs for social change

Course Content

Textbook:

Readings:

* Only portions of the syllabus are included here. These excerpts show the major elements of the service-learning syllabus and illustrate the components of social justice education.
http://www.docstoc.com/docs/86184265/A-BLUEPRINT-TO-END-HUNGER.

Reflection Workbook:

Video:
Michael Sandel’s *Justice* (Excerpts) – Focusing on contemporary issues that raise philosophical questions about individual rights and the claims of community, equality/inequality, morality, and law.

Topics:
- Approaches to social problems: Charity vs. social change/empowerment approach
- Issues of privilege and power, prejudice and discrimination, marginalization and oppression in a multicultural American society
- Role of research in understanding the needs of marginalized and oppressed populations
- Social programs and services provided by government agencies, corporations, and nonprofit/social service organizations; civil society role/voluntary action/citizen involvement
- Advocates and activists, including civil rights leaders
- Example/Case study: Addressing the problem of hunger
- Relationship between policy development and program implementation

Community-Based Work

This course requires 15 hours of community-based work as part of the service-learning component. Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with course work and critical reflection to enrich the learning experience, foster civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

Students will work in five-member teams to conduct research in local community settings (see details under Assignments).

Assignments and Critical Reflection

1. Individual Assignment: Describe an incident in which you were the victim of prejudice or discrimination and one in which you were the perpetrator. Explain your feelings, attitudes, and behaviors.
   or
   Describe the assumptions you made about a population with whom you are/were not familiar. The population could be based on race/ethnicity, nationality, religion, or social situation (e.g., affected by hunger, homelessness). If you became familiar with that population, how did your assumptions match or differ from reality?

2. Group Assignment—Research and Presentation: The class will be divided into five-member teams. Each team will conduct research; identify a major social problem to be addressed;
analyze relevant policies, programs, and services; and prepare a social change strategy. Research focusing on policies, programs, and services should be done primarily through interviews with representatives of two social service agencies and at least two community residents as well as through document reviews.

- **Problem identification** — Identify a major social problem – its nature, causes, and consequences, including its relationship to social injustice.

- **Analysis** — Analyze current responses to the problem – specifically, social policies, programs, and services. Specify programs and services provided by the two agencies. Consider: What is the American sentiment towards this policy? Are the existing policies/programs/services appropriate for addressing the problem identified? If so, how do they address the causes and consequences of the problem?

- **Strategy Development** — Develop a social change strategy to address the problem. Include information sharing, consciousness raising, advocacy, and social action in the strategy.

- **Presentation** — Make a 40-minute, in-class presentation of the strategy before classmates, agency representatives, community members, and other invitees.

3. **Individual Assignment** — Reflection Paper: Prepare a 10-page paper reflecting on the development of the social change strategy (i.e., the group assignment). Describe your possible role in promoting and implementing the strategy. The paper should be prepared in accordance with the R3A3 (Report, React, Reflect, Analyze, Assess, Apply) Processing System (see Service-Learning Workbook).

**Assessment**

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (2 x 15%)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Presentation</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support**

Barry University’s Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI), [www.barry.edu/service](http://www.barry.edu/service), offers a comprehensive collection of resources on social justice/change in relation to service-learning. CCSI staff members are available to assist in identifying relevant resources. A Directory of Community Partners is accessible at the Center’s Web site.
Teaching Culture and Language through the Multiple Intelligences Film Teaching Model in the ESL/EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This paper will demonstrate how to enhance second language (L2) learners’ linguistic and cultural competencies through the use of the Multiple Intelligences Film Teaching (MIFT) model. The paper will introduce two ideas to teachers of English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL). First, the paper shows how L2 learners learn linguistic and cultural competencies by responding to teachers’ interactional feedback. Second, the presentation presents how Multiple Intelligences (MI) activities can encourage L2 learners’ motivation to acquire these competencies when responding to the interactional feedback. Third, the paper also illustrates how to construct MIFT model based on the theories of interactive feedback, noticing the gap and Multiple Intelligence. Last, examples will be presented sharing how to use the MIFT model through the incorporation of MI activities, such as reader’s theater, role play, read aloud, oral presentation, task-based activity, process writing, and journal writing.

Keywords: Film, multiple intelligences, EFL/ESL, motivation, culture.

Numerous studies have shown statistical evidence that indicates motivation is a significant predictor of second language (L2) success (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 1999; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Ushioda, 2003). The literature reveals that motivated L2 learners will learn another language faster and to greater degree (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Unfortunately, many L2 learners are anxious, unmotivated or have negative attitudes toward language learning due to the environment or limited resources.

Therefore, the author created a Multiple Intelligence Film Teaching (MIFT) model to enhance L2 learners’ motivation in English language learning through the use of Multiple Intelligences activities and films in EFL/ESL curriculum. The purpose of designing the MIFT model is to show how the model can: (1) enhance L2 learners’ linguistic and cultural competencies by integrating films into an ESL/EFL curriculum (Krashen, 1995), (2) enhance L2 learners’ motivation and engagement in target language activities, (3) demonstrate how to design lesson plans based on the concept of Gardner’s (1983) MI, and (4) demonstrate practical examples of MI activities such as reader’s theater, role play, read aloud, oral presentation, task-based activity, process writing, and journal writing in the MIFT model.

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Theoretical Framework

The author created the MIFT model based on the theoretical frameworks in terms of interactive feedback, noticing the gap, and Multiple Intelligence. First, interactional feedback is a highly effective strategy for teaching L2 acquisition. Second, interactional feedback provided by teachers helps students notice a gap between what they know about the target language and what is produced by the teacher of the target language. Third, the use of MI activities can motivate L2 learners’ self-correct their utterances. Fourth, the applications of MI activities can be enhanced through the use of technology. These four concepts inform the construction of the MIFT model, and will be illustrated in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Interactive Feedback

Interactional feedback, also known as corrective feedback, plays an important role in L2 learning. The interactional feedback discussed above can draw L2 learners’ attention to certain elements of language of their speech, which leads them to notice a gap between (a) their speech and that of a native speaker of the target language (especially when the feedback is a linguistic model) or (b) a deficiency of their output (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Noticing the gap refers to occasions when L2 learners notice a mismatch between what they know about the target language and what is produced by the speakers of the target language (Swain, 1985). If L2 learners are going to make modifications in the grammatical errors, they should first recognize that changes need to be made. Therefore, self-correction or readjustment of grammatical errors is triggered by the perception of noticing the gap (Schmidt, 1995; 2001).

Noticing the Gap

Through interactional feedback, learners receive information about the accuracy of their utterances from two types of interactional feedback – recasts and negotiations. These two types of feedback trigger learners to noticing the gap and self-correct their utterances. A recast refers to a reformulation of an inaccurate utterance which maintains the original meaning of the utterance (Gass & Selinker, 2008), as in 1-1, where the Native Speaker (NS) reformulates the Non-Native Speaker’s (NNS) inaccurate phonological error. NNS pronounces /l/ sound instead of /r/ sound in the word, really, as illustrated in the example below.

(1-1) NNS: Do you leally like him?
NS: Do I really like him?

Negotiation refers to a type of explicit feedback which serves as a catalyst for self-corrections because of its focus on inaccurate forms. Negotiation provides L2 learners explicit information about inaccurate forms, and encourages leaners to search for additional information to correct the errors. Four types of prompts are commonly used in negotiation (Lyster, 2004):

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1. Clarification requests: teacher uses phrases such as “Sorry” or “I don’t understand,” as in 1-2.

(1-2) Student: I like to picnic in the grass.
Teacher: Sorry?
Student: I like to picnic on the grass.

2. Repetition: teacher repeats the student’s incorrect forms, and adjusts intonation to highlight the error, as in 1-3.

(1-3) Student: She love to eat cookies.
Teacher: She love to eat cookies?
Student: She loves to eat cookies.

3. Metalinguistic clues: teacher provides comments, information, or questions related to the correct forms to bring up the attention to student’s ill-formed utterance, as in 1-4.

(1-4) Student: Mary is thinking about buying his own house.
Teacher: Not his own house.
Student: Mm…her own house.

4. Elicitation: teacher elicits students by asking questions such as “How do we say that in English?” or by pausing to allow students to complete teacher’s sentence, as in 1-5.

(1-5) Teacher: What did you do yesterday?
Student: I do my homework yesterday.
Teacher: You…Careful.
Student: I did my homework yesterday.

Multiple Intelligences

The learners’ motivation to self-correct their utterances can be enhanced through the application of MI theory. MI theory suggests that individuals possess eight “intelligences,” including linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematic intelligence, visual and spatial intelligences, musical and rhythmic intelligences, body and kinesthetic intelligences, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and naturalist intelligence (Gardner, 1983; 1999). By designing lesson plans that acknowledge the differences among students, teachers can increase the level of interaction. For example, students who are high in an interpersonal intelligence enjoy learning through communicative language activities or cooperative activities, while other students who have a high level of intrapersonal intelligence enjoy learning through individual presentations or journal writing (Christison, 1996).
The effectiveness of using MI theory is also shown in a large number of empirical studies. Many research studies revealed that MI activities were more effective in the positive development of the students’ attitudes (Baş & Beyhan, 2010; McCarthy & McCarthy, 2005). The findings of Baş and Beyhan’s study indicated that the students who are educated by multiple intelligences supported projected based learning approach are more successful and have higher motivation level than the students who received merely traditional instructional approaches (Baş & Beyhan, 2010). Furthermore, a number of studies show that teachers apply MI as the basis for learning preferences or learning styles that can be used effectively to enhance language instruction, motivate learners, and cross other disciplines (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy & McCarthy, 2005).

Differences in learning and cognitive styles of L2 learners have led numbers of researchers and teachers to apply MI theory to ESL/EFL curriculum (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Studies suggest that Multiple Intelligence (Gardner, 1983) activities are effective in the positive development of the students’ attitudes and enhancing motivation (Baş & Beyhan, 2010; McCarthy & McCarthy, 2005). Berman (1998) was the first scholar to show MI activities can enhance learners’ English language proficiency. Since then a large number of researchers and teachers have also contributed to the field of MI and claim that MI activities can be effectively used to enhance learners’ English language proficiency (Jallad & Abdelrahman, 2008; Jinxiu, 2013; Kim, 2009; Saricaoglu & Arikan, 2009; Savas, 2012). Furthermore, L2 learners’ motivation to self-correct their error in English utterance can be enhanced through the application of MI activities without feeling anxious or lack of self-confidence. Jallad and Abdelrahman (2008) investigated the effect of multiple intelligences strategies on EFL ninth graders’ achievement in reading comprehension. The findings of the study revealed that students who received multiple intelligences strategies have significant improvement in the students’ reading comprehension comparing to students who merely received traditional methods. The findings of Jinxiu’s (2013) study supports Jallad and Abdelrahman (2008) that MI-based reading contributed significantly to enhancing students’ motivation toward English reading, and improving their reading proficiency. Saricaoglu and Arikan (2009) investigated the relationship between 114 college EFL students’ intelligence types and English language performance. The results indicated that the relationship between musical intelligence and writing was significant and positive. As for applying films in ESL/EFL courses, this approach is commonly used for not only enhancing L2 learners’ motivation, but also developing their linguistic and cultural competences (Roell, 2010).

Enhancing MI with Technology

Literature shows that technology and multimedia can be effectively used to enhance various types of MI employed while learning language (Dryden, 2004; Kim, 2009; Mackenzie, 2002; Stedge, 2005). Mackenzie (2002) demonstrates how teachers can apply technology and multimedia (i.e., CD–ROMs, video clips, videoconferencing, social network sites) in their instructional planning through the use of MI theory. He compares MI with non-digital technologies to MI with digital technologies to demonstrate how teachers can effectively incorporate technology in MI activities. Dryden (2004) supports the curriculum of combining MI theory and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). He
claims that incorporating CALL into MI theory offers a new curriculum adaptable to each individual’s needs in the 21st century.

Based on the empirical studies discussed above, literature shows that MI theory has significant impact on ESL/EFL learning. As a result, the author designed a MIFT Model for ESL/EFL teachers to enhance L2 learners’ English language proficiency and explain how to implement these intelligences into ESL/EFL curricula in the following section.

Multiple Intelligences Film Teaching Model

The purpose of designing the MIFT model is to show how the model can: (1) enhance L2 learners’ linguistic and cultural competencies by integrating films into an ESL/EFL curriculum (Kramsch, 1995), (2) enhance L2 learners’ motivation and engagement in target language activities, (3) demonstrate how to design lesson plans based on the concept of Gardner’s (1983) MI, and (4) demonstrate practical examples of MI activities such as reader’s theater, role play, read aloud, oral presentation, task-based activity, process writing, and journal writing in the MIFT model.

The MIFT model illustrates how L2 learners process the interactional feedback and acquire L2 successfully. (See Figure 1.) The center part of the Figure 1 is based on Gass and Mackey’s (2006) concept of interactional feedback. Interactional feedback is an essential source of information for L2 learners because it provides learners information about the accuracy of their utterances and draws their attention to focus on production and comprehension. The MIFT model illustrates this concept with the mediating factor of attention. Through interactional feedback, learners’ attention is drawn to certain elements of language, and these elements will be incorporated into a learner’s language developmental system (Gass & Mackey, 2006; Gass & Selinker, 2008).

The top and bottom part of the Figure 1 illustrates a way to design MI activities to demonstrate how to use recasts for phonological errors and negotiations for lexical errors. Therefore, EFL/ESL teachers could use recasts to enhance learners’ awareness of phonological errors, and use negotiations to make learners aware of lexical and grammatical errors in different types of MI activities (Lyster, 1998). In the top part of the Figure 1, the MIFT model illustrates four MI activities focusing on phonological awareness. These MI activities are reader’s theater, role play, read aloud, and oral presentation. With regard to the phonological MI activities, it is important for teachers to provide recast feedback to enhance students’ awareness of phonological errors.

In the bottom part of the Figure 1, the MIFT model illustrates three MI activities focusing on grammatical and lexical learning. These MI activities are task-based activity, process writing, and journal writing. During the grammatical and lexical MI activities, it is essential to provide negotiation feedback to draw students’ attention to grammatical and lexical errors. Lyster (1998) supports this idea that the negotiation is more effective in immediate self-correction than recasts, particularly in the areas of lexical and grammatical errors; however, it is not effective in correcting phonological errors.

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Figure 1. Multiple intelligences film teaching model incorporating Gass and Mackey’s (2006) concept of interactional feedback.

Examples of MI activities in MIFT Model

There are seven practical examples of MI activities in MIFT model. These activities are reader’s theater, role play, read aloud, oral presentation, task-based activity, process writing, and journal writing. The MIFT model suggests teachers provide recast feedback in the former four MI activities, and provide negotiation feedback in the later three MI activities.
The MIFT model incorporates one feature film, *Freedom Writers* (Sher, Shambirg, & LaGravenese, 2007), and one simplified readers’ book, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. These materials provide teachers with a variety of intercultural issues about which to speak of in ESL/EFL classrooms. *Freedom Writers* and *The Diary of a Young Girl* discuss a wide variety of intercultural themes; therefore, they are useful and informative materials that can be used to enrich thematic or content-based teaching. The MIFT model suggests four cultural thematic lesson topics in *Freedom Writers*: cultural diversity, social justice, gender roles, and heroism. Furthermore, the MIFT model, based on Gardener’s MI theory (Gardner, 1983), demonstrates how to incorporate multiple aspects of learning to trigger L2 learners’ different intelligences through the use of films. (See Table 1 for MIFT model Activity Chart.)

### Table 1. Multiple Intelligences Film Teaching Model Activity Charts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>MI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linguistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recasts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reader’s Theater</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read aloud</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-based activity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process writing</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal writing</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recasts**

The main purpose of the following activities is to focus on pronunciation, intonation, appropriate stress and fluency. The teacher plays the role of facilitator who provides recasts to scaffold students during the practices.

**Reader’s theater.** The teacher shows students two scene dialogues from “Toast for Change” (1:00:00—1:06:00), and “Guest Speaker: the Day Miep Gies Comes to the School” (1:28:56—1:32:07) in *Freedom Writers*. Both scenes discuss the theme of cultural diversity and racism. They read the accompanying script of the conversation, and
then memorize and imitate the conversation. The teacher should provide recasts to draw students’ attention on phonological awareness in terms of pronunciation, intonation, and appropriate stress. By giving students practice and recasting feedback in phonological components before they present the final performances, these practices ought to develop their linguistic and intercultural competence. The read theater activity helps to develop learners’ linguistic, musical, body/kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences.

**Role play.** The purpose of role-play is to encourage students to discuss and write about hypothetical conversations between different characters from *Freedom Writers* to explore motivation and characterization.

The teacher shows students four short clips from “Eva as a Witness of a Gunshot” (26:30—28:00), “The Expectation of Eva’s Father” (1:00:30—1:01:36), “Family Pressures” (1:26:49—1:27:58) and “The Truth of the Trial” (1:29:36—1:32:45) in *Freedom Writers*. The scenes discuss the theme of cultural diversity and racism. Students are prompted to write their own scripts to accompany the clip, making sure that both the dialogue and content are consistent with and supported by scenes depicted in the film. Students discuss their scripts in a small group. Each group choses one version of the scripts and revises it as a group. The teacher uses recasts with each group before they present their skit to the class (Tognozzi, 2010). The teacher provides feedback to the scripts and recasts to draw students’ attention to phonological awareness. The role play activity helps to develop learners’ linguistic, visual, musical, body/kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences.

**Read aloud.** In the read aloud activity, the teacher uses the simplified reader’s book, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, to practice students’ phonological language skills. After brief discussion of the assigned reading, students choose one of their favorite paragraphs related to intercultural themes in the book and read it out loud in the class. While reading, the teacher recasts the students’ phonological errors to trigger their immediate self-corrections. The teacher allows students to re-read the passage after going through it with the teacher recasts for the first time. This gives students a sense of accomplishment and enhances their motivation in reading. The read aloud activity helps to develop learners’ linguistic and interpersonal intelligences.

**Oral presentation.** The purpose of oral presentation is to enhance students’ presentation skills in their academic and professional careers. To date, presentation skills in English have become more important because of the communication across countries, cultures, international businesses, and the issues of science and technology. Students follow guidelines that include three main features of structuring an oral presentation: (1) how to introduce a main theme and outlines of the presentation; (2) how to connect and refer to visuals (e.g., video clips); (3) how to wrap up and design Q&A questions.

The teacher assigns the students an artifact from a Holocaust survivor. Students read an article through Washington State Holocaust Resource Center at the web site [http://www.wsherc.org/teaching/posters.aspx](http://www.wsherc.org/teaching/posters.aspx) (Young, 2010). The article is about the story of a survivor and the artifact he/she hold. In the presentation, students are required to
(a) introduce the story of the Holocaust survivor, (b) illustrate the role of the artifact in the history of Holocaust, and (c) explain the connection between the Holocaust survivor and the artifact.

The teacher takes notes of students’ utterances that have phonological errors and provides feedback after the presentation. The oral presentation activity helps to develop learners’ linguistic, spatial/visual, musical and intrapersonal intelligences.

**Negotiation**

The main purpose of the following activities is to focus on lexical and grammatical language skills. The MIFT model uses three MI activities to illustrate the lesson plans. The three activities engage students in different types of written tasks. The MIFT model suggests the teacher provide negotiation feedback in students’ written tasks. Lyster (2004) supports this idea that negotiation feedback is more successful than recasts in teaching grammar, especially in the written tasks.

While providing negotiation feedback on written work, clarification requests and metalinguistic clues are two most commonly used negotiation techniques. The teacher should create correction symbols to indicate that students have made grammatical and lexical errors in their written tasks. The correction symbols not only make the corrections clearer and less threatening, but also provide opportunities for students to respond to peers’ and teachers’ comments by making self-corrections. Table 2 demonstrates the use of clarification requests and metalinguistic clues in order to draw students’ attention to noticing their grammatical and lexical errors in written tasks (Harmer, 2007).

**Task-based approach activity.** The purpose of using task-based activity is to encourage students to work collaboratively in order to solve the tasks through an authentic communication or written texts. During the activity, the interaction among the class and the teacher draw students’ attention to some target feature of the language, such as a verb tense or the structure of paragraphs. Students are aware of their grammatical and lexical errors because the teacher and peers give feedback on a task they have just been involved in (Harmer, 2007; Thornbury, 1999).

**Step 1:**

The teacher introduces the theme, cultural diversity, by telling a short story about one’s experiences, which demonstrates, for instance, the approach to the cultural diversity and conflicts in one’s country. The teacher uses the story to check the meaning of *heterogenous* and its opposite, *homogeneous*.

**Step 2:**

The teacher asks students to recall relevant experiences. The teacher suggests that there are many controversies of pros and cons of living in either a *heterogenous* or a *homogeneous* society. Since there is argument about this issue, the teacher suggests the class to
Table 2. Correction Symbols Chart Incorporating Harmer’s (2007) Concept of The Use of Written Feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negotiation types</th>
<th>Correction symbols</th>
<th>Example errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Clarification requests</td>
<td>?M: The meaning is unclear.</td>
<td>That is a very excited picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L1 effects: Errors caused by the influence of students’ first language syntactical structures.</td>
<td>I very much like it. or Chinese English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Metalinguistic clues</td>
<td>SP: A spelling errors.</td>
<td>My mother and I had an argument yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T: Wrong word tense.</td>
<td>I write my diary yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Concord mistake.</td>
<td>Most of the Chinese people is collectivists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>^= There is something missing.</td>
<td>Anne told ^= that she has a secret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WW: Wrong word.</td>
<td>The students pay attention on Ms. G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X: Something is redundant.</td>
<td>My apartment is far more farther than yours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P: A punctuation mistake.</td>
<td>Would you like to go out with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F/I: Too formal or informal.</td>
<td>Hey, Mr. Smith, thank you for your consideration...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
conducted a survey, in which they interview each other to see if there is any correlation between their previous experiences and present attitudes of cultural diversity. The teacher assigns students into pairs to prepare questions, which they wrote down.

Step 3:

The teacher organizes the pairs of students into groups of four, and asks them to ask each other the questions they designed. He/she takes notes of students’ utterances that have grammatical or lexical errors, but he/she doesn’t correct them at that point.

Step 4:

The teacher asks the class to watch two video clips from “The Debate of Racism and Holocaust” (28:00—41:00) and “The Line Game” (41:00—50:00) in Freedom Writers. The dialogues include various examples of the same themes, cultural diversity and racism. The whole class discusses the clips using the five key questions. (See Appendix A for general comprehension questions). The teacher hands out the script of the video clips, and replays the video while they read.

Step 5:

Students study the script to find the target language that might be useful for the survey task, particularly language related to the notions of heterogeneous and homogeneous. They list these in two categories: previous experiences and present attitudes. Students work in pairs on this task, and then the teacher writes the ideas on the board (See Figure 4 for examples).

Table 3. Examples for Task-Based Approach Activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous experiences</th>
<th>Present attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I could not understand the jokes my friends were talking about.</td>
<td>I still feel uncomfortable while hanging out with foreign friends; especially they are speaking in foreign language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher asks the class to complete the chart together, and to make generalizations about the grammar of the two categories. The teacher also elicits the question forms of the verb structures: Have you ever experienced…? How did you feel? etc. The students return to their survey task and revise their questions in pairs. Then, they are paired up with different students than the ones they were working with (in Step 3).

Step 6:

The teacher asks students, working in their original pairs, to prepare a report on their findings, with a view of answering the question: How does living in a heterogeneous society or a homogeneous society affect attitudes of cultural diversity and racism? Each stu-
dent is required to submit their questions and answers. The teacher provides negotiation feedback to students’ writing assignment.

**Process writing.** The purpose of process writing is to engage a L2 learner in interaction between the writer and his/her audience that enhance an authentic situation and create an opportunity to cooperate with others. This activity provides students’ opportunities to respond to peers and teachers’ feedback and make self-corrections. There are three phases in process writing including: (1) the processes of planning, (2) peers and teachers’ feedback, and (3) revising the drafts. Group social networking websites (e.g., blog, black board) are very useful tools for developing students’ process writing skills (Boas, 2011; Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005). The following lesson plan demonstrates how to integrate black board and film into process writing.

Step 1: Selecting a cultural theme

The novel, *The Diary of a Young Girl,* and the film, *Freedom Writers* discuss four cultural thematic lesson topics including racism, social justice, gender roles, and heroism. After reading the book and watching the video clips, the whole class discusses the film and selects one topic for the writing assignment. The following paragraphs will use the topic, social justice, as an example in the process writing. The example demonstrates how to write a text in the problem-solving genre.

Step 2: Planning

For the purpose of developing a problem-solving topic related to social justice, a black board was created with the title “How can we prevent bullying?” After reading the novel and watching the film about social justice, students receive a handout and work in pairs to complete the following activity:

In the reading and video clips, bully could happen in various situations from a small-scale bullying at school, a gang culture in the community, to the Nazis trying to exterminate the Jews and other groups in Europe in WII (Belchere, 2007). The characters in both the novel and the film show “ethical courage” and stand up against the authority to do the right thing. The teacher asks the students work in pairs to discuss about (1) what causes bullying, and (2) how to prevent bullying. Students write down three causes of bullying and three solutions from preventing bullying. The homework is to post the three problems and three solutions on the black board.

Step 3: Drafting

During the next class, students work in pairs and receive two handouts. The first handout contains the student-generated ideas of the causes and solutions on the black board posts. The second handout is the guidelines of how to structure a problem-solving text. The guidelines include how to write the introduction, the body of the paper, and the conclusion. For instance, in the body of the paper, students discuss the cause and the solution about bullying. The teacher asks students to pick one cause of bullying and one solution
of preventing bullying. Students are required to provide three supporting sentences and one example to support the idea of the cause of bullying. Likewise, students write down three supporting sentences and one example to support the solution of preventing bullying. In the first phase, the homework is to write the first draft on introduction of “How can we prevent bullying?” and post it on the black board.

Step 4: Peer review

Students bring their first draft to the class and exchange papers for peer revision. Peer revision is an essential component in process writing because it (1) engages writers in interactive and collaborative writing process (Lui and Hansen, 2002); (2) provides negotiation feedback different from the teacher (Campbell, 1998); and (3) helps develop students’ critical thinking skills.

Step 5: Teacher’s feedback

After students’ revised their first draft of introduction based on peers’ negotiation feedback, they submit the second draft to the teacher. The teacher provides negotiation feedback to the students and students are required to revise the second draft based on the teacher’s feedback.

Step 6: Multiple drafting and revising

After two versions of draft from both peers and the teacher, students are now ready to write about the body of the paper — the cause and solution of bullying. In this phase, students follow the guidelines and information that was posted on the black board for guidance on how to pattern their problem-solving essays. After writing the first draft of the body of the paper, the class repeats the same pattern by having peer reviewing process and then the teacher reviewing process. Process writing involves in many re-writing and reviewing opportunities for students. Students post the final essays on the class black board.

Step 7: Reflection of peers’ essays

Students’ audience of writing assignments is usually merely the teacher. Therefore, in order to make writing tasks more authentic, the teacher assigns students to interact with their peers’ by writing reflections of peers’ essays on the black board. Because the multiple drafting and revising phase had already finished, the purpose of the reflections is to emphasize the content of the essays rather than the lexical and grammatical forms. This writing activity focuses on the content of different ideas and cultural contexts.

Journal writing. The purpose of writing a journal is writing to communicate. Writing to communicate provides students opportunities to (1) develop creative thinking skills, (2) express their feelings by using informal language, rather than formal languages, and (3) communicate with the teacher. The teacher plays a role as a facilitator to scaffold the students, rather than a judge (Young, 1999).
In *The Diary of a Young Girl* and *Freedom Writers*, the characters keep journals to express their feelings and write down the difficulties they encounter in life. The teacher asks students to choose one character in the story and write diary entries in order to answer the following questions: (1) what would you do, if you were the character in the story?; (2) how would you feel, if you were the character in the story?; and (3) how the problems and difficulties the characters faced connect to your life experiences?

The teacher should collect and read the journals on a regular daily basis. Some teachers prefer not to correct students’ errors in journal writings; however, in this activity, the purpose is to focus on not only the contents but also the common lexical and grammatical errors in L2 writing. Therefore, the teacher should provide negotiation feedback on the errors.

**Conclusions**

In order to successfully acquire a L2, students must gain not only linguistic competency but also an ever-widening critical cultural competency. The MIFT model provides three benefits: first, it demonstrates to ESL/EFL teachers a classroom application via a course management system for intermediate and advanced English conversation and composition class; second, it provides strategies and techniques that can be employed to promote linguistic and cultural competency; and third, it shows how the development of linguistic and cultural competencies can be integrated with the development of creative and critical thinking.

This paper is of significant interest to multilingual and multicultural educators and learners. It addresses pressing concerns for other educator in the fields of language, media literacy, cultural competency, social study, and critical thinking skills in education today. This paper also suggests directions for future research and pedagogical implications. Media literacy has been an essential tool in not only language classrooms but also other disciplines; however, teaching content knowledge and cultural competence through the use of media and selecting appropriate materials through media are still controversial. Additionally, this paper serves as a model for (1) how teachers can use films effectively in teaching English and cultural competency or other disciplines; (2) and how teachers can use films to design lesson plans based on the concept of Multiple Intelligences.

**Acknowledgments**

This study would not have been possible without the love, support, and encouragement I received from my family, professors, and classmates. I have benefited greatly from the mentoring of Dr. John Henning and comments received from Dr. Sara Helfrich, Daniel Showalter, Ellen Myers, and Andy Knapp. The authors acknowledge the support from faculty and students from the Ohio OPIE and ELIP programs.
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Appendix A

General comprehension questions for discussions:

1. Setting: Where did the story take place?
2. Theme: What is the message of the scene?
3. Problem: What was the problem in the debate? Solution: How was the problem solved?
4. Characters: Who were in the story? Whose point of view is shown in the debate?
5. Event: What important things happened in the scene?
Effects of Cooperative Learning on Learning Achievement and Group Working Behavior of Junior Students in Modern French Literature Course

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Abstract

This study reported on the results of a quasi-experimental research to explore the effectiveness of using a cooperative learning method on students’ academic achievement, their group working behavior and their perception and opinions towards cooperative learning in a Modern French Literature course. The sample included twelve junior students majoring in French who registered in Modern French Literature course in the second semester of 2010 at Rangsit University. The sample was further divided into three groups and each group contained four of more or less competent students. The Learning Together technique of the Cooperative Learning method was used as treatment to teach 12 topics of the 14 topics of the Modern French Literature Study Guide, written by the researcher for the 2010 academic year. For the last two topics of the Study Guide, each student was required to self-study the content prior to class. During the 11 weeks of the experiment period, the effects of using cooperative learning on students’ learning achievement were examined through the results of the pre-tests and post-tests, administered to the class before and after each topic, and through the results of oral presentation and group work quality assessed by the teacher and by the audience after each session. The group working behavior was examined through the teacher’s appraisals, and through the self-assessment of each member after group working.

The results revealed that the use of Learning Together technique raised significantly the students’ learning achievement at 0.01 statistical level. Especially, the students whose pre-test scores were rather low benefited the most from cooperative learning, as their post-test scores were apparently increased. The results also indicated that, according to the teacher’s assessment, the students gained group working skills at a high level while they self-evaluated their group working skills from a high to the highest level. Regarding their perception of cooperative learning, the overall satisfaction with Learning Together technique was positive, ranking from a high level to the highest level. (The means are between 4.38-4.76).

Keywords: Cooperative learning, learning together technique, learning achievement, group working behavior, critical thinking, student perception.

The study was aimed to test the effects of Cooperative Learning method on learning achievement of the junior French major Students in Modern French Literature course;

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then to investigate the effects of cooperative learning method on their group working behavior; and finally to survey their opinions towards cooperative learning. The study was conducted from October 2010 to August 2011 and funded by Teaching and Learning Support and Development Center of Rangsit University.

**Background of Thai Culture**

In a wider view, like most of Asian Buddhist countries, Thai culture is influenced by Buddhism, a religion of peace and harmony. In a narrower view, Buddhists in each country have their own characteristics. Thais have been known to be “very good-natured and easy-going”. (Nguyen, n.d.) In everyday life, Thai people often say “mai pen rai” or “no problem” in a bad or unhappy circumstance. Thais are friendly and smile easily because life should be fun or “sa-nook”. Nevertheless, they usually show their timidity in public rather than express their emotions.

Socially, Asians are reported to be closer linked to their families and depend on authority figures. (Jersabek, 2010 : 164) But distinctly, Thais are much more social learners as they often get together in groups and discuss among their peers what they are to do or what is unclear.

In term of ethnography, the Chinese were the largest number of non-Tai in Thailand and were the largest Chinese population in Southeast Asia. (LePoer, 1987). By using assimilation policy, Thai governments encouraged Chinese to become Thai citizens. Many generations later, the Sino-Thais were successfully integrated into Thai society, particularly by intermarriage to facilitate their commercial activities. And most of them played important role in the drive of Thai economy.

In terms of values, the earlier Sino-Thais transmitted their beliefs and social values to their ascendants. This is why “filial piety [of Confucianism] plays an important role in Thai society”. (Ngugen, n.d.) Parents and the elderly are the most respectful persons and children were taught to avoid contrasting views with them. Gradually, familial respect is extended to respect for the elderly and the authority, including teachers, in Thai society.

**Background of Thai Education System**

The cultural and social background discussed above contributed greatly to one-way teacher-student teaching method. Thus, the rote learning methodology is deeply ingrained in the Thai school system. (Foley, 2011) Thai teachers tend to dominate the class and the students would be embarrassed asking questions or trying for problems’ solutions in a class. Since 1999, the Education Act promulgated by the Ministry of Education approved a student-centered learning approach to learning. Teacher who deals with small classrooms has more chances to design teaching methods that turn major responsibility over to the students and he or she plays a coaching role in the learning process. But in huge classes, which is generally the case of most of the subjects, the teaching pedagogy remains teacher-directed. Hence, the majority of Thai students are not being taught to think for themselves and to solve problems. In Thai classrooms, they are passive and wait for the
transmitted knowledge from the teacher. It is a big task and a challenge for the teacher to change this kind of attitude in order to engage them in their own learning.

**Background of the Research**

Since 2004, the researcher has been in charge of Modern French Literature course which is a student-centered one. The main objective of the course is to develop critical thinking of the students. To reach such a goal, the students must be well-disciplined at a high level. As we discussed in the background of Thai education system above, Thai students are generally passive and not familiar with thinking and problems solving. The problem encountered by the researcher before this study was that most of the students were not well-prepared neither for the content nor for the closed-ended or open-ended chapter exercises before coming to class. In order to motivate the students to become personally involved in the learning, to do their pre-reading and to engage themselves actively in the task assigned, the researcher had studied different types of teaching methods, and found Cooperative Learning very interesting. We were persuaded that cooperative learning would probably solve our problem and contribute to meet our objective, as cooperative learning creates positive social skills among the students who would learn from each other and encourage each other through group working. And that would fit the fact mentioned above that Thais students are social learners. Additionally, with cooperative learning, the students learn by doing, their learning would be accordingly active comparing to one-way teaching method. Nevertheless, to achieve such a change, the students must be mentally prepared for the treatment. With this in mind, cooperative learning techniques are analyzed, chosen and designed to fit our classroom situation.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985, cited in Apple, 2006), human beings have three basic needs: relatedness, competence, and autonomy. It seems that cooperative learning methods are appropriate to this psychological principle. Apple (2006) has taught English in all levels of education in Japan and cooperative writing is among his current interests. He wrote that “teachers who had used effective environment for learning and thus had helped students reach their learning potential.” (Apple, 2006: 279) And as declared Dee Dickinson, a former school administrator who had experience teaching at all levels from kindergarten to university, and was the founder of *New Horizons for Learning*, Faculty of Education at John Hopkins University:

> Cooperative Learning enhances children’s ability to construct knowledge as they engage in discovering new ideas with each other. In addition, it enhances students’ self-esteem and helps teachers with classroom management… (Dickinson, 1994: 20)

**Cooperative Learning and its Effectiveness**

According to the Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota, cooperative learning requires five elements: Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Interpersonal Skills, face-to-face Interaction and Group Processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). This “five pillars” model for cooperative learning has been well studied. Da-
vid and Roger Johnson have been at the forefront of cooperative learning theory for four decades and cooperative learning is among the most well researched of all teaching strategies. Many research studies all over the world have shown that when compared to other methods of instruction, cooperative learning is one of the most effective ways for students to maximize their own learning and the academic achievement of their classmates (New Horizon, 2008, Johnson & Johnson, 1994, Slavin, 1995).

**Various Methods of Cooperative Learning**

Each cooperative learning method has its own process. In The Jigsaw method, a member from each home group who is assigned for the same topic, forms a new group of specialists to study together that topic. After that, he goes back to his home group and teaches what he had learned to the other members. In The Student-Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) method, all the members of the group study the assigned topic together and do the individual test of each section and finally the overall test. The mean of all individual tests of each student is called basic scores. The difference between the basic scores and the overall scores is called developed scores. In the third method, Team-Assisted Individualization (TAI), members in the home group study the assigned content and do the exercises. Those who fulfill 75% of the exercises will continue with the overall test. Those who gain less than that will rework on the exercises until they get 75% then they can follow the others. The total points gained by the members represent the scores of the group. In the fourth method, Team Games Tournament (TGT), members in the home group study the assigned content and each of them, and depending on his poor or good capability, represents their group to compete with the other groups in a question-answering competition. The scores of the members are those of the group. In Group Investigation (GI), the members of the group divide the assigned content into sub-contents and each member provides the relevant answer or explanation of each sub-content before coming back to the group for discussions and conclusions. The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method is especially designed to develop reading skill, including reading comprehension and integrated composition. The Complex Instruction (CI) method combines various knowledge and skills by emphasizing on the task designed by the teacher to match each student’s ability. And the last one is the method created by Kagan (Kagan, 1989), the Co-op Co-op technique of cooperative learning. In the Co-op Co-op technique, students work in group to produce a particular group product in order to share with the whole class and each member shares material with multiple sources and makes a particular contribution to the group.

**Learning Together Technique**

Learning Together technique refers to one model of cooperative learning presented by Johnson & Johnson (1994). The principles of Learning Together consist of heterogeneous grouping, positive interdependence, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing. Heterogeneous grouping is considered on the basis of mixed ability as obtained by past achievement. Positive interdependence among group members is formed through setting a common goal, assuming a common identity, applying the same resources, getting the same reward and so forth. Individual accountability is regulated
through individual preparation and testing, responses to teacher’s questions, and presentation of their group work. Lastly, group processing gives evidence of learners’ achievement as a group and plans the learners for further cooperative activity.

**Literature Review**

**Two approaches used in second language teaching**

According to Apple (2006), two main approaches used in second language teaching are Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and social-cultural theories such as the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of Lev Vygotsky and the Activity Theory of Leontiev. In the first approach, learners memorize and repeat sets of rules and patterns. In the second approach, learners use the second language as a part of communication process. However, in this case, the input must be regulated by L2 peers or experts, as learning is seen as a result of social interaction with the members of the community. For second or foreign language learners, the best community for them is the language classroom community. And Apple found cooperative learning very helpful in that such community: “cooperative learning techniques allow EFL learners to actively participate in the classroom activities where learners use their different understandings of how the world operates, leading to stronger personal ties between group members, more well-defined individual identities, and a greater sense of membership in the learning community.” (Apple, 2006: 296)

**Research papers on cooperative learning in language classrooms**

During the decade 1990, some papers dealt with the development of four language skills in classrooms by using cooperative learning method. Wei & Chen (1993, cited in Liang 2002) conducted a questionnaire survey to investigate 263 college students’ perception of cooperative learning. The results of the questionnaire showed that cooperative learning offered students more opportunities to practice four language skills and increase vocabulary retention. And more than 50 percent of the participants felt that their four language skills improved. Chen (1998, cited in Liang 2002) investigated the effects of cooperative learning method of Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) on 143 freshman college students. Through open-ended interviews, 12 students with different levels of English proficiency informed that cooperative learning reinforced their development of four language skills in English.

Regarding oral communication skill, the findings of Liang (2002) and Zhang (2010) showed the beneficial effects of cooperative learning. Liang (2002) collected data from two oral tasks, scores of monthly examinations, motivational questionnaires, student interview, and teacher review to achieve methodological triangulation. The major findings of his study suggested that cooperative learning helped significantly to enhance the junior high school learners’ oral communicative competence and their motivation toward learning English. Based on his conclusions, he recommended cooperative learning to be integrated into the junior high school English instruction as part of the Nine-Year Joint Curriculum in Taiwan. He also proposed the application of cooperative learning in EFL
teaching, and especially suggested for teacher development in cooperative learning. (Liang, 2002: iii) Apropos of Zhang (2010) who compared cooperative learning with traditional instruction, he found cooperative learning promotes productivity and achievement and provides more opportunities for communication. Moreover, cooperative learning responds to the trend in foreign language teaching method with focusing on the communicative and effective factors in language learning. Consequently, “cooperative language learning is beneficial in foreign language learning and teaching.” (Zhang, 2010:83)

In the matter of reading and composition skills, different methods of cooperative learning were used by teachers-researchers. But mostly, the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) was chosen. Sitthilert (1994, cited in Wichadee 2005) investigated the effects of the cooperative learning method of CIRC with 106 high-school students. The findings revealed that the English reading comprehension achievement of the experimental group was higher than the control group. The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) helped low achievement students improve their ability and the opinions towards classroom atmosphere were positive. Mulmanee (2009) examined the effects of the cooperative learning method of CIRC with 32 high-school students in Bangkok. The findings indicated that the English reading comprehension achievement of the experimental group was significantly higher than the control group ($p < .01$). The researcher also suggested for teacher practices in cooperative learning before using it.

Some researchers, without specifying the method they used, tried cooperative learning in their English reading classes. It was the case of Chang (1995, cited in Liang 2002) who compared traditional instruction with cooperative learning method in a college English reading class. A general test and a summarization test were administered to each method. The results indicated that the average scores of students in cooperative learning were about two points higher than that of the students in teacher-oriented class.

Other kinds of cooperative learning method were also administered to develop the reading skill of the students such as STAD and Co-op Co-op technique. Wichadee (2005) studied the effects of cooperative learning on English reading skill development of 40 first-year students at Bangkok University. Team-Achievement Divisions (STAD) technique of cooperative learning was used with the sample group over an eight-week period. The results indicated that the students obtained higher reading comprehension scores for the post-test than the pre-test scores at the .05 level of significance. Most students rated cooperative learning moderately positive and they performed good cooperative learning behaviors in their tasks. (Wichadee, 2005) Buatum (2010) investigated the achievements on critical reading of 63 freshmen students who learned with the Co-op Co-op technique of cooperative learning. She also compared the achievements on critical reading of the students with different critical reading competency. It was found that the students’ post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores and the achievements of the students with different critical reading competency were significantly different at.05. Her students expressed their strong agreement with the Co-op Co-op technique of cooperative learning.

surveyed 80 college students’ reflections upon one of the cooperative learning methods of Jigsaw. The results showed that more than 50 percent of the participants thought that Jigsaw helped improve their general English language proficiency. Chen (1999, cited in Liang 2002) examined the English development of students in junior colleges by comparing traditional method and cooperative learning. The results revealed that the students in cooperative learning gained significantly higher scores (p<.05) on the overall test and the cloze test than those in the control group.

In terms of others skills in language classrooms, the work of Somapee (1999, cited in Wichadee 2005) seemed interesting as she examined critical thinking skills of the students in Business English course by comparing traditional group work method with cooperative learning. The findings showed that the post-test scores of students through cooperative learning were remarkably higher than those of students in traditional group work method.

Regarding social atmosphere and learners’ motivation, several papers claimed that cooperative learning encouraged a new learning environment and/or raised students’ motivation. Chu (1996, cited in Liang 2002) examined the effects of the Jigsaw activity of cooperative learning on 118 freshman students in a college English class. The findings indicated that over 90 percent of the students perceived that cooperative learning helped build an intimate learning and social atmosphere in the classroom. And as already mentioned above, the study of Liang (2002) asserted that cooperative learning encouraged learners’ motivation. Towards Chen (2005) who dealt with several instruction methods, studied how the implementation of cooperative learning activities, incorporating the cooperative learning (CL) the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) of Howard Gardner, and the notion of Whole Language Approach (WLA) in college EFL classrooms have effect on students’ language proficiency and attitude. The results of his study showed that the motivation in learning English was enhanced a great deal for the experimental group that was taught using the CL and MI ideas. Based on his insight gained from the study, CL, MI, WLA and Language Learning Center were recommended to be integrated into the Junior College English curriculum. (Chen, 2005: 2)

Learning Together as the Most Appropriate Cooperative Learning Method for this Study

As the main objective of the Modern French Literature course is to develop critical thinking of the students and the researcher aimed to solve the problem encountered as mentioned in our background. At the same time, we intended to encourage, with group working and presentation skills, the solidarity and the intimate learning atmosphere among the students. The notion of helping each other is the most obvious in Learning Together technique which requires the equal contribution of each member of the group in their learning process as well as their accountability. Consequently, we found Learning Together the most appropriate cooperative learning method for this study.
Method

This quasi-experimental research involved the sample of twelve junior students majoring in French who registered Modern French Literature course in the second semester of 2010. The sample was divided into three groups and each group was composed of four of more or less competent students.

Research questions

1. Can Learning Together technique raise significantly students’ learning achievement?
2. Can Learning Together technique provide the students with group process skills and problem solving skills?
3. Can Learning Together technique help the students to develop presentation skills?
4. How do the students perceive Learning Together technique of cooperative learning?

Scope of Study

Learning Together technique of cooperative learning method was used to teach 12 of the 14 topics of the Modern French Literature Study Guide, written by the researcher for the second semester of 2010 academic year.

A class session lasted 90 minutes and covered the learning of one topic. For the last two topics of the Study Guide, each student was required to self-study the content before coming to class. During the 11 weeks of the experiment, the effects of using cooperative learning on students’ learning achievement were examined through the results of the pre-tests and post-tests, administered to the class before and after each topic, and through the assessment of oral presentation and group work quality by the teacher and by the audience after each class. The group working behavior was determined through the teacher’s appraisals of self-preparation to group work and during-the-group-work behavior of each student, and through the group working self-assessment of each group member. The overall satisfaction with Learning Together technique was investigated through the students’ perception.

The sample was divided into three groups of four or more and less competent students, by considering their French grade point average of the two recent academic years. Each group received a name and the same treatment and was responsible for the group working and the presentation of four topics, alternatively.

Here are seven steps of how Learning Together technique of cooperative learning was administered to teach the 12 topics to the sample group.

1. Four members of each working group do the pre-test, then go back to study the assigned topic in which they will learn about one contemporary French writer,
his/her biography, list of literary works, key concepts and a page of one of his/her literary works.

2. Each member of the group consults dictionaries in order to help each other to understand the literary work page of the writer.

3. When the content of the page in 2.2 is clear for them, they discuss in group to specify genre, form, objectives, writing style and enunciator of the literary page.

4. Then the group finds keywords and principal themes of the literary page.

5. After that, the group tries to give relevant answers to the questions at the end of the chapter.

6. In some topics, it is possible that the group has to deal with the comparison between two similar concepts. For example, in the first topic, the group who is responsible for that, has to compare the existentialist concepts in Jean-Paul Sartre with Buddhist notions.

7. In this step, the group makes an appointment with the teacher who will check their comprehension, encourage them to think and discuss until they can analyze correctly the text and get the right themes and the relevant answers to the questions of the chapter. With regard to the comparison of concepts which is quite difficult, the teacher checks if their comprehension is clear enough to point out the similarities and the differences of both concepts. The teacher gives more explanation, if necessary, and tries to let the group members express the maximum of their opinions.

8. When everything is clear, the group prepares for topic presentation in class which normally takes place one or a few days later. In class, the audience does the pre-test. Then, members of the working group help each other to explain the concept of the writer and give a detailed analysis of the literary page. For the exercises at the end of the chapter, the group members let the audience try to find out the themes of the literary work and the answers to the questions before they give their own ones. In the comparison part, they encourage the audience to discuss and share with them. Sometimes, they learn more from the audience who has different points of views.

9. As soon as the group finishes each presentation, the teacher distributes the post-test to all of the class. She also distributes various evaluation forms. The audience evaluates presentation and work quality of the group while each member of the working group self-evaluates his/her group working behavior and gives opinions on cooperative learning (LT). At the end of each class, the teacher evaluates work presentation and work quality of each member as well as the working process of the group.

**Research plan and timeframe**

During the first month of research plan, the researcher surveyed a variety of instructional methods and analyzed the content of the 2010 *Modern French Literature Study Guide*, the objectives of the course and the learners, in order to choose an appropriate model of cooperative learning method.
In the second month, two weeks before the start of the new semester, the research instruments as followed were constructed:

- The pre-tests and post-tests of each topic of the Study Guide;
- The presentation and work quality assessment form which will be assessed by the teacher;
- The presentation and work quality assessment form which will be assessed by the audience students;
- The group working behavior and group work quality assessment form which will be assessed by the teacher;
- The self – assessment on group working behavior; and,
- The questionnaire to survey the opinion of each group member towards cooperative learning.

At the beginning of the first class, the researcher explained to the class the objectives of the course by informing the students that cooperative learning will be used as the instructional method. Then, I distributed the class schedule to show how and when group working and presentation of each group will be carried out. I clarified when each research instrument will be administered. After that, I divided the students into three groups of four of mixed abilities by basing it on their grade points obtained from French course in the previous semester.

From the second to the fourth month, the Learning Together technique of cooperative learning method was administered to the teaching of chapter one to chapter twelve of the Study Guide and the data was collected with the instruments constructed.

During the fifth month, individual pre-class content prepared method was applied for the last two topics of the Study Guide and the data was collected with the pre-tests and post-tests.

In the sixth and seventh months, the collected data was analyzed and interpreted.

The findings were summarized and the report was written in the eighth month.

Then the report was reviewed by an educational expert during the ninth month and in the tenth month, the researcher effectuated the corrections recommended. Finally, the report was submitted to the Teaching and Learning Support and Development Center of Rangsit University who funded this study.

**Timeframe**

10 months from October 2010 (two weeks before the beginning of the second semester) until August 2011.
Data analysis

Descriptive analysis and t-test were used to analyze the data as follow:

1. The pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed by mean, standard deviation, t-test verification, and frequency.
2. The presentation and work quality scores were analyzed by mean, standard deviation, and t-test verification, and the scores assessed by the teacher were compared to the scores assessed by the audience students.
3. The group working behavior and group work quality scores assessed by the teacher were analyzed by mean, frequency and interpreted according to a Four-Steps Scale proposed by the researcher.
4. The self-assessment on group working behavior scores were analyzed by frequency and interpreted according to a Five-point Likert Scale.
5. The group members’ opinions towards cooperative learning scores were analyzed by frequency and interpreted according to a Five-point Likert Scale.

Results and Discussion

Regarding the effect of cooperative learning method on learning achievement, the results revealed that learning achievement of the students was significantly higher after cooperative learning at the level of 0.01, especially the students whose scores of the pre-test were quite low gained the most benefit from Learning Together technique. This supported the findings of Chang (1995, in Liang 2002) and of Keramati (2009) that teaching by cooperative learning contributed to higher learning achievement of the students than by traditional instruction. The results were also consistent with those of Wichadee (2005) that the post-test of the students after cooperative learning scored higher than the pre-test. Based on this point of results, and to reply to the research question number one, we acknowledged that Learning Together technique raise significantly students’ learning achievement.

In the matter of group working behavior (volition, cooperative effort in group working and self-discipline during the work), the findings indicated that the mean of group working behavior assessed by the teacher scored at a high level while the mean of self-assessment on group working behavior of the three groups scored at a high level to the highest level (The mean of the first group is 4.67, the mean of the second group is 4.42 and the mean of the third group is 4.40). This was in agreement with the results of Chen (1998 cited in Liang 2002) that, with cooperative learning, the learners were encouraged to help and respect each other, and were responsible for their own learning. As regards Liang (2002), his findings showed that cooperative learning help significantly increase speaking skill and motivation in learning English. Consequently, the findings replied to the research question number two that Learning Together technique provide the students with group process skill and problem solving skill.

Concerning group work quality (individual task quality and group work presentation) assessed by the audience students, the results showed the scores’ mean at a very good level...
Effects of Cooperative Learning

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(the mean of the whole class is 7.02 from the total of 8 points), while the mean assessed by the teacher scored at a good level (The mean of the whole class is 6.27 from the total of 8 points). But when comparing the assessment of group work quality of the audience with that of the teacher, the t-Test value (-3.55) showed no significant difference between them. Based on these results, we found the answer to our third research question that Learning Together technique helped the students develop their presentation skill.

With regard to students’ opinions towards cooperative learning, the results showed that the first group was satisfied by the method at the highest level (The mean is 4.76), while the second and the third groups were satisfied by the method at a high level (The mean is 4.44 and 4.38, respectively). This was consistent with the findings of Sitthilert (1994 cited in Wichadee 2005) who studied the effect of cooperative learning on teaching English comprehension and on classroom atmosphere. The results revealed that the mean scores of experimental group were higher than those of control group and the experimental group was satisfied with the classroom atmosphere. As for Saiyud (2010) who explored the effect of cooperative learning on critical reading skills in Thai language, she found the post-test scores of the students higher than the pre-test scores and the students were agreed with the cooperative learning as teaching method at a high level.

In terms of students’ perception and opinions, the findings suggested that most of the students were satisfied by the Learning Together technique at the highest level and they ranked Learning Together technique the most suitable instruction method for this course (The mean is 4.53). If we considered the rankings by item of each group, we found that, the first group ranked first the fifth item : they found LT technique the most beneficial as they “learned the real values of various things through cooperative learning”. According to the second group, the third item was ranked first to show their high satisfaction level of LT technique which was different from self-study method. (The mean is 4.75), while the third group ranked first the first item as they “realized they played important role in their group” at a high level (The mean is 4.67).

To sum up and to reply to the fourth research question, by considering the rankings by item of the three groups, the results showed the overall perception of cooperative learning of the students as followed : They pointed out that, firstly, LT technique was the most beneficial especially when it helped them “learn the real values of various things through cooperative learning” (The mean of the three groups is 4.67). Secondly, they found LT technique “encouraged their development of critical thinking skills” (The mean of the three groups is 4.58). And thirdly, LT technique was for them, “an instruction method which was suitable for the teaching of the course” (The mean of the three groups is 4.58).

Originality of the Research and Success of Cooperative Learning in Thai social Context

First of all, when we decided to use LT technique in this research, we intended to make student-centered approach effective, since our students were familiar with the rote learning. And the results showed that cooperative learning as our treatment contributed to the success of the student-centered approach in the Thai context where students are social
learners. The precise steps of cooperative learning helped systematize their social learning. This is why our findings reported the mean of group working behavior assessed by the teacher scored at a high level and the mean of self-assessment on group working behavior of the three groups scored at a high level to the highest level.

In the second place, all research papers on cooperative learning in language classrooms mentioned in the literature review dealt with four language skills, one of the four skills or general English and proficiency, while our study coped with a Modern French Literature course. And our second intention to use LT technique was to increase the participation of the students in the learning process. The finding indicated that LT technique facilitated the switching of the passive to the active learning method. In our cooperative learning classroom, learners were responsible for their pre-class learning activities and for the comprehension of the others students during the class. Each member in a group had to do his or her part of the whole work, then helped each other to present it to the class. Supported by the teacher and by other members of the group, each speaker was able to overcome his/her diffidence. They assimilated what they learned and were proud of their work.

In the third place, we discussed above in the background of Thai education system that Thai students are not being taught to think for themselves. However, with LT technique, our students were trained to do that: they were responsible for their own learning from the beginning to the end of the chapter they were to do. According to our results, the students found LT technique “encouraged their development of critical thinking skills” (The mean of the three groups is 4.58). And this was the strength of this research as the main objective of the course is to develop critical thinking of the students.

Fourthly and finally, since Thai students are also weak at problem solving, our finding suggested new issue about the success of LT technique in developing problem solving skills of the students during their group work and group presentation. Here are two examples. For the first case, when one of the members in the group was sick on the presentation day, the other members discussed to choose a substitute who stood in promptly the sick person. In another case, when a group started working together late and asked the teacher to postpone the class, the teacher turned responsibility over to the group by telling them to negotiate with the members of the following group if they were happy to replace them. As the answer was negative, the leading group decided to speed up their work and was able to present it on time. In their points of view, the students reported that LT technique helped them “learn the real values of various things through cooperative learning” (The mean of the three groups is 4.67) and LT technique was “an instruction method which was suitable for the teaching of the course” (The mean of the three groups is 4.58).

Suggestions

1. As the main objective of the course is to develop critical thinking of the students and the results revealed that learning achievement of the students was significantly higher after cooperative learning at the level of 0.01, especially the students whose scores of the pre-test were quite low gained the most benefit from Learning
Together technique. This suggests that it would be possible for the teacher to apply cooperative learning with other course in which the teacher intends the learners to develop their critical thinking. 

2. The findings indicated that the mean of group working behavior and group work quality assessed by the teacher scored at a high level while the mean of self – assessment on group working behavior of every group scored at a high level to the highest level. This means that Learning Together technique is helpful in developing interpersonal skills and problem solving skill of the students, when integrated into the course that requires group discussion before or during the class. 

3. The mean of presentation and work quality assessed by the teacher scored at a high level while the mean of presentation and work quality assessed by the audience scored at the highest level. This implies that Learning Together technique helped to develop presentation skill of the students. 

4. The overall results of the study has led us to say that cooperative learning would be one of the most attractive choices for teachers who aim to replace teacher-centered instruction by student-centered strategy.

Limitation

The study was an action research in Modern French Literature course. As there was only one group of junior students majoring in French when conducting this study, the researcher was obliged to select the whole group as the experimental group without a control group. The conclusions drawn from the results may be different if applied to other studies with different design of research.

References


Additional Resources

Printed matters in Thai language


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**Printed matters in English and French**


**Articles in English**


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Electronic documents in Thai language


Electronic documents in English and French


Effects of Cooperative Learning


http://www.google.co.th/books?hl=th&lr=&id=RxjjUefze_oC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1
&ots=ogCXStu28v&sig=ZMtW5_fMdL21m9j8PsCQXKKnw


The Online University Classroom: One Perspective for Effective Student Engagement and Teaching in an Online Environment

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Abstract

Universities struggle with alternate means of instructional delivery to meet the demands of distant student needs, the competition for enrollments, and restraints from limited physical building space. For many, fully online programs of study using internet-based instruction commonly named online instruction have become viable solutions. There has been significant growth in the number of on-line degree programs since many students want to take courses that will positively impact their future careers but not hinder family and work responsibilities. Shifting from a traditional program of study to an online format is not without challenges. There are three primary areas of focus when considering an online design format for course delivery: course design, instructor role, and student role. This paper will provide one instructor’s perspective of how to improve student engagement and interaction in master’s level Educational Leadership courses over a three-year span utilizing available data from the university Student Perception of Teacher (SPOT) assessment available.

Keywords: Online course design, course evaluation, assessment, student engagement, student perception.

The advancement of technology and the increased enrollments for some universities have pushed many colleges to explore alternate means of instructional delivery to meet these challenges. It is commonplace to shift delivery of coursework in higher education programs from the traditional four walls of a classroom, face-to-face (f2f or F2F), to an internet-based instruction commonly referred to as online instruction. Growth in the number of on-line degree programs has been attributed to the increased number of student enrollees who want to take courses that will positively impact their future careers but not hinder family and work responsibilities (Bangert, 2004; Maeroff, 2003). Nationwide, there is also a growing concern among educators that the design and delivery of Internet-based courses have not undergone rigorous quality assurance as colleges and universities rush to offer an array of online programs that will allow them to compete for increased enrollments (Fish & Wickersham, 2009; Motiwalla & Tello, 2000).

Teaching online requires an understanding of the benefits and limitations of the online environment as a teaching and learning tool (Conceição, 2007). An online course is not a

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traditional course in a different delivery format. Conceição believes that university instructors need to rethink the roles of the teacher, the learner, and course design to embrace effective online teaching strategies unlike those in a traditional classroom.

A departmental shift to online teaching occurred in the Educational Leadership department at UNCW several years prior. The demands of distant student needs, the competition for enrollments, and the flexibility afforded from online course delivery on physical building space was sufficient to explore fully online programs of study at master’s level and select doctoral classes. Not all programs of study are afforded the option of online delivery or given consideration due to content restraints (Mandernach, Mason, Forest, & Hackathorn, 2012). Even when courses can be delivered in an online environment, shifting from a traditional program of study to an online format is not without challenges. Some obvious challenge is the inability to see students, and the absence of visual cues, creating a 2-dimensional environment compared to 3-dimensional in a traditional classroom. Lecture formats can be difficult to present in online classrooms without student interaction and feedback. Learning to navigate within the multiple layers in module designs can be frustrating for instructors that need to personally have documents in hand. The obstacles in online teaching vary by instructor and learning style, so planning is difficult until the instructor is in the environment to realize what is personally challenging. The first step, for any online instructor, is to create a well-organized and manageable course. There are three equally important areas when considering an online format for course delivery: course design, instructor role, and student role.

**Course Design**

As an online instructor, one must design for an educational experience, facilitate for a social environment, and project subject matter expertise. Each of these areas has potential to cultivate interest, motivation, and engagement of students in active learning.

There are various methods of online course design. The key is to realize online courses may not mirror F2F design with exception to content. According to Dykman and Davis (2008), detailed organization and planning is the first step in teaching online. Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001) suggest a framework to describe the context of instruction based on a model of critical thinking and practical inquiry using three components of teaching and learning: “cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence” (add page number). Cognitive, social, and teaching presence can be built into any course design with adequate planning. Cognitive presence can be built into the course through content. Social presence is usually established in the discussion board section of online courses but can also be accomplished through emails, video, interactive sessions, and through the use of teams in the course. Teaching presence is instructor visibility, and is accomplished in a variety of methods such as daily or weekly email announcement, content or assignment videos, content lectures, question and answer sessions, as well as group or main discussion board chats.

Blackboard, a common online classroom format, provides for all three presences. Blackboard includes discussion boards (private and public); public and private folders (referred
to as modules); internal emailing (private and group); public announcements; team or group formation, chat rooms, blogs, video conferencing, interactive and voice emailing. WebEx, an interactive classroom, is also available to supplement Blackboard and offers audio and video of each student by each other and the instructor during instruction. In most instances, both formats would be used to deliver an online course.

Instructor Role

Understanding learner characteristics is essential for designing online instruction. Conceição (2007) believes the learner is the most important element of the online learning environment and should be considered early in the design and implementation of the online learning experience. The experience will be better for both if the instructor understands online learners (Moore & Kearsley, 1996).

Students must be comfortable in the online environment. Online training for students is critical in order to reduce student anxiety and prevent online technology frustrations interfering with learning (Cornelius & Glasgow, 2007). UNCW does provide online video support and a Technology Assistance Center (TAC) to answer students’ (and faculty) questions. As instructors, sending students emails prior to the opening of the course can direct students to the services as well as offer step-by-step instructions to enter the course. It should never be assumed that students are familiar with the technology.

As instructor, course organization is of absolute importance. Since students are not entering a classroom and visually present for the instructor to assess, the online classroom must be organized, easily accessed, and navigationally free of roadblocks regardless of the technological expertise of each student. Course content must incorporate different learning modalities to meet student needs such as using both instructor video and text format for modules. Folders, organized and labeled by content, should house instructional materials. Without the ability to interact in a physical setting with students, care must be taken to ensure students feel connected to the instructor through daily interactions by emails, course updates, or assigned online tasks. Course related questions should be stored in one location for student accessibility since online courses are not afforded the luxury of a student asking a question in class for the benefit of all students.

Course delivery is equally important in designing a great course. Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002) identify three roles for the online instructor based on tasks performed during the delivery of the course: cognitive, affective, and managerial. Learning, thinking, and information are cognition roles and the classroom environment, instructor, and relationships of students are affective. Not only is the instructor responsible for challenging course content, the instructor must also have etiquette in the online environment. When voice and body clues are absent from communications, instructors must be savvy in interactions so students see the instructor as considerate and caring. The managerial role is associated with the management of the course. The course must be user-friendly, easily accessed, and simple assignment submission. Assignments can be set online to not accept uploads after the deadline. Students must be aware of unfamiliar protocols associat-
ed with online teaching such as logging into Blackboard, knowing how to locate and find contents of module folders, and uploading assignments.

Meaningful and authentic activity is basic to engagement. Steinbronn and Merideth (2008) suggest making learning outcomes meaningful in the teaching environment by engaging students actively in their own learning through student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and student-to-content to build collaborative skills. The development of these skills involves a commitment from students to share personal experiences, ideas, and alternatives (Merideth, 2007). This is often the greatest challenge in online course development. Authentic student engagement is a natural process, not forced through assignment, but encouraged through participation and collaboration. Students must be engaged in authentic learning tasks which support learners in their development of skills in self-regulation and self-learning (Herrington, Oliver, & Reeves, 2002). Online course development must focus on processes to engage the learner during content delivery.

Gathering feedback from students in the form of an end of course survey will provide assessment data. If feedback is needed prior to the end of the course, then instructor-created mid-term surveys using UNCW Select Survey or external resources such as Survey Monkey (SurveyMonkey.com) can be sent to students. Email frequency needs to be monitored as it can be a sign of insufficient information in the course for students or it can be a lack of content support. Some students just need more encouragement than others. Emails serve as a means of support from the instructor. Some students are very comfortable in the online environment and others lack the confidence to navigate in a foreign setting. Online technological expertise appears to be a barrier for some adult students who are returning to school for an advanced degree or certification program. All students can be successful regardless of the initial navigational level of expertise in an online environment.

**Student Role**

Students often require or request online programs of study without giving thought to what an online program will require has been the experience of this instructor. The flexibility of taking a course from the comfort of home and the convenience of being able to perform tasks at any given time is conducive to keeping busy schedules, maintaining employment, and raising families. While these are certainly enticing attributes of the online environment, online courses often require student to put forth unanticipated effort in ways which are different from a traditional classroom.

The online environment is designed for self-guided and self-directed student efforts. Since they are not meeting the demands of attending a physical class each week, students are responsible for logging in and checking assignments, uploading work, and interacting with colleagues on given topics. Steinbronn and Merideth (2008) also believe the instructor must take on a new role as a facilitator, strategist, and coordinator to provide support to students in the online environment. Online technology does not replace the instructor; but does shift the focus to the students’ relationship with the learning process.
Course Evaluation

In an online course, akin to a traditional classroom, feedback is necessary to make changes to course design using data. One method of online course evaluation is through student feedback. UNCW uses a method of course and instructor evaluation called Student Perception of Teacher (SPOT) assessment. SPOTs are a series of questions where students are asked to rank a response from 0 to 5. A narrative section is also provided for students to elaborate on any particular area. SPOTs are sent to students prior to the end of the course and final grades. The surveys are offered both in online and paper formats primarily matched with the format of the course. SPOTs are not mandatory. The Educational Leadership department experiences a higher percentage of paper versions completed by students since they are distributed and collected during class time while most students are in attendance. Students in online courses are asked to complete the online evaluations and the instructor has limited control over whether students actually complete the evaluation. Students often complain they are busy finalizing end of course projects when SPOTs are made available and when they have time to access the online survey, the link has been closed. This leads to a lower percentage of students responding in the online environment since students are asked to complete the SPOTs independently outside of a class setting with a deadline coinciding with the end of the course.

Review of Online Course Data

The current UNCW course evaluation instrument has been replaced. For the purposes of this paper, the online SPOT evaluation responses of one instructor in three online educational leadership courses offered multiple semesters over a period of three years were charted. A fourth online course was reviewed but did not have three years of data so the course was not included in the analysis; however, the course also showed an increase in the SPOT rating. Four questions were selected from the SPOT survey to evaluate the course and instructor. A ranking of 5.00 is the highest a student can give any of the responses in Tables 1-4.

From the SPOT reports, the first three questions, Q1, Q2, and Q4 focused on the course content and design. This is also an evaluation of the instructor’s ability to design an online course. The final evaluation question from SPOTs, Q7, focused on the instructor. There are some challenges in using online student evaluation for data in altering course designs due to low student participation. Students that are content with courses do not always feel a need to participate in the survey; therefore, the feedback may not accurately assess class perception without majority representation.

Another factor difficult to filter was the number of students that participated in each evaluation. The university has procedurally used a percentage to compensate for low student response to surveys. During the three-year range, class sizes varied and student participation in the evaluation process also fluctuated from course to course, albeit, a review of the SPOTS showed that the student participation was similar throughout the three-year review.
Table 1. EDL 512 School Law
SPOT Results for Q1, Q2, Q4, and Q7**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDL 512</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 (2010-11)</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 (2011-12)</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 (2012-13)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. EDL 513 Organizational Management
SPOT Results for Q1, Q2, Q4, and Q7**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDL 513</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 (2010-11)</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 (2011-12)</td>
<td>4.40/4.67</td>
<td>4.80/4.33</td>
<td>4.40/4.00</td>
<td>4.60/4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 (2012-13)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. EDL 526 Essentials of Management
SPOT Results for Q1, Q2, Q4, and Q7**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDL 526</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q7</th>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1 (2010-11)</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 (2011-12)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3 (2012-13)</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. EDL 569 Pre-Leadership Internship
SPOT Results for Q1, Q2, Q4, and Q7**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDL 569</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 (2010-11)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 (2011-12)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 (2012-13)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* New reporting system was used.
** Narratives were not included in this chart.

Class sizes averaged 20-25 students (5 students in internships to 38 students in content courses) and student participation was between 7-10% as compared to similar enrollments in f2f courses where the instructor had 90-94% of students respond to paper evaluations. There was a slight increase of student online survey responses over the three-year period although no correlation between increased satisfaction and responding to surveys was determined.
Narrative responses paralleled the 7-10% survey responses. If students completed the survey, they were compelled to respond to the narrative. Narrative comments were reviewed only to support student survey responses with detailed accuracy. An average of the responses for each year for comparison purposes was also considered as viewed in Table 3. This was used only to observe the incremental change from year to year in the survey questions since there are factors that cannot be taken into account such as student enrollments, course rigor and content, and seasonal modifications (summer school).

Changes made to the online courses were also grounded in the additional narrative feedback from SPOTs, available throughout all three years, coupled with a review of the current research for online course design. During the final year there was notable change, according to the data in Table 1-4 (also represented in Figures 1-3 in the Appendix) in the students’ perception of the courses and instructor compared to the first year of online course implementation. Students rated early courses in the range of 2.65-4.76. This rating changed over a three-year span to 4.00-5.00, a relatively high evaluation. It was necessary to understand what alterations occurred in the courses that precipitated an elevated shift in SPOTs.

**Course Modifications**

The changes the instructor made to the online course design and format over the three-year period of time are shown in Table 5.

During the first year of online implementation as a department, students rated the courses as less engaging and less organized. During narratives, students shared that they had difficulty in locating materials contained in online folders. Students also expressed feelings of isolation without an instructor physically present. They also said that assignments were more self-directed in nature. Changes were then made to improve course delivery and to create an environment that was user-friendly for students without prior experience in the online environment. Courses were also rearranged so that students could engage with one another on discussion boards. The SPOTs results, including both quantitative and qualitative data, were used to alter the course delivery for Year 2.

The second year of changes yielded higher rankings on SPOTs, but there was obvious room for improvement. SPOT narratives cited the 24/7-instructor availability as a major strength of the course because it helped students feel connected virtually since they knew that they had access to the instructor even if they did not take advantage of this. Videos were abundant with instructor images that delivered assignment overviews, provided tips for successful completion of the projects, and, from time to time, reminded students of the goals of the course. Students also agreed that the instructor videos, which provided assignment overviews and encouragement throughout the course, were an asset. Group or team discussion board activities and projects were introduced to create a natural oasis for rich student dialog. Student narratives revealed that some students initially did not like the idea of working in teams but afterwards, they felt that it was a great tool for student connectivity. Year 2 also abandoned discussion boards with limited use for specific interactions.
Table 5. Changes to Online Course Delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Courses were redesigned based on the performance goals for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tutorials on how to work in Blackboard were made available with links for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Discussion boards were mandated for students to use for interaction with each other and for attendance purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Weekly announcements and emails were sent to students as needed, not consistently.</td>
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<td>- Students were sent private emails when assignments were missing to check on them and serve as reminders.</td>
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<th>Year 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Instructor-made videos provided an overview of Blackboard and showed how to navigate the particular course.</td>
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<td>- Discussion boards were used only when needed for interactions related to specific content and were not a continual part of the course design.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Both group discussion boards and main discussion boards were used for student interaction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Videos were used to introduce the instructor to the students and the students to each other for a more personal effect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Team activities were used in the courses to increase student interactions through small groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Videos and written assignment overviews were made for each module in the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The course was made available to students upon entry into the course, in order that the students could preview all assignments, plan, and work ahead when desired. Students were encouraged to email questions to the instructor at any time of day for immediate feedback.</td>
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<th>Year 3</th>
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<td>- WebEx (an interactive video and audio online classroom) was used to deliver lectures for each module to help students interact with each other and the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- WebEx lectures were recorded, allowing students to revisit them and giving students who missed lectures access to them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Links to video resources for course format were provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Various software such as Inspiration, Camtashia, LiveBinders, and Dipity timelines were used for assignments, projects, and activities.</td>
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</table>
The greatest change over a span of three years was revealed during the third year in SPOTs narratives. The majority of student comments credited the interactions with the instructor through WebEx, a source for increased instructor visibility and student engagement, as a powerful online tool. WebEx mirrors a face-to-face classroom with the exception that students can access the website remotely from any location with video and audio, which allows the student to feel as though they are in a physical ‘online’ classroom.

While it is not believed that any one change was instrumental in course appeal, a combination of changes over time improved the course design by providing multiple avenues for student engagement. Student engagement was thought to have increased due to continuous and ongoing student interaction with each other and the instructor throughout the course. The courses and the instructors received higher marks. Efforts will continue to improve the quality and design of each course as well as to heighten student engagement as new technologies become available.

Summary

Designing and teaching online is not for every instructor nor is every course appropriate in an online environment (Mandernach, et. al., 2012). Courses and instructors that are open to an online environment necessitate careful planning.. Online course design continues to be pivotal in the success of online interactions and student engagement.

This data suggests the most effective method of increasing student engagement in these educational leadership courses was instructor visibility through interactive sessions and video conferencing. Additional tools included weekly video snapshots providing an overview of the module or video assignment introductions. Creating smaller teams or groups within larger classes of 20 or more students also created a bed of interactivity for students. The use of discussion boards should be limited to specific assignments for rich dialog and not just the satisfaction of online attendance. It is not clear whether the success of the educational leadership online course development can be transferred to another course of study, but this does provide a foundation of inquiry for other schools.

Online instruction provides several benefits to students and instructors. The accessibility and flexibility of an online course can be advantageous to adult learners in a career path or with family responsibilities. Any biases such as age, weight, or gender are removed when students are not visual although it can be argued that as professionals; students are not subjected to biases even in traditional classrooms. For instructors, the ease of an online environment provides accessibility and uninterrupted teaching while traveling for conferences, professional development, or training in the field. Students are always accessible in the online format. In some cases, online courses have spurred increased enrollments due to their flexibility. Regardless of preference, online courses are a consideration for some courses and instructors but serious contemplation must be given before any final adoption.
Conclusion

Draves (2002) has estimated that by the year 2050, one half (50%) of all learning will take place in an online environment. Research indicates that there is no significant difference in learning when using online or face-to-face formats (Benbunan-Fitch & Hiltz 1999; Johnson, Aragon, Shaik, & Palma-Rivas, 2000; Swan & Jackman 2000) and this establishes online education as a viable delivery format (Steinbronn & Merideth, 2008). Online course delivery is a valuable method of teaching but it requires an organized course format and delivery; an instructor who is knowledgeable in the environment; and students that are aware of the responsibilities and additional demands of the online setting.

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**Appendix: 3-Year SPOT Evaluations**

![Figure 1. EDL 512 School Law Online Course 3-Year SPOT Evaluations.](image-url)
Figure 2. EDL 513 Organizational Management Online Course 3-Year SPOT Evaluations.

Figure 3. EDL 526 Essentials of Management Online Course 3-Year SPOT Evaluations.