

# MountainRise

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## SALAD BOWLS AND SALAD DAYS: Teaching, Learning, and Diversity in Higher Education

Editor's Introduction by Laura Cruz, Western Carolina University

Growing up in the suburban United States of the late twentieth century, large portions of my long-term memory are filled with ditties from a video series known as Schoolhouse Rock. Shown during Saturday morning cartoons, the series included such memorable pieces as “Conjunction Junction,” “Interplanet Janet,” “I’m Just a Bill,” and “the Great American Melting Pot.” The latter two videos were specifically commissioned as part of the American Rock series which coincided with U.S. bicentennial celebrations in 1976. At the time, I remember the series as being socially progressive and, like other shows on public television, emphasizing the value of diversity and awareness and respect for differences. Fast forward over 30 years later, and I decided to be more intentional about addressing diversity issues in my course on the Columbian exchange between Europe and the Americas in the 1600s, so I began to delve into the literature. As an historian, I had never had formal training or preparation in diversity issues and was surprised to find how much this dynamic field had changed in a relatively short period of time. I learned, for example, that the “Great American Melting Pot” had become a very outdated concept and that my childhood nostalgia had given way to the Great American Salad Bowl, a metaphor for the cultural mosaic theory at the forefront of much contemporary thinking about diversity and diversity education both inside and outside of the United States.

The Salad Bowl theory suggests that rather than squashing cultural differences together into one homogenous whole, that the various parts retain their original flavor, so to speak, but come together into one appealing dish. There are clear resonances between this idea and that of

educational constructivism, which suggests not one pathway to learning, but rather multiple trajectories that allow students with different interests, backgrounds, and talents to work together in a common classroom environment. Each of the contributions in this issue of *MountainRise* seek to bring these concepts together as the authors deal with questions related to diversity, from teaching to multicultural audiences to raising awareness of multicultural issues.

For James Davis and Lori Oxford, the challenge was to use Spanish language education to help overcome cultural resistance. Based on their experience teaching in rural southern U.S., they hypothesized that the desire to learn a second language might go hand in hand with appreciation for the culture for which the language is native. In which case, if students had a better understanding of Hispanic culture, it would stand to reason that they might become more motivated to improve their second-language communication skills. They chose to use experiential learning to bridge the two, establishing a program in which their students worked directly with Spanish-speaking elementary school students. In their analysis of the outcomes of the program, however, they did find clear gains in cultural awareness and appreciation but, surprisingly, these did not translate into increasingly positive attitudes towards second language acquisition. As they suggest, perhaps this relationship is more complex than we might think.

For Deborah Pattee and Tom Lo Guidice, the challenge was to provide diversity training for pre-service teachers and to prepare them for managing multicultural classrooms. Recognizing “unreadiness” for such classrooms as a national trend, the instructors chose to develop several real-life inspired scenarios in order to gain an understanding of the level of cultural sensitivity among their students and to suggest constructive solutions to the “unreadiness” issue. Students responded to scenarios based on race, gender, sexuality, age, religion, ability, and appearance. They were then given focused instruction on these issues and the scenarios repeated and a

reflection component added. In the end, the researchers found that diversity education produced some noteworthy gains, but not across the board. Gains in awareness of racist and homophobic behavior and behavioral interventions were evident for example, but the scenario concerning ableism produced less clear-cut results. The study demonstrates that there is real value in integrating diversity education into teacher preparation, but the issues are complicated by the environment and context in which they take place.

For James Hand, Chad Betters, Michael McKenzie, and Himanshu Gopalan, the cultural context of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) presented a particular challenge for student learning and retention. Noting the established link between engagement and reflection, the faculty in Motorsports Management at Winston Salem State turned to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to devise a creative means for increasing student engagement across the NSSE categories. The result, an undergraduate research showcase, produced successful results for student but also for faculty, who found their own interest in research renewed by the mentoring experience. Their experience suggests that as complicated as environmental challenges can be, it is possible to meet them through intentional practice.

Tamara Walzer's contribution to this issue is not overtly about cultural diversity but it does address educational constructivism. The piece is an action-research based study on one instructor's move from using scoring rubrics to a scaled system. At the onset, she hoped that the new system would better facilitate high standards, fairness, and student motivation. The results of her study showed that this was indeed the case and that both the instructor and the students recognized these values in the new system. While not directly addressing diversity, the instructor did move away from "melting pot" standards she perceived as stifling innovation to a new system

that allowed for greater and varied responses while still upholding high standards of academic rigor.

As these essays collectively show, cultural diversity and educational constructivism go hand in hand, but there are few clear cut recipes for success and, in fact, perhaps this is not the goal. Instead, the process of taking these issues and tossing them into the ‘salad’ of higher education may be worth examining in future issues. Faculty centers, as Ed Nuhfer’s book review suggests, may be major players in leading these broader changes. All in all, it could be said that we are in our ”salad days,” or highpoint of awareness, sensitivity, and openness to issues of diversity inside and outside of the classroom and the results of this are resounding in classrooms everywhere.

Laura Cruz  
Western Carolina University

**No pride in prejudice: pedagogy and one experiment in the deconstruction of anti-immigration sentiment**

Jamie Davis

Western Carolina University

Lori Oxford

Western Carolina University

*The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Thomas Ford to their research*

**Abstract**

We implemented and evaluated a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project in which forty-nine college students worked at a local elementary school with children who live in households where Spanish is the primary spoken language. We measured the college students' attitudes toward Hispanics and learning Spanish both before and after participating in the project. Students who participated in this project expressed more positive attitudes toward Hispanics at the end of the project than at the beginning in contrast to 23 students in a comparison group who did not participate in the project. Surprisingly, participation in this project was not associated with more positive attitudes toward learning Spanish.

Interpersonal communication has changed in the last twenty years in the United States because of the influx of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries, and has thereby challenged extant cultural norms. Emerging intersubjective difficulties wrought by linguistic obstacles in social, medical, and law enforcement services have created burdens on personnel working in these fields; policy makers working in these respective professions have duly begun to see that the disorder created by the linguistic divide has become an urgent priority. While we acknowledge that this problem has emerged as a distinctly American phenomenon, trans-group contention caused by language barriers certainly exists elsewhere. It is our hope that scholars in other countries comparably affected by such translanguistic strife may discover parallels in our research that could mitigate similar cultural hostilities that impede social understanding, and, by extension, teaching and learning itself.

In the United States, the mounting resistance to diversity, strident defenses of monolingualism, and, particularly in the wake of 9/11, the renaissance of ethnocentricity as a culturally desirable American value, may currently be complicating transitions towards more effective and reciprocal communication. While certain proactive individuals have scrambled nonetheless to invent solutions to compensate for such lacunae in language in the aforementioned professions where clarity in communication is of utmost and dire necessity, the complexities of deconstructing linguistic and ethnic prejudice continue to stymie their efforts.

A parallel problem also exists in the public schools with regards to the education of the children of Spanish speakers. There is an expectation that Spanish-speaking children will acquire English merely through exposure and absorption, and many children with minimal English language skills are placed haphazardly into classrooms in which they are taught by teachers with no specialized training in educating limited English proficiency (LEP) students. Although ESL initiatives have purported to lessen the trauma of confusion and displacement experienced by these children, the management of language acquisition for each individual student remains a daunting challenge in rural communities, for example,

that often cannot circumvent the limitations imposed by sparse instructional and personnel resources and insufficient funding.

While we cannot with any authority diagnose the specific reasons that there exists a paucity of interest in the welfare of this special population of children, we suspect that, at least on certain levels, the same ethnocentrism that informs a general social perception that Hispanics are undesirable may figure into policies regarding their education (Armendariz 2000). In our own experiences, after having taught Spanish in numerous post-secondary institutions, we have frequently pondered to what degree this same cultural resistance persists in our students. We theorized that student ethnocentrism and resistance to bilingualism might be positively modulated by exposing students to a real-world application of language skills. Duly, in light of these observations, and Jeffrey C. Dixon's assertion that "by facilitating knowledge of minority groups, contact may help majority group members develop more favorable views of minority groups" (Dixon 2004), we sought to investigate the extent to which engagement in a SoTL project could alter the stereotypes of Hispanic persons that could hinder Anglophone students' desire to learn Spanish. The underlying hypothesis of the project was that participating university students would develop more positive attitudes toward Hispanics and learning Spanish at the end of the project than at the beginning.

As we have both taught at a university in the rural southern United States and ruminated about these problems as issues relevant to the scholarship of teaching and learning, we posited that there were certain obstacles to language acquisition that could be circumvented or altered by exposing undergraduate students to contact with individuals from other cultures, primarily Hispanic. These were: ethnocentrism, xenophobia, lack of opportunities for real-world application of language skills, and the perceived irrelevance of studying abroad, exacerbated by a depressed rural economy. With the assumption that minimizing racial tensions could result in more productive learning environments, we therefore sought to explore the use of contact theory as a means of testing our hypothesis.

## **Method**

We paired 59 students from our university with numerous students in local elementary schools. The elementary school students were in grades K-8, and all came from households in which English was not the primary language spoken at home. The children had been identified by licensed Title III LEP



coordinators as deficient in some aspect of English communication, and their proficiencies in language encompassed a gamut that ranged from a total deficiency in English language skills to highly functional communicative ability. Twenty three students enrolled in a different Spanish class did not participate in the project and served as a comparison group. The total number of participants was 72.

The college students were initially instructed to spend time working with the children to bolster literary proficiency. All college students taking part in this program had to undergo a rigorous criminal background investigation in order to participate in the program and also were required to receive training in teaching reading skills prior to placement in the public schools. Each student was assigned to one child for an entire semester. As the project evolved and time passed, the responsibilities of the students expanded to include tutoring in school subjects ranging from basic math to elementary science to assistance with time management skills. In addition, the college students were also to read elementary texts in Spanish (where applicable) to the children.

All of the students were given the opportunity to opt out of this program by conducting alternate research, but a vast majority of our students (59 in total) elected to be paired with one of the children at the local elementary schools. In addition, the college students were informed formally of the purview of our research at the beginning of the semester, and consent was obtained formally in writing. At the beginning of the semester, all 72 student participants completed a 49-item questionnaire designed to measure attitudes toward Hispanics and attitudes toward learning Spanish. The 49 items emerged from a larger set of items through confirmatory factor analyses and reliability analyses based on an independent sample of 68 students who had completed this exact same project the previous semester. The survey is included in this article as Appendix A. Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with pro or con attitude statements using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After reverse-scoring appropriate items, higher scores indicated more positive attitudes.

We sought to examine particular areas of concern to language educators. While we hoped to establish correlations between such experiences and positive changes in attitudes towards immigration, Spanish language learning, and Hispanics in the United States, our findings only revealed demonstrable variations in students' opinions towards Hispanics as an ethnic group. The "Hispanic attitudes and stereotypes" subscale consisted of 24 items (e.g. "I avoid Hispanics whenever possible," "Hispanics tend

to be dirty"). In this subscale, Cronbach's alpha was .90. The "attitudes toward learning Spanish" subscale consisted of seven items (e.g. "I look for opportunities to practice my Spanish," "I am only taking Spanish because it is required"), and for this particular subscale, Cronbach's alpha was .88.

At the end of the semester, participants in both the project group and the comparison group completed the 49-item questionnaire for a second time.

## Results

For each of the subscales in the 49-item questionnaire, we tested our hypotheses about the effects of participating in a contact project. To accomplish this, we compared the pre- and post- scores on each of the subscales for participants in the project group and in the comparison group. We anticipated that there would be positive changes on each of the subscales in the project group, but not in the comparison group.

We postulated that participation in this project would bring about more positive attitudes toward Hispanics and fewer negative stereotypical beliefs about Hispanics. In keeping with this hypothesis, we found that participants scored significantly higher on the "Hispanic attitudes and stereotypes" subscale after completing the project ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = .50$ ) than they did before starting the project ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = .51$ ),  $t(48) = 4.23$ ,  $p < .01$ . In contrast, participants in the comparison group did not report a significant difference in their attitudes toward Hispanics at the end of the semester ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = .44$ ) compared to the beginning ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = .41$ ),  $t(22) < 1$ . Finally, the attitude change among participants in the project ( $M = .22$ ,  $SD = .38$ ) was significantly more positive than the attitude change among participants in the comparison group ( $M = .05$ ,  $SD = .26$ ),  $t(70) = 2.00$ ,  $p < .05$ .

We also hypothesized that participation in such a project would generate more positive attitudes toward learning Spanish. Contrary to this hypothesis, participants reported less positive attitudes toward learning Spanish after completing the project ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = .45$ ) than they did before commencing their work with the children ( $M = 4.03$ ),  $t(48) = 2.29$ ,  $p < .05$ . Participants in the comparison group also reported less positive attitudes toward learning Spanish at the end of the semester ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) than they did at the beginning ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = .49$ ),  $t(22) = 2.12$ ,  $p < .05$ . Furthermore, the negative attitude change was not different between participants in the project ( $M = -.18$ ,  $SD = .55$ ) and participants

in the comparison group ( $M = .19$ ,  $SD = .45$ ),  $t(70) < 1$ . This finding suggests that students' attitudes toward learning Spanish became more negative over the course of the semester, and participation in the project did not curb this trend. While this data came as a surprise to us given the positive alterations in attitudes towards Hispanics and our expectation that enthusiasm for language learning would accompany such a course, we have hypothesized that this data may be attributable, among other factors, to student fatigue at the end of an academic year.

### Conclusion

The results of the study support our first hypothesis: that students who participated in the tutoring project would express more positive attitudes toward Hispanics at the end of the project than at the beginning in relation to the students from the comparison group.

The association of more positive attitudes towards Hispanics with participation in this project is consistent with research on the "contact hypothesis" on reducing prejudice (Allport 1954). Researchers have discovered a number of conditions under which intergroup contact fosters more positive intergroup attitudes and relations (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami 2003). Our project inherently created such favorable conditions in two ways.

First, research has shown that prejudice is more likely to change as a result of contact that gives people an opportunity to be involved and interact with members of other ethnic groups (Amir 1998; Dovidio et al. 2003). This project fostered the development of close relationships between the college student participants and the Hispanic elementary school children. The evolution of this bonding is plainly discernible through anecdotal evidence we gathered as part of our research. In comments submitted in conjunction with the second survey, students articulated their clear investment in the relationships with their pupils:

- "I had gone into this project believing that I was going to be stuck [...]. Boy, was I surprised! What I got was a bundle of joy. [...] I felt so needed and loved."
- "I feel like my child began to look up to me as her role model."
- "I had a great time with the project and felt like I bonded well with my child. I hope to be able to continue doing work like this in the future."

- “I brought her a slinky and a yo-yo and she was very grateful for the gifts I had given her. After I gave her the gifts, however, she said [...] ‘Thank you. My mommy can’t afford to get me presents like these.’ The statement she made moved me deeply.”
- “Teaching my child how to read has given me a sense of accomplishment. [...] I taught her life skills that she will always be able to use.”

Secondly, Pettigrew argued that developing such inter-group relationships is important in reducing prejudice for two reasons: close inter-group relationships allow people to empathize and identify with out-group members rather than simply learning about them, and inter-group relationships lead to a reappraisal of the in-group. One particularly compelling anecdotal example collected from the post-experiential survey demonstrates Pettigrew’s premise cogently: “I went into this project thinking that Mexicans need to go back to where they came from and saying things like, ‘You are in America, learn the damn language.’ Coming out of this project, however, has made me see things in a totally new and different perspective. Now I do not agree that we should send this child’s family back to Mexico.”

Such processes provide information about the in-group as well as the out-group and lead specifically to “deprovincialization,” a phenomenon in which individuals begin to see that the customs, cultural norms, and worldviews of the in-group are not the sole and exclusive ways of managing the social world, thereby developing a less insular perspective with respect to other groups in general. As this applies to the scholarship of teaching and learning, we contend that microsocial contacts such as those forged in their project ultimately foster more constructive macrosocial changes in pedagogical practices given the extent to which such endeavors diminish the agency of ethnicity.

While it is indubitable that demographics in the United States and elsewhere in the world are constantly shifting and will continue to change, studies such as this one may help educators ease the transition to multilingual culture by exposing their charges to circumstances that allow them to reflect on their own prejudices, confront them, and develop therefore a greater sensitivity to the turbulence that has historically accompanied ethnic transformations in societies. When students become part of a solution and do not perceive difference as threatening to their own cultural status quo, ethnocentrism may eventually cease to function as a barrier to learning.

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## Appendix A

### SURVEY

Please circle the response that best corresponds to your personal opinions. Please be as truthful as possible according to your OWN beliefs when you answer.

1. Most Americans feel like Hispanics need to go back to their own countries.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

2. I resent seeing signs in Spanish in public places.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

3. Most individuals in this country feel that Americans need to learn Spanish as much as Mexicans need to learn English.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

4. Lots of people appreciate the cultural diversity that Hispanics bring to the United States.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

5. I look for opportunities outside class to practice my Spanish.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

6. My friends and family have positive opinions of Hispanics.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

7. I think Hispanics are burdens on America because they don't pay taxes.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

8. People appreciate the hard work that Hispanics do.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

9. U.S. citizens think that English is a part of American culture and needs to be protected as the official language.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

10. I am trying to become fluent in Spanish

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

11. Hispanics place a higher value on education than most ethnic groups.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

12. If a baby is born to immigrants who are here illegally, that child should be granted U.S. citizenship.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

13. Most people have at least one good friend who is Hispanic.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

14. The ideas of the "great American melting pot" and "give us your poor, your tired, your huddled masses longing to be free" are still the proper notions about immigration in America.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

15. Hispanics tend to be less concerned with personal hygiene than other races.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

16. Studying Spanish helps me with other aspects of my learning.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

17. I avoid Hispanics whenever possible.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

18. Hispanic people are a viable part of our society.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

19. I feel guilty about my real attitudes about Hispanics because of my religion.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

20. Hispanics care a lot about their living environments.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

21. Hispanics love their children and pay attention to their needs as much as any other race does.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

22. I think most Hispanics place a low value on education.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

23. I am glad I took Spanish.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

24. Hispanics are less concerned with the welfare of their children than other races are.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

25. Most people think that Hispanics are peaceful and gentle.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

26. Hispanics show little concern for their homes and yards.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

27. I feel better about Spanish than I feel about other required classes.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

28. The government should do a lot more to control immigration.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

29. I try not to be around Hispanic or Spanish-speaking people if I can help it.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

30. It gets on my nerves when I see things written in Spanish.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

31. The majority of Americans think that bilingualism is a responsibility that should be shared by English-speakers and Spanish-speakers.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

32. There are all sorts of moral justifications that make it okay to hop the border without papers to come into the United States to work and live.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

33. Listening to people speak Spanish when I'm out and about makes me feel weird.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

34. I enjoy speaking in Spanish in class.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

35. In most communities, there is a general sense that life is enriched by the cultural differences that Hispanics bring to them.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

36. Lots of parents encourage their children to learn both Spanish and English.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

37. I'm only taking Spanish because it's required.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

38. Hispanics are not afraid of hard work and that is why people appreciate them.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree



39. People think that it does not matter what language is spoken in the United States as long as people can find ways to communicate with each other.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

40. Since Hispanics have poor health care systems in their own countries, I fear I might get sick from them somehow.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

41. Anyone who wants to move into the United States should be allowed to do so without any problems because this country was founded on that idea.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

42. Hispanics tend to be dirty.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

43. In my opinion, we end up having to pay more for all services and goods because Hispanics get out of paying taxes.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

44. There is really no justifiable reason for anyone to be in this country without proper documentation.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

45. All children born on United States soil deserve American citizenship regardless of their parents' nationality.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

46. My morals obligate me to love all people, including Hispanics, but I still feel some negative feelings toward them anyway and I feel bad about this.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

47. I am afraid that I might get a tropical disease from a Hispanic person.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

48. If I heard that a mother who was here illegally had to leave her child behind in the country and be deported, I would feel bad for her because she has a right to be with her child.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

49. People want their children to grow up being able to speak both Spanish and English.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**Preparing Socially Conscious Teachers: A SoTL Study  
of Teacher Education Students Responses to Seven Scenarios**

**Deborah K. Pattee  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire**

**and**

**Tom Lo Guidice  
Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Platteville**

**Abstract**

Two University of Wisconsin professors brought together by a Wisconsin system SoTL initiative, attempted to measure how preservice teachers changed over the period of a semester. A pre and post-test were given two semesters to students at two UW campuses. The surveys consisted of seven real world scenarios addressing different types of oppression. The findings were that students changed in most every area, and infusing diversity into every course is necessary to impact the lives of students not only as teachers but also as human beings.

With the world changing and the realization that by 2050 half of the students in U.S. K-12 schools will be students of color, diversity needs to be at the forefront of teaching. Though this statistic is primarily about ethnic diversity, we define diversity as more than race, including class, affectional orientation, gender, age, religion, looks, and disabilities. Also, the realization that approximately 80% of U.S. pre-service teachers are white, non-Hispanic (Fox, 2008) makes it even more imperative that teacher education programs purposely address this topic of diversity.

Standard Three of the Ten Wisconsin Educator Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure mandates that “The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.” It concerns us that many believe that diversity can be sufficiently taught in just one class. Although we do believe that students should have to take a human relations class where the topic of diversity is solely taught, we also believe that it should be integrated into every course.

In teaching about diversity issues we also hope that pre-service teachers develop cultural competence, but it is not something that can be picked up quickly. When our students become teachers who then teach students of color, in order to be successful, it is not about “what to do” but “how we think about the social contexts, about the students, about the curriculum, and about instruction” (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Culturally relevant pedagogy is a philosophy. Hence, through our teaching, purposely not changing anything about what we usually do, we hoped to document how pre-service teachers might change in one semester.

In light of the fact that most pre-service students are European Americans, how do teacher education programs prepare students for a changing world? Teacher education students must be

culturally relevant if they are to be effective with all audiences and to display the qualities of a genuine integrated society.

We have experiences of urban educators in the Midwest and South that have convinced us that European American students must be impassioned to meet the needs of all students. The statistics tell us that half of all pre-service teachers will leave the profession in less than five years. We recognize that for society to be served, new professionals must move out of their comfort zone and grapple with issues new to them to help all students succeed.

In Wisconsin, teacher educators and citizens have long recognized the need for human relations education. The minority relations code was a Department of Public Instruction response to citizen petition in the 1970s for more effective teachers. A responsible teacher education program integrates diversity in every course. The competencies have been expressed through the Department of Public Instruction's Human Relations (Minority Relations) Code and through legislation barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

As teacher educators at two regional universities, we have observed human relations challenges that students face during their college years and during the student teaching experience. We have sought to better understand student reactions to oppression and discriminatory incidents. To gain a better understanding of these reactions, we presented students with examples of different kinds of oppression.

### **Problem Inquiry**

This study sought to answer the question, "How do teacher education candidates respond to human relation scenarios that reflect challenges they are likely to face in everyday life and their teaching career?"

### **The Process of Developing the Study**

Teacher educators are concerned with the “unreadiness” of future teachers related to their lack of cultural responsiveness; some see it as the greatest challenge for teacher education (Futrell, Gomez, and Bedden, 2003). Many see a direct role between multicultural education and student achievement in urban schools. Simply said, there is “a need to engage and motivate pre-service teachers to acknowledge the need to consider intercultural dynamics and to actively incorporate multicultural education content and practices into their teaching” (White, 2008).

The use of scenarios is widely reported in the literature (e.g. Trumbull, Greenfield, Quiroz, Rothstein-Fisch, 1996) as a useful tool for qualitative studies. Much of the literature that refers to scenarios uses the term “cross-cultural.” Indeed, scenarios as a research tool seem to have grown from anthropology and cross-national efforts at international understanding. We believe the term is confusing because of the association with cross-nations and we prefer the term multiculturalism. Multiculturalism clearly addresses cultural diversity within a particular nation.

To assure that the scenarios we used for this study were consistent with common teacher preparation practice in Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Minority Relations Code, we developed our own scenarios based on our experiences.

## **Methodology**

The scenarios developed by the authors were based on their experiences and observations, and they were keyed to the definition of diversity described earlier. Each of the seven scenarios represent a different kind of oppression. The appendix describes each of the scenarios that were used. They are as follows: scenario one addresses heterosexism and name calling, scenario two describes cultural ignorance around the Thai culture and showing the bottom of one’s feet, scenario three focuses on ableism with the special education teacher bad mouthing three of her students with disabilities, the fourth scenario addresses classism with a college professor abusing a student who hunts, fishes and can’t afford school supplies, scenario five revolves around a woman who works in the Admissions office and bad mouths students who receive Affirmative Action and also tells a racist joke, scenario six addresses

sexism with some female students on spring break and a man working at a car rental, and scenario seven discusses American Indians and special rights. Survey Monkey™ was used as an on-line pre and post survey tool for students. Results were collected and tabulated using this data collection tool.

Basic demographic information was requested related to the year in school, age group, gender, ethnicity, and major, as well as their reaction to the seven scenarios.

The first group from the fall of 2007 involved nine sections of classes. One hundred sixty-seven students took both the pre and post survey. Many more students took the survey, but it was important to us that we use just those who took both surveys. 103 students were female, 64 were male, and no one self-identified as transgendered. There were 8 freshman, 41 sophomores, 44 juniors, 73 seniors and one graduate student. Of the 167 students one was African American, 2 American Indian, 112 European Americans, 1 Latino, 43 who self identified as other and 9 who preferred not to answer. The second group, spring of 2008 had fewer students; only 58 completed both surveys.

The first drafts of the scenarios were peer reviewed by numerous individuals from the state SoTL group as well as other colleagues. Then the scenarios were pre-tested by a group of university pre-service students. The revised scenarios were used in this study. The instructors involved were teacher educators at two regional universities in the state of Wisconsin.

The students took one of the following courses:

- Ethnic and Gender Equity in Education - a general course for junior students preparing to become teachers.
- Senior Seminar (where we initiated our pilot survey) - a capstone course offered immediately prior to student teaching for students preparing to teach in programs from early childhood to grade 6.
- Middle Level Methods and Instruction - a required course for Secondary licensure.

Each of the instructors addressed the topic of diversity in their courses. In the Middle Level Methods course, though not a diversity course, many of the activities that took place addressed diversity. Students were asked to complete an activity entitled Circles of Our Multicultural Selves. Using a web graphic organizer, students wrote their names in a middle circle and then thought of at least five

categories in which they were members. These categories were shared and students would continue to add to their web. At least twenty categories were created such as student, gender, age, religion, hobbies, birth order, job, club membership, and neighborhood where they live. This helped the students to understand the many identities they have, especially when they feel that they are not around much diversity. It opened their eyes to the diversity around them.

Students read McIntosh's (1989) article that addresses white privilege and were expected to list the various ways that they as European Americans have racial privileges, or if a person of color, the ways that they did not experience white privilege.

The wheel of oppression was taught helping students to name the various forms of oppression around them. Students were asked to draw a picture of a time where they encountered oppression. It could have been recently or when they were five years old. They were asked to write one word on the picture: agent or oppressor (they are the one who is doing the act of oppression), victim or target (they are the one who is being oppressed), bystander (they are the one who is standing by watching and not doing anything), or ally (they intervene in the act of oppression and try to help the person being oppressed). It was explained that each person has been these four roles during their lives, but students were to think of one incident to draw and discuss. It is at this time that the different forms of oppression were named: racism, classism, heterosexism, sexism, ageism, religious oppression, lookism, and ableism.

## Results

The results are stated in a series of tables that follow. They indicate that deliberate instruction makes a significant difference in the way students react to discriminatory actions. In every situation,

responses demonstrated an enhanced and deepened sensitivity to oppression. In some cases, the improvement was profound.

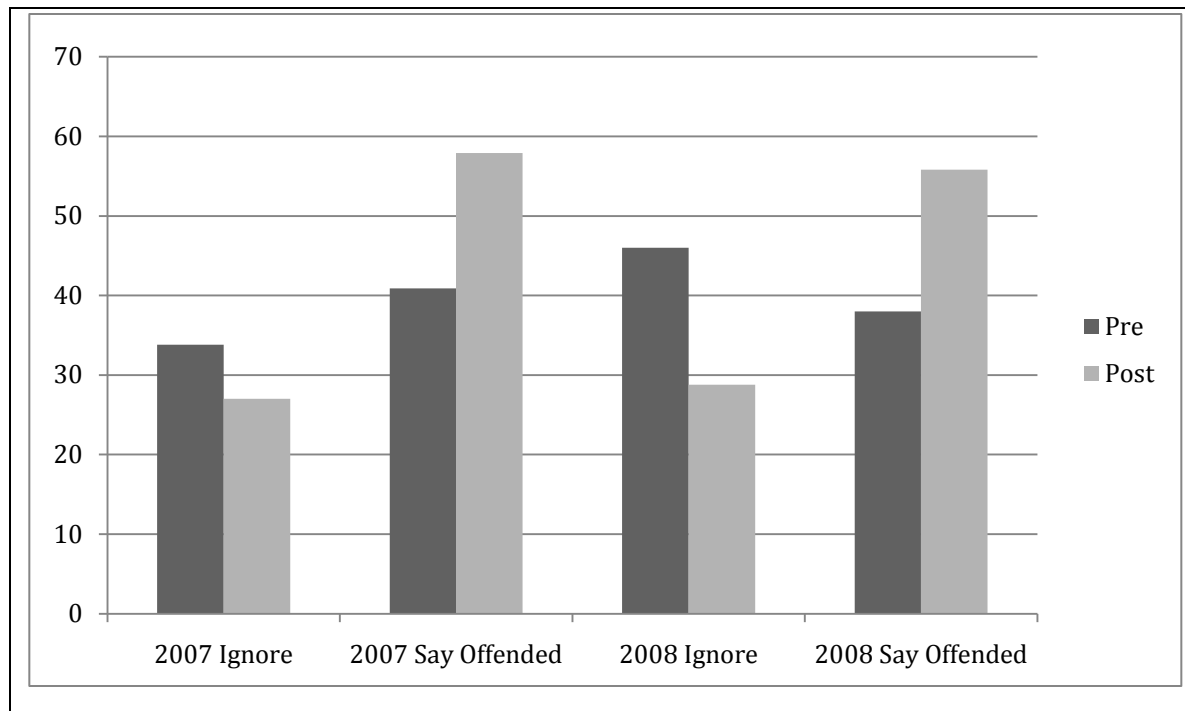


Figure 1. 2007 and 2008 Pre and Post Test Results for Homophobia

For example, in response to the homophobic scenario (#one), the 2007 group improved by 17.9% and the 2008 group improved by 25.5%. The amount of students who said they would ignore the comment decreased in both groups. This scenario addressing heterosexism saw the largest change in behavior. This intrigued us because homophobia is so rampant in our K-12 schools and one of the areas of oppression that does not always get addressed. We were pleased that so many students changed in this one area. One student who marked “other” on the survey wrote that they would

“respond with a polite, but direct, ‘Excuse me?’” Making a connection between homosexuality and a person’s memory, even in a joking manner, is completely inappropriate, particularly in a professional setting; it devalues people and their personal life choices. So, saying, “Excuse me?” is a way of expressing one’s discontent with his/her choice of joking expression while still keeping a line of communication open. I would probably follow that up with, “I don’t see the connection between my memory of my former teacher and that comment.” To me, this is a serious issue, and “ignoring the



comment," laughing, or continuing the joking are not remedies. Also, responding with outright offense might be misunderstood as hot-headedness; I'd rather discuss things in a more rational manner."

		2007		2008	
		<i>PRE</i>	<i>POST</i>	<i>PRE</i>	<i>POST</i>
SCENARIO	COMMENT				
<b>One:</b>					
<b>Homophobia</b>	a) Ignore the comment	33.8	27	46	28.8
	b) Laugh, it's a joke	14.3	5.3	2	3.8
	c) Respond that you are offended	40.9	57.9	38	63.5
	d) Join in and make another joke	0.6	0	2	0
	e) Other--please specify	10.4	9.9	12	3.8
<b>Two: Culture Awareness</b>					
	a) Ignore the students' behaviors	1.3	0.7	2	0
	b) Talk to George alone and inform him of the cultural taboos of the Thai culture	25.8	29.1	18.4	30.8
	c) Talk to Rose alone and inform her of the Midwest culture	14.8	13.2	16.3	11.5

	d) Inform the class about the situation and make it a teachable moment.	21.9	23.2	30.6	34.6
	e) Other--please specify	36.1	33.8	32.7	23.1
<b>Three:</b>					
<b>Ableism</b>	a) Ignore the comment	8.4	13.4	16.3	13.5
	b) Laugh, it's a joke	0.6	1.3	0	1.9
	c) Respond that you are offended	59.1	64.4	61.2	65.4
	d) Join in and make more comments/jokes	0.6	0	0	0
	e) Other--please specify	31.2	20.8	22.4	19.2
<b>Four:</b>					
<b>Classism</b>	a) Ignore the comment	30.5	20.8	18.4	27.5
	b) Laugh, it's a joke	4.5	0	0	0
	c) Respond that you are offended	41.6	58.4	55.1	54.9
	d) Join in and make more comments/jokes	0	1.3	0	0
	e) Other--please specify	23.4	19.5	26.5	17.6
<b>Five:</b>					
<b>Racism and Affirmative Action</b>	a) Ignore the comment	44.2	37.3	41.7	30.8
	b) Laugh, it's a joke	14.9	8	10.4	3.8
	c) Respond that you are offended	28.6	42.7	33.3	57.7

	d) Join in and make another joke	0	1.3	2.1	0
	e) Other--please specify	12.3	10.7	12.5	7.7
<b>Six: Sexism</b>	a) Ignore the comments and wink	20.9	16.8	16.3	11.5
	b) Laugh, he's joking around	7.2	6	0	3.8
	c) Respond that you are offended	45.1	53	40.8	55.8
	d) Join in and make more comments and wink	0	0.7	0	0
	e) Other--please specify	26.8	23.5	42.9	28.8
<b>Seven: Racism of American Indians</b>	a) Ignore the comment	9.7	6	6.1	7.7
	b) Talk to 5th grade teacher alone and inform her that they aren't special rights	16.9	24.8	12.2	26.9
	c) Ask this 5th grade teacher for more information about her thoughts	66.2	60.4	75.5	59.6
	d) Agree that they want special rights	1.9	0.7	2	1.9
	e) Other--please specify	5.2	8.1	4.1	3.8

Figure 2. 2007 and 2008 Pre and Post Test Results for the Seven Scenarios

For the culture awareness scenario (# two) the 2007 group and the 2008 group improved. The amount of students who said they would ignore the behavior decreased in both groups. This scenario was interesting because there could be multiple "right" answers. Talking to George about his ignorance of the Thai culture went up in both classes, as did making this incident a teaching tool. Talking to Rose alone

went down in each class, which we see as a good thing. One student shared why they would not talk to Rose alone. "I don't think I would want to single out Rose, and make it a teachable moment, especially if I believe it will only serve to further embarrass her. However, I believe it is important for both people in the situation to understand the other's culture, and then come up with a solution together."

For the ableism question, the 2007 group improved by 5.3% and the 2008 group improved by 4.2% (they said they would respond that they were offended). One student said, "I would respond asking why she doesn't like those interesting kids and would call them that name. I would say that I still liked her as a teacher but disagreed with her labeling of these particular children." Another student said they would

"respond with highlights of the boys' positive behavior and how wonderful it is that they've become friends. Their behaviors are different, yes, which is why their friendship is so amazing. I know that it's not exactly my place to critique my CT for this type of negativity, but hopefully with positive evidence, her perspective might be somewhat mitigated. These students have probably all had a rough time in school, especially because of emotional connectivity issues (e.g.: Asperger's is part of the autism spectrum), and the last thing that they need is a negative teacher. They need a teacher who's rooting for them, who's in their corner. I would also encourage her to look at the fun side of their interactions with each other. Making fun of students, on the other hand, through sarcasm or a poor attitude is always inappropriate, especially for a teacher. Again, responding with blatant offense is not a solution in this situation either, especially since the teacher did this in a private, confidential setting. She might have been simply expressing what she saw as frustrations, so hopefully a positive perspective would help her see the brighter side of things."

For the classism question (scenario four) the 2007 group improved by 16.8% and the 2008 group decreased by .2%. In the 2007 group the amount of students who said they would ignore the comment decreased, and in the 2008 group the amount of students who said they would ignore the comment increased.

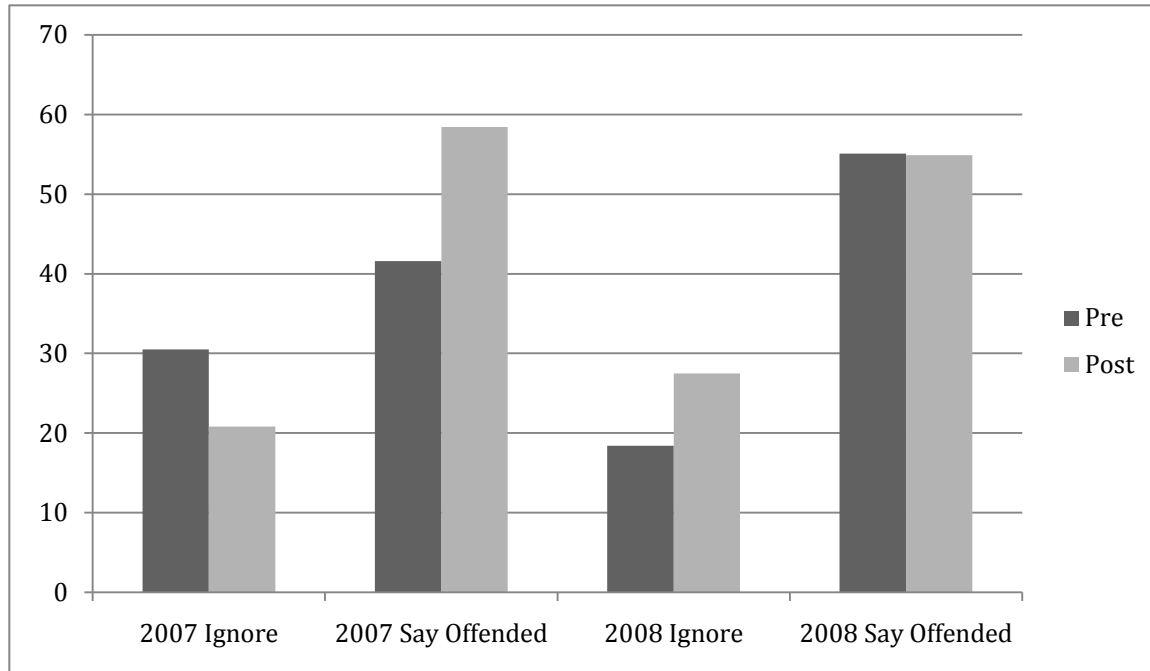


Figure 3. 2007 and 2008 Pre and Post Test Results for Classism

We find it very interesting how each class is so different. One student justified her comment that she would not say anything to the teacher by saying, “I’m not sure I would say anything to the teacher, but once she was away, I would tell my partner that I would be happy to share my supplies with him until he can purchase his own.” A number of students were very empathetic and while not talking to the teacher, they would make sure that the student was OK and taken care of. One student who marked “other” said that she would correct the teacher. “Stereotypes about hunting and fishing really offend me because my family is really involved in the two sports. Not only was the professor wrong by stereotyping the lab partner, but she was also out of line.” Another student said that this was the one time that they would speak up.

“This time, I would express my extreme dislike of what the professor said directly to the professor. This involves direct, intentional humiliation of a student and a purposefully unfounded judgment about his work ethic. The gloves are off. How does she know whether or not he “wastes” his time hunting and fishing? What if these are the only cap and boots he owns? What if he wears them for his job? Who really knows why he doesn’t have the money? I really don’t know exactly what I’d say. I’d keep it coolly polite to let the professor know that this sentiment is a product of rational thought.”

This shows us that each student is certainly an individual and through the life experiences they have had, they are unique and respond to each scenario differently.

For the racism question (scenario five) the 2007 group improved by 14.1% and the 2008 group improved by 24.4%.

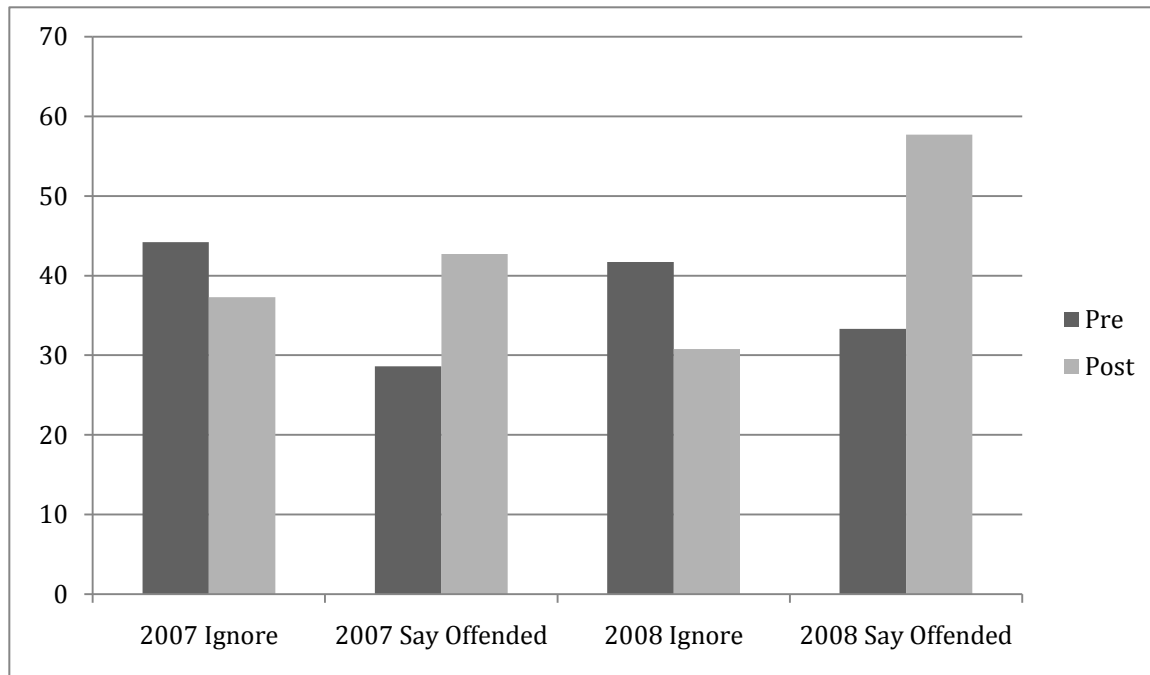


Figure 4. 2007 and 2008 Pre and Post Test Results for Racism

The amount of students who said they would ignore the comment decreased in both groups. For those who said that they would respond that they were offended, it was the second biggest change in the scenarios. It seems racism and homophobia had the biggest gains.

For the sexism scenario (# six), the 2007 group responding that they were not offended improved by 7.9% and the 2008 group improved by 15%.

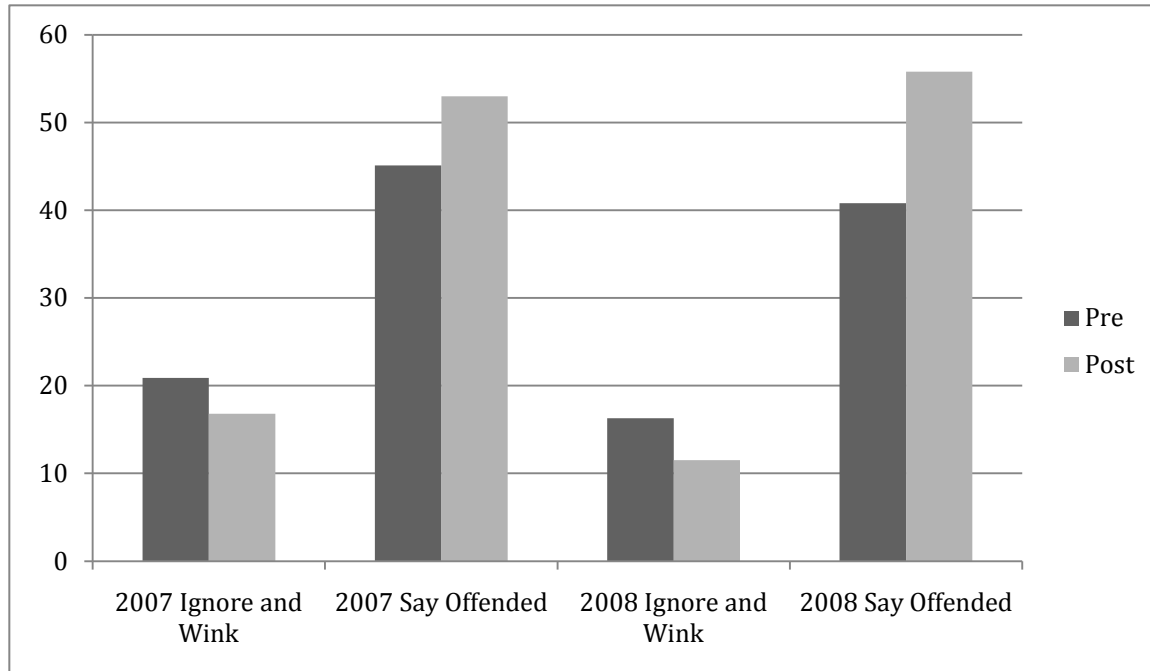


Figure 5. 2007 and 2008 Pre and Post Test Results for Sexism

The amount of students who said they would both ignore the comments and wink decreased in both groups. The following are some quotes from three different students highly offended. “I think that by showing the man that I was offended and leaving his establishment will make him learn a little bit. He will have lost business because of his disrespect.” “If no other person is available, I would ask to speak with the manager.” “I would probably tell him that I’m offended that his place of business treats women that way and, either ask to speak to his manager, or take my business elsewhere and pay a little bit more money.”

Lastly for the American Indian scenario, the majority of both groups answered that they would either talk to the teacher alone or ask for more information about her thoughts on the topic. One student commented,

“I’d keep it conversational; I’d definitely want to know what she thinks ‘special rights’ are, to know what she’s basing her definition of ‘special’ on. Then, I’d ask her if she knows about Wisconsin’s Act 31, the state law giving American Indian tribes sovereignty, hunting and fishing rights, etc. because of treaties that were signed and promises that were made about a century and a half ago. Also, that the law requires that teachers teach about these rights so that students know that they aren’t ‘special’, they’re seen as what is

'equal' under the law. I'd politely suggest that she look up the Act 31 statutes because they're unique and that it's important to know why they've been enacted. I'd also say that I'd love to dialogue about the topic some more. I almost chose 'other' to say that I'd ask for more info and talk more about it when we were alone, but then I considered that we'd been carpooling for some time and that we probably have a pretty good conversational rapport."

Students did change in their sensitivity and response to oppression in almost every case overall; however, there were some results where improvement was not evident, and their sensitivity was not deepened. In the first survey addressing homophobia, in the 2008 class, the laughing increased from 2 % to 3.8 %. That is not much, but it still bothers us.

We were also troubled with the ableism scenario. In both the classes, the laughing increased. Again, it is not by much, but regardless a few students felt it was acceptable to laugh. In the 2008 class, ignoring the comment also increased. While it is possible that some students may feel it is good to ignore discriminatory comments, we do not, and see this act as being a bystander and participating in the act of oppression. It might be helpful though to realize that there is a power differential in this, and other scenarios. It is the teacher that makes the discriminatory comment. With this realization that a student teacher was commenting to the cooperating teacher, we were especially pleased that our numbers were very high in this scenario. For the student teacher to intervene in this act of oppression and to tell her cooperating teacher that she was offended by the use of the term "weirdkateers" in light of this power differential is quite significant. So because of this power differential, it might be understandable for some students to not say anything just because of who made the comment. This adds another dimension, which could change if it was just a friend who had made the comment and not the teacher.

Most of the scenarios actually do deal with a power differential. There were three scenarios that dealt with students as student teachers working with cooperating teachers (one, three, and seven – see appendix). Scenario number two dealt with the student as a professor in college and number four had the student as a college student and the professor made a classist comment. Scenario five had the student as a college student who interacted with a university employee in the admissions office. Lastly, scenario six is the only one where the student is with a bunch of friends off of campus. So even though we had



most of the scenarios dealing with different types of oppression, they were not equal. The power differential probably impacted how students responded. That could have skewed the data.

It is enough to confront a friend, but it adds another layer to confront a teacher who will also be deciding one's fate. Therefore, the scenarios need to be rewritten, and we will need to create scenarios that are similar to each other and do not deal with people in power as we do further research. However, the current scenarios may be used as a teaching tool. Actually, following this study, we did find the scenarios to be useful for structuring our own teaching. One instructor used them as a teaching tool the following semester.

### **Conclusion**

Although the study was exploratory and preliminary in nature, the findings are certainly interesting and sufficiently provocative. In both categories of homophobia and racism, we saw major growth. With respect to homophobia, one class improved by 25 % stating that they will speak up by saying that they are offended when they hear a homophobic remark. This is quite timely given the number of gay teens who have committed suicide fall of 2010. In the area of racism, one class improved by 24.4 %, stating that they will speak up by saying that they are offended when they hear a racist remark. In almost every area, we see that students will be assertive and not ignore oppressive remarks. As previously noted, the "ignoring the comments" numbers have gone down from 4 % - 17 %. Students see the necessity to act.

Again, given that the great majority of pre-service teachers are White, and that there is a significantly growing number of students of color in our public schools, we are sending out students who can be allies to their students. They will not ignore the problems that face many of our students of color, but will be able to understand and speak up for them.

We chose scenarios that students saw as relevant. In asking them to reflect on the action they would take when seeing an injustice occur, most of our students did change their initial responses. Whether they are standing in the hall between classes and calling students on the words that fly like, "That's so gay. You are such a fag" or responding to the woman in line behind them at the local grocery store, who calls her friend a "retard," our students will act in a just manner.

We have been affirmed in the value of integrating diversity into every course that we teach. One stand-alone course is not sufficient. Our research tells us that even in the course of one semester, impressive gains occurred. The integration of diversity not only affects how we teach, but it affects both the professional and personal lives of our students. In a changing world, we need to prepare all students to be ethical and persistent human beings who will make a difference in our world. As we are, they will also be change agents.

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## Appendix

The following scenarios were used:

### Scenario One

You are with your 6th grade cooperating teacher and you have a team meeting out of the building over lunch one day. Someone asks your teacher if she is growing out her hair. She replies that she is and it is because she is sick of being mistaken for a lesbian. All of the other teachers laugh and the topic gradually changes. Later, as you are all walking back into the building, something about one of the teachers in the school comes up in conversation. This teacher is your past 7th grade English teacher from twenty-five years ago, and you mention this. You also say that it took a couple of days to realize she was who she was (her name changed), but when you saw her walking down the hall, it was her walk (which is quite distinctive) that triggered your memory. After saying such, your cooperating teachers says to you, "Oh you little lesbian lover you." What would you do in this situation?

### Scenario #1

- a. Ignore the comment.
- b. Laugh, it is a joke.
- c. Respond that you are offended.
- d. Join in and make another joke.
- e. Other (please specify)

### Scenario Two

You are a professor of a class in a midwestern university and have the class arranged so that groups of students are sitting around tables in cooperative learning groups. One table in particular has six students sitting at it, which include George, Angela, Gary, Brad, Shelia, and Rose. All of these students are from the upper Midwest except Rose who is a foreign exchange student from Thailand. George sits across from Rose and is very outspoken and consistently sits with his feet propped-up on the table. As the professor, you notice that Rose is very distressed about something and will not make eye contact with or talk with George. Additionally, Rose never contributes to the class conversations. How would you handle this situation?

### Scenario #2

- a. Ignore the students' behaviors.
- b. Talk to George alone and inform him of the cultural taboos of the Thai culture.
- c. Talk to Rose alone and inform her about Midwest culture.
- d. Inform the class about the situation and make it a teachable moment.
- e. Other (please specify)

### Scenario Three

You are a student teacher who is placed with a Learning Disability teacher. You had a field trip to the Minnesota Zoo and your cooperating teacher and you split up the students to chaperone them on the trip. Your teacher has three students in her group that are very intelligent and unique boys and who have not

found a place to fit comfortably in the classroom, but they have found each other. They are the best of friends, and they often have interactions that are amusing. One of these students has Asperger's Syndrome, one has an Emotional Disorder, and the other is currently being evaluated for special education services. Your cooperating teacher and you start to discuss the events of the field trip the day after and you tell her what a great time you had and how wonderful your group of students had behaved. Your cooperating teacher responds that she got stuck with the "Three Weirdkateers." She continued on for a few minutes about this group of three boys, saying only negative comments directed at their behaviors. What would you do?

**Explain your choice:**

**Scenario #3**

- a. Ignore the comment.
- b. Laugh, it was a joke.
- c. Respond that you are offended.
- d. Join in and make more comments/jokes.
- e. Other (please specify)

**Scenario Four**

You are in your Chemistry 100 class with around one hundred students. Your professor is trying to figure out a fair way to split up the class into lab table groups and partners. She finally decides to assign partners based on alphabetical order on the class roster. As your lab table group gathers, the professor directs the class to the list of supplies needed to be purchased for the class. Your lab table group introduces themselves to each other and you notice that your partner is wearing a camouflage-print cap and large boots. After introductions, your new partner turns to you and says that he will be unable to buy any of the supplies because he cannot afford them at this time. As he is saying this, the professor walks by and overhears the conversation. She asks your partner where he is from, and she immediately laughs saying, "Well, that explains it. Maybe if you actually tried to get a job instead of just wasting money and time on hunting and fishing, you would be able to get the supplies for my class."

**Explain your choice:**

**Scenario #4**

- a. Ignore the comment.
- b. Laugh, it was a joke.
- c. Respond that you are offended.
- d. Join in and make more comments/jokes.
- e. Other (please specify)

**Scenario Five**

You are just enrolling for another year at the university and go into the admissions office to discuss payment. As you walk into the office the woman behind the desk is on the phone. She seems upset at first and then begins to laugh. As she hangs up the phone, wiping tears from her eyes because of laughing so hard, she asks how she can help. As you ask her questions about the payment plan you are interested in, she stops and states that she is sorry for you. She only wished that people like you could get enough free financial support as those "other kids" who got into the university purely because of Affirmative Action. Then, she laughs and says that as you were walking in, her friend on the phone came up with the funniest "Pollock" joke and proceeds to tell it to you.

**Explain your choice:**

**Scenario #5**

- a. Ignore the comment
- b. Laugh, it's a joke.
- c. Respond that you are offended.
- d. Join in and make another joke.
- e. Other (please specify)

**Scenario Six**

You and your friends have decided to take a nice spring break get-away trip to San Diego, California. When you arrive, you all decide that the cheapest option of transportation would be to rent a car. The four of you walk into the nearest rent-a-car place and find another group ahead of you waiting to be helped. The four women, who are in their early twenties, are patiently waiting and chatting with one another. The man behind the desk continues his conversation on the phone without giving recognition to the line. Finally, he hangs up the phone, looks up at the women, and continues doing something at his desk without a word. After a few more minutes, the man says, "All right girls, here is the form you need to fill out to rent a car and it is waiting right outside for you." The women seemed surprised at not being asked what kind of car they wanted to rent. They hesitantly start to read over the document when the man interrupts with a comment about how it is just manly business stuff and they can just sign; it is more important that they get out to the beach to work on their tan lines. He also recommends insurance on the car just in case they get into an accident. The women ask to see the car before they sign and the man sighs, rolls his eyes, and says, "Well, sure you can, but what difference is that going to make to you? Let's be honest, four young, beautiful girls like yourselves don't know what to look for... I'm just the man to show you around the vehicle." As he leads the women out of the store to the parking lot, he turns to you and your friends and winks. What do you do?

**Explain your choice:**

**Scenario #6**

- a. Ignore the comments and wink
- b. Laugh, he's joking around.
- c. Respond that you are offended.
- d. Join in and make more comments and wink.
- e. Other (please specify)

**Scenario Seven**

You are student teaching in the fifth grade. For the past couple of days your cooperating teacher, another fifth grade teacher and you have been car-pooling. As you near the end of your trip the other fifth-grade teacher says, "Tomorrow we start on that new required unit. You know the one on special rights. The other groups want equal rights, but these Indians want special rights. I guess it's something I have to do." What would you do in this situation?

**Explain your choice:**

**Scenario #7**

- a. Ignore the comment.
  - b. Talk to the fifth grade teacher alone and inform her that they aren't special rights.
  - c. Ask this fifth grade teacher for more information about her thoughts.
  - d. Agree that they do want special rights.
- Other (please specify)

## **Acknowledgements**

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Increasing Academic Engagement at HBCU's Through the Implementation  
of an Undergraduate Research Showcase

Dr. James Hand  
Assistant Professor  
Motorsport Management  
Winston Salem State University

Dr. Chad Betters  
Assistant Professor  
Rehabilitation Counseling  
Winston Salem State University

Dr. Michael McKenzie  
Assistant Professor  
Human Performance and Sports Science  
Winston Salem State University

Dr. Himanshu Gopalan  
Associate Professor  
Human Performance and Sports Science  
Winston Salem State University

### **Abstract**

According to the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE), it has been shown that academic engagement and environmental characteristics influence student success. Students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) tend to have academic profiles that are different from students attending Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's). These factors tend to result in a negative effect on student engagement in the academic environment. To instill academic engagement, an Undergraduate Scholarship Showcase (USS) was implemented at a public HBCU in the Southeast. The showcase allowed select students the opportunity to collaborate with faculty on current research, and disseminate the findings at an on-campus poster session.



Students attending HBCU's (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) tend to have academic profiles that are different from students attending Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's). These differences occur within the societal/familial domain, as well as in the intellectual domain. For example, students at HBCU's and other minority serving institutions are often the first member of a family to attend an institution of higher learning (Allen et al., 2007; Del Rios, Leegwater, & Policy, 2008). They also tend to be from families who have lower socio-economic status (SES) (Walpole, 2003). Allen et al. (2005) reported that in 2004, one-third of all Black freshmen at HBCU's had low-income status. Despite these findings, Walpole (2003) found that low SES students are more likely to work with faculty on research projects than high SES students if given the chance.

While engagement opportunities exist on HBCU campuses, several African-American students cannot, or do not, take advantage of them, or these activities do not always include faculty led educational engagement. Due to their low SES status, these students tend to spend more time working at a job rather than in academic pursuits. Results of a 4-year survey conducted through the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) at the HBCU where the study took place indicated that of the entering freshmen, approximately 40% worked more

than 15 hours per week during their last year of high school. Of these same students, nearly 80% spent less than 5 hours per week studying or doing homework during that period of time (Higher Education Research Institute, 2007).

These factors negatively affect academic preparation. Bennett and Xie (2003) found that the quality of pre-college academic experiences tends to be poorer for these students than that of their peers at PWI's. The standardized test scores of students attending HBCU's tend to be lower than that of students at PWI's (Kim, 2002), and these students in general have weaker academic records (Kim & Conrad, 2006).

Davies and Guppy (1997) asserted that students from disadvantaged origins have lower probabilities of survival in advanced stages of the education system. "The United States is more successful at getting students into college than graduating them – less than half who enroll in a higher education program receive a degree in that program – and the college dropout problem is particularly prevalent for students from poorer backgrounds" (Kahlenberg, 2004, p. 7). Very few studies have examined why this phenomenon occurs, but some suggest that low income students are more likely to struggle with assimilating into the culture of higher education. Yorke and Longden (2004) found that low-income students are at a disadvantage with this cultural capital as compared to their wealthier peers who often have family members who have earned a college degree. These factors tend to result in a negative effect on engagement in the academic environment.

Research has demonstrated that engagement in educationally purposeful activities results in the desired outcomes of college including better grades, higher satisfaction, and greater persistence (Kuh, 2001). Harris (2008) defines academic engagement as "time spent doing learning activities" (p. 59), as opposed to general student engagement which encompasses the environmental characteristics mentioned above. Student engagement is more broadly defined as environmental characteristics as that which "encompasses everything that happens to a student during the course of an educational program that might conceivably influence the outcomes under consideration" (Astin 1993a, p. 81).

Providing undergraduate students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities an undergraduate research showcase may facilitate an increase in academic engagement, involvement, and add to the overall college experience, which has been shown to lead to positive academic outcomes.

## **Review of Literature**

### *NSSE and Academic Engagement*

The National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) measures the environmental practices central to student success to assist individual institutions in improving student learning (National Survey on Student Engagement, 2005). NSSE is the result of research conducted in 1979 by Robert Pace on student effort and perception. Pace concluded that increased student engagement in the collegiate environment results in larger learning gains. Subsequent research by Kuh (2001) has demonstrated that engagement in educationally purposeful activities results in the desired outcomes of college including better grades, higher satisfaction, and greater persistence. Therefore, the elements of academic engagement are embedded in the benchmarks of the NSSE.

These concepts are central to NSSE and have resulted in five benchmarks for educational practice: (1) level of academic challenge, (2) active and collaborative learning, (3) student-faculty interaction, (4) enriching educational experiences, and (5) supportive campus environment.

The first NSSE benchmark is the level of academic challenge and encompasses the quality of work students are engaged with in the classroom. The level of academic challenge includes three components: nature and amount of assigned work, complexity of cognitive tasks, and evaluation standards used by faculty (Kuh et al., 2005). This is accomplished by institutions promoting high student achievement via classroom expectations that promote effort and performance.

The second NSSE benchmark is active and collaborative learning and assesses the level of intensity by which students are engaged in their education and are able to make practical applications of their learning. This is demonstrated via active participation in classroom settings, working with groups on class projects, tutoring or teaching other students, community-based projects, and discussing readings and course material with others. Astin (1993b) asserted the importance of active learning as a positive influence on student learning and can be accomplished in a variety of formats.

Third, the NSSE measures the amount of student interaction, both formally and informally, with faculty members. These opportunities help students learn key skills from experts that can be applied to all facets of their learning (Kuh et al., 2005). Astin (1993b) reported that faculty represents the second most powerful group, next to their peers, in a student's development. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) confirmed that student and faculty interaction is positively correlated to student persistence and educational attainment.

Enriching educational experiences is the fourth NSSE benchmark and reflects the quality of the curricular and co-curricular opportunities available for students that complement their academic experience (Kuh et al., 2005). These are manifested via diversity programming, involvement opportunities (such as the Undergraduate Scholarship Showcase described in this paper), leadership development, technology, internships, community service, and capstone courses.

The level of support a student receives on campus is the fifth NSSE benchmark. Students who were satisfied with the relationships they form on campus were more likely to persist and were more committed to their academic success. Yorke and Longden (2004) found similar results in their retention study involving six universities in the United Kingdom. Specifically, students were more likely to persist when they perceived the institution to be supportive both academically and socially. This benchmark is especially important when working with first generation college students and students of color whose perception of campus climate directly affects their persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Through the implementation of the Undergraduate Scholarship Showcase, all five NSSE benchmarks were fulfilled or partially fulfilled. The following section outlines the process for the development and implementation of the event. It is important to recognize the planning process in order to facilitate the academic platform.

### **Undergraduate Scholarship Showcase**

The Undergraduate Scholarship Showcase (USS) was implemented at a public, Historically Black College/University (HBCU) in the Southeast. It originated from a departmental faculty member's suggestion of increasing undergraduate academic engagement in faculty research and improving their overall understanding of scholarship. A committee consisting of select faculty members representing each of the seven programs within the department was formed during the Fall semester. This method of selection was conducted in order to maintain equity among the departmental programs in regards to showcase planning, availability, and accessibility. The committee first met in September, and held monthly meetings until the actual showcase event in April. During these meetings strategic decisions were made in order to ensure the quality of the showcase, as envisioned by the committee members.

The first task of the committee was to determine the overall purpose for the showcase. In the beginning, the reasoning was solely based on increasing undergraduate scholarship activity. However, the committee quickly realized that the showcase should and would serve as a catalyst for improving faculty and student working relationships, specifically in regards to ongoing research. The showcase would also serve to identify exceptional students who were capable of contributing to the scholarship being conducted within the department. These students would also serve as role models for the other students, with hopes of improving the students' perceptions of research.

The committee members concluded that each departmental faculty member would be invited to identify a single undergraduate student that, in the faculty member's opinion, demonstrated the academic capability and integrity to participate in ongoing research and present

it at the showcase. All of the faculty members' nominations were reviewed by the committee in order to select the proposals that best fit the scope of the showcase. Essentially, the committee desired data-driven research or comprehensive literature reviews. The committee did not want to include class projects even if they were exceptional, since these submissions would not adhere to the purpose of the showcase, which was to foster an opportunity for additional growth via participation in a faculty member's ongoing research. As submissions were made and time went by, the committee narrowed the proposals to twelve abstracts, which represented all programs within the department.

After the twelve participants were identified by the committee, the faculty and students met often and completed the research for their project together. Several hours a week were dedicated to this project over a twelve week span. This engagement, which was outside of normal class projects, was the critical component of the program.

Some projects that went through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) were presented at conferences, and one resulted in a national publication. This type of quality academic engagement with a faculty member has been found to influence student success (Astin, 1993b; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

With a clear purpose of the showcase defined and the mechanism for identifying students in place, the fiscal considerations for the event were addressed. A showcase requires financial assistance, especially if it is to exemplify the quality of scholarship that was desired. The university's administration was contacted, and it overwhelmingly supported the concept of student engagement. A working budget was established, which would specifically cater to the committee's needs for developing the showcase appropriately.

It would have been naïve to think that identifying students who would want to participate and having them develop a poster presentation would be the only tasks involved in creating a showcase. The committee also had to contend with material development, logistics, and advertising concerns. This is why the committee, although initiated early in the fall semester, foresaw the need to schedule the showcase late in the spring semester. The planning was also impacted by the fact that this was the first time such an event was ever produced on that campus.

The question of what medium to use in order to present the scholarship was brought up within the committee meetings. The objective was to mirror academic scholarly meetings, such as conferences and symposia as much as possible. However, the reality of the situation also had to be considered. It would be unrealistic to expect undergraduate students to fully present the details of the faculty member's research via an oral presentation to a large audience. This would seem unreasonable regardless of how engaged the student was in the scholarship, as the student would clearly not be an expert in the discipline or specific item of interest.

The final decision was to present the information with research poster presentations. This was chosen for several reasons. First, research poster presentations are prominent in a majority of educational meetings (conferences, symposia, etc.) across several academic disciplines, thus the projects would mirror professional academic standards. Second, posters would provide the details of the research and allow the student to communicate with the audience and permit the faculty member to also be present in a supportive role. Third, the posters would provide uniformity to ensure equity among the presenters. The printing of the posters was a great challenge, keeping in mind a working budget that had to address all other expenditures. A bulk price was identified with a nearby printer, which greatly reduced cost. This was done by using a single template for the posters, which also contributed to our desire for uniformity. It also made the overall aesthetic look more professional.

Logistics were somewhat difficult at first. Identifying a location on campus that would allow for such an event was problematic, especially when planning toward the end of an academic year. A location was identified that met several needs, including square footage, accessibility for incoming and outgoing traffic, and proximity to food services for catering needs. It was also beneficial because it was in a centralized building on campus, thus encouraging the entire university community to visit. Establishing the showcase date was critical, as it dictated the timeline for proposal submission, poster printing, and advertising needs. The committee learned that scheduling the location is a primary action, and next year's location has already been secured as a consequence.

Advertising was another factor for the committee to consider. A secondary purpose of the showcase was to serve as a model for other students and it was important for the selected students to be recognized for their work by university faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as fellow students. The showcase participants were modeling behaviors that reflected a genuine interest in the research topic, process, and presentation. These behaviors were not previously being displayed on campus. Advertising was also needed in order to ensure an adequate audience.

Advertising took place in the form of signage, brochure development, and word of mouth, which included person-to-person, voice mail messaging, and email. Attempts to advertise via the local television and newspapers were made; unfortunately these media venues did not express interest. As a result of the advertising on campus, the showcase was a success in regards to audience turn out. During the two hour duration, there were always more than fifty faculty, staff, and students present, engaging the presenters at their posters. At some moments, a larger room would have been nice, as the room capacity was being met.

### ***Program Review***

Departmental support is a must in order to ensure success and includes several areas, such as financial support, participation, and mentorship. Our department covered the costs of the entire showcase, which ended up being a very modest expenditure. The two largest expenses were the printing of the posters and the program brochures. We were able to work with a university print shop and get posters 3' x 5' for a very reasonable fee. Additionally, we also designed and printed about 200 programs which were in color and printed on glossy paper. The programs included the student's name, faculty sponsor, presentation title, and three sentence abstract. Signage and refreshments also needed to be budgeted in as well. Although institutional policies will vary, we incurred no facility charge or rental fees for necessary tables and linens.



All departmental faculty were asked by the department chair to include the showcase on their course syllabi and to bring their classes to the showcase on the day of the event. This was made easier by the fact that a “scavenger hunt” quiz was designed by the showcase planning committee. This quiz contained one question about each of the 12 presentations. Most faculty members agreed to collect them and discuss the results in their courses. This quiz served an additional benefit: attending students had to go to each poster and interact with those who were presenting so that they could get the answers for the quiz. These efforts, in addition to the other promotions, resulted in more than 250 students attending the showcase.

A good planning committee was essential to the success of the showcase. The event took almost an entire academic year to plan and implement. Monthly meetings and specific areas of responsibilities required a faculty member's most precious commodity, time. A full calendar year is recommended as our first committee meeting was held in the second full month of classes, and our showcase was in the last full month of classes. If the department chair and departmental faculty were not fully supportive and committed, program's success would have been improbable.

Although no data were collected, participating faculty did report that they had significantly more academically minded contact with the students outside of the normal classroom hours and students met, or surpassed, both research and course grade expectations. Every student that started this 12 – 15 week project completed it and presented their collective work (faculty and student) at the showcase. Several of the students were asked to present again at administrative meetings, faculty gatherings, homecoming galas, and open house fairs.

There were collateral benefits to the participating faculty as well. This showcase provided a great deal of exposure to the department on campus, as several deans from the university were in attendance and commented on how well it was run. Participating faculty were recognized for their time and engagement they spent with their students “outside of the classroom” in mentoring capacities.

There are also a few areas which we would like to offer suggestions for improvement. Probably the greatest challenge we faced was the fact that historically, very little research had

taken place in our department. How could we foster an environment of research when so little was being done by the faculty? Will the few that actually are conducting research have the time to volunteer to help undergraduate students out to actually perform some research with them? These were the tough questions we had to address.

The undergraduate research showcase project actually encouraged faculty to “revitalize” (or initiate) their research agendas and all twelve faculty members reported that they enjoyed working with and encouraging their sponsored students. Faculty also reported that their participation with this project made them reserve some time out of their busy schedules and set it aside for research. Many faculty members have kept or adopted the practice of setting aside a few hours a week to conduct research.

### **Conclusion**

Faculty at a Historically Black Colleges and University planned and executed an undergraduate research showcase involving the collaboration and extracurricular academic engagement between faculty and students. It has been shown that academically engaged students and students involved in educationally purposeful activities result in the desired outcomes of college including better grades, higher satisfaction, and greater persistence (Kuh, 2001). Providing an undergraduate research symposium engages students in all five of the benchmarks outlined in the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). Specifically, it provides an increase in the level of academic challenge (benchmark 1), fosters active and collaborative learning (benchmark 2), encourages student-faculty interaction (benchmark 3), enriches the educational experience (benchmark 4), and helps provide a supportive campus environment (benchmark 5).

Providing undergraduate students at an HBCU an undergraduate research showcase may help to increase academic engagement, involvement, and positively add to the overall college experience that has been shown to lead to positive academic outcomes which are the cornerstone of higher education institutions.

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## **Using a Standard Rubric to Promote High Standards, Fairness, Student Motivation, and Assessment for Learning**

Tamara M. Walser, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Educational Research and Leadership  
Department of Educational Leadership  
Watson School of Education  
University of North Carolina Wilmington

### **Abstract**

This article describes the implementation of a standard scoring rubric to assess the quality of student assignments and projects across eight undergraduate and graduate level university courses, as well as the results of an exploratory action research study of the effectiveness of the rubric. The rubric included a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4 points, with a score of “3” serving as the fulcrum, representing the instructional goal, and a score of “4” representing work that goes beyond level 3 performance. Results indicate that the rubric supported this goal by promoting clear expectations, good feedback and progress monitoring, and student motivation.

As a university professor, I have often struggled with grading student work. I want to promote high standards and motivate students to do their best. I want to be fair. I want students to learn from the assessment process. Fortunately, the use of scoring rubrics has been helpful in supporting my assessment goals.

A scoring rubric is a tool, often in the form of an outline, table, or checklist, used to evaluate the quality of student work. In addition to criteria that describe the expectations for work, a scoring rubric includes a scale of possible points for varying levels of performance in relation to the criteria (Goodrich, 1996; Popham, 1997; Wiggins, 1998). These criteria specify the “what;” the performance levels specify the “how well” (Mabry, 1999b). The rubric scoring procedure can be holistic or analytic. Holistic procedures rely on all of the criteria for one overall quality score, while analytic procedures require separate scores for separate components of the work, which may or may not be aggregated into one overall score (Mabry, 1999b; Popham, 1997).

Scoring rubrics have become increasingly popular among educators from preK-12 to higher education. Researchers have noted that scoring rubrics help define “quality” (Goodrich, 1996), provide expectations up-front (Moskal, 2003), provide feedback about strengths and weaknesses in student work (Andrade, 2000), monitor student performance (Goodrich, 1996), and support assessment for learning (Tierney & Simon, 2004), including student self-assessment (Andrade, 2000).

*Assessment for learning* is characterized as assessment that enables students to understand their own learning and goals through effective feedback (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002); thus, assessment is part of instruction. Andrade (2000) has referred to scoring rubrics that “blur the distinction between instruction and assessment” as “instructional rubrics” (p.13). Tierney and Simon (2004) have also noted the potential for scoring rubrics as an instructional tool, and according to Popham (1997), “Rubrics represent not only scoring tools but also, more important, instructional illuminators. Appropriately designed rubrics can make an enormous contribution to instructional quality” (p. 75).

### **The Problem**

I have used scoring rubrics in the classes I have taught since I began teaching at the university level. Although there is much support for using scoring rubrics (see Andrade, 2000; Goodrich, 1996;

Marzano & Haystead, 2008; Moskal, 2003; Popham, 1997; Stiggins, 2001; Tierney & Simon, 2004; Wiggins, 1998) and my experience using them in my classes has been positive, I wanted to improve my assessment process. The scoring rubrics I used were holistic and generally included criteria describing the expectations for a given assignment and a scale to categorize student work along a continuum of “absolutely meeting expectations” at the high end, to “not meeting them at all” at the low end.

I became concerned that some students were treating the scoring rubrics as recipes—they made sure to meet the minimum criteria required to get the highest grade possible. This was promoting the high standards as identified in the rubrics, which was good; however, these students were not exercising the creativity, innovation, and interest in learning that I also wanted to promote. At the same time, there were always some students who did exercise creativity, innovation, and interest. They went above and beyond what was expected, but the scoring rubrics did not account for this. These students received the same score as students who met the basic expectations as defined by the rubric for an “A” grade.

Mabry has written about this issue with scoring rubrics in general (1999a) and with scoring rubrics used to assess writing in particular (1999b). She has noted that scoring rubrics can focus too much on performance criteria as opposed to the overall effect of a student’s work (1999b) and can limit student performance to the criteria listed in the rubric (1999a). According to Mabry (1999a):

One problem is that criteria imply that all students’ performances should conform to the criteria. But should they? What about students who are capable of doing more than the criteria require, and who might do less than their best by trying to conform to the criteria by which they will be assessed? . . . Teaching to the rubric is a dismaying variation on the theme of teaching to the test. The negative consequences of standardization or convergence of student thinking and products, dampening of creativity and self-expression, have not been thoroughly considered (p. 58).

### **The Solution**

I had the opportunity to attend a workshop conducted by Robert Marzano at the 2006 annual National Evaluation Institute sponsored by the Consortium for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation. In the workshop, Marzano described a rubric format, available in the book

*Making Standards Useful in the Classroom* (Marzano & Haystead, 2008). The rubric format included a 5-point scale of 0 to 4 points with half-point scores possible (e.g., 3.5, 2.5). The score of “3” was the fulcrum on the scale, indicating the instructional goal. The score of “4” represented “in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught” (Marzano & Haystead, p. 29).

For me, the appeal of the Marzano and Haystead rubric format was that it could accommodate, reward, and motivate more creative, innovative, and in-depth student performance beyond what was described as meeting an instructional goal. It also included a standard scale that could be used across many assignments and projects. Thus, I took the concept of a 5-point scale with a score of “3” as the fulcrum and developed a standard scale to use in the courses that I teach. To meet the needs at the university level, I modified the scale descriptors and added percentage grade translations for the rubric: 4 = 100%, 3 = 95%, 2 = 85%, 1 = 75%, 0 = 0% (see Figures 1-3). The unique aspect of the rubric, of course, is the score of “4” or “performance level 4,” which is intended to motivate students to work beyond the instructional goal. I have used this rubric format since the Spring 2008 semester in the following undergraduate and graduate courses:

- *Teacher, School and Society* (Spring 2008): This is an undergraduate educational foundations course for pre-service teachers. Most students are sophomores.
- *Technology for School Administrators* (Spring 2008, Fall 2009): This is a master’s level technology leadership course for Master of School Administration students. Most students are full-time teachers or assistant principals.
- *Research in Education* (Spring 2009): This is a master’s level research methods course for education students. Most students are full-time educators.

Figure 1. Standard Rubric for Study Guide Assignments for *Teacher, School and Society* Course

Grade	Criteria
<b>4</b>	<b>Demonstrates in-depth understanding of Study Guide content that goes beyond “3” performance criteria.</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Clearly demonstrates understanding of Study Guide content.</b> ✓ Responses to questions are complete, accurate and appropriate. ✓ Communication is clear with minimal spelling and grammatical errors. ✓ Study Guide is completed and submitted in the specified format by the deadline.
<b>2</b>	<b>For the most part, demonstrates understanding of Study Guide</b>



	<b>content.</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>For the most part, does not demonstrate understanding of Study Guide content.</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Does not demonstrate understanding of Study Guide content at all OR does not complete and submit Study Guide within 48 hours of the deadline.</b>

Figure 2: Standard Rubric for Online Discussion Postings for *Educational Program Design and Evaluation* Course

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Demonstrates in-depth understanding of and ability to apply Discussion content that goes beyond “3” performance criteria.</b> <u>For Example:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Postings demonstrate in-depth grasp of content and sophisticated reasoning.</li> <li>✓ Communication is exceptionally clear, well-focused, and relevant.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Clearly demonstrates understanding of and ability to apply Discussion content.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Postings evidence ability to meaningfully examine and apply Discussion content.</li> <li>✓ Postings evidence understanding and higher level thinking skills, good “listening” skills, and includes at least 3 discussion posts with the first post made at least 48 hours prior to the deadline.</li> <li>✓ Communication is clear with minimal spelling and grammatical errors.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>For the most part, demonstrates understanding of and ability to apply Discussion content.</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>For the most part, does not demonstrate understanding of and ability to apply Discussion content.</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Does not demonstrate understanding of and ability to apply Discussion content at all.</b>

Figure 3: Standard Rubric for Review of the Literature Project for *Research I* Course

Grade	Criteria
4	<b>Demonstrates in-depth understanding of and ability to apply Review of the Literature skills that goes beyond “3” performance criteria.</b>
3	<b>Clearly demonstrates understanding of and ability to apply Review of the Literature skills.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ All required sections of the Review of the Literature are complete, accurate, and appropriate.</li> <li>✓ Procedures clearly describe the search process used to locate references and the analysis process used to analyze information.</li> <li>✓ Results for each Review Objective adequately address that Objective.</li> <li>✓ At least 1 analysis table is included; all analysis tables are used appropriately.</li> <li>✓ References used evidence adequate search for secondary and primary sources.</li> <li>✓ APA format is used correctly throughout—e.g., headings, tables, citations, references, appendixes.</li> <li>✓ Communication is clear with minimal spelling and grammatical errors.</li> <li>✓ Review of the Literature is completed and submitted to Blackboard in the specified format by the deadline.</li> </ul>
2	<b>For the most part, demonstrates understanding of and ability to apply Review of the Literature skills.</b>
1	<b>For the most part, does not demonstrate understanding of and ability to apply Review of the Literature skills.</b>
0	<b>Does not demonstrate understanding of and ability to apply Review of the Literature skills at all OR does not complete and submit assignment to Blackboard within 48 hours of the deadline.</b>

- *Educational Program Design and Evaluation* (Spring 2009): This is a master’s level data-based decision making course for education students. Most students are full-time educators.
- *Research I* (Spring 2008, Spring 2009): This is a doctoral level research methods course. Most students are full-time principals, assistant principals, school district administrators, or teacher leaders.
- *Research II* (Fall 2008): This is a doctoral level research methods course. Most students are full-time principals, assistant principals, school district administrators, or teacher leaders.

In each class, rubrics were given to students in advance so that they knew what was expected for each assignment and project. I used the rubrics for grading and feedback to students. Each student received a copy of the rubric with a grade and comments related to criteria met or not met for each assignment and project. With the exception of large projects, I gave rubric feedback and grades to students within one

week following the deadline for the assignment or project so that they could use the feedback to make needed changes for future assignments and projects. For larger projects, they received rubric feedback and grades within two weeks following the deadline.

### The Study

Based on informal, positive feedback from students about the rubric as well as my experience using it, I conducted an exploratory action research study about the effectiveness of the rubric. *Action research* is characterized as research conducted by practitioners who design and conduct the study, and then analyze the data to improve their own practice (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2004). Action research in higher education, which is considered key to *the scholarship of teaching and learning* (Bender & Gray, 1999), has gained increased attention and importance as part of faculty scholarship. As with other scholarly work, the scholarship of teaching and learning requires that inquiry be reflective, systematic, replicable, and shared with the public.

During the spring 2008 semester, I administered an “Instructional Methods Survey” to students in my undergraduate *Teacher, School and Society* class, which included one open-ended question about the effectiveness of the rubric. The survey was part of a larger study I was conducting on a variety of methods I was using in my classes (e.g., book clubs, wikis). I administered the survey to students during the last face-to-face class meeting. Of the 22 students in the class, 17 responded to the item about the rubric (77.27%).

In addition to data from the survey question, I also reviewed University End-of-Course Evaluations for each of the classes in which I had used the standard rubric. The evaluations include one open-ended item that allows students to make comments about the class. Of the 71 written comments across 8 classes, 19 were related to assessment; these comments were used as data in the study. I analyzed these comments and the Instructional Methods Survey data by categorizing responses according to prominent themes.

Finally, I developed a brief reflection of my experience implementing the standard rubric in my classes. Reflection is a key component of the action research process (Mertler, 2009), as action research is inherently about examining one’s own practice (McLean, 1995).

## Results

### ***Instructional Methods Survey Question***

The following is the open-ended question about the effectiveness of the standard rubric used in the spring 2008 *Teacher, School and Society* class: During this course, assessment was conducted using a common rubric structure with a “3” indicating that a student clearly demonstrates understanding of and ability to apply content, and a “4” indicating that a student demonstrates in-depth understanding and ability to apply content that goes beyond “3” performance criteria. Was this assessment method effective for you? Why or why not? Student responses to the question were all positive. The most common theme across the student responses was that the rubric provided feedback that allowed them to monitor their progress. Other common themes were that the rubric provided clear expectations and motivation. The following representative student quotations support these themes:

#### ***Feedback and Progress Monitoring:***

“Yes, I knew exactly why I got the grade I did and knew what to do for the next time.”

“I really liked this method it was an easy way to check how I was doing and see if I was performing well.”

“Yes, because it set standards for me and let me know if improvements needed to be made.”

“Yes, it helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses.”

#### ***Clear Expectations:***

“Yes, it clearly said what was needed for each assignment, it helped me know what I needed to do to make a 4 on each assignment.”

“Yes, because I knew exactly what you expected out of me.”

“Yes, I knew what I needed to do.”

**Motivation:**

“Yes, it motivated me. Let me know where I stand in the class.”

“Yes, because it made me work extra hard to get a 4.”

**University End-of-Course Evaluations**

From the open-ended question on University End-of-Course Evaluations, the majority of student comments that were related to assessment were positive. The most common themes from the student comments were that expectations were clear and good feedback was provided. Another theme was that students were positive about the use of rubrics in the classes in general. Finally, there were two criticisms related to assessment. The following representative student quotations support these themes:

**Clear Expectations:**

“She made her expectations clear.”

“It is nice having a grad class with clear, challenging standards.”

“She is consistent with grading policy and expectations. You always know what is expected out of you.”

“I appreciate [the instructor’s] clear expectations and specific feedback.”

**Good Feedback:**

“Provided great feedback that enabled me to adjust my work.”

“The feedback she gave was prompt and meaningful.”

“Prompt, constructive feedback was always given on assignments I submitted.”

“She offers meaningful and useful feedback.”

**Positive Perception of Rubric:**

“[The instructor’s] use of the rubric was a great tool. I believe it improved the level of responses on Blackboard [online discussions] that reflected more graduate level proficiencies.”

“I like the rubric used for grading. It is concise and fair.”

“Course was well-organized, designed for student learning, used rubrics to guide assignments.”

***Criticisms Related to Assessment:***

“Graded too picky.”

“Expectations at times could have been clearer.”

***Professor Reflection***

From my perspective, implementing the standard rubric improved the assessment process in my courses. The rubric maintained and motivated high standards, and promoted fairness and assessment for learning. As mentioned previously, the appeal of the rubric format was using the score of “4” on the scale to accommodate, reward, and motivate student performance that went beyond what was expected.

Although students were often skeptical and concerned about the rubric scale when I first introduced it to them, they became familiar with the format and expectations quickly—it helped that I used the rubric for nearly all assignments and projects. After the first assignment and use of the rubric, students seemed to catch on and I always noticed a general improvement in student work on the next assignment. However, one issue I encountered early on was that students often thought that a score of “4” was about quantity—i.e., they just needed to write more. To help students better understand “4” performance, I often shared examples of “4” level student work as exemplars when reviewing an assignment so that students could see that quality and quantity are not the same thing.

In addition, I think the rubric promoted fairness and assessment for learning. Students knew upfront what was expected of them and could use the rubrics as guides for self-assessing their work. When they received feedback with the rubric, they could identify their strengths and diagnose areas for improvement. They could also monitor their progress across assignments because of the standard rubric format.

Developing the rubrics, specifically the performance criteria, for each assignment and project made me focus on the instructional goals and expectations and clearly describe what quality work looks like. The rubric also helped me to be more consistent when grading and to focus my feedback on what really matters. The most challenging aspect of using the rubric was maintaining the “beyond expectations”

indicated by a score of “4.” I had to make sure that I was reserving a score of “4” for work that truly represented in-depth understanding and application that went beyond basic expectations.

Based on the results of the exploratory action research study and my positive experience using the standard rubric, I will continue to implement this type of rubric in my courses. However, I plan to involve my students more in the assessment process by having them help determine the performance criteria for course projects to further integrate assessment into the instructional process and promote assessment for learning. As Stiggins (2001) contends, “The heart of academic competence resides in students’ ability to use their own knowledge and understanding to continuously improve their performance until they achieve success. Therefore, there is a direct link between performance criteria and student involvement” (p. 295).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the standard rubric based on the work of Marzano and Haystead improved the assessment process in my courses. Based on student data, the rubric supported clear expectations, good feedback, progress monitoring, and motivation. Based on my experience, it helped me maintain high standards and motivate students to do their best, and promoted fairness and assessment for learning. However, because this was an exploratory action research study conducted with pre-service and in-service educators, more research needs to be conducted using action research, other methodologies, and with post-secondary students across disciplines to get a more complete picture of the effectiveness of implementing the standard rubric in college and university courses.

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Review of *Coming in from the Margins: Faculty Development's Emerging Organizational Development Role in Institutional Change*. Connie M. Schroeder and Associates, Stylus, (2011)  
Ed Nuhfer, Director of Faculty Development, Cal State Channel Islands

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The title affirms what seasoned developers already understand: faculty development is usually on the margins. The situation is a sad one, because faculty developers have solutions to problems that deans, provosts, presidents, and even governing boards and legislators are currently trying to solve: how to enlist and train faculty to assess student learning, how to lower dropout rates, how to raise graduation rates and even how to raise morale in trying times. This book, written by a team of well-qualified authors, is a start to filling one of the greatest needs in higher education. Together, these authors effectively inform how faculty developers should act as institutional change agents to produce better institutions.

The first section affirms that having faculty development at the table in a directive position offers distinct advantages to institutions over those that constrain faculty development to its traditional marginalized role. Nancy Van Note Chism's chapter provides a useful list of nine considerations for faculty developers trying to get to that table. The chapter on collaborative leadership between developers and upper level administrators comes from Devorah Lieberman, an individual who has succeeded much better in both roles than either the normal developer or the average provost.

Part 2 offers a rich presentation by Connie Schroeder based on case studies, surveys and interviews, which illuminates the determining factors that are instrumental in directing faculty development into either a marginalized or a leadership role.

Seven chapters in Part 3 constitute about half of this book. These are case studies or summaries of insights gleaned from several studies. The cases reveal that events which catalyzed bringing faculty development to the leadership table were often

punctuated changes or disruptions, such as an external reviewer's recommendation that development take a directive role or an abrupt change of operating philosophy created by a new university president. Others involve a faculty development center working gradually to the directive position by aligning its work with the institutional mission.

However, the reality is that "coming in from the margins" depends upon much that developers cannot control. If anything, this book reveals that no other unit in a university is as dependent on the good graces of higher-level administration as faculty development. The revelation that even some of the very qualified authors of this volume had to switch institutions in order to reach receptive high-level administrators confirms the challenges inherent to faculty development finding a directive place at the table. I too have experienced similar challenges; they come with the territory of the faculty development profession.

Phyllis Blumberg's chapter carries a poignant note: "...it is critical for top administrators to realize that developers have unique expertise and knowledge to share...." Chapter after chapter affirms that only managers who respect and understand that "unique expertise and knowledge" will employ it to advantage. As such managers move on, organizational volatility creates a constant disruption for faculty development. Too many faculty and administrators believe that they already possess the expertise of seasoned faculty developers. Almost none do.

As noted in the beginning of this review, this volume offers a worthy start. The obvious audience for this book is faculty developers. The book is excellent, and belongs in every faculty developers' personal library. It offers a comprehensive resource for faculty developers maximizing success by paying attention to those things that they can control.

As I read this book, I yearned for a next step to educate more higher education managers about how to use that "unique expertise and knowledge" of faculty

development and employ it to advantage. Until more do so, the major problems of student success will remain chronic and without effective solutions. It really is in an institutions' best interest to have a faculty developer in a directive role.