

MountainRise

Volume 7, Number 1 (2012)

Table of Contents

Editor's Comments

The Art of Pairing

Laura Cruz

Articles

Identifying Stakeholder Needs within Online Education

Dr. Ipek Bozkurt

Student Access of a Learning Management Site in Different Psychology Courses

Michael Clump, Ph.D., Tracie Doherty, and Kayla Kinworthy

The Personal is Historical: Oral History and Undergraduate Research Papers

Jennifer Helgren, Ph.D.

Using Film as Pedagogy to Explore Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs

Sheri Klein, Ph.D. and Urs R. Haltinner, Ph.D.

Measuring Classroom Engagement by Comparing Instructor Expectations with Students' Perceptions

Paul Savory, Ph.D., Amy Goodburn, Ph.D., and Jody Koenig Kellas, Ph.D.

Student Incivility: An Engagement or Compliance Model?

Dr. Emily Schnee and Dr. Jason VanOra

The Art of Pairing: Conversations about Teaching and Learning

According to master sommelier Evan Goldstein, wine pairing is like a conversation between two people in which the exchange brings out the best qualities of each contributor. In this issue of *MountainRise*, we have brought together pairs of ideas, themes, or issues that we believe benefit from being brought together. In education, as in wine, putting the right two people together is more of an art than a science, but with this issue we present several, hopefully artful, pairings for your consideration.

Our first course consists of two pieces that look at perceptions of the on-line learning environment. The first, “Identifying Stakeholder Needs within Online Education” by Ipek Bozkurt, presents us with a bird-eye view model for viewing on-line education through the lenses of its respective stakeholders, from faculty and students to institutions and industry. In their piece entitled “Student Access of a Learning Management Site in Different Psychology Courses,” Michael Clump, Kayla Kinworthy, and Tracie Doherty, the researchers look at on-line learning from the perspective of one of these stakeholders, the students (two of the authors are students themselves), and closely analyze how they access different types of course material within the Learning Management System. Both authors suggest strategies for increasing the effectiveness and success for on-line teaching and learning.

Next on your plate, our second course is the pairing of “The Personal is Historical: Oral History and Undergraduate Research Papers” by Jennifer Helgren and “Using Film as Pedagogy to Explore Pre-service Teacher’s Beliefs” by Sheri R. Klein and Urs Haltinner. Both pieces focus on less conventional means for meeting higher-order learning outcomes. While Helgren focuses

on the use of oral history methods to enable students to construct meaning, Klein and Haltinner use Hollywood films to deconstruct the values and beliefs of pre-service teachers. While both offerings are grounded in their respective disciplines (history and education respectively) both articles suggest ways in which these tools could constructively be transplanted into other academic settings.

Our third and final course consists of two pieces that compare student perceptions of what goes in the classroom with the perceptions of faculty. In both cases, the two perspectives do not always align. In their essay “Student Incivility: An Engagement or Compliance Model,” Emily Schnee and Jason VanOra reflect on their experiences with student incivility and how the faculty and administration differ on strategies for managing the burgeoning phenomenon. Paul Savory, Amy Goodburn, and Jody Koenig Kellas look instead at the different perceptions students and faculty have of the levels of engagement that take place in their courses. By administering the survey to both stakeholders (faculty and students), they are able to identify some significant and surprising disconnects between what students think they are learning and what faculty think they are teaching. Both the C^{LEAP} survey and the recommendations made by Schnee and VanOra focus on the importance of recognizing where these gaps lie and creating greater transparency between teacher and learner.

In the *Wine Spectators Pocket Guide to Wine*, author Martin Shanken states that “The goal in tasting wine is not to “find” the same aromas and flavors some other taster is describing. If you hone your own perceptual abilities and develop the vocabulary to articulate them, you’ll not only derive more pleasure from the wine itself, but also stimulate better communication between you and the friends who are sharing the bottle.” In a similar sense, we hope that our spirited pairing will inspire you to not simply find commonalities with the ideas discussed in this

issue, but will encourage, even inspire, you to think and to share your thoughts with friends and colleagues. *A votre santé.*

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Identifying Stakeholder Needs within Online Education

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Abstract

Online teaching and online learning has been an invaluable component of education in the past decade. Demand for fully online or hybrid courses has been steadily increasing. Similar to any system or project, online education has stakeholders that have a major say in the direction online education takes. These stakeholders are identified as the faculty, the students, the academic institutions, and the industry. Each of these stakeholders will have different needs. This paper identifies these needs and demands and provides a holistic perspective within the context of online education that is intended to be used as support when looking at issues relating to online education.

Keywords: Online Education, Faculty, Student, Industry, Stakeholder

INTRODUCTION

Online education (OE) has established itself as an independent discipline due to the increasing demand from academia and practice alike. Universities, more and more, offer either blended or fully online courses and fully online degrees. For the purposes of this paper, the following classification will be used, in line with the Sloan-C definitions:

- *Fully Online Course*: 80% or more of content is delivered online, with no face-to-face meetings.
- *Hybrid Course*: Between 30% and 79% of content is delivered online, with some face-to-face meetings.
- *Traditional/Face-to-Face Course*: No content is delivered online, with all content delivered in writing or orally.

The 2008 Sloan Consortium survey of online education reports that more than 20% of all students in U.S. colleges enroll in at least one online class. Academic research on the effectiveness and efficiency of online education is now published in journals solely dedicated to this topic, such as *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, *American Journal of Distance Education*, *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, and *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, among others.

A survey conducted by the *Instructional Technology Council* (2008) on the impact of eLearning at community colleges reports that there has been an 11.3 percent increase in the distance education enrollment between Fall 2006 and Fall 2007. The seventh annual Sloan Survey of Online Learning (2009) states that 73% of the institutions they surveyed (more than 2,500 colleges and universities) reported an increased demand for *existing* online courses and programs, and 66% of institutions reported increased demand for *new* courses and programs. In the same survey, it is reported that the demand for online offering is greater than that for the corresponding face-to-face offerings, and that 1 out of 4 higher education students has, at least, taken one online class.

In order to successfully integrate an online component to any academic degree program, the first step should be to identify stakeholders. In any context, if projects are developed without full understanding of fundamental requirements, failure will be unavoidable. Stakeholders may be the customers and the users of an end product, the people who provide an input, the people who receive an output, or the people who

review and evaluate a system; in general, everyone who has a relation to the system at hand. What needs to be achieved must be clearly understood and articulated beforehand, so that full acceptance and satisfaction of each stakeholder can be guaranteed. Within the context of online education, it may be clear and obvious that faculty members who are teaching the online course and students who are taking it would be two stakeholders that are on opposite ends of the OE dimension. However, a deeper analysis of the literature shows that there are more factors impacting the effectiveness and success of online teaching and learning.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS OF ONLINE EDUCATION

When looking at OE literature, four major stakeholders are identified, as shown in Figure 1. The *faculty* is responsible for design, development, and delivery of online courses. The *students* are the end-users of these online courses; therefore, factors affecting motivation and satisfaction of students need to be taken into consideration. *Academic institutions* are colleges and universities that provide online education to students via faculty members. Even though these institutions may seem to be a collection of students and faculty, they also have their own specific requirements and needs which make these academic institutions a separate entity and a major stakeholder within online education. The *industry* is a stakeholder that may be considered to be outside of the three academia-oriented stakeholders, but it can be seen as both the supply and demand component of online education. Expectations and requirements of each of these stakeholders have to be identified clearly in order to have a successful online course (Wilkes, Simon and Brooks, 2006).

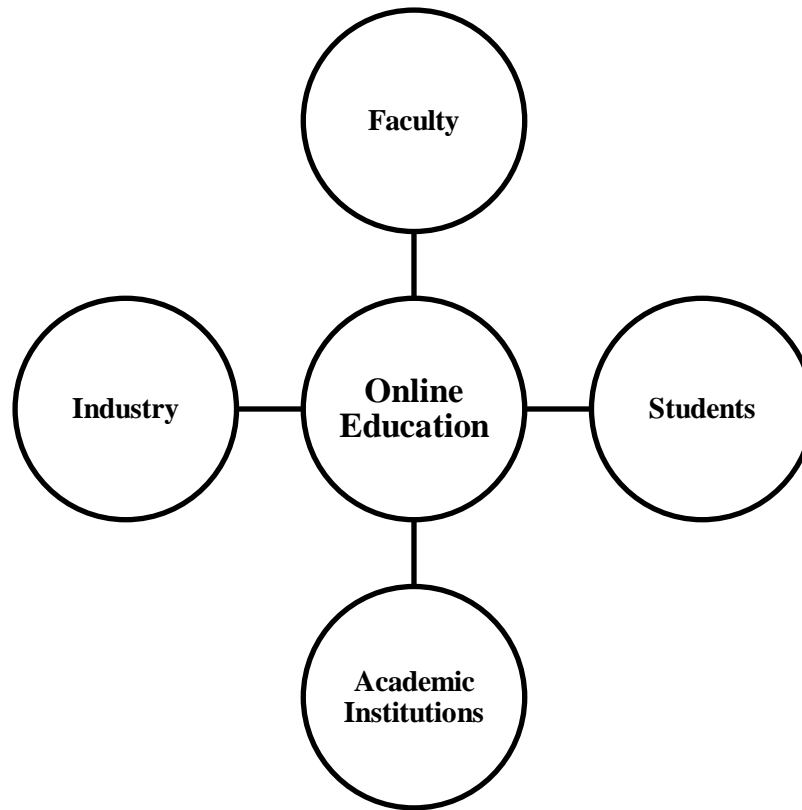


Figure 1. Major Stakeholders of Online Education

STAKEHOLDER 1: THE FACULTY

It is the responsibility of faculty members to continuously sustain and develop the engagement levels of students (Robinson and Hullinger, 2008). From a faculty perspective, it is interesting to note that academic and practical research results do not always support each other. The results from the Sloan Survey (2009) show that, since 2002, there has been little increase in support for online education provided by faculty. This may be because the teaching philosophy and style of some teachers may be more appropriate in a face-to-face delivery medium while others may be more comfortable and skilled in online deliveries. However, research conducted by Wilkes et al (2006) on faculty perception of online courses showed that only around 11% of the faculty members stated that they would not like to teach an online course.

A study conducted by Scagnoli, Buki, and Johnson (2009) suggests that, when instructors have taught the same course both online and face-to-face, they tend to transfer pedagogical strategies from

the online medium to the face-to-face medium. The same study also concluded that, when an instructor teaches an online class, he/she tends to incorporate technological components to traditional classes. This shows that teaching a course in different mediums enhances the teaching effectiveness of faculty members. As Fabry (2009) suggests, the issue of effectively utilizing the features and tools of the design and delivery mediums, such as Blackboard, needs to be addressed by course developers. Once these delivery mediums are utilized to their full capacity, the course delivery will be more effective and efficient. Koenig (2010) conducted a study on determining the effectiveness of different instructional delivery methods, specifically face-to-face, online, and video conference. His research showed that faculty members stated that the more traditional, face-to-face classroom setting was far more effective than online or video conference delivery mediums. When comparing online and video conference delivery, however, the results were not significantly different except on the area of “faculty interaction.” The faculty stated that faculty and students interacted more effectively in online delivery, rather than video conference delivery. The interaction between faculty and students was also studied by Robinson and Hullinger (2008); their survey research on student engagement in online learning suggested that, due to technological advances, faculty-student interaction was very effective in online courses. Figure 2 is a representation of faculty requirements, needs, and expectations when it comes to designing, developing, and delivering online courses.

Stakeholder 1: Faculty Requirements				
Training	Up-to-date technology	Support from administration	Demand Analysis	Compensation for developing online courses

Figure 2. Requirements of Faculty Members

STAKEHOLDER 2: THE STUDENTS

Some students definitely prefer to be in a “real” classroom and interact with the teacher and their classmates, while others prefer the anonymity and flexibility online education provides them. Menchaca and Bekele (2008) conducted a research where students stated that using multiple tools within distance education would motivate them to participate in discussions and meetings. A survey study conducted by Bolliger and Wasilik (2009) shows that faculty satisfaction within an online teaching environment is mainly affected by student success and student satisfaction. Therefore, it is important to identify factors contributing to successful students. In a survey study conducted by Wilkes et al (2006), undergraduate students considered the following five issues as important when deciding to take online classes: timely feedback to questions, accreditation of the institution, access to information, organized and systematic presentation of materials, and flexibility of schedule to accommodate work responsibilities. Furthermore, issues such as electronic submission of assignments and flexibility of schedule to accommodate social activities were also reported to be more characteristic of an online course. Battalio (2009) analyzed student success with respect to different learning styles and concluded that students who are reflective learners –a more introverted learning style where students do not engage or interact with other students and prefer a quieter learning environment- have been more academically successful than active and sequential learners.

In a study investigating how adult students described the learning process through distance learning courses, Makoe et al (2008) concluded that some students described learning as based on critical thinking, and personal development and change. However, other students described it as achieving personal change with no active or critical engagement. In light of these two different groups, they concluded that the way adult students view learning within distance education will be dependent on culture and context. Ogunleye (2010) also conducted a study on students’ perspectives on online courses and studied how online courses increased student competencies in terms of skills associated with new technologies. His findings suggested that gender and age are major variables contributing to successful online learning, and skills in terms of browsing and searching, information gathering, and library reference searching were positively affected during online learning, and this also depended on gender and age. In my experiences of teaching different student profiles, I also see this differentiation between students.

Age, gender, and culture are big factors, among others, that affect the way students see a course. Adult students, who came back to academia to receive another degree, sometimes have more difficulty in adjusting to online delivery mediums. However, these mediums also benefit the adult learners most, since they are mostly full-time working professionals with families. Therefore, it is important to understand that different student populations will have different needs in terms of the way the course is designed and delivered. The needs, requirements, and expectations of students are represented in Figure 3.

Stakeholder 2: Student Requirements				
Flexibility	Ease of use	Accessible technology	Interaction with faculty and fellow students	Use of multiple mediums (slides, video, reading, blogs, etc.)

Figure 3. Requirements of Students

STAKEHOLDER 3: THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

From the *university* perspective, the analyses are conducted at a much higher level. The Sloan Survey (2009) reports that the trend for institutions and universities to include online education as part of long-term strategy and goals has been almost a plateau, with 73.6% of public academic institutions agreeing that online education is critical to their long-term strategy. This number drops to 49.5% for private nonprofit institutions. This is interesting, since research also shows that OE proves to have a significant effect on budget issues that favors the university. Betts, Hartman, and Oxholm (2009) have identified several economic factors that drive the enrollments in online and hybrid programs. Tuition, state funding, financial aid, and endowments are among the many factors that impact enrollment in these non-traditional programs. They further state that, in order to provide long-term sustainable programs, the colleges and universities should balance academic quality and accountability with online education. The issue of quality was also discussed by Smith and Mitry (2008) who concluded that, if university administrators do not remain committed to high academic standards, e-learning will never reach its true

potential. With the increasing number of for-profit institutions who offer online degrees with the support of part-time instructors who may not always have the necessary terminal degrees from accredited universities (Smith and Mitry, 2008), it is crucial that truly academic institutions pay extra attention to highlight the strengths of online education while fighting the challenges and limitations of online education.

Without adequate and appropriate people and organizational support, the technological tools and models will not be efficient or may not be applied successfully. Integration of necessary organizational support is crucial when identifying which components are going to be needed when designing, developing, and deploying the system. In order for faculty to design, develop, and deliver effective and efficient online courses, they need to receive some sort of training. The Sloan Survey (2009) states that only 19% of institutions they surveyed stated that they do not have training or mentoring programs for their online teaching faculty. As demand for online courses and online degrees increases, this percentage would no doubt decrease. As part of continuous self-development, faculty members should be open to such training, as well as online teaching certificates like the one provided by Sloan-C Consortium. In addition to receiving training, one of the main expectations of faculty members when developing online courses is to receive compensations or incentives. According to the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) survey conducted in 2009, faculty for 69 institutions that were part of the survey study gave lowest rankings to their institution's incentives for developing and delivering online courses. The requirements and needs of academic institutions are shown in Figure 4.

Stakeholder 3: Academic Institution Requirements			
High retention rate	Justification of online course with data	Industry collaboration	Alignment with short and long-term goals

Figure 4. Requirements of Academic Institutions

STAKEHOLDER 4: THE INDUSTRY

The industry is usually an ignored stakeholder within online education. A review of journals focusing solely on online education (*Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, *Distance Education*, *American Journal of Distance Education*, and *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*) was conducted. Five hundred eighty-six publications from 2007 to present were reviewed, and there was no mention of “industry” within the articles. Even though online education has now reached to high-school level, the flexibility of online education is specifically appealing to working, professional adult students. Even though the data is scarce on the national profile of online students and their demographics, Mayadas, Bourne, and Bacsich (2009) state that working adults are indeed the target population of online classes. This being the case, it is natural to assume that the industry would also be considered a major stakeholder. Businesses and organizations support online education in both ways, as shown in Figure 5.

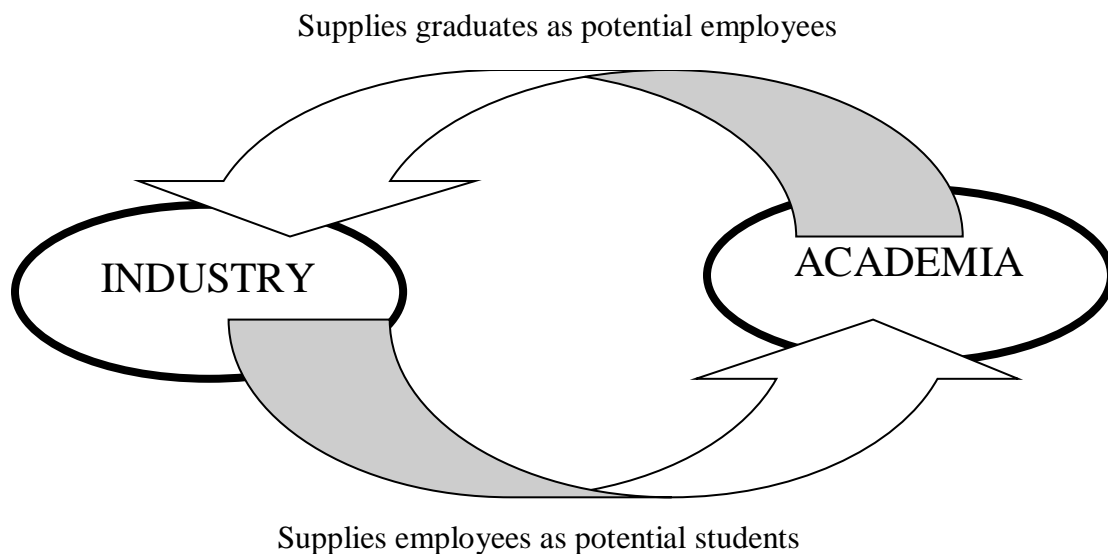


Figure 5. Relationship of Industry with Academia

Working professionals who are employees in organizations and businesses are potential students for academic institutions. Most of the time, businesses want the employees to receive higher degrees (Master’s, Doctor of Engineering, or a Certificate) while they are working, or the employees would like to be more competitive and have more skills, so the organizations support them. This is one of the reasons why practice-oriented programs, such as engineering management and systems engineering, offer

evening and weekend courses. The online courses and online programs completely eliminate scheduling conflicts and offer the required flexibility to working students. The other side of this is that recent graduates become potential employees to businesses in the industry. Academic institutions, when adding new degrees or offering certificate programs, usually conduct a market analysis and survey the industry within the proximities to find out what the businesses require. Therefore, there is a supply/demand loop between the industry and academia. Requirements and expectations of the industry are shown in Figure 6.

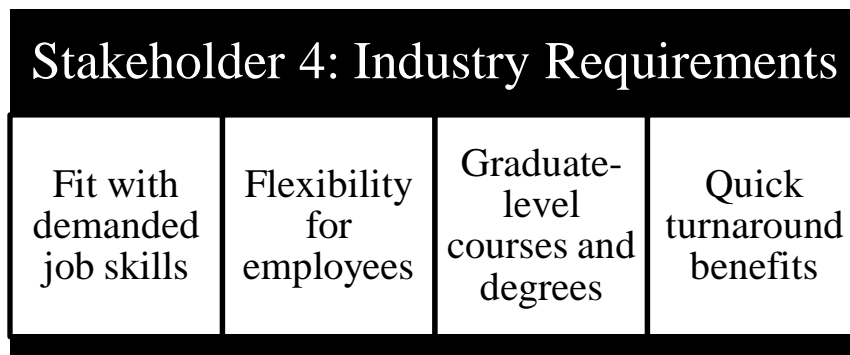


Figure 6. Requirements of Industry

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, major stakeholders were identified within the context of online education. Similar to any system or project planning conceptual phase, it is crucial to first identify all the stakeholders, then to identify what their requirements and needs are, in order to have a successful project. Online education, with its learning and teaching components, is no different. The major stakeholders identified were faculty members, students, academic institutions, and the industry. Reviewing relevant literature showed that each of these stakeholders has different expectations and different factors contributing to their effectiveness and efficiency. For instance, faculty members require training and support from their institutions. Students require more interaction with their faculty teaching the online course, as well as with their class mates. Academic institutions, taking a more business-like perspective, want the economic implications of online courses to be made explicit and need the online programs to be aligned with their strategic goals and mission. The industry, as the “outsider” stakeholder, will want the students to obtain the skills required for certain job positions and need the students to obtain their degrees in a timely

manner. All of these factors contribute to the development and improvement of more efficient and successful courses and programs.

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Student Access of a Learning Management Site in Different Psychology Courses

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Abstract

The increased usage of technology in courses raises the question of whether students access the information posted on a learning management system (LMS). This study examined student access and exploration of an LMS across multiple psychology courses to evaluate student utilization of this resource in a manner similar to Clump, Bauer, and Bradley's (2004) evaluation of student reading across multiple psychology courses. Across the courses, students consistently accessed information that can be classified as "course documents." They were less likely to use other aspects of an LMS, such as a discussion board, without it being a course requirement or providing a means of communication. Previous research demonstrates students do not typically read course material, and it appears they are less likely to access course reading materials or web links related to class material.

Student Access of a Learning Management Site in Different Psychology Courses

Previous research consistently demonstrates that students do not read items assigned for class, unless a specific motivation exists, such as a quiz or extra credit (Burfield & Sappington, 2000; Carkenord, 1994; Clump & Doll, 2007; Clump, Bauer, & Bradley, 2004; Connor-Greene, 2000; Marchant, 2002; Ruscio, 2001; Sappington, Kinsey, & Munsayac, 2002; Sikorski et al., 2002; Steuer, 1996). Burchfield and Sappington reported a consistent decrease in completion of required reading across a 20-year time span by graduate and undergraduate students. Clump et al. found students only read 27.46% of the assigned readings before their undergraduate classes and 69.98% of the readings before a test. Clump and Doll found graduate students only read 54.21% of the assigned material before class, which corresponds to the 61.6% level reported by Burchfield and Sappington. Given these disappointing findings with respect to reading in a course, one quickly wonders if students make use of other study-supporting materials, particularly information available via a learning management system (LMS). Faculty can spend numerous hours developing a LMS site, but is it worth it? If students, especially those who have been raised with a computer, access to information online, and a constant connection to the Web 2.0, are not utilizing a LMS, is it worth faculty time and energy to develop a site?

The data on the effectiveness of an LMS are limited and conflicting. After controlling (1) the students' level of cognitive ability using a measure of reasoning, (2) the students' learning styles, and (3) the students' attitudes toward computers, Lang and Hall (2007) found that using an LMS did not significantly increase student performance compared to not using one, which is similar to Bonds-Raacke's (2006) finding of significantly lower course performance when an LMS was introduced into a course. However, Hove and Corcoran (2008) found that access to class notes on an LMS significantly increased student grades, especially for those with low attendance. Finally, Heffner and Cohen (2005) found a significant correlation between hits to course items on an LMS and grades in the course. Thus, more examinations into the effectiveness of an LMS are needed, but a general investigation into student usage of an LMS is warranted.

This study provides information from an investigation into student access of information placed on an LMS for multiple psychology courses, ranging from lower-level psychology courses that almost all of

the university students take to complete a general education requirement to upper-level seminar courses that senior psychology majors complete, one of which was online. This study's data was gleaned from the students' accessing of different components of each course's LMS site, with special attention paid to items faculty specifically added to the site, such as copies of syllabi, test review sheets, PowerPoint files or notes from PowerPoint files, course readings, links to related websites, and other course documents. Zhang, Almeroth, Knight, Bulger, and Mayer (2010) and Lonn and Teasley (2009) found that students focused their attention on accessing items that can be grouped under course documents and communication. Business students reported the same focus on course content over communication support in Landry, Griffeth, and Hartman's (2006) study. Hamuy and Galaz (2010) also found a larger focus on information resources over communication resources, but this occurred for both faculty and students. We expected to find similar results across the different psychology courses.

Method

Participants

This study's data is from the activities of 128 students in enrolled in four sections of the PSY 101 General Psychology course, 26 students in enrolled in four sections of the PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory course, 50 students in enrolled in two sections of the PSY 210 Human Growth & Development course, 32 students in enrolled in the PSY 250 Biological Bases of Behavior course, 20 students in enrolled in the PSY 270 Tests & Measurements course, 21 students in enrolled in the PSY 321 Psychology of Gender course, 5 students in enrolled in the PSY 400 Internship course, and 8 students in enrolled in the PSY 405 General Psychology Laboratory Instructor Practicum course during one semester at a mid-sized eastern university.

Courses

The PSY 101 General Psychology course is a required course for students majoring and minoring in psychology. In addition, students in other majors take PSY 101 General Psychology in order to partially complete the university's introductory social science general education requirement. The students who take the PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory course are either psychology majors or minors, or are

from another major and are interested in the course. The PSY 210 Human Growth & Development course is also required of all psychology majors. Many students in other majors also take PSY 210 Human Growth & Development in order to partially complete the university's introductory social science. Students minoring in psychology can take the PSY 210 Human Growth & Development course in order to partially complete the 12 credits of 200-level psychology course required for the minor. The PSY 250 Biological Bases of Behavior course is required of all psychology majors, is another course that a student minoring in psychology can complete to partially fulfill the required 12 credits of 200-level psychology course, required of students completing a major in Criminal Justice Forensic Science, and is taken by other students interested in the course. The PSY 270 Tests & Measurements course is required of all students majoring in psychology. The PSY 321 Psychology of Gender course is open to all students and can serve as a fulfillment of the university's upper-level social science general education requirement, as well as one of the options available to students majoring or minoring in psychology to complete for their upper-level psychology courses requirements. The PSY 400 Internship course is the online seminar associated with the required internship of all students majoring in psychology. Throughout the semester, the students in the PSY 400 Internship course place their multiple assignments (they also respond to instructor and peer feedback to their assignments) on the course's LMS site and complete online chats through the course's LMS. The PSY 405 General Psychology Laboratory Instructor Practicum course is taken by the student instructors of the PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory course. This course is open to select senior-level psychology majors.

The faculty of the courses, and the individual sections of those courses with multiple sections, were asked to rate the importance of the use of LMS by the students in their courses with the endpoints 1 (*not at all important*) to 10 (*utmost importance*). The values for the difference courses were: six, eight, and nine for the PSY 101 General Psychology course, six for the PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory course, eight for the PSY 210 Human Growth & Development course, nine for the PSY 250 Biological Bases of Behavior course, seven for the PSY 270 Tests & Measurements course, eight for the PSY 321 Psychology of Gender course, 10 for PSY 400 Internship course, and seven PSY 405 General Psychology Laboratory Instructor Practicum course.

Procedure

Using the statistics function for the different areas of each course's LMS site, we gathered the number of hits for each student to the different parts of the courses' LMS sites. This data was also used to calculate the percentage of students who accessed each portion of the course's LMS site.

Results

Overall Findings

Looking at the percentage of students who accessed a course's LMS site at least once (see Table 2), it is evident that students took advantage of this supportive tool. Across the courses, 94.5% of students accessed the course's LMS site at least once. However, not every student made use of this supportive learning tool, as evidenced by the fact that some of the students in PSY 101 General Psychology did not access the course's LMS site. The students' accesses consistently seemed to focus on syllabi, PowerPoint files or notes based on the PowerPoint files, and test review sheets, not necessarily the course readings or additional items (such as web links) that faculty add to demonstrate the topics outside of the class.

The PSY 400 Internship course demonstrated the most total accesses (see Table 1 for information pertaining to specific accesses), but this is to be expected given that the course is offered online and the students use the LMS for posting their assignments, accessing course documents, and being involved with discussions. Outside of the PSY 400 Internship course, the other courses demonstrated consistent findings: (1) PowerPoint files or notes based on the PowerPoint files were accessed the most, (2) followed by the Announcements area [it should be noted that Announcements portion of the LMS used at the institution is often the entry point to each course, and so it gives a general idea of how many different times a student logged onto the course's LMS site], (3) the syllabus, (4) web links, (5) test review sheets, and (6) other course documents (such as homework assignments). These items, not counting the Announcements portion of the course's site, are items that faculty add to the course's initial shell on the LMS. Outside of these items that the faculty add to the initial shell of the LMS, the most accessed item was the My Grades portion of a course's LMS site, followed by items related to communicating and

interacting with other students and faculty in the course (Discussion Board, Tools area which provides access to grades and communication, Communications Area, Staff Info, and Email).

Table 1

Percentage of Students in the Course that Access the Different Portions of the Course's LMS site

Area	Class								Average across courses
	PSY 101	PSY 105	PSY 210	PSY 250	PSY 270	PSY 321	PSY 400	PSY 405	
Address Book	7.0	0	0	3.1	0	0	0	0	3.4
Announcements	85.9	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	93.8
Glossary	2.3	0	0	3.1	0	0	0	0	1.4
Collaboration	1.6	3.8	2.0	0	0	0	100	0	3.1
Communications Area	63.3	38.5	54.0	71.9	80.0	38.1	100	100	61.4
Email	28.9	26.9	4.0	40.6	30.0	19.0	60.0	87.5	27.2
Roster	11.7	7.7	4.0	6.3	25.0	9.5	20.0	75.0	12.1
Tools Area	60.2	19.2	60.0	62.5	65.0	71.4	20.0	37.5	57.6
Discussion Board	39.8	23.1	32.0	21.9	10.0	42.9	100	25.0	33.8
Homepage	2.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
The Electric Blackboard	2.3	0	0	0	0	4.8	0	0	1.4
Groups	3.9	7.7	4.0	0	0	4.8	0	25.0	4.1
Messages	7.8	15.4	2.0	6.3	10.0	0	40.0	0	7.2
Staff Information	59.4	53.8	74.0	65.6	55.0	4.8	100	87.5	59.3
My Grades	79.7	42.3	90.0	96.6	85.0	81.0	60.0	62.5	79.7
Tasks	3.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.7
Syllabus	76.6	92.3	100	100	100	*	100	100	81.7
PowerPoint or Notes	75.8	11.5	100	100	100	n/a	n/a	100	72.4
Course Readings	28.1	n/a	52.0	n/a	n/a	*	n/a	n/a	21.4
Other Course Documents	83.6	34.6	26.0	100	100	*	100	100	66.9
Web Links	10.9	n/a	92.0	n/a	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	27.6
Test Review Sheet	75.8	n/a	84.0	96.9	95.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	65.2
Accessed the site at least once	87.5	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	94.5

Note. PSY 101 = General Psychology, PSY 105 = General Psychology Laboratory, PSY 210 = Human Growth & Development, PSY 250 = Biological Bases of Behavior, PSY 270 = Tests & Measurements, PSY 321 = Psychology of Gender, PSY 400 = Internship, and PSY 405 = General Psychology Laboratory Instructor Practicum.

n/a = not applicable to that course.

* = data not available due to a system upgrade.

Table 2

Mean Access Data for the Different Areas of the Difference Courses' LMS Sites

Area	Class								Average across courses
	PSY 101	PSY 105	PSY 210	PSY 250	PSY 270	PSY 321	PSY 400	PSY 405	
Address Book	0.18 (0-6)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	.09 (0-3)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.09 (0-6)
Announcements	32.85 (0-149)	9.73 (2-27)	28.24 (7-79)	39.75 (15-60)	21.70 (3-39)	34.90 (10-64)	62.60 (43-87)	26.88 (13-62)	30.47 (0-149)
Glossary	0.02 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.03 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.01 (0-1)
Collaboration	0.02 (0-1)	0.27 (0-7)	0.06 (0-3)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	24.40 (8-52)	0.00 (0)	0.46 (0-52)
Communications Area	2.54 (0-17)	1.27 (0-19)	1.10 (0-13)	2.91 (0-19)	2.10 (0-8)	1.68 (0-9)	23.20 (11-48)	6.00 (1-14)	2.56 (0-48)
Email	1.70 (0-24)	1.46 (0-15)	0.12 (0-4)	3.63 (0-39)	2.65 (0-22)	1.62 (0-22)	6.80 (0-17)	0.60 (0-3)	1.89 (0-39)
Roster	0.64 (0-11)	0.42 (0-8)	0.08 (0-3)	0.25 (0-7)	1.25 (0-10)	0.19 (0-3)	1.89 (0-39)	0.63 (0-14)	0.63 (0-14)
Tools Area	6.09 (0-74)	0.46 (0-4)	3.46 (0-26)	5.06 (0-25)	1.85 (0-11)	3.48 (0-22)	8.80 (0-26)	1.75 (0-12)	4.46 (0-74)
Discussion Board	0.88 (0-12)	0.38 (0-5)	0.50 (0-4)	0.31 (0-3)	0.10 (0-1)	0.71 (0-3)	237.40 (198- 279)	0.75 (0-5)	4.72 (0-279)
Homepage	0.02 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.01 (0-1)
The Electric Blackboard	0.11 (0-10)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.05 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.05 (0-10)
Groups	0.04 (0-1)	0.08 (0-1)	0.04 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.05 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	.38 (0-2)	0.04 (0-2)
Messages	0.20 (0-6)	0.31 (0-2)	0.04 (0-2)	0.06 (0-1)	0.10 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	1.40 (0-6)	0.00 (0)	0.16 (0-6)
Staff Information	2.58 (0-27)	1.58 (0-6)	2.14 (0-10)	3.13 (0-19)	1.10 (0-4)	0.05 (0-1)	1.80 (1-3)	2.50 (0-6)	2.17 (0-27)
My Grades	8.62 (0-66)	2.50 (0-22)	6.30 (0-38)	12.69 (0-45)	4.55 (0-43)	4.62 (0-16)	4.40 (0-11)	1.13 (0-5)	7.27 (0-66)
Tasks	0.04 (0-1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.02 (0-1)
Syllabus	20.20 (0-128)	5.15 (0-20)	19.00 (3-72)	34.72 (10-55)	13.30 (2-31)	*	23.00 (5-38)	28.50 (11-76)	20.03 (0-128)
PowerPoint or Notes	44.72 (0-173)	0.86 (0-6)	189.42 (29-755)	34.09 (6-57)	34.95 (3-90)	n/a	n/a	4.13 (1-16)	69.03 (0-755)
Course Readings	6.04 (0-20)	n/a	1.39 (0-10)	n/a	n/a	*	n/a	n/a	3.84 (0-20)
Other Course Documents	9.80 (0-52)	0.75 (0-3)	0.62 (0-5)	9.41 (2-21)	22.75 (6-8)	*	40.80 (9-67)	37.00 (19- 109)	9.72 (0-109)
Web Links	79.13 (0-222)	n/a	5.58 (0-16)	n/a	13.15 (2-31)	n/a	n/a	n/a	20.34 (0-222)
Test Review Sheet	30.40 (0-200)	n/a	2.78 (0-15)	3.16 (0-9)	4.45 (0-10)	n/a	n/a	n/a	16.44 (0-200)

Note. Range in accesses in parentheses below mean accesses.

PSY 101 = General Psychology, PSY 105 = General Psychology Laboratory, PSY 210 = Human Growth & Development, PSY 250 = Biological Bases of Behavior, PSY 270 = Tests & Measurements, PSY 321 = Psychology of Gender, PSY 400 = Internship, and PSY 405 = General Psychology Laboratory Instructor Practicum.

n/a = not applicable to that course.

* = data not available due to a system upgrade.

Upper-level versus Lower-level courses

Given the large number of accesses for the students in the PSY 400 Internship course, because the course was offered online, data from this class was removed for the comparison between upper-level and lower-level courses. The lower-level courses were those that the student could take immediately upon entering the institution (PSY 101 General Psychology, PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory, and PSY 210 Human Growth & Development). The upper-level courses required that students have completed at least one psychology course before enrolling in them (PSY 250 Biological Bases of Behavior, PSY 270 Tests & Measurements, PSY 321 Psychology of Gender, and PSY 405 General Psychology Laboratory Instructor Practicum). A significantly higher proportion of the upper-level students ($M_{upper-level} = 1.00$, $SD = 0.00$) accessed the course's LMS site at least once compared to the students in the lower-level courses ($M_{lower-level} = .92$, $SD = .27$), $t(203) = -4.16$, $p < .001$. A significantly higher proportion of students in upper-level courses ($M_{upper-level} = 1.00$, $SD = 0.00$) accessed the Announcements portions of their course's LMS site than students in the lower-level courses ($M_{lower-level} = .91$, $SD = .28$), $t(203) = -4.43$, $p < .001$. A significantly higher proportion of the upper-level students ($M_{upper-level} = 1.00$, $SD = 0.00$) accessed the Email portion of the course's LMS site at least once compared to the students in the lower-level courses ($M_{lower-level} = .91$, $SD = .28$), $t(129.74) = -2.36$, $p = .02$; this was also demonstrated by the students in the upper-level courses ($M_{upper-level} = 3.12$, $SD = 6.64$) having a significantly higher number of accesses of the Email portion of the course's LMS site than the students in the lower-level courses ($M_{lower-level} = 1.28$, $SD = 3.21$), $t(95.20) = -2.38$, $p = .02$. Finally, the students in the upper-level courses ($M_{upper-level} = 26.75$, $SD = 15.43$) had a significantly higher number of accesses of the syllabus on the course's LMS site than the students in the lower-level courses ($M_{lower-level} = 17.99$, $SD = 19.78$), $t(262) = -3.16$, $p = .002$.

The students in the lower-level courses accessed the Discussion Board ($M_{lower-level} = .73$, $SD = 1.47$) and the Messages area ($M_{lower-level} = .17$, $SD = .71$) of their courses' LMS sites more than students in the upper-level courses ($M_{upper-level} = .41$, $SD = .91$, for the Discussion Board area; $M_{upper-level} = .05$, $SD = .22$, for the Messages area); $t(233.64) = 2.21$, $p = .03$, and $t(272.42) = 2.21$, $p = .03$, respectively.

Discussion

While it appears that students do not read their textbooks or course readings, it appears that they do make use of an LMS. However, their interaction with the site is mostly geared toward accessing items placed on the site by the faculty member that could loosely titled, "Course Documents," such as the syllabus, notes or actual PowerPoint files, test review sheets, and other course documents (like homework assignments). On less consistent occasions, the students made use of the ability to check their grades, communicate with individuals in the course, investigate outside web links the instructor provided, or access course readings. Our findings match what Zhang et al. (2010) found with the computer science course, Lonn and Teasley (2009) found across a large institution, and Hamuy and Galaz (2010) found across a campus after the implementation of an LMS.

The consistency of activity, by the students across the different courses and the different level of courses, is illuminating. While differences between students in upper-level and lower-level classes existed, fewer differences actually existed, and these differences were often small. Thus, faculty members can apply the same development ideologies to their sites regardless of the level of the course. Additionally, as mentioned, the high level of usage for the PSY 400 Internship LMS site was not surprising based on the course being offered online. However, when investigating this data, the students demonstrated similar behavioral patterns as their peers. The students in the PSY 400 Internship course focused their usage on areas directly related to what they thought they needed to do to succeed in the course. It seems that across the different psychology courses the students valued the use of an LMS to help obtain documents and communication like Lonn and Teasley (2009) found over other interactive tools. However, Lonn and Teasley (2009) found that faculty valued these same tools for document management and communication over interactive tools, which also seems to have been valued by the faculty in this study based on the type of items placed on the LMS and the tools of the LMS used.

The results of this study provide a glimpse into the organic behaviors of the students when provided with resources to them via an LMS. Most classes did not require students to access items for the class via the LMS, but some did. However, no class gave students a direct reinforcement, such as extra credit, for using the course's LMS site. It needs to be determined if faculty must give students a specific incentive to ensure that students fully and consistently use an LMS. It appears that a faculty

member's time spent on using an LMS for a course is quite valuable, especially given that students focus their time accessing course documents posted by the instructor. However, faculty should not assume that posting an item related to course material (like a web link that demonstrates a topic outside of class) will cause this item to be automatically used by students.

Future research should investigate when students access a course's LMS, when they access specific items on the LMS, and what they then do with the information that they access. By better understanding student usage of these systems, faculty will be able to continue to better utilize these systems to further influence student learning.

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**The Personal is Historical:
Oral History and Undergraduate Research Papers**

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Abstract

This paper illustrates how an oral history research project enables undergraduate students to identify with and find enhanced meaning in historical research. Students conducted interviews with family and community members and contextualized the interviews in research papers and presentations. Using a scoring rubric to assess students' historical learning and analyzing students' writing and evaluations, I conclude that these projects gave students greater command of the course content by connecting it to stories of their families and communities. Faculty across the disciplines may find the interview project useful in building personal connections between students, their courses, and their communities.

Interviewing someone close to me and hearing their experiences in the time periods we are studying helped me identify more with this course (Student comment in a US Women's History project evaluation, University of the Pacific).¹

Oral history interviews enable students to identify with and find enhanced meaning in historical research, and so, for over a decade, I have used oral history projects in history and women's studies courses. These projects have been central to my teaching at both large state institutions, where my courses served 50 to 100 students, and at the University of the Pacific, where a typical upper-level, general-education history class has 25 or fewer students. Currently, students taking Women in United States History and American Immigration History conduct interviews with family and community members (referred to here as narrators to emphasize their roles in the development of the interviews). Students interview individuals who are at least one decade older than they are themselves, people willing to comment on their experiences in American society. Students find the project most rewarding when they interview family members or other important people in their lives, such as former teachers or family friends. Students are asked to try to gain an understanding of the narrator's life experiences and decisions in the context of the options, opportunities, and constraints provided by the historical events the course covers. Next, students compare their interviews with classmates' in small groups, and then the entire class analyzes them together. Finally, they write research papers that provide historical context for their findings and present their conclusions to the class. The final papers, recounting life stories reflected through the course readings, films, and discussions, may be individual or group undertakings. (Appendix A lists the assignment's steps.)

The project requires students to play an active role in mastering both historical information and its analysis. It also supports other educational goals, such as developing the students' abilities to construct coherent narratives about the past, think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, work collaboratively, and reflect on what they are learning. Although my project is designed for the history classroom, faculty across the disciplines may find the interview component useful in building personal connections between students, their courses, and their communities. In particular, I suggest that one

¹ All comments by students are quoted verbatim and include the students' spelling and other errors. Use of student comments meets IRB approval.

step of the project, generating interview questions, enhances not only the students' ability to collaborate productively, but also their interest in and dedication to their work.

The Problem: The “Irrelevance” of History

Many of us in history (as in other) classrooms encounter students who are disengaged because they do not see the relevance of course material to their lives. In history classes, analyses of the past do not capture their imagination. The general population also seems to have trouble relating to academic interpretations of history. This led historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen (1998) to conduct a national survey of 1,500 Americans to find out if they were really divorced from and ignorant of historical knowledge. Although their subjects referred to classroom and textbook learning as “dull” and “irrelevant,” they were very much engaged with the past. According to Rosenzweig and Thelen, “The past was omnipresent in these interviews” even if “‘history’ as it is usually defined in textbooks was not” (p. 9). Their respondents' connections were personal; they took photos, kept old diaries, visited museums with family members, “video [taped] my great-great-grandpa' telling his favorite stories” (p. 17), and constructed genealogies.

Moreover, historical research can be a solitary endeavor, deepening the students' sense that it does not involve contemporary concerns. This study, therefore, sought to answer the questions: *How well does oral history research make their studies relevant to undergraduates by providing personal and political connections?* and *Does oral history research increase students' command of historical information and their ability to construct historical narratives that include attention to chronology, context, and causation (particularly to how lives are shaped by institutions and culture)?*

Background

Oral history interviews, “primary source material obtained by recording the spoken words . . . of persons deemed to harbor hitherto unavailable information worth preserving” (Starr, 1996, p. 40) are a valuable tool for recovering voices that might otherwise be lost from the historical record. Begun in the 1950s to record the memories of well-known public officials, such interviews also became a tool of historians to record the voices of and to empower marginalized groups (Lynd, 1993; Thomson, 1998;

Grele, 2007). As such, oral history has an intensely political dimension. As Linda Kerber, Jane Sherron deHart, and Cornelia Dayton Hughes write, “One of the most effective ways in which dominant groups maintain their power is by depriving the people they dominate of the knowledge of their own history” (2011, p. 1). Oral history can raise group consciousness and connect generations (Hareven, 1978). When accompanied by critical inquiry into the asymmetric nature of narratives produced through the unequal relationships of interviewers and narrators, they can challenge dominant patriarchal and racist historical narratives (Gluck & Patai, 1991). As I describe below, many students show in their papers that they understand this political dimension. One student reflected that her group essay was “able to give these women a voice.”

The historian Thomas Dublin (1996) assigned a similar project in his classes and found that oral history interviews “broaden the canon to include other cultures and traditions” (p. 1). His students reflected on ethnicity and identity in their own lives, linking “personal experience with broader social processes” (p. 2). Vicki Ruiz (1998), Pattie Dillon (2000), and Timothy P. Fong and Ava F. Kahn (1998) also find that oral history assignments help students reflect on their own lives and the lives of individual family and community members as parts of larger social and cultural systems.

The oral history project may seem specific to history classrooms, and indeed, oral history refers to the systematic creation of primary sources through the initial collaboration of a narrator and a historian and the subsequent verification and contextualization of findings. Ideally, the interview transcript is eventually deposited in an archive accessible to the public and the findings published. Historians and archivists should, of course, protect the narrator’s intellectual property rights and any desire to keep the material closed for some period of time.

Nevertheless, these interviews, different from those that seek to interrogate or entertain, can be used in a variety of fields. Similar projects can help students across disciplines engage with materials in a way that is personal, collaborative, and that provides multiple perspectives. Business students might conduct end-of-the-semester debriefing exit interviews with classmates to evaluate what and how much they have learned; education students might interview professionals in their field about a controversial issue in their local school district; and philosophy students might interview each other about how they have dealt with a difficult concept and used metaphor to help understand it. Like many successful active

learning techniques, the interview encourages students to think “about what they are doing” (C. Bonwell and J. Eison, 1991) and can be adapted in discipline-specific ways.

The collaborative element of oral history interviews also encourages student engagement and reflection. Given the structure of these projects, collaboration occurs both between the interviewer and narrator and also among the members of the class who share ideas throughout the process of research and analysis. Collaboration matters, too, because it enables students to see links between their work, current community issues, and history. As Charles R. Lee and Kathryn L. Nasstrom (1998) explain,

Exchanges between interviewer and narrator, like those between student and teacher, are only the first, and most obvious, forms of interaction. The interview, in fact, represents a moment in the relationship between interviewer and narrator, self and society, between social and cultural groups or communities, often between generations, and between the present and the past (p. 2).

Professors often set up oral history projects with set goals in mind. Lee and Nasstrom celebrate, however, that “somewhere in the process of doing oral history . . . a new dynamic takes over the individual or classroom experience. Students collaborate, broaden their focus to include the community, and construct meaningful histories” (p. 4). In other words, students build personal connections with others through oral history projects, connections that have inspired deeper civic engagement for at least a few of my students.

Although I lead them into the process, I ask the students to take charge. We begin to devise interview questions collaboratively before the students move to individual consideration of specific issues. When I first began teaching, I provided students with a set of questions that I urged them to use as a guideline. Using that process, however, as Ruiz (1998) has noted, students sometimes methodically read the questions as if from a survey form rather than adapting the questions to their specific narrator’s experience. Ruiz recounts the story of a student who asked an older man if he had ever been sexually harassed, a question that was inappropriate to both his experiences and sensibility. To minimize the possibility of such inadvertently awkward (and disrespectful) moments, I no longer provide questions. Instead, after the students have completed preliminary research on the time periods and topics they will address and have also examined oral histories in our university archive, the entire class discusses

potential questions. The intellectual benefits of these group discussions come from addressing not only specific historical issues, but also from considering some of the difficult methodological problems related to oral history research and historical research more generally. In addition to confronting ideas in this exercise, students are exposed to the virtues of working with others. When they go on to develop specific questions for their own projects, they build on the group effort and make the work their own.

In my most recent American immigration history class, I began the group discussion of potential questions by projecting nothing but the title *Sample Questions* at the top of the classroom screen and asking the students what questions they thought were important for their interviews. Although regular contributors offered suggestions, I made sure I called on everyone. One student said, "I'd want to know about immigrant foods." His primary interest was in the material conditions of immigrants before and after coming to the United States, but his comment elicited a lively class discussion on cultural retention, adaptation, and assimilation as well. To encourage the students to rework the questions to suit their particular narrators, I listed topics and themes rather than specific questions. We generated a long list of topics involving culture, such as "first big purchase," "ties to country of origin," "ties to family," and "expectations of American culture." I also reminded the students to think about the larger historical events that were happening during their narrators' lives. This collective strategy for developing interview questions can be adapted to a variety of fields to increase collaboration and student involvement in the research process.

The discussion of what topics to address yields a dynamic class session about the types of questions that are likely to elicit meaningful responses. It also begins conversations about establishing rapport and respecting narrators as co-authors of the interview. Role-playing is an effective part of the process of training the students to go out and do the actual interviews, and often, it is in this context that important questions about sensitivity arise. I ask, for example, "What happens if Grandpa says he had no interest in assimilating? Should we leave it at that and move on to the next question?" Students quickly catch on that a follow-up question is in order: "That's interesting, what about United States culture made you not want to assimilate?" or "Were there pressures in your job for you to learn English or change your style of dress?" Not wanting their narrators to feel interrogated, students usually wonder about how to

ask these questions, and so we discuss affirming the narrator's experience before pursuing the next question.

Later in the semester, students again confront major issues of historical research and analysis as they report on their interviews. In groups of three or four, they discuss what they learned and then share with the entire class their key findings, sometimes as shaped or polished in the small group discussions. In this way, students collaborate on interpretation and analysis as they did in developing the questions for their interviews. Their discussions often turn toward the significance of the primary sources that they have created. In women's history classes, at least one student typically complains, "But Mom didn't talk about the things we've been reading about." Usually, this means that the student's mother was not an activist in the civil rights, feminist, or student movements. Still, the comment presents the opportunity to consider how and about whom historical documents are created, what elicits scholarly attention, and how, even in studies of marginalized groups, some individuals' voices still may be silent. Interviews often generate material that is not part of the dominant historical narrative. Many students recognize that they are adding the voices of their families to the historical record and comment that this is a kind of corrective to it. In short, students learn about the production of historical knowledge.

Method

Based on my informal classroom observations as described above and on feedback from students, I hypothesized that the oral history projects that I had been assigning, through the collaborative nature of the interviews and our class discussions about them, inspired students to explore personal connections to the past and enabled them to describe some of the ways that individual and group experiences are shaped by culture and institutions. To test this hypothesis, I used a scoring rubric (Appendix B) to measure how well history majors met the history department's goals for the mastery of substantive information and its analysis, specifically the ability to generate coherent historical narratives with attention to chronology, context, and causation (especially the ability to understand the roles of culture and institutions in shaping human history).

In addition to the rubric results, I surveyed students in two classes who had completed my oral history assignments. I administered the surveys (Appendices C and D) during the final class session,

after students had completed their projects and heard most of their peers present papers. These quantitative and qualitative surveys regarding the features of the project offer the students' own assessments of how well they had met these goals.

Results: History Is Not Irrelevant

My rubric-based assessment showed that 22% of history majors' papers demonstrated real mastery, 67% were proficient, and only 11% were developing mastery or below expectations. These results show a slightly larger number of essays that show mastery or proficiency than in other departmental courses, indicating that the project leads to greater engagement and command of the subject matter.

The completed research papers demonstrated that students did reflect on the legacies of the past in their own lives. One student used the research paper in the immigration class to "explore how my family's immigration pattern fits into the larger Vietnamese immigration context, and how my family dynamics have changed due to our immigration from Vietnam to America." His paper then compared his generation's experiences and sense of national belonging to those of two older generations of family members. Another student demonstrated the potential of the project to get students to think about their personal and political connections to their families and to the past:

The rising socio-economic and political conflict in our native country of Peru darkened the prospects of economic progress and political stability and spurred my parents to transplant our family to a place where we could prosper. . . . Leaving jobs and relatives behind, my family made a monumental move that continues to shape our character, a move that fosters my interest in politics and fuels my personal efforts to success professionally.

The student successfully contextualized his family's experiences as they related to the economic and cultural histories of two countries and reflected on how the new knowledge he had gained furthered his commitment to a political career.

In their project evaluations, students reported feeling a personal connection to the material as a result of the interviews. Most of those in the 2010 women's history and 2011 American immigration

history classes responded affirmatively to the question “Did the oral histories help you personally identify with US women’s / US immigration history? Explain. Can you think of an example?” Twenty-four of 36 respondents said the oral histories did help them identify with the past. Five said they did so only somewhat (these particular students’ responses are especially revealing, and I discuss them below). Three said they did not, and four gave no response. One third of the respondents offered specific examples. These findings, supplemented by student comments, indicate that the project helped students feel connected to the past and aware of the political dimensions of their personal histories. One student commented, for example, that “interviewing someone close to me and hearing their experiences in the time periods we are studying helped me identify more with this course.” Another noted, “It made me realize how much my life is influenced by women’s history. An example is how my grandma had to deal with neighbors going into internment camps just because they were Japanese.” Although the internment of US citizens of Japanese ancestry during World War II is commonly covered in current history textbooks, this student reflected on what the textbooks rarely discuss: that even non-Japanese Americans were affected by and, indeed, implicated in the US government’s denial of civil rights during World War II. Through stories of people she knew, this student signaled a deeper engagement with the past.

Students also noted when they heard a historical narrative that departed from the text. “They gave me another perspective that was different from what we learned in the book,” wrote a student. In fact, those students who said in the evaluations that the interviews helped them only somewhat to connect to the themes of the course (personally identify with US women’s / US immigration history) actually pointed to the presence of multiple voices in the interviews, perhaps more so than those who agreed more fully. Tellingly, one student wrote, “My woman’s oral history did not address US women’s history, but more of their own cultures.” Another said that the course did not deal sufficiently with Pacific Islanders as immigrants, even though he added his own research findings to the ongoing class discussion, thereby shifting a historical narrative that would otherwise have left his family out. Yet, hearing alternative voices can be difficult for students to assimilate immediately; the students who responded “somewhat,” although they felt their narrators’ stories should be included, hesitated to call their narrators’ histories “US History” and therefore reflected only a developing sense that they were collaborating to transform knowledge.

As to whether the project “help[ed] you see how personal experience is shaped by culture and institutions,” 35 of 36 students responded that the project did this. One student commented, “Coming from a different country with differing governments and an education system really affects one’s opportunities as well.” Another reflected, “Yes, the hardships my grandpa went through during the *bracero* program helped me see him in a new light.” A student learned that her grandfather from Italy had had difficulty adjusting because he did not know English well.

When I surveyed the students in the course on the history of American immigration, I added two questions to the survey. To elicit more specific responses and to allow students to reflect on any aspect of the project they wished, I asked, “What was the most significant thing that you learned as a result of doing this project?” This open-ended question allowed me to assess whether the personal or political dimensions of the paper were valuable to the students. Of 18 students, 16 felt they learned something significant: seven mentioned a specific story about their family history, three felt they better understood why their families were the way they were, four referred to learning about the broad context of immigration history, and two felt they learned about their own identity. Student comments illustrate what students believed they had learned. One student said, “I think the most significant thing was that I am not full Japanese but Japanese Okinawan.” Another explained that the project helped illuminate “How important it is to understand where you come from & how it can affect your sense of identity.” The findings from this question show that students selected the personal connections as significant and used them to work through issues of identity.

Asked to give recommendations to change the project, the students offered a similarly engaged and largely positive response. Of 18 students, 10 said the project should not be changed at all. One commented that it was “A great project to learn about how your family immigrated and the things in history class actually connect with some people in your own family,” and another said that it was “very pleasant because it has such a personal dimension making it an easier project to get involved in.” Of the eight who suggested an improvement, three sought ways to strengthen the contextualization of the interview (perhaps by incorporating additional primary sources such as photographs and journals) or to increase collaboration (by, for example, sharing the projects earlier). The remaining five wanted different requirements, such as a shorter paper.

Challenges for Students and Instructors: Implications for Future Research

The oral history project is not without challenges. In addition to concerns over the construction of memory (Kwa Chong, 2008) and its accuracy, interview methods can be difficult to teach, and undergraduate students approach their narrators with varying abilities to establish rapport and pursue lines of inquiry. Students also struggle with interpreting the interviews. As demonstrated by those who felt their interviews only somewhat deepened their understanding of course themes, students often remarked that their interviews were most successful when they matched what they had learned about in class. One student commented, "It's so interesting that [my classmate's] aunt was involved in sit-ins like we learned about." The student was excited to find that "real" people participated in events about which she had read. She felt the need to look for something that fit the textbook's narrative, however, and so discussed the classmate's interview in her evaluation rather than how her own interview had illustrated lives of women who were not activists. To prompt students to think further about how their own interviews add to our knowledge, I plan to add to the assignment guidelines by asking specifically how and why narrators' lives differed from what students had read about.

Since the production of knowledge is a political act (Elenes, 2000), the students engage in politics when they design questions and again when they analyze their interviews. As already shown by the student comments above, this can become particularly telling when their projects address the specific experiences of groups that are underrepresented in the historical literature and when, in seeking their own history, they find themselves revising traditional narratives. Students also find it challenging to balance compelling stories with an appropriate amount of critical historical background and to keep in mind that the women and immigrant narrators may have their own acknowledged and unacknowledged agendas (Grele, 1998). Many narrators frame their lives according to traditional notions of progress that involve, for example, overcoming obstacles or achieving individual triumph in the face of discrimination. Students come away with new respect for family and community members, but they rarely question the typical narrative of United States history as one of progress; they get caught by the assumption that the inhabitants of the United States have inevitably achieved greater equality than those in other nations and that democracy is better ensured with each generation. In other instances, women's history students may

interview antifeminists, or women ambivalent about the feminist movement. Their papers often derogate these women's choices, or, conversely, fiercely defend them, both reactions as a response to their assumption that, as a feminist, I will judge negatively the women they love. Still, others seek to glorify relatives. Scholarly distance is difficult to achieve.

In response to these challenges, which emerge in most types of historical research, I am developing a more deliberate assignment to teach students how to evaluate oral history interviews and papers based on them. The collaborative research process in my classes actually opens up a dialogue in which students can question the origins and reliability of sources, become aware of their own assumptions and biases, and come to a deeper understanding of how writing and remembering the past is both personal and political. Future research should assess how well those discussions help students critically analyze the perspectives and origins of oral history interviews as one type of primary source.

Conclusion

Oral history interviews can be excellent tools, in the undergraduate classroom, for building a personal connection between students and their research subjects. Using collaborative sessions in which interview questions are generated by the class before students individually refine them for their own specific interviews can deepen students' engagement with the study of history (and other fields) and lead to meaningful discussions about both historical context and the personal and political dimensions of the production of knowledge. Students report that oral history interviews build bridges between them and the past, allowing them to add the perspectives of silenced individuals to the historical record. While the instructor of oral history research must be attuned to issues of memory and romantic interpretations of individuals and the past, these challenges open space for meaningful discussions about the production of historical knowledge as well.

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Appendix A

Designing an Oral History Research Project

Below are suggested steps for successful collaborative oral history projects.

- Instructor introduces the project.
- Students determine whom to interview.
- Students do individual background research.
- Students listen to and look at models (e.g., “Stockton Immigrant Women’s Interviews” in the Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific, Stockton).
- Students generate general interview questions as a group and role-play interview scenarios.
- Students refine specific interview questions before and as they interview.
- Students share interviews with small groups and then with the entire class.
- Students write proposals for their research papers.
- Students prepare their annotated bibliographies.
- Rough drafts are due for peer or instructor review.
- Students give oral presentations of findings.
- Final drafts are due.
- Students write evaluations of their own work.

Appendix B

Scoring Rubric for Historical Information Competence

The scoring rubric includes results from history majors who completed an oral history research project. It is adapted for the US Women's History and American Immigration History classes from the scoring rubric used by the University of the Pacific History Department to assess student mastery of historical substance and analysis.

n=9

Student Learning Outcome 1 – Historical Information Competence: <i>generate coherent narratives explaining the subject matter</i>			Essays in each category
Mastery	Demonstrates sophisticated knowledge of US women's / US immigration history through rich detail; insightfully compares and contextualizes interviews in the historical periods evaluated and in the historiography; thoroughly relates accurate chronology and evaluates historical causation, especially how institutions and culture shape lives.	4	2
Proficient	Contains solid information about US women's / US immigration history and provides satisfactory context for the interview in the relevant historical periods and historiography; could go further in depth or detail; chronology is generally accurate and there is some reflection on historical causation, although some further development is needed.	3	6
Developing	Shows basic comprehension of US women's / US immigration history but interviews are only tangentially related to that history, minor historical mistakes appear, or important historical events or arguments are ignored.	2	1
Un-distinguished	Contains insufficient information or misinformation about US women's / US immigration history; little attempt to relate interviews to the historical record or historiography; may include misunderstanding of chronology or causation.	1	0
Below Expectations	Contains many historical inaccuracies related to US women's / US immigration history; does not relate interviews to the historical record and historiography; shows little or no comprehension of context, chronology, and causation.	0	0

Appendix C

US Women's History: Group Oral History Project Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is for you to reflect on how well you work in groups and also to provide feedback so that the instructor can better design future assignments.

1. Did the oral histories help you personally identify with US women's history? Explain. Can you think of an example?
2. Did the project help you see how personal experience is shaped by culture and institutions?
3. What worked well in your group?
4. What could your group have done differently to improve your discussion or your own final paper?
5. How did your group members' backgrounds, schedules, personalities, and other characteristics affect your group's progress? Consider both advantages and disadvantages.
6. Do you like to work in groups? Why or why not? If not, what could you do to ease the difficulties of collaboration?
7. Tell anything else you learned about working in the group.
8. Do you have any suggestions for preparing future students for successful group work?

Appendix D

American Immigration History: Family History Project Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is for you to reflect on how well you work in groups and also to provide feedback so that the instructor can better design future assignments.

1. Did you complete an oral history interview of an immigrant for the paper, or did you interview a family member about genealogy?
2. If you interviewed an immigrant, did the oral history/ies help you personally identify with US immigration history? Explain. Can you think of an example?
3. Did the project (including the interview, doing the genealogical research, and writing the paper) help you see how personal experience is shaped by culture and institutions?
4. What was the most significant thing you learned as a result of doing this project?
5. What changes to the project would you recommend, if any?

Using Film as Pedagogy to Explore Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs

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Abstract

This study investigated preservice teachers' beliefs about education through the application and analyses of Hollywood films in an undergraduate teacher education course. Hollywood films, as a genre of films, present teachers as lead characters in plots that center on classroom environments and relationships. As an instructional strategy, film pedagogy can assist preservice teachers in understanding a wide range of issues and events that may surface in teaching.

The research questions guiding the study were: What are preservice teachers' beliefs about education? What changes may have occurred to preservice teachers' beliefs about education over the course of a semester? What do preservice teachers learn about education from watching Hollywood films about teaching? The methods for data collection included pre and post surveys and worksheets; data was analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings suggest that watching and discussing teacher films helped preservice teachers to develop a greater awareness and a more complex understanding about teachers' roles and responsibilities. Limitations of the study and recommendations for film pedagogy within teacher education courses are addressed.

Introduction

Within teacher preparation programs, pre-service teachers are introduced to the profession through a progression of professional education courses in three discernible stages: introduction to the profession, immersion into the content and discipline-based readings, and practicum/student teaching experiences (Zulich, Bean, & Herrick, 1992). Stage one (introduction) is pivotal because it exposes pre-service teachers to foundational issues and topics relative to public education and the teaching profession. This stage is also intended to facilitate reflection about their chosen career path.

There is abundant support for pre-service teacher reflection within teacher education as a way to understand complexity inherent in teaching and classroom life (Galbraith, 1995; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Klein, 2003; Schulte, Edick, Edwards & Mackiel, 2004; Schön, 1983; Zeichner, 1996; Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Zeichner, 1996). Approaches to reflection that address multiple dimensions of teaching (emotional, moral, ethical, and spiritual) allow pre-service teachers to better understand teaching as complex and nuanced (Klein, 2008; Miller, Karsten, Denton, Orr & Kates, 2005; Palmer, 1993). Case study analyses and journaling can allow prospective teachers to “stand-back from taken for granted assumptions [and] frame problems from multiple perspectives” (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004, p. 322). Viewing, discussing, and analyzing Hollywood films about teaching can also accomplish these aims.

In recent years, “visual texts with moving images have become the dominant textual form of our contemporary global culture” (Dalton & Lindner, 2008, p. 2). Many educators view films as a form of pedagogy (Trier, 2007). There is support among many scholars (Bratlinger, 1999; Dalton & Linder, 2008; Edelman, 1990; Giroux, 2002; Joseph & Burnaford, 2001; Trier, 2003) that films about teachers provide an effective way for pre-service teachers to decode and interrogate the representation of teachers, students, administrators, and schools.

Pre-service teachers tend to demonstrate more common sense thinking (LaBoskey, 1994), that is, focused on self and/or subject matter, having short-term views, relying on personal experiences, seeing the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge, and making broad generalizations about teaching. Ottesen (2007) and others suggest that pre-service teachers become more reflective over time, and we have also found this to be true. While reflective thinking by pre-service teachers may be limited by age

and experience, we believe that film pedagogy as a curricular and pedagogical intervention can develop more critically aware and reflective pre-service teachers.

Through the use of drama and storytelling that is inherent in films, pre-service teachers can engage with powerful images and stories about teaching. The films may assist them to see that, while teaching is nuanced, complex, and fraught with challenges, it may also be rewarding. Dalton (2004) identified 100 films about teaching that are part of mainstream popular culture and Hollywood. Within teacher education, the integration of commercial films about teaching is a viable strategy for contemplation, interpretation, and interrogation of messages about teachers and public education. Furthermore, visual and emotive qualities of films can allow pre-service teachers to access their feelings and beliefs, and to engage in metaphorical and strategic thinking about teaching through the discussion of plots and characters.

About this study

This study is based on our shared beliefs about reflection as “reflective action [that] is bound up with persistent and careful consideration of practice in the light of knowledge and beliefs” (Noffke & Brennan 1988 in Hatton & Smith, 1995, ¶ 5). Throughout the undergraduate teacher education program at a Midwestern university, pre-service teachers focus on four areas of classroom practice in both theory and practice: instruction/pedagogy, curriculum/assessment, classroom environment, and professional responsibilities (Danielson, 1996) through guided reflection assignments that are embedded into the teacher education courses. Both of us were assigned to teach a required *Foundation of Education*, a 2 credit-course, that addresses the historical developments and philosophical, legal, and political issues impacting American public K-16 education. In our multiple roles within the teacher education program, as faculty and as program directors, we observed that reflecting on teaching is often a difficult task for pre-service teachers because they lack necessary classroom teaching experience. We began to talk about ways in which we could take the subject of ‘classroom teaching’ and problematize it in a way that fostered greater awareness about teaching and critical thinking about issues facing teachers. Our shared interest in films spurred further discussion about how we could integrate Hollywood films into this course to ‘tell stories’ about teaching. We speculated that watching, analyzing, and discussing films about teaching

could address many issues about classroom and professional practice that could not be easily understood through other means. Embracing the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), we allowed our own questions about our practice to emerge, and, in turn, viewed our own classrooms as spaces to explore these questions. Our discussions about films led us to write a research grant that was funded by the university to pursue this study; funds allowed us to purchase a variety of Hollywood films about teaching as well as other resources. Through this grant project, we were able to review, discuss, and select films about teaching, revise the course syllabus, and integrate films into the course.

Our research grant goals evolved out of a commitment to the SoTL in that we believed that to “take learning seriously, we need to take learners seriously” (Schulman, 1999, p.12). The goals of this study were: 1) to research and discuss films about teaching relevant to K-12 teaching; 2) to expose pre-service teachers to diverse and multiple perspectives about teaching and historical and contemporary public education through the use of contemporary films; 3) to encourage affective as well as cognitive student responses about education through discussion of contemporary films; and 4) to inquire as to what beliefs pre-service teachers have about K-12 education.

Our research grant goals two, three, and four were fulfilled through the implementation of the research. To achieve the first research grant goal, we met prior to the implementation and identified films that aligned with the Foundations of Education course objectives. We looked to the work of Dalton (2004) and Dalton & Lender (2008) and engaged in online research to obtain a comprehensive list of both Hollywood and independently produced films; slightly over 100 films were identified. The selected nine films met the following criteria: 1) they possessed breadth and represented a wide range of historical, societal, political, and cultural perspectives; 2) they illustrated a variety of teaching philosophies and perspectives, and 3) they possessed both male and female lead characters. The films listed in Table 1 represent the range of selected commercial cinematic works (ca. 1950-2007). While documentaries about teachers exist, we chose Hollywood films because they addressed a wider range of issues and scenarios about teaching.

Many of the selected films are considered classics and may be perceived inspirational in that they present teachers who overcome difficult circumstances with varying degrees of success. Through our

review of the films, we realized that most of the Hollywood films depicted urban settings, yet very few films addressed teaching in rural areas.

Table 1. Selected Films

Films*	School Setting	Release Date
<i>Black Board Jungle</i>	Urban	1955
<i>To Sir with Love</i>	Urban	1966
<i>Up the Down Staircase</i>	Urban	1967
<i>Teachers</i>	Urban	1984
<i>October Sky</i>	Rural (science education)	1998
<i>Pay it Forward</i>	Urban (middle school)	2000
<i>Music of the Heart</i>	Urban (music education)	1982
<i>Election</i>	Suburban	1999
<i>Freedom Writers</i>	Urban	2006/2007

*The film order reflects the sequence they were presented and discussed in class.

Methods

Research questions. To determine what effect, if any, the films might have on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching, we developed the following research questions to guide the implementation, data collection, and analysis: 1) What are preservice teachers' beliefs about education? 2) What changes occurred to preservice teachers' beliefs about education over the course of a semester? and 3) What can preservice teachers learn about education as a result of watching Hollywood films about teaching?

Implementation. After developing the research questions, the films were introduced into two sections of Foundations of Education in the fall of 2008. The Foundations of Education course met for 55 minutes, two times per week. Due to scheduling changes, the study was implemented in only two sections instead of the intended four sections; both sections were taught by one researcher (Klein) who

collected the data during the course of one semester. The film assignment requirements (film viewing, participation in class discussions, and completion of worksheets and surveys) constituted 45 percent of the final course grade.

The participants in this study (n=54), referred to as 'pre-service teachers' and 'students,' were at the freshman and sophomore level. Non-traditional students included those students who may have transferred from technical or community colleges, who were undecided majors, or who were graduate students seeking a license in K-12 pupil services. Participants represented the following degree areas: Art Education, Business Education, Early Childhood Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Marketing Education, Science Education, Technology Education, Special Education, School Counseling, and School Psychology.

Pre-service teachers were provided with an overview of the research project and, upon receipt of institutional approval for the research, and prior to data collection, students in both sections were asked to sign consent forms that provided permission for us to analyze data from the online surveys and to photocopy their worksheets. One student chose not to participate in the study and did not complete the surveys but did complete and submit the required worksheets. Students were asked to complete several surveys using *Survey Monkey*, a secure online survey web portal. As the course was web-enhanced, the survey links were posted within the course management tool and students could log in and click on the survey link.

Viewing and discussing the films. A final selection of films represented diverse plots, teaching contexts, student populations, teacher philosophies, and methods. The sequencing of films within the course correlated with the course objectives and major topics covered in the required text: historical foundations of education, school diversity, curriculum, and professional responsibilities. We determined that the students should view the films in their entirety to allow for a more complete understanding of plots and character development. Students were required to view the nine selected films outside of class; all films were on reserve in the university library. The films were between 1.5-2.0 hours in length, and it was expected that students would view the films prior to class and complete the accompanying worksheet. Films were viewed in the order presented in Table 1 with historical films preceding contemporary films. During the course of a 16-week semester, all the films were integrated into the course. Approximately 50

percent of each class time (25-30 minutes) was devoted to the film discussion. The worksheet was developed to facilitate discussion and to record their observations and understandings relative to each film. A total of 486 worksheets were collected, graded, and returned to students. Worksheets by those students who consented to participating in the study were copied and names were removed.

Completing the surveys. Students were invited to complete a pre and post survey, using *Survey Monkey*, at the beginning and end of the course to gain insight into their beliefs about teaching through seven open-ended response prompts. The survey included open-ended prompts that invited students to complete the following sentences: 1) *I believe that schools...* 2) *I believe that teachers...* 3) *I believe that students...* 4) *I believe that administrators...* 5) *I believe that classrooms...* 6) *I believe that curriculum...* and 7) *Impact of people, places, resources and events on teaching...* The initial and post surveys addressed research questions one and two.

Another online survey was administered after each film was viewed and discussed, totaling nine surveys. This survey provided 10 prompts: nine prompts with a five point Likert scale rating and one open-ended prompt. These surveys addressed research question three and attempted to understand what students learned from each film. Class time was devoted to completing all of these surveys.

Data Analyses

After the implementation of the film pedagogy in the Fall 2008 semester, we regularly met throughout the academic year to review and analyze all the data. We engaged in memo writing between meetings to capture our “evolving ideas, assumptions, hunches, uncertainties, insights, feelings, and choices” (Fassinger, 2005, p. 163), and that subsequently influenced further data analysis and interpretation. The establishment of this “audit trail” allowed us to check each other’s coding, categories, and assumptions (Fassinger, 2005, p. 163).

All data from the individual film surveys collected through *Survey Monkey* were analyzed; survey items 1-8 facilitated the collection of statistical data. Open-ended survey items were analyzed through thematic analysis informed by Van Manen (1997) and Georgi’s (1997) transcription process (Figure 1) and that allowed for reading the responses to find emerging themes. Van Manen (1997) describes this as “the holistic or sententious approach” (p. 94) where incidental themes gave way to more durable and

essential themes. According to Van Manen (1997), “the lacing of anecdotal narrative into a more formal discourse, if done well, will create tension between the pre-reflective and reflective pulls of the language” (p. 121). After refinement of initial themes, we returned to data to uncover any new themes and refine existing themes. It should be noted that the themes that emerged from the findings were not discussed with participating students as the data analyses occurred after the semester had concluded.

Essential themes were interpreted and supported with anecdotal evidence (students’ quotes) from worksheets, belief statements, and survey responses. Only one worksheet question was analyzed from the worksheet: *What did you learn about teaching as a result of watching and discussing this film?* Using the copied worksheets, we obtained a sample of the worksheets to analyze through random selection using about 20 percent of the total worksheets, or 100 worksheets. These worksheets were representative of all the films viewed and of students in both sections. Individually and collaboratively, we coded students’ responses to the worksheet question from the entire sample and collapsed themes.

Findings

Pre and post ‘belief’ surveys. The combined survey response rate was 91 percent for the pre- and post surveys. We looked at students’ responses from the pre-survey (before the film pedagogy) and their responses from the post-survey (after the film pedagogy). The analysis of these responses addressed our research questions relating to students’ beliefs: *What are student beliefs about education?* and *What changes occurred to students’ beliefs about education over the course of the semester?*

Table 2 provides an overview of the themes that emerged from the pre and post survey. We then compared the pre- and post themes and arrived at a theme that summarized or captured the shift in thinking that we found in the writings and experienced through class discussions. The last column identifies themes that reflect a shift in student thinking over the course of the semester about schools, teachers, students, administrators, classrooms, teaching, and influences on teaching.

Table 2. Comparison of Pre- and Post Belief Survey Themes

Item	2) Pre-Survey Themes	3) Post survey Themes	4) Synthesis of Themes
I believe schools...	Schools should be safe, warm, and caring.	Schools are a community anchor; should be accountable.	Schools serve broad functions (academic, social, and emotional).
I believe teachers...	Teachers should be knowledgeable, fair, understanding, flexible, nurturing, role models, and keep curriculum "fun."	Teachers should have high standards, uphold school and classroom rules; have the 'power to do good and bad'.	Teachers have broad roles and responsibilities.
I believe students ...	Students should be "ready to learn, tolerant, respectful of teachers", "listened to."	Students should have good work habits and habits of mind.	Students should be ready for active learning, but expect to be motivated.
I believe that administrators...	Administrators enforce rules and policies that govern teachers and students.	Administrators both manage and create positive learning environments.	Administrators are internal and external agents of schools, leaders and managers, and role models.
I believe that classrooms...	Classrooms should be safe and comfortable, warm and inviting.	Classrooms must be designed and maintained; impact teaching both positively and negatively.	Classrooms are physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, and pedagogical spaces.

I believe curriculum...	Curriculum should be logical, relevant, engaging, and appropriate.	Curriculum should be meaningful and accommodate students' learning styles.	Attention to learners as part of curriculum process. Curriculum has multiple functions: Intellectual, psychological (emotional, motivating), practical (applicable to life/real world) and accommodates (diverse learners).
Impact of people, places, resources and events on teaching...	All viewed as relevant and important.	Technology viewed as very important resource today; current events very important	Viewed as important and impacting positively and negatively.

Individual film survey. This survey was completed at the end of class discussion for each film. The nine prompts that students were invited to complete included: 1) This film helped me to think critically about the teaching profession; 2) This film presented an example of an inspirational teacher; 3) This film changed my beliefs about teaching; 4) This film offered me some examples of strategies to deal with learners; 5) This film provided me with some examples of strategies on how to create curriculum; 6) This film presented examples of strategies for how to work through moral and ethical issues in the classroom or the school; 7) This film offered me some strategies for how to work with administrators; 8) Overall, I would recommend this film to other students who are studying to become teachers; and 9) As a result of watching this film I have gained the following insight about teaching (an open-ended response item). Students were asked to rank each response using a Likert scale. Descriptive statistics were used to report the number of students who agreed with each survey item with respect to each film.

The films *Freedom Writers* (87%), *Up the Down Staircase* (44%), and *Blackboard Jungle* (44%) ranked highest with respect to helping students think critically about teaching. *Freedom Writers* (92%), *Blackboard Jungle* (78%), and *October Sky* (69%) ranked highest in presenting an inspirational teacher and helping students to understand moral and ethical issues in teaching. They often described the teacher, Mrs. G, in *Freedom Writers* as someone who "stuck to her guns," and "was strong, but flexible."

Students acknowledged the film *To Sir with Love* as a compassionate portrayal of a teacher. The teacher was described as "like a lion" who "brings hope to his surroundings." They also acknowledged that "love and respect are like flowers on the same branch." *Freedom Writers* (46%) and *Pay it Forward* (35%), ranked highest as the films that helped change their beliefs about teaching. One student commented, "Seeing how much of a difference Mr. Simonet [in *Pay it Forward*] made in students' lives really helps me see that we can do anything to help a student of ours go into the right direction." Another student wrote, "This film helped me to understand not to underestimate the ability of anyone, especially students."

Freedom Writers elicited comments such as, "teaching is tough but change is possible," and "hopefully I will enter [teaching] with more confidence." *Freedom Writers* (87%), *To Sir with Love* (54%), and *Blackboard Jungle* (46%) ranked highest as films that helped students to understand learners. Students shared that teachers should "really try to understand and respect each student to get them to understand." Responses to prompt five suggest that *Freedom Writers* (50%) helped them to think about curriculum and that "relating subjects to every day life will help students learn better." They also indicated that teaching requires understanding the contextual factors that impact student learning. Responses indicate support that *Freedom Writers* (90%), *To Sir with Love* (73%), and *Blackboard Jungle* (61%) provide good examples of teachers who are able to work through moral and ethical issues.

With respect to helping students understand strategies for working with administrators, the films *Freedom Writers* (61%) and *Music of the Heart* (43%) ranked the highest. In response to *Freedom Writers*, one student wrote "there is [administrative] support for the teacher as long as their methods are orthodox." With *Music of the Heart*, responses included that "relations between teachers and administrators can be strained due to budget cuts," but also that teachers and administrators sometimes "come together for a common cause," and that administrators are "supportive to a point."

It is interesting to note that, while 50 percent of the films viewed and discussed ranked consistently high across all categories, *Freedom Writers* consistently ranked highest across all categories and was recommended by 98 percent of the respondents. Some of the other films recommended by over 50 percent of the students were *October Sky* (67%), *Pay it Forward* (65%), and *To Sir with Love* (63%).

Responses to the open-ended prompt, "As a result of watching this film, I have the following insights about teaching..." suggest that students became *more aware* of many dimensions to teaching: tensions that can exist within schools and in relationships; feelings of isolation, particularly in the face of unsupportive administrators (as in *Up the Down Staircase* and *Teachers*); the importance of having teachers as student advocates (as in *Pay it Forward* and *Music of the Heart*); and the importance of adapting curriculum to the needs and interests of students.

Students also began to understand the impact that stress can have in a teacher's life, particularly for new teachers (as in *Freedom Writers*, *Blackboard Jungle*, and *To Sir with Love*). They also began to see that effective teaching can take many forms and embrace many styles and personalities; however, effective teachers are persistent in their attempts to reach students and embrace hope and change (as in *October Sky* and *Freedom Writers*).

Film discussion worksheets. Film worksheets primarily served as a means to help students prepare for class discussions but also assisted us in determining what they learned overall about teaching as a result of watching and discussing the films. Responses to the question *What did you learn about teaching as a result of watching and discussing this film?* were analyzed through coding and allowing the following themes to emerge: teacher dispositions, teacher expectations, and teacher attitudes. Table 3 lists these themes along with students' quotes to support these salient themes. Overall, as a result of watching Hollywood films, pre-service teachers learned that teaching is personally and professionally demanding and is, plain and simple, hard work that requires both preparation and perseverance.

Table 3. Themes from Film Discussion Worksheets

Themes	Students' Quotes
Teacher attitudes	<p>you can't make everyone happy</p> <p>you can't help or change all students</p> <p>even the best of intentions are sometimes not enough</p>
Teacher dispositions	<p>be inspirational</p> <p>think big</p> <p>be selfless</p> <p>teachers should take chances</p> <p>teaching requires self-awareness, resiliency, courage, strength of character, and motivating self-talk</p>
Teacher expectations	<p>adjust teaching styles</p> <p>provide consistency</p> <p>have good assignments</p> <p>try different methods</p>

Discussion

Themes and anecdotal evidence were reviewed across data that included the surveys and worksheets with respect to the three overarching research questions guiding this study: 1) What are preservice teachers' beliefs about education? 2) What changes occurred to preservice teachers' beliefs

about education over the course of a semester? and 3) What can preservice teachers learn about education as a result of watching Hollywood films about teaching?

What are preservice teachers' beliefs about education? An analysis of the pre- and post survey data themes (Table 2) and worksheet themes (Table 3) reveals that, after the film pedagogy, students' beliefs relative to the roles of teachers and the function of schools shifted. They now viewed schools and school personnel as having broader functions and roles as well as demanding responsibilities that went beyond the local school context or just making curriculum "fun." While many of the films depicted teachers interacting with parents and community outside of the classroom, students' beliefs about teacher expectations pointed more directly to being effective in the classroom. By the end of the course, pre-service teachers' views about K-12 students became more tempered in that they recognized that "some kids don't want to be fixed or helped," but it is a teacher's responsibility to continue to reach out, for "at any moment, someone might be looking for a mentor and you might be the key." Finally, the pre-service teachers shifted in their thinking about administrators from just being local enforcers of school policy to having external responsibilities.

While many students expressed idealism about teaching, they began to see, from the films, that a teacher's best intentions might not always be well received by students, parents, or administrators. Additionally, they began to see that many factors can impact teaching and learning, both in and outside of the classroom, and that teacher effectiveness, e.g. 'getting through to students' and creating an environment for learning, can be very challenging.

What changes occurred to pre-service teachers' beliefs over the course of a semester? In general, students' responses became less generalized and more specific and articulate. Additionally, it is clear that they had a more realistic view about teaching as reflected in comments such as "teaching is not all fun and games." Post-survey and worksheet responses reveal an awareness of the complexity and demands of teachers and administrators, the diversity of school climate and students, and the difficulties and challenges that can arise from student/teacher/administrator interactions. It is clear to see that they had awareness about the emotional and moral struggles of teachers from watching the films. As such, there was awareness that teaching can be personally and professionally demanding and that it requires self-awareness, resilience, courage, sacrifice, and ongoing motivating self-talk and reflection.

Students acknowledged that certain dispositions might be critical to being an effective and enduring teacher. The number of students' comments relative to 'dispositions' suggests that they view teaching as a construct of relationships and that these relationships (to self and others) are shaped by many influences.

What can pre-service teachers learn about education as a result of watching the Hollywood films about teaching? From the data analyses, we can conclude that students learned the following from film pedagogy: 1) that curriculum should be relevant to students' lives and 2) that teachers need to be idealistic yet realistic, to be able to adapt, and to be responsive to students and settings. In addition, as they watched the films, they became aware of how much time teachers devote to thinking about and meeting with their students outside of class. Finding balance between one's personal and professional life became the subject of many classroom discussions. Undoubtedly, the films helped the students to understand the importance of having a passionate commitment to students in ways that will not lead to a sense of hopelessness and despair.

Discussing the balancing of work and life was important as many of the students' comments reflected an idealist stance toward being a teacher. This stance is consistent with the portrayal of teachers as 'saviors' or 'heroes' (Burnaford & Hobson, 2001; Lowe, 2001) and the images of teachers in many Hollywood films such as *Freedom Writers*, *Blackboard Jungle*, *Music of the Heart*, and *October Sky*. Based on the findings from this study, it is apparent that film pedagogy can allow for reflection on the archetypal roles assigned to teachers in films and in the culture as well as opposing and stereotypical views of teachers (good teacher/bad teacher). Furthermore, film pedagogy may also permit the development of strategic thinking with preservice teachers relative to pedagogy and other professional responsibilities.

Films such as *Music of the Heart* and other films with female lead teacher characters can also elicit important discussions about gender and teaching. One of the limitations of the study was that discussions, worksheets, and survey questions did not specifically address issues of age, race, class, and gender relative to teachers. Additional guiding questions for future studies using film pedagogy may include: 1) How can films assist beginning teachers to better understand school culture and politics? 2) How do the images of teachers in films impact personal and cultural perceptions of teachers and

teaching? and 3) How are teachers perceived similarly or differently in films due to gender, race, and class? Hollywood films, as presented in this study, may be a starting point for further discussion with preservice teachers as they learn about their “political, ethical, [pedagogical,] and managerial roles” (Hobson & Burnaford, 2001, p. 231).

Conclusion

In taking a holistic look at the findings, it can be concluded that film pedagogy in this study allowed pre-service teachers to gain more awareness of their beliefs about teaching and to critically examine their views about education. Overall, students' responses regarding film pedagogy were favorable; they appreciated seeing examples of teaching philosophies in action and learning about teaching through engaging stories. Hopefully, they will remember some of these powerful stories as they proceed toward becoming teachers.

As a result of film pedagogy in the course of one semester in an undergraduate teacher education course, we believe that the integration and discussion of selected films about teachers afforded preservice teachers unique opportunities to critically examine the four areas of responsibilities (instruction, assessment, classroom environment, and professional responsibilities). The number of films presented should depend on the type of course, the level of the course, the duration of course, the course content, and the allotted class time. Including fewer films may offer opportunities for more in-depth discussion and comparison of films; however, including more films, as it occurred in this study, may lead to a greater understanding of the genre of teacher films.

The online surveys were a convenient, safe/secure, and accessible way to document learning. Worksheets could also be posted online, within online course management systems, to allow for digital data collection and secure storage. Other forms of assessment regarding student learning about films could take the form of a course blog or course journals.

Film pedagogy in teacher education reinforces some national trends within teacher education that support early intervention and examination of pre-service teachers' beliefs in ways that can help them problematize the practices of K-12 schooling (NCATE, n.d.; Ryan & Annah, 2009). As Grauer (1988) concluded, pre-service teachers' beliefs are a strong indicator about their willingness to learn and be

open. It is, therefore, important that introductory education coursework and experiences present pre-service teachers with opportunities to both examine and re-shape their beliefs and think more critically about the multitude of roles, responsibilities, and challenges facing teachers, students, administrators, and schools.

Discussion-based strategies that are aligned with film pedagogy are recommended to enable the critical analyses of films. New films, such as *Social Networking* and even *Bad Teacher*, may provoke important discussions about the role of teachers with respect to technology and relationships with students, as well as how negatively teachers are often portrayed in the media today.

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Measuring Classroom Engagement by Comparing Instructor Expectations with Students'

Perceptions

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Abstract

Even instructors who can demonstrate student success in their courses can be challenged to document which practices are most effective in engaging student learning. National surveys designed to assess student engagement do not provide individual faculty with information that can help them assess their individual teaching efforts. This paper highlights a survey designed to help individual faculty members learn about their students and provides a comparison of instructors' expectations with students' perceptions. This paper illustrates the value of such a survey through an extended example of the insights that an instructor gained by using it in her course.

Introduction

Classroom engagement can be defined as students' willingness, need, desire, and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, their learning processes (Bomia et al., 1997). In designing a course, an instructor seeks to develop approaches and activities that produce an encouraging and supportive structure for engaging student learning. Smith et al. (2005) remarked that "...engaging students in learning is principally the responsibility of the teacher, who becomes less an imparter of knowledge and more a designer and facilitator of learning experiences and opportunities" (p. 88). But how can an instructor measure the effectiveness of course design and facilitation? Instructors often ask: Are students engaged by the course? Which practices are working to facilitate such engagement? Which practices need improvement or revision? As faculty leaders of a faculty development program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (a Carnegie classified Research University – very high research activity), we know that these are challenging questions that most instructors cannot easily answer. One common approach is to have faculty document student accomplishment in a course (Bernstein et al., 2006). While our work with faculty follows this model, we realize that such a review can possibly be misleading since students' success in a course might be in spite of an instructor's effort rather than a direct result of it.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) are tools that have been developed to explore engagement for college-level student learners. Both have been used by institutions nationwide to assess the extent to which students are "engaged in empirically-derived good educational practices and [to understand] what they gain from their college experience" (Kuh, 2001, p. 11). These survey results offer aggregate snapshots of common practices that are used to measure engagement and learning for students. These types of surveys allow senior administrators to reflect upon student learning and engagement from an institutional perspective and to explore large-scale programmatic revisions. Due to their standardization, results can be compared year-to-year within an institution or with other institutions to measure changes.

Although valuable at the institutional level, given their focus on aggregate results, these surveys do not offer individual instructors much insight into what is successful in their classroom. For example, NSSE questions include items such as how often a student works with other students on projects, how often students write papers or reports of a certain length, and the frequency with which they interact with

the instructor about their grades or assignments. Most instructors already know the answers to these types of questions because they structured these classroom activities and experiences. Rather, instructors want to explore how their goals, intentions, and plans for a course match their students' perceptions of what actually occurs.

While many (e.g., Sevanun and Bigatti, 2009; Schwinle et al., 2009, Draper and Brown 2004, Tinto 1997) have explored the impact of student engagement for specific teaching practices and changes in their course, there has been little research for measuring overall classroom engagement. Handelsman et al. (2005) commented, "Student engagement is considered an important predictor of student achievement, but few researchers have attempted to derive a valid and reliable measure of college student engagement in particular courses" (p. 184). To respond to this need, we developed a survey titled C^{LEAP} (Classroom Learning, Engagement, Attitudes, and Perceptions). This survey provides a tool for instructors to explore perceptions of student learning and engagement in individual classrooms. In the paper, we first discuss the development of C^{LEAP} and the methodology used for administering the survey. We next highlight the survey questions and showcase the insights that one instructor gained when she administered it in her course. We conclude by reflecting on the potential value of using a survey like C^{LEAP} for sponsoring faculty reflection and development.

Development of the Survey

One current survey for measuring classroom student engagement is CLASSE (Classroom Survey of Student Engagement) (Ouimet and Smallwood, 2005; Smallwood and Ouimet, 2009). CLASSE is an adaptation of the NSSE survey for use in an individual classroom setting. The CLASSE survey is comprised of two parts. Students complete one version and the instructor completes an accompanying version. Being able to contrast student responses to the instructors allows for a unique comparison of perceptions (Smallwood, n.d.). We performed a pilot version of CLASSE in two of our courses during the Fall 2007 academic term. While the results were interesting, we concluded that we did not learn anything new about our students or ourselves as instructors. We attribute this to the fact that the majority of the CLASSE's questions (28 of the 38) are drawn from the NSSE survey instrument and explore issues to which instructors already should know the answers. Similarly, a number of the CLASSE questions explore

the frequency of events in the course (e.g., number of times a student interacts with the instructor). While these details are useful from an aggregate point of view, measuring what students are doing doesn't necessarily provide useful data for an instructor to assess whether these efforts are effective in helping them learn.

Building upon ideas from the CLASSE and the work of Handelsman et al. (2005), we developed questions based on our review of the prior work and our assessment of the engagement issues we wanted to explore. The resulting survey matched our faculty members' instructional needs and also helped assess our university's new general education program. Our goal was not to create an instrument that would be used for summative evaluations—such as a student teacher evaluation form—but rather an instrument that an instructor could use for formative assessment of his or her students' learning. Key categories explored by the survey included:

- how student engagement is impacted by their own behaviors and actions
- how student engagement is impacted by course materials and classroom activities
- how students interacted with the instructor and fellow students
- how student engagement is connected to their desire to do well in a course
- whether students' perceptions match the expectations for our university's general education requirements

Similar to the CLASSE, C^{LEAP} consists of two surveys— one for students and an accompanying version for the instructor. The student survey explores students' perspectives about their course, their engagement and learning, and the factors that influence them. The instructor survey seeks instructors' perspectives about similar aspects of the course and how they envision their course engages students. Comparing the responses in the two surveys allows an instructor the opportunity to identify and reflect upon areas where there are disconnects between student and instructor perceptions about course goals, approaches, and expectations.

We developed and piloted a draft version of C^{LEAP} in the spring 2008 term. It consisted of 63 questions. In comparison, the CLASSE survey has 38 questions. The survey was administered in 22 separate courses that ranged from a freshman-level art course to a doctoral-level course in children's education. The survey was distributed both via paper and electronically. A total of 1,856 students

completed the survey. Twenty-two instructors completed the instructor survey on their respective courses. Based on an analysis of the results and feedback from instructors and students, we concluded that we needed to reduce the number of questions, classify questions to specific learning and engagement categories, reword questions, create a uniform response scale, and distribute any future surveys only in an electronic format.

Based on this feedback, for the Fall 2008 academic term, we implemented a revised version of C^{LEAP} that consisted of 46 questions. These questions explored multiple dimensions of student engagement and learning in the following general categories: factors impacting student learning, engagement with course topics, personal motivations, classroom relationships, classroom performance, cognitive development, and general education outcomes. Building on the work of Ouimet and Smallwood (2005) and Handelsman et al. (2005), these categories were based on our assessment of criteria that an individual instructor wants to learn about. In refining the questions, a key criterion was to include only those questions that would provide useful formative feedback to an instructor about their course and their students. All of the questions but three (questions 17, 18, and 19), use the following Likert scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5).

The revised survey was piloted in 13 different courses and a total of 356 students completed it during the Fall 2008 term. The next section shares the survey questions and highlights the responses for COMM 201 (a second-year Communication Studies course that provides an introduction to research methods to majors and non-majors) consisting of 50 students. Each student was asked to complete a student consent form providing permission for their data to be used in the study. Thirty-two students completed the survey for a 64% response rate. Showcasing the results for an individual instructor's specific course will provide insight into how the survey offers a means for reflecting upon the types of learning that we as instructors want for our courses and students' perceptions of what occurred and was effective.

Dimensions of Engagement: *Student Learning Factors*







The first group of questions on C^{LEAP} seeks to evaluate the factors impacting student learning in a course. As such, they explore preparation for the course, the instructor, time spent on the course, classroom interactions, feedback from the instructor, and the physical classroom environment. Table 1

shows the specific items in this section. Each question is presented in the form that it appears on the student survey. The companion instructor survey asks the same question, but from the instructor's perspective. For example, question 3 asks the instructor to rate the item "Students in my course are positively impacted by their time on task."

Since C^{LEAP} is not meant to replace our existing teaching evaluation process, Question 2 is the only question on the survey that directly asks for a judgment of the instructor. The basis for Question 5 is the research of Strong et al. (1995) on the need for instructors to evaluate student work in clear and constructive ways as soon as possible after project completion.

The survey results for the COMM 201 course are also shown in Table 1. The student response column provides a histogram of the range of student responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The student responses range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating increased agreement with the statement. The instructor response column shows the instructor's response from completing the accompanying instructor survey.

Table 1. Survey questions and responses for factors impacting student learning.

#	Student Question	Student Response	Student Mean	Student Standard Deviation	Instructor Response
1	My learning in this course was positively impacted by the quality of my academic preparation in the prerequisite materials, topics, and/or courses that was received prior to this course.		3.66	0.97	3
2	My learning in this course was positively impacted by the quality of the instructor.		4.41	0.61	5
3	My learning in this course was positively impacted by my time on task (the amount of time I spent on this course).		4.22	0.79	5
4	My learning in this course was positively impacted by my interaction with fellow classmates.		3.53	1.11	4
5	My learning in this course was positively impacted by the quality of feedback I received on coursework (e.g., papers, assignments, exams).		3.69	1.18	4
6	My learning in this course was positively impacted by the physical layout or design of the classroom or learning space.		3.13	1.01	2

The results for this set of questions show an interesting mix when comparing student and instructor responses. In general, the instructor's response differed slightly from how her students responded. For Question 1, the instructor indicated "neither" (3) since this course is a sophomore level course that has no prerequisite requirements. In comparison, a majority of the students indicated "agree" (4). Perhaps a rationale for this difference is that while the course does not build on the specific topics of a

prior course, student success in COMM 201 requires them to have strong writing and critical thinking skills that are developed in the prior curriculum.

For question 2, the instructor indicated that her instruction had a large impact on student learning. The students agreed. In reviewing the results for Question 3 about the link between time on task and student learning, the instructor comments:

Although a majority of the student either agree or strongly agree with this statement, I am surprised that more students did not rate this as strongly agree (5) as I did. The time they spend on reading, coming to class, completing assignments, and studying for exams—in my mind—has a direct correlation with their learning.—We even spend time in class completing a statistical exercise that demonstrates the link between time on task and their learning. Perhaps students consider my course very time-intensive but don't necessarily feel that all of their time was well spent.

Question 6 was influenced by the work of Chism and Bickford (2002) and Kuh (2005) who have explored how physical environments impact student engagement. In reviewing the survey responses, the instructor indicates that her students will offer a low assessment of the physical classroom environment. The students were not as negative, but they don't rate it much higher. According to the instructor:

I taught my course in a basement lecture hall designed for over 200 students. The room overwhelmed us in size and the chairs are bolted to the floor and are not conducive to the extensive amount of group-work and in-class application I use in the course.

The instructor now has valuable data to justify moving future offerings of the course to a more size appropriate room.

One could potentially explore if there is a statistically significant difference between the instructor and student responses. But since the goal of the survey is for the formative development of the faculty member, such an analysis is not needed and we felt that comparing the general responses is enough. It also seems unlikely that many instructors would complete such a detailed statistical analysis.






One issue that we did not ask about on the survey, but is possibly relevant, is the use of technology. With the increased use of technology in traditional classrooms and in online learning, an additional question could explore classroom technology or the use of a virtual learning environment.

Dimensions of Engagement: *Engagement with Course Topics*

The next category of questions explores how students' engagement was impacted by their own interests and motivations to learn the course topics.

In comparing question 7 to question 11 in Table 2, one would typically assume that student interest will increase as a result of a course. This finding was the case for COMM 201. In comparison, there are certain disciplines, astronomy is one example (Savory et al., 2007), where student interest in a topic often decreases as a result of taking a course.

Table 2. Survey questions and responses on engagement with course topics.

#	Question	Student Graph	Student Mean	Student Standard Deviation	Instructor Response
7	Before taking this course, my interest in this course subject was very high.		2.59	1.04	1
8	Between class sessions I often think about the course topics, class activities, and/or discussions		3.13	1.18	3
9	I have performed additional non-graded study (e.g. extra reading, additional homework problems) on course topics for my own learning and interest.		2.63	1.04	2
10	I have discussed ideas from the course with people outside of my class.		3.22	1.13	4
11	After taking this course, my interest in this course subject is very high.		2.75	0.98	4

For COMM 201, the instructor indicated that students typically have very low interest in taking the course (question 7), which she attributes to students' concerns about the difficulty of the topics.

Interestingly, the student responses were not as negative. The instructor comments:

Seeing the distribution of responses suggests to me that I need to reconsider their potential fear and disdain of the subject matter prior to taking the course. From experience and anecdotal evidence, I know that some students fear this course. I address this fear on the first day of class by asking students to talk about the "lore" of a research methods course. The survey results indicate that there is a sizable percentage of the class who has no prior expectations and/or negative connotations about the course. A question for me to ponder is whether my talking about it negatively on the first day to help alleviate fears might actually have adverse ramifications for those students who have none.

This instructor's reflection shows that we as instructors can often view courses in particular ways based on lore or institutional history and can easily attribute motives to students that they may or may not really have.

Questions 8-10 seek to learn if students talk and think about the course outside of class sessions. The foundation of many humanities courses is to have students think about the world and how it impacts them—this occurs through reflection, exploration, and thinking. If this is a goal of a course, is it occurring? For COMM 201, the instructor was enthusiastic to see a close match between her expectations and students' perceptions since she specifically required students to come to class with examples of how the research method topics they were discussing were evident in their everyday lives.









For question 11, the instructor indicated that students' interest at the end of the course would be relatively high. The students did not necessarily agree. There is some improvement, but certainly not to the level that the instructor thought would occur. This question highlights that student interest is potentially dependent upon a range of factors that an instructor does not necessarily control.

Dimensions of Engagement: *Personal Motivations*

Questions 12-19 examine how students' engagement and learning are impacted by their behaviors and actions via motivation, attendance, and effort. In comparing the responses in Table 3 for questions 12-16, the instructor appears to be in tune with her students. However, she consistently rates the students lower on motivation, attendance, and attempts to complete coursework than the students rate themselves. The instructor remarks:

I rated students neutrally on these items based on an aggregate sense of moderate motivation (some students were highly motivated, some were not motivated at all, but the majority appeared to be moderately willing to be there and work). Also, although students completed most assignments, only a moderate number of them appeared to be completing (or attempting) reading assignments. There may be a bias at work on the parts of the students to rate their own behavior as more positive or on my part to rate them as more negative.

Table 3. Survey questions and responses for personal motivations.

#	Question	Student Graph	Student Mean	Student Standard Deviation	Instructor Response
12	I consider myself a motivated student in this course.		3.59	1.04	3
13	I attended all of the class sessions.		3.84	1.11	3
14	I attempted all assigned course work (assignments, reading, projects).		4.19	0.93	3
15	For class sessions I attended, I typically focused or paid attention.		4.06	0.88	4
16	I completed the required readings or preparatory assignments prior to class.		3.19	1.00	3
17	I weekly spent around the following number of out-of-class hours working on this course (e.g. assignments, studying, reviewing notes, reading materials, library research, and writing papers).		3.16	0.88	3
18	The intellectual effort (e.g. thinking, learning) required for this course, compared to similar courses is		4.25	0.62	4
19	Compared to similar courses, the time that I have put into this course was		3.97	0.65	4







So as to better gauge responses, the scale for questions 17, 18, and 19 differed from the other questions on the survey. For question 17, the scale consisted of 5-points, where the low end was labeled “less than 1” and the high end was labeled “more than 10.” As Table 3 shows, the students’ responses were right in the middle (about 5 hours per week) which closely matches the instructor’s judgment. For

questions 18 and 19, the scale consisted of 5-points with the low end labeled “significantly less” and the high end labeled “significantly more.” Both the students and the instructor for COMM 201 indicated a high level of intellectual effort and time is required for the course.

Dimensions of Engagement: Classroom Relationships

The next set of questions seeks to gauge the interactions and classroom relationships that are developed with the instructor and with classmates. Several studies (Heller et al., 2003; Akey, 2006) have found that students who noted that their instructors were supportive and cared about their success were more likely to be engaged in the classroom and perform well academically. Table 4 lists the questions and the results for COMM 201.

Table 4. Survey questions and responses for classroom relationships.

#	Question	Student Graph	Student Mean	Student Standard Deviation	Instructor Response
20	My instructor knows who I am (e.g., knows my name, recognizes me).		4.47	0.84	5
21	I have interacted with my instructor outside of class (e.g., office hours, phone, e-mail) in regards to this course.		4.32	1.01	5
22	I asked questions during class or contribute to class discussions.		3.91	1.03	5
23	It was helpful to interact with other students during/in class.		3.94	0.73	5
24	It was helpful to interact with other students outside of class (including e-mail, phone, and instant messaging).		3.87	0.99	5
25	I enjoyed this class.		3.10	0.94	4

The COMM 201 instructor learned all of her student's names by the second week of the term and called on students by name during class discussions. Given the student's positive response to question 20, they concur that the instructor knows them.

Students' interactions with each other both in and out of class were rated very high by the instructor. The students appeared to value the interactions, but not to the level that the instructor thought. This difference in perception can possibly be attributed to the nature of the group work in the course. The major assignment in the class culminated in a group paper and students were given time in class to work with their group members. The instructor posits that such interactions represented a good use of class time. In reviewing the students' responses, she suggests that students who did not like their group members or did not feel comfortable with the nature of a group assignment may have rated lower the degree to which such interactions were useful.

Question 25 explores whether students enjoyed the class. One can debate if "enjoyment" is an important factor to consider. Given the focus of the C^{LEAP} survey is to provide formative feedback to the instructor, this question offers insight into students' experiences in a course. In reviewing the range of student responses in the histogram, most students were neutral and the next highest category was disagreement. The instructor had the following reaction:

This is disappointing given the effort I made to make the course relevant, energetic, and enjoyable. At the same time, this is a course that is difficult to make interesting to students since so few of them actually do research on a regular basis and/or will use research in their future jobs.









The instructor's reaction has led us to question the usefulness of the term "enjoyment" with respect to assessing classroom engagement. While for some, the term "enjoy" might refer to the instructor's ability to entertain or promote humor in the class, for others it might imply that students see the relevance of the coursework to their future careers. Given the problematic nature of interpreting its meaning, in a future version of C^{LEAP} we plan to reword this question to explore if the class is "valued."

Dimensions of Engagement: *Cognitive Development*

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom, 1956) is a system for classifying learning objectives according to the skill level required to meet them. Similar to the CLASSE and NSSE surveys, questions 26–33 classify students' learning efforts according to Bloom's Taxonomy. Bloom's categories and associated questions are: Knowledge (questions 26, 27, 28), Comprehension (question 29), Analysis (questions 30, 31), Synthesis (question 32), and Evaluation (question 33). Due to a clerical error when creating the revised C^{LEAP} survey for fall 2008, a question for exploring the Application category of

Bloom's Taxonomy was mistakenly left off. The specific question would have been: "This course has helped me understand the applicability of the course topics to new problems and situations, other courses, my field of study, and/or my future employment plans." Table 5 lists the specific questions and the survey results.

Table 5. Survey questions and responses for cognitive development.

#	Question	Student Graph	Student Mean	Student Standard Deviation	Instructor Response
26	This course has contributed to my learning terms and facts about the course subject.		4.06	0.68	5
27	This course has contributed to my learning concepts and theories related to the subject.		4.16	0.64	5
28	This course has contributed to my developing skills in using materials, tools, and/or technology central to this subject.		4.23	0.50	5
29	This course has contributed to my ability to analyze an idea in depth, and being able to understand its components.		4.16	0.69	5
30	This course has contributed to my being able to distinguish between fact and opinion.		4.06	0.68	5
31	This course has contributed to my learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and multiple points of view.		4.26	0.51	5
32	This course has contributed to my being able to see how the concepts from the class are organized to fit together.		3.81	0.91	5
33	This course has contributed to my being able to explain why an example in this course topic differs or can be compared to another.		3.77	0.80	4



Upon reviewing these results, the instructor jokingly remarked, “They might not have ‘enjoyed’ it, but at least they agree that they have learned a lot.” In regard to question 30, while the instructor was encouraged with the response, she commented that she wished more of the students had selected strongly agree (5) versus agree (4) since a large number of class discussions were focused on understanding how research is done so that students could make distinctions between researched versus un-researched claims in their daily lives. Similarly, for question 32, most of the students agreed with the instructor, but a small number indicated low agreement on understanding how the course topics are interlinked together. This discrepancy was disappointing since the instructor had such high expectations. The instructor comments:

This may point to tensions between semester time constraints for the course and departmental expectations for course content. Because this course is required for majors and a pre-requisite for upper-division courses, faculty from a diverse set of methodological approaches have a vested interest in various methods being taught in COMM 201. The possibility that students struggle to see a fit between course concepts may be an artifact of trying to include too much in one semester, something that needs to be addressed as we continue to refine this course.

Dimensions of Engagement: *Classroom Performance*

The next two questions explore how students’ engagement was impacted by their desire to do well in the course. Question 34 was based on the premise that instructors who have high expectations will encourage students to do their best work. As Akey (2006) notes, creating “collaborative, supportive environments with high but achievable standards” (p. 32) greatly effects students’ engagement in school and learning. In comparing the student and instructor responses in Table 6, there is agreement that this was the case for COMM 201.

Table 6. Survey questions and responses for classroom performance.












#	Question	Student Graph	Student Mean	Student Standard Deviation	Instructor Response
34	My instructor's grading standards or expectations improved my learning.		3.52	1.00	4
35	My expected grade will be an accurate representation of my effort and learning.		3.26	1.00	4

Question 35 asks students to judge how their final grade compared to their effort and learning. While a majority of the students agreed with the instructor that it was a good match, there were a number of students who indicated less agreement. This result was a surprise to the instructor, and she commented that this disconnect is an area she wants to explore more fully in the future. On reflection, including both “effort and learning” in one question may be problematic as the answer could be different for one than the other. Students could, for instance, agree that their course grade will indeed reflect their learning (or lack thereof) but not their “tremendous” effort.

Dimensions of Engagement: General Education Outcome

In the Fall 2008 term, our university implemented a new general education program. It is based on the foundation that students complete course work to fulfill ten learning outcomes identified for all university undergraduates. The remaining questions on C^{LEAP} explore students' perceptions that a course meets the outcomes. We added this category to the survey based on questions and concerns of faculty we were working with as to whether their courses met the new requirements and more importantly, how they were going to document their students' learning. The questions and results are included in Table 7.

Table 7. Survey questions and responses for general education outcomes.

#	Question	Student Graph	Student Mean	Student Standard Deviation	Instructor Response
36	This course has contributed to my developing an openness to new ideas.		3.65	0.71	4
37	This course has contributed to my acquiring knowledge and skills related to my career path.		3.23	1.26	4
38	This course has contributed to improving my rational thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making ability.		3.71	0.82	5
39	This course has contributed to my enhancing my ability to think creatively.		3.48	0.85	4
40	This course has contributed to my improving my academic skills, strategies, and habits.		4.10	0.80	5
41	This course has contributed to my improving my communication skills (e.g. written, oral, visual).		3.81	0.75	4
42	This course has contributed to my developing my ability to effectively collaborate with others.		3.84	0.78	4
43	This course has contributed to my enhancing my self-esteem/self-confidence.		2.84	0.90	4
44	This course has contributed to my increasing my awareness of diversity issues involving race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or other social differences, including diverse peoples and cultures.		3.19	0.91	4
45	This course has contributed to my developing an informed understanding of contemporary social issues.		3.32	0.91	3
46	This course has contributed to my enhancing my knowledge of, and capacity to make, informed ethical choices.		3.94	0.85	4

The student responses to question 37 are spread fairly evenly across the range of options. In future offerings of the course, the instructor could possibly collect data on her students' career goals to better learn how the COMM 201 course directly impacts their future plans. The instructor was appreciative of the response to question 40 and the student's agreement that her course develops key skills (e.g., how to research a topic, how to write a literature review) that students will apply in their upper-division courses. In regards to question 42 about collaboration skills, the instructor explains, "I believe they are commenting on their group projects. This is interesting data for me to have and useful to see that we are closely aligned in our assessment of its role in the course." Given the large emphasis she places on research ethics, the instructor was enthused to see that students agreed (question 46) with the course's impact on improving their ability to make ethical decisions.

While it was not evident for COMM 201, there were instances for several other courses in the pilot study where the instructors' responded to questions 44, 45, and 46 with strongly disagree (1) or disagree (2) and the students had the opposite response and indicated agree (4) or strongly agree (5). As such, the instructors indicated that ethics, social issues, or diversity were not topics of the course and that students would learn little to none about them. Surprisingly, the students indicated that they learned much about these same issues. In exploring the discrepancy, we determined that through their classroom examples, explanations, and activities, the instructors, implicit to themselves, were developing these concepts for their students. This difference in perception shows the type of disconnect that can develop between what instructors plan and want for their course and how students actually experience it.

Conclusions

Instructors can enhance student engagement and learning by challenging students, making students feel comfortable to ask questions and seek assistance, providing feedback, support, and encouragement, and setting expectations for students to do their best. Certain factors are outside the control of an instructor, such as student interest, motivation, and the amount of available time a student has to devote to learning. A key to increasing student classroom engagement for the factors that are controllable is finding efficient ways to measure it. When something is measured and summarized, it provides an instructor the opportunity for reflection and growth.

The C^{LEAP} survey is one means for an instructor to learn more about students' engagement and learning. A key feature is that it allows for a comparison of the instructor's expectations with students' perceptions. Being able to compare the two highlights potential disconnects between the types of learning that an instructor wants to sponsor in their course and how students actually experience such learning. An instructor can use these differences as an opportunity to reflect on possible changes in a subsequent offering of the course or as a future inquiry project to better understand the discrepancy (Savory et al., 2007).

The formative feedback provided allows an instructor to reflect on their course, their students' learning, and future changes. The COMM 201 instructor remarks:

The results have been fascinating to me. I have learned much about my students' learning and their perceptions about the course. Both the discrepancies and the similarities will be useful to my future teaching of the course. For example, I learned that student perception of the course prior to taking it was not as negative as I had anticipated. In the future, I will temper my comments about potential negative lore on the first day to ensure that I don't "plant a seed" of negativity, fear, or doubt about the class in their minds. I also learned that although students do not seem to "enjoy" the course as much as I would hope, they seem to be relatively confident that my instructional style contributed to their learning. Students also seemed to improve their academic skills, strategies, and habits. While I did not fully convert all of them to be lovers of research methods, they did report leaving the class with some of the vital skills I set out in my objectives for the course. In the future, I will use these results to plan course activities, and I will continue to engage in discussions with my department about the ways in which we can further improve the course design across instructors and sections.

As for the future of C^{LEAP}, we continue to use it in our individual courses. It is still in development and much work is needed to test for its reliability as a valid survey instrument. As we have guided its development, the focus has been to provide formative feedback to instructors. Potentially there are opportunities where the results can be adopted to provide assessment of student engagement for comparing multiple course sections and/or tracking changes over time.

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Student Incivility: An Engagement or Compliance Model?

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Abstract

This critical essay describes two community college faculty members' experience of student incivility in a learning community. Situated within the context of the tremendous recent growth in community college enrollment, the authors explore the negative consequences of heavy-handed, compliance based approaches to inappropriate student behaviors in the classroom. The authors "theorize up" from their classrooms on ways to address student incivility that motivate student agency and foster engagement in learning over simple compliance to rules. They propose several innovative interventions aimed at diminishing negative student behaviors and promoting student self-regulation in defining and enforcing civility on campus.

Student Incivility: An Engagement or Compliance Model?

“...arguments based on ‘authority’ are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be *on the side of freedom*, not *against it*.” - Paulo Freire (2007)

Community colleges throughout the United States have been flooded with students since the economic downturn began in 2008 (Boggs, 2010).ⁱ Our home campus, one of six community colleges in the City University of New York, is no exception. This fall, enrollment peaked at almost 18,500 – up from 14,500 just three years earlier – with students showing up to enroll and register for classes until just days before the semester began (Office of Institutional Research Assessment and Planning, KCC, 2010). This surge in community college enrollment brings, to higher education, many students, who, barring the economic crisis and the high unemployment rate for young adults (Community Service Society, Rutkoff, 2010), would not necessarily have chosen college.ⁱⁱ The enrollment of so many youth for whom college is a last resort coincides with a widespread perception on the part of higher education faculty that student incivility on our campuses is on the rise (Bjorkland & Rehling, 2010; Cabony, Hirschy, & Best, 2004; Rookstool, 2007; Summers, Bergin, & Cole, 2009). This reflective essay explores one experience of student incivility in a community college and what we perceive as the negative consequences of heavy-handed, compliance based approaches to inappropriate student behaviors. We “theorize up” from our classroom experience in order to stimulate dialogue among our colleagues on ways to address incivility that motivate student agency and engagement in learning over simple compliance to rules.

Incivility on Campus

Classroom incivility is generally defined as student behaviors that interfere with a productive learning environment in the college classroom (Bray & Del Favoro, 2004; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldman, 2001). It is often framed around complaints by instructors concerning students walking in late or leaving a lecture early, using cell phones during class, disrupting lectures through chatting with other classmates, and engaging in activities that are not directly related to the topic-at-hand (Patron & Bisping, 2008). Feldman (2001) broadly defines incivility as any action that interferes with a cooperative and

harmonious learning environment and cites a number of instances in which students' learning has been impaired by various forms of classroom misconduct. Across college campuses, a large proportion of students report fair amounts of incivility within their classrooms and the need for faculty and administrators to enact strategies aimed at maintaining a civil classroom environment (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Further, Connelly (2009) argues that civility involves more than just abiding by the rules, but includes "a mixture of both moral principles or precepts, like respect for others, and manners" (p. 50). Ultimately, classroom civility is about more than just behaving well and not getting into trouble. It is about creating and maintaining a college culture that allows all students to learn, grow, and get the most out of their educational experience.

On our campus, like many others, the recent influx of new students has coincided with a widespread perception that student incivility has increased. Despite deep faculty reluctance to report incidents not directly involving physical threats or violence, close to 90 incidents per semester have been reported to the Dean's Office of our college the last few years (Office of the Dean of Students, personal communication, 2010). The perceived increase in disciplinary issues at the college prompted, for the first time ever, a college-wide campaign for civility. This campaign has involved the posting of a code of civility in every classroom, an effort to get faculty to include a civility statement on their syllabi, the development of an Assessment and Care Team (ACT) dedicated to monitoring and responding to "students that may pose a threat to themselves and/or the college community," and a forum on civility in which more than a dozen panelists from a variety of college programs and offices spoke about the ways in which a civil campus environment was critical to a safe and productive academic experience (KCC, ACT website, 2010). Though touted as a "student-driven" campaign, the initial impulse came from the college administration and remains largely faculty and staff driven. The campaign combines promoting respect for human diversity and a strong stance against bias/discrimination on campus with concern over student conduct in class. A draft survey on college civility circulating on campus includes many questions about the appropriateness of student behaviors such as chewing gum, arriving late, and texting in class, as well as a few concerning hostile verbal attacks and harassing comments or behavior. Thus, civility on our campus seems ill-defined, with little consensus as to what constitutes incivility and where to draw the line between criminal offenses such as sexual harassment and more mundane infractions such as sleeping in

class. Similarly, the consequences for violating the civility code are not yet fully defined or consistently enforced, since many faculty – the frontline in experiencing and reporting incivility – are unaware that such a code or campaign exists.

The forum on civility was followed by another event organized by a student association comprised primarily of young men of color called “Brothers United.” This group challenged the concept of “civility” as an attack on freedom of speech and argued that the college community ought to focus on building tolerance through education and help students develop a sense of ethical behavior in relation to issues such as homophobia, religious intolerance, sexual harassment, and the self-segregation of different cultural and ethnic groups on campus. Their concerns dealt primarily with creating an environment, within and beyond the classroom, in which all students feel safe to express who they are and what they believe without fear of silencing or recrimination. This group advocates for allowing students to voice all opinions – even those deemed offensive – so that, through open and honest dialogue, students gain an understanding of the personal and social origins of prejudicial views and come to greater acceptance of diversity on campus. Simply put, the Brothers argue “not to limit by force, but out of love.” Consideration of incivilities such as students talking or texting in class was *not* part of their agenda. Overall, Brothers United defines civility as “ethics not behavior” and underscores the importance of raising awareness so that students recognize that “words have weight” and self-regulate (Brothers United, personal communication, 1/5/11).

The college’s campaign for civility and the Brothers United event underscore the complexity and potential contentiousness of defining and enforcing campus civility, particularly given this enormous influx of new students. These initiatives illustrate the diversity of opinions on how to best foster an environment that honors student freedoms while concurrently setting parameters for classroom behavior that is conducive to students’ intellectual growth. In this reflective essay, we depict our own first-hand struggles to find a balance between freedom and limits in our classrooms and call for a dialogue on how community colleges might develop protocols that effectively address student incivility while avoiding the sorts of authoritarian dynamics that compel compliance to rules at the cost of authentic student engagement. We convey our struggles to set and enforce limits without denying our students the opportunities to take active leadership roles in class, debate controversial ideas, voice unpopular opinions, and begin to “own”

their college educations. We also express our concerns about institutional responses that fail to consider the psycho-social origins of student behaviors and/or take disciplinary actions that inadvertently alienate students from the larger college community and disengage them from learning.

Incivility in the Context of our Learning Community

Like many colleges that are struggling to retain students and improve graduation rates, our campus has embraced learning communities as a strategy for promoting student success. Our college is a nationally recognized leader in learning communities which are intended to increase student persistence, in large part through increasing student engagement in learning (Scrivener *et al*, 2008). Research indicates that, when learning community courses are student-centered, provide integrative assignments aimed at satisfying the objectives of both courses, foster active learning, and provide opportunities for both social and intellectual interactions among students, learning community students tend to have higher rates of retention and greater satisfaction with the college experience (Tinto, 1997; 1998; Scrivener *et al*, 2008). Our classes, Developmental English and Introduction to Psychology, linked as part of a first semester learning community and consistent with learning community philosophy, are generally characterized by a high degree of student participation, pedagogies that encourage active learning, and significant curricular integration. We share a cohort of 22 students who not only take our two classes, but are also enrolled in a one credit student success course taught by their academic adviser and intended to ease the transition to college. As part of the learning community, students work on three long-term integrative assignments intended to encourage connections across our courses and promote higher order thinking skills as they gain disciplinary knowledge in psychology and develop their academic reading and writing abilities.

Despite their many positive outcomes, one well documented downside to learning communities is that the cohort model can lead to what is commonly referred to as “hyper-bonding,” or the development of overly close relationships among students that result in unproductive behaviors in class (Jaffe, 2004; 2007). These unconstructive student behaviors generally resemble those more commonly associated with high school: the formation of cliques among students, classroom behavior dominated by incivility, and a general sense that the familiarity of the learning community “breeds contempt.” Despite our deep

commitment to learning communities as a highly effective strategy for increasing student engagement, persistence, satisfaction with the college experience, and a sense of “belonging” among students who are usually the first in their families to attend college (Bloom & Sommo, 2005; Engstrom, 2008), we have seen our fair share of “hyper-bonding” in our learning communities as well. At different points in the semester, when too much togetherness has frayed our collective tempers, we’ve been witness to the formation of cliques, students who have momentarily, and quite colorfully, “lost it” in class with their peers, and the constant background murmur of excessive student chattiness that has seriously distracted the class from learning. But these behaviors have never, in our own minds, outweighed the significant benefits of participation in a first year learning community. Rather, as educators, we have tried to respond in creative, pedagogical ways to decrease these negative behaviors and engage students in thinking deeply about what actions promote and enhance student learning. We now hold a joint class at the beginning of each semester dedicated to engaging students in collaboratively defining the parameters for what constitutes a positive and productive learning environment. We always leave that session pleased that students are readily able to name the actions – on their parts and ours – that will enable us to work collaboratively in the semester to come. And, though there is often some slippage – cell phones usually emerge again around the fourth week in the semester, side talk is always hard to combat – this investment in taking seriously students’ beliefs and values about what makes for a positive learning environment generally pays off.

Unfortunately, this semester seemed qualitatively different. A clique of four students, based on bonds of gender, age, and race (three African American young women and one Black Latina young woman), threatened to upset the equilibrium of our learning community in ways we had not previously experienced.ⁱⁱⁱ What began as excessive chattiness in class, and a reluctance to change seats at our request, soon escalated into outright disregard for us and the rules we’d attempted to co-create with students at the beginning of the semester. Jason’s request that students permanently change their seating, to diminish the distraction of non-stop chatter, was met with absolute refusal. Emily’s insistence that the ban on cell phones in class be respected led to the confiscation of one student’s cell phone and Emily being “cussed out” in class by a member of this clique. Our initial responses to this new level of student disruption were to meet with these students outside of class, to set clear limits, and to reaffirm our

sincere desire to engage them in learning. Though there were some bumps in the road, in Emily's class, this group of students began to reassert their leadership in an entirely new and productive dimension, redirecting their smarts as proactive and engaged members of the learning community. Confronting them about their negative behaviors and recommitting to work with them as learners seemed to lead to a breakthrough of sorts. When the predictable teacher crackdown never materialized, it seemed that these students realized Emily was serious about their learning. Now, these young women were raising their hands right and left, emerging as leaders of class discussion, and, most importantly, using their time in the computer lab to work diligently on their writing rather than chatting with their peers and checking Facebook!

In the psychology class, the young women became particularly engaged in the context of group activities, debates, and presentations, with one of the young women always the first to volunteer to document on the chalkboard what her small group had accomplished and the others eager to present orally what they had done with a cooperative learning task. However, they continued to struggle with participating in whole class discussion and paying attention to the interactive lecture format of the psychology class, often resuming the chatter and cell phone usage when other students would voice opinions or Jason would attempt to explain a difficult concept. However, our early interventions appeared to open up enough of an understanding between Jason and the four students that he could bring them back to the conversation with less disruption and attempt to discover with them the reasons for their resistance and unwillingness to listen to others' ideas. In fact, outside of class, they began opening up to him, sharing both their anxieties that they would not understand the material (thus, their attempts to preclude Jason from presenting it) and mental health concerns that they believed kept them from focusing in class.

Despite the relative improvements in both English and Psychology, in the student development class, the situation continued to devolve into outright rebellion with the level of distraction generated by this clique making it close to impossible for the instructor to teach. About a month into the semester, the situation exploded. After arriving 20 minutes late to this one hour class, the four young women proceeded to engage in rude and uncooperative behavior that included plotting to cross a classmate's name off of the attendance sign-in sheet, rearranging classroom furniture so that one of them could put her feet up on

the desk, and loudly whispering amongst themselves that the class was “bullshit.” When confronted about their behaviors after class, the students claimed that the instructor was unfairly singling them out and accused him of being racist. The meeting ended with the four young women storming out of the classroom and proceeding to walk down the corridors of the college loudly proclaiming that they were the victims of unfair treatment.

We attribute the focus of student resistance to the student success course to several factors. Despite the college’s efforts to bolster the legitimacy of this one-credit course, it is perceived by students as “soft” in its focus on self-exploration and growth (rather than academic literacy skills or disciplinary content), and it was taught by a particularly young and inexperienced staff member who is not part of the full-time faculty. In a sense, we believe that these students found what they perceived as the “weak link” in the learning community and acted out accordingly. After this particularly egregious class session, the instructor made a formal complaint to the Dean’s office. Though Emily had some reluctance about this course of action due to the marked improvement in student behavior in her class, she supported the student success instructor’s actions, because the disruption and disrespect seemed so extreme and unrelenting. In addition to our commitment to supporting our learning community colleague, we also saw the importance of making it clear that certain behaviors are simply *not* appropriate in the college classroom, and we clearly had not been able to communicate this effectively enough through our own interventions.

After the official complaint was lodged, several days passed, and we received no response from the Dean’s office. As the students’ positive (or at least, passable) in-class behavior continued, it seemed like the whole issue might fade away on its own, so we were surprised and concerned to receive an email one Friday from the supervisor of the student success course informing us that uniformed security guards would pull these students out of class on Monday morning and escort them to the Dean’s office for disciplinary action. Emily’s initial reaction was to express her concern via email. She wrote:

I find it terribly disturbing to have a security officer come pull them out of my class after I have worked extremely hard to set appropriate limits and move beyond their disruption to establish the foundation of trust upon which all learning is based. To have an officer enter my classroom and take them to the Dean of Students would undermine everything I have done to move these

students from disruption and disrespect to engagement with the learning process. And that engagement is beginning to happen -- I have seen evidence of them following the parameters we have laid out for them and real work on learning in the last couple of classes! ... These are young people, who perhaps have never been in a positive learning situation before. Clearly, they are testing the limits in deeply inappropriate and disrespectful ways. However, what I would like them to take from this experience is a belief in the positive potential of their participation in education -- not a confirmation of their alienation from teachers and the teaching and learning process.

(10/22/10)

Despite this, and several follow up phone calls on her part, it looked like the college's response was entrenched and unwavering. Ultimately, the students were "picked up" after their psychology class by uniformed guards and, in their meeting with the Dean, were compelled to sign a contract of "acceptable behavior" that covered five specific points: 1. No cell phones in class; 2. Continue to sit apart; 3. No talking/disruptiveness in class; 4. No foul language in class; and 5. Treat professors with respect. Should they not heed the parameters of the contract, the next course of action would be daily suspension.

Responding to Disciplinary Measures with Compliance

Our students' response to the college's disciplinary intervention was disturbing and disheartening to us and represented a dramatic disjuncture from the increased engagement that Emily, in particular, had been seeing in her classroom in the weeks prior. While the students mostly respected the letter, though definitely *not* the spirit of the contract (strategically positioning themselves one seat apart, for example, or putting their cell phones away when asked but not of their own accord), we worry that their actions represented compliance at the expense of real engagement. In compelling them to sign a contract with the Dean, we believe that students' choice to engage in learning was taken away from them. When this educational conflict over power and authority in the classroom – the heart and soul of pedagogical theory since John Dewey – was turned into a disciplinary issue, it only served to heighten students' original sense that perhaps they "did not belong" in college. This was particularly disturbing, given that learning communities are largely aimed at fostering a sense of college connection and commitment among students who are the first in their families to attend college and whose relationship to higher

education is often tenuous at best (Cohen, 2003; Engstrom, 2008). Along with eradicating the very inappropriate behaviors that these young women were enmeshed in, current disciplinary measures inadvertently squelched the very real evidence, and possibility, of student engagement Emily had begun to see in her classroom.

After this intervention, instead of raised hands, Emily often found one of the students with her head down on her desk refusing to engage in collaborative learning activities with other classmates. She began to see record numbers of what appeared to be coordinated latenesses (12, 17, 20 out of 36 classes in the semester!) in which all four young women walked in together, dramatically and distractingly late, and an improbable number of absences all on the same dates (enough to warrant unofficial withdrawal from the course). More disheartening, these students were turning in work late, and, jeopardizing their chances of passing the course and moving out of remediation, a stated outcome of the learning community. In fact, only two of the four young women passed the developmental English course at the end of the semester, though all of them had strong enough reading and writing skills to move to the next level of remediation.

In both Jason's class and the one credit student success class, these students did a better job at arriving on time and allowing others to speak without interruption. However, Jason noticed that these young women were less likely to appear animated during small-group activities or to volunteer to share the outcomes of their tasks. Overall, their interest in the course material appeared to dissipate, despite the fact that students generally find the second half of the Introduction to Psychology course more interesting and relevant to their lived experiences. Their behavior seemed to directly contradict Schussler's (2009) depiction of student engagement as "a deeper connection between the student and the material whereby a student develops an interest in the topic or retains the learning beyond the short term" (p. 115).

Feeling disappointed at the lack of engagement we witnessed following the Dean's intervention, we began to consider why these students might have been so eager to test classroom limits, reject traditional authority figures, and resist the more heavy-handed, compliance-based response to their inappropriate behaviors.^{iv} A review of their personal essays, written at the start of the semester, provides a few clues. Each of these students' early essays, a personal narrative about an important learning

experience, detailed some degree of personal trauma: a father with many, many children from multiple partners taught his daughter never to trust men; a grandmother's death after a protracted illness led another student to feel responsible for this untimely death; another young woman's family conflict led her to abandon her home in the first weeks of the semester and seek temporary housing with relatives and friends; another wrote about being sent to live with a grandmother in another country for several years as an adolescent because her mom could not take care of her during this time. In short, these essays revealed that each student grew up feeling disempowered from decision-making and betrayed by traditional authority figures. We can only assume that, by following a compliance-based model and turning these students in to the Dean for discipline, we confirmed for them the notion that authority figures are *not* to be trusted. We deeply regret the lost opportunity to show these ambivalent young people that teachers can be counted among those who are on their side.

Addressing Incivility through Strategies that Foster Engagement, *not* Compliance:

A Modest Proposal

Defining the fine line of limits and freedoms in a community college classroom will never be easy. Over the past semester, we have often asked ourselves: what *is* the answer to inappropriate student behaviors when we are in the trenches and sometimes just can't stand any more distractions? How can we create a culture in which students behave in ways that promote learning because *they* choose to? How can we nurture more student self-regulation? This article represents our attempt to acknowledge the complexity of the problem, the very real tension over student rights and responsibilities, and ultimately argue against the notion that heavy-handed interventions put students on the right track toward learning and college success. We believe there are steps colleges and instructors can take to diminish incivility and promote engagement among students for whom a positive college outcome is anything but secure.^v

Campus Initiatives

Our proposal begins with a more serious and sustained dialogue within and across urban community college campuses about what constitutes a civil campus environment. We believe that these conversations must include both faculty and diverse student perspectives concerning where and how

limits on students' freedoms bump up against faculty and staff desires for certain kinds of conduct. The "Brother's United" group, mentioned earlier, proclaims that civility need be promoted "not out of limits, but love" and by reaching the hearts and minds (not fears) of fellow students. One challenge would be to include not only those model students who are the first to volunteer for extra-curricular and civic-engagement focused activities on campus, but also those who often resist collaborations with faculty and cause the disruptions to teaching and learning about which we write. In contrast to typical classroom dynamics, we might invite students to take the lead in these discussions and both consider the reasons for underlying classroom conflicts and propose strategies for moving forward. For those of us who believe in the educational theory of student agency and empowerment, this could be an opportunity to turn the deeply enervating process of controlling student incivilities into an emancipatory educational experience.

Ideally, we envision these cross-campus conversations enabling more student-driven committees and initiatives that respond to specific complaints of student incivility. Hence, instead of calling students before the Dean's office, they might meet with a committee that includes fellow students to ascertain both the students' and instructor's perceptions of the conflict (which are likely at odds) and develop strategies for improving classroom dynamics. If struggles appear driven, at least in part, by mental health issues, then mental health counselors might be brought in as facilitators, and counseling might become part of the student-instructor agreement.^{vi} Bringing in public safety would be used exclusively as a last resort. As leaders in Brother's United passionately explained, "You might as well bring in the NYPD" (Brother's United, personal communication, 1/5/11). As young men of color -- for whom higher education is often seen as an escape route from poor Black and Latino neighborhoods in New York City where "stop and frisk" is standard practice and police presence has terribly negative connotations and implications -- this is not what they want in their college. These young men see involving public safety in cases of incivility as "being put in the slammer before you get a slap on the wrist" (Brother's United, personal communication, 1/5/11). For our students, this disproportionate response to their infractions led to their withdrawing from real engagement with the learning process.

Classroom Initiatives

Within the context of individual classrooms, we believe that the push towards engagement once again begins with faculty engaging students in real dialogue about what constitutes appropriate college behavior in class and, ultimately, *working with students* to collaboratively establish ground rules and consequences for violating them. It would be especially important for instructors to remain open to learning about those faculty behaviors that students consider unprofessional and/or ineffective and to accede to some behavioral guidelines (i.e., mutual respect, constructive criticism) set down by students. To the extent possible, violations of the agreed-upon ground rules would be addressed in class by both the instructor and fellow students.

Although this might not come easily, instructors could also express a willingness to negotiate certain previously non-negotiable issues, such as the use of cell phones and other electronic devices in class. Of course, in the spirit of true negotiation on both sides, we would urge our students to make good choices concerning classroom guidelines, sharing evidence that those students who have access to laptops and other forms of technology are less likely to remember as much of the material that is presented as compared to those who were denied access to technology (Hembrooke & Gay, 2003).

Alongside this more genuine collaboration with students concerning rules and consequences, we might also afford students greater opportunities to test out whether or not faculty beliefs concerning engagement and ultimate learning will be supported empirically within our individual classrooms. At the very start of the term, we might randomly select a group of students to place their cell phones in a bin at the start of the class and, at mid-point, compare the grades and quality of writing of those students to the rest of the class who have had the opportunity to retain and make use of their electronic devices. We might ask students early on to agree that, if those *not* having access to electronic devices outperform other classmates by midpoint, then the rest of the class would agree to renounce cell phone usage for the rest of the term.^{vii} Depending on the results, we might have a more solid basis for prohibiting cell-phone usage or, at the very least (if we don't get the anticipated results), students' belief that we are genuinely *working with them* to discover effective teaching strategies and not simply imposing them haphazardly. For those classes with greater initiative at the start of the term, we would certainly encourage students to generate testable hypotheses concerning various classroom behaviors (positive and negative) and

eventual student outcomes. Throughout the term, we would integrate their experience of the experiment into class work via student reflection papers and, at the end of the term, perhaps invite students to co-author a paper on the results.

Finally, we should probably acknowledge explicitly that, at particular junctures, we might need to privilege the teacher's over the students' classroom prerogatives (though ideally these would become merged) and use the authority vested in us if we believe some students' behavior is limiting other students' learning. However, we need to be explicit when we occasionally make this more authoritative choice and acknowledge that we might be in violation of those mutually agreed-upon guidelines for teaching and learning established early-on. Although this is not ideal, we trust our students to recognize that we are doing our best and that the structures of education (and their individual teachers) are imperfect. Moreover, if we do our best to stick with our original agreements, revisiting and revising when necessary in a democratic fashion, then those exceptions would hopefully substantiate (rather than disprove) the democratic and egalitarian structures that we hope to promote.

Concluding Thoughts

We conclude, with a little preliminary evidence, that a more democratic classroom in which decision-making is shared, the reins are loosened, and engagement (rather than compliance) is fostered leads to better pedagogical outcomes and a more positive learning experience for all. Given our concerns that the compliance-based model enforced by the college did not foster positive learning among our students, we made a conscious decision to violate their contractual agreement with the Dean and afford them agency over who they worked with in a final integrative presentation which asked them to highlight the connections made between the concepts covered in psychology and the work done in English. Hence, three of the women involved in the earlier incident (the other had already unofficially withdrawn) chose to work together, using the Johari Window (Luft, 1969), a self-awareness tool, to analyze how the feedback they had received from us on their essays enabled them to develop a newfound self-awareness, particularly with regards to their writing abilities.^{viii} Their presentation illuminated a newfound passion and fervency in their work, enabling us to glimpse the knowledge they had likely obtained earlier in the term but refused to demonstrate within a compliance-oriented classroom.

It also appeared in great contrast to the compliance-oriented behaviors that had dominated our classroom interactions since the Dean's intervention. Hence, we believe that, when these three young women felt that they (finally) were not simply being *forced* to do what their teachers and the college dictated, they started the process of more substantively engaging in the course material and connecting their newfound disciplinary knowledge within psychology with the readings and academic skills-building supported in their English class. The possibility that we overcame the previously stifling compliance-based model by semester's end was also substantiated by reading one of these students' final self-assessment essays and learning that, by the end of the semester, she had, in fact, stopped "trying to please the professor" and instead realized she "had something to say" and "felt for the first time ever, that... I was not so bad [at writing] after all" (Personal communication, 12/6/11).

As community college educators, we embrace the complexities and challenges our students bring to the classroom, even when, at times, they confound and frustrate us. We hope to inspire a passion for learning in our students, especially in those who initially seem most resistant or disengaged. We clearly need to continue developing the sorts of pedagogical strategies that motivate students' learning without simply forcing them to follow the letter of the law. In short, by giving students choice and greater opportunities for self-regulation, self-reflection, and the capacity to collaborate in the parameters we set, we have a better chance at enabling them to develop the intellectual interests and intrinsic motivations needed to persist in college long-term. Although the implementation of more engaging, less compliance-oriented strategies would probably mean more work for us, we're betting it might also make our experience as community college teachers a far more gratifying one.

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Endnotes

ⁱ The enrollment of credit-earning students at community colleges in the U.S. increased 16.9% to approximately eight million per term in the last two years.

ⁱⁱ Unemployment among 16 – 24 year olds in New York City hit 21.5% in 2009.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is important to acknowledge the three instructors in this link are White.

^{iv} The damaging consequences of applying a compliance-model to the treatment of psychologically vulnerable youth has been well-articulated by Lorraine Fox (1994) who describes the “catastrophe of compliance” for a group of adolescents in foster care who were obliged to “comply to the rules,” rather than given opportunities to test boundaries, develop a sense of assertiveness, and become prepared for independent living.

^v Nationally, only forty percent of community college students graduate within six years (Bailey, Crosta, & Jenkins 2006), and these numbers are significantly lower for students who begin at the developmental level of reading and writing (Attewell & Lavin, 2007).

^{vi} The ACT team (mentioned earlier) draws on counselors to help in evaluating and making decisions concerning some cases of student incivility.

^{vii} Students would need to trust their instructors to share the results of these studies honestly, since we could not publicly display students’ grades. Additionally, as in much research, there would be a selection bias since participation in the study (particularly for those randomly selected to disavow ownership of their cell phones for the duration of class time) would be voluntary.

^{viii} The Johari Window is a self awareness tool that persons use to identify those dimensions of themselves that are known (what the person knows about her/himself and also makes known to others), hidden (what the person knows about her/himself that others do not know), blind (what is unknown by the person but others know), and unconscious (outside of everyone’s awareness).