ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

A Publication of the Empire State College Mentoring Institute

EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Issue 12 • Fall 1997

Issue 12, Fall 1997

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From the Editor

Alan Mandell, Metropolitan Center

I recently worked in a tutorial with a student who was interested in the meaning of "progressive" education. For a good number of years, she and her husband have been very involved in the schooling of their two children, both of whom have been students in "alternative" New York City public schools. Her goal in this study was to explore how the term "progressive" developed, how people define it, what attitudes and activities it claims to promote, and (quite interestingly for me), how the very use of the term sometimes deflects us from critical examination of the educational practices put forward in its name. What excited me about the tutorial was that its direction clearly grew out of important questions raised by the student, and that we both had the opportunity to think about the relationship between history, theory and practice.

The student's real interest was certainly the education of children, but what continued to strike me were the resonances between her focus and efforts we mentors at ESC make to reflect on adult learning. How fascinating it was that on so many occasions, I could easily substitute "adult learner" for "child." Whether the student and I were reading a selection from Dewey's essays or Deborah Meier's evocative *The Power of Their Ideas: Lessons from a Small School in Harlem*, the work mentors do quickly came to mind. The student and I were thinking about a range of so many issues common to the learning of both adults and children. For example, what do we mean by learning and guidance? How can we engage students in their own intellectual work? How can classrooms be reconceptualized as "miniature communities" (as Dewey put it)? How can the interconnections between practical and theoretical issues be revealed? How are moral and intellectual development intertwined? And, how can active learning be a central part of our everyday lives as family members, friends and citizens? These are very basic ESC questions; all of them are about what learning is, and about the relationship between learning and its contexts. So it was natural that I also wanted the way the student and I worked together to echo the ideas we were exploring. Most important, for example, I wanted us to keep her questions at the center of the study, and her personal, professional and academic interests prominent.

But the connection to ESC (and, I believe, to this issue of *All About Mentoring*) took a slightly different turn for me after we both read Philip W. Jackson's "Introduction" to Dewey's *The School and Society & The Child and the Curriculum* (University of Chicago Press, 1990). There, Jackson is very interested in helping his reader understand the complex relationship between Dewey's "principles" and his "methods." In terms perhaps somewhat different from his own purpose, I took Jackson to be asking us, what is the "range of inventiveness" that our principles inspire? In other words, do the educational principles that we announce at ESC actually produce the range of practices we actually legislate? How can we keep alive the spirit of experimentation upon which we were built? How can we remain an inventive and thoughtful community? How can we find a language in which to honestly and directly define our practices without confusing what we actually do with what we claim or want to do? How can we tell if we are actually doing what our principles genuinely require of us? How can we change (if indeed we must) without losing our heart? These are certainly our ESC questions today.

In writing about Dewey and the progressive tradition he inspired, Jackson usefully reminds us that these questions are not only ours. Dewey and others at the turn of the century often worried and argued over what "progressive" really meant

both in principle and in practice. Similarly, my student kept returning to these kinds of questions in her own struggle to understand what "alternative" education does or should mean. And so, shouldn't we realize that we also must patiently return again and again to exploring and refreshing our understandings of our fundamental values and commitments?

But it is Jackson's effort to describe those "special places" that conceive of themselves as educational "laboratories" that is so immediately relevant to what we want to be as a college. Here is Jackson's description:

> To begin with, they (educational laboratories) are refined or purified environments, places where the racket and din of the workaday world have been at least partially reduced, where not only noise and dirt but also their ideational equivalents—confusion and disorder— can be filtered out or systematically controlled. They are also reflective environments, places where people have time to think carefully about what they are doing, time to reflect upon the outcomes of their actions and to plan next steps with caution and care. They are semipublic environments in that those who work within them are under obligation of either a moral or contractual kind to report on their findings and to open their facility to inspection if called upon to do so. They are, additionally, risk-taking environments, places where new and sometimes risky ventures are undertaken and where the possibility of failure is openly acknowledged. Finally, most laboratories are expensive environments, made so by the costs of maintaining the conditions just named. Those costs commonly include not only the purchase of expensive equipment and the facility in which it is to be housed but also the salaries of highly skilled personnel and the support services they require.

We too should be such a laboratory. We need moments of "purity" so that the decisions we make about learning with our students are not completely driven by the internal economics of the institution. We need opportunities for reflective conversation with each other about our daily practices. We need to report to ourselves and to the outside world about the nature and the results of our efforts. We need to take risks—to experiment with our ideas. And we need to acknowledge that our "laboratory" is expensive. These issues are familiar to us, and perhaps returning to them can help us think again about what we most care about and about our obligations to ourselves and to our students. Many of the pieces in this issue of *All About Mentoring* seek to deal with these kinds of themes and speak to the problem of an experimenting institution in transition- -a "progressive" laboratory that needs to judge its next steps.

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Revisiting "Footless in Rensselaerville"
Gary Goss, Long Island Center

Editor's Note: After the July 1997 Governance Retreat, mentor Gary Goss offered some initial reflections on the kinds of issues and questions raised and those that he felt we failed to directly address at the meeting. Many of us saw Gary's important comments. He was gracious enough to offer a slightly edited version of his "Footless" piece for this issue of All About Mentoring. *In addition, we asked a few colleagues who had initially responded to him to provide their comments. After Gary's essay, five of these responses are included.*

"The philosophical search for our criteria is a search for community."
– Stanley Cavell

In "Footless in Rensselaerville," much of which is reprinted below, I called for the formulation of criteria to help us evaluate our various programs and proposed programs. To be specific, I believe that we need a *task force* to examine the matter.

We might look for a moment at what criteria are.

As I see it, criteria are conventional and not justified by something else. They are human instruments. Criteria govern judgments, assertions, statements, those things that admit of being true or false. That's what we use criteria for.

As mentors, when we say that a student knows something, it's on the basis of a social process involving criteria. If we are unwilling to say – in a serious way –that we know which of the College's programs we should support, it is in part because we lack public criteria. In a sense, we lack a community.

A year ago, I doubted that building a community or finding criteria was possible in a college that was part virtual and part real. For one thing, I put a high value on strong human relations in the educational process, and as Howard Rheingold writes in *The Virtual Community*, "(we) must pay for our access to each other by forever questioning the reality of our online culture." (I am indebted to Deborah Kleese for sending me an editorial from *Science* [included in these pages] that contained the Rheingold quotation and much else.)

In my 25 years at Empire State College I did not hear much straight talk from supporters of distance programs about the weaknesses of these programs. Nor did I ask for a discussion – I assumed that the programs were not defensible, except as an option for the house-bound. I was wrong.

I sent my own children to small, private liberal arts colleges: where, for instance, one well-known professor designed a literature class around the interests of my older daughter; where, for instance, one of my daughters had lunch with Hilary Rodham Clinton.

Yet my children kept in touch with me on e-mail.

A question raised by the *Science* editorial was "What virtues of online communities are absent in off-line ones?" Immediate communities and distance communities have different weaknesses. What combination of both would unite their strengths?

We already have partial, if undiscussed answers to the two questions above. I believe now that we can find criteria and community among our various practices – if we have the will to look.

Some Thoughts on the Governance Retreat –

At Rensselaerville, we listened to a report from the Distance Learning Task Force. At one point I raised a question about our lack of clear, public criteria to use in evaluating reports, proposals and programs. The task force replies almost immediately veered into a discussion about how competing groups struggle for turf and resources, an important question but secondary to what interested me.

History

When ESC was founded, we went through a period of discussion of educational values, beliefs and practices. I suppose the result was that different learning centers adopted somewhat different practices, but there was also a sense that ESC was committed to a core set of beliefs and practices designed to emphasize mentoring, a student-centered approach, individualization, etc. To an extent, we understood why we did what we did, and we had public criteria.

No doubt we used terms like "individualization" in many ways. "Individualization" is a word with no clear essence. Even so, we had some unity and criteria to use in measuring our practices.

A term like "individualization" can be explained – by offering samples of usage – although it cannot be given a Merkmal definition. It is a fallacy to think that an indefinable expression cannot be explained.

More History

In the last 20 years the College has changed in structure and approaches to education. Whatever our beliefs were in 1977 (and some were unworkable), they have been overtaken by events – or some of them have been overtaken. Which beliefs remain in good standing is unclear to me. We have no public consensus about what constitutes a sound education.

Our response to having few agreed-on educational beliefs is to assume that we have plenty of them (unexamined) and then to get on with making important decisions, using other sorts of criteria. This strikes me as an error that taints every decision we make about programs and personnel. We're footless.

Lacking other criteria, we may fall back on economic criteria to decide issues. While obviously economic arguments must be a concern, I doubt if anyone – admini-stration or faculty – wants them to be the only standards that we use in planning the future of the College.

The *Distance Learning Report* did contain certain ritual comments about meeting individual student needs, maintaining convenience in student contact, etc. This is expected in ESC reports. But, for the most part, educational quality is assumed (for no reason). The proper goals of a college education are assumed (for no reason).

All delivery modes are, in this picture, approximately equal.

I doubt if anyone believes that all modes of delivery are equally good in the same ways, but we have no public criteria to use in measuring one mode against another.

Perhaps we have been careful not to develop a way to measure one mode against another, so that no program will suffer. I suspect that if we discuss all this – and everyone is heard – no program will suffer.

If we want to be "one college," what do we believe about education that makes us "one?"

What to Do

At the retreat, the administration called for an organized discussion of the outmoded governance structure. That seemed appropriate. But without a prior discussion of our values, beliefs and practices, without a discussion of what it is that we are trying to do, a report on the governance structure will float, lacking context, as footless as the *Distance Learning Report*.

I suggest that we need an organized discussion of our current different practices (many of them unknown or unclear to me) and beliefs and educational values. What should students get from an education at ESC? I believe that such a discussion will yield a fairly coherent picture that will give us a starting point and the criteria we need.

An Example

The *Distance Learning Report* briefly summed up our educational philosophy in ritual language: "Attention to individual student needs, appropriate educational planning, the development of self directed learning skills, the availability of credit for experiential learning, and the availability of a range of learning options are all essential elements of Empire State College education."

The sentence distinguishes ESC from colleges that boast of ignoring individual student needs, pride themselves on inappropriate planning, etc.

The sentence saves us the trouble of thinking about what we mean by "individual student needs."

We can address our confusion and develop educational criteria to use in evaluating proposals.

Doing this would entail an examination of how we use terms like "individual student needs," "self directed learning skills," "a range of learning options," etc., in our literature and in our discussions.

What is it we mean by such expressions? If we look closely, we will find a range of uses for each expression, but once we grasp what that range is – in an ESC context – we will have a chance to agree in public on educational criteria we can employ in reaching decisions about things like distance learning.

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Response to Gary Goss-More Radical Ideas
Wayne Ouderkirk, Northeast Center

By now I have forgotten my first response to Gary's thoughtful comments, though I am sure that I thanked him, as I thank him now, for taking the time to write them and send them out.

The first thing that stands out upon re-reading "Footless" is its radicalness. It is too bad that "radical" has acquired its present negative connotations, because it is a good word, and because we need more radical ideas. I am using radical in its philosophical and etymological senses of getting to the root of things. Gary's comments are radical in that he calls for an examination of our basic beliefs and values, which then can be used to evaluate our practices and programs.

Too often, in both professional and personal life, we flow with the rush of day to day urgencies and habits. We think we remain the same through it all, but we do not. (We change in ways a life demands, says a Jackson Browne song.) Our reports and other documents testify to our beliefs and values as formulated long ago. Are they our values now? Do all our practices reflect them? Or has practice in fact changed some of the values? The kind of reflection Gary calls for asks that kind of question, and taking the time to ask and answer them will only strengthen ESC as an institution, as he implies.

In the absence of doing that kind of radical questioning, we do have values to which we reflexively pay lip service, but other criteria begin to influence our directions. Gary's comment about economic criteria coming to govern our decisions reminds me of environmental issues. In the absence of other clear and publicly accepted criteria, we citizens have allowed economic criteria to determine much of the decision making affecting the environment; and it has cost us dearly.

In that context, too, we have other criteria we pay lip service to – freedom, individual rights, community development, progress – but the bottom line has ruled, to our collective loss of other values. That's the kind of result that comes from a lack of radical questioning.

I don't know how the discussion Gary calls for could be accomplished, but now seems like a good time to do it, given the changes currently envisioned. The self-study required by the reaccreditation process seems like an ideal context for it to happen. Perhaps we will discover that our old values are still our values; more likely, some of them have changed. In any case it 's a discussion the College should have, and I thank Gary again for proposing it.

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Response to Gary Goss-A Webbed Collaborative Learning Community

Catherine Copley-Woods, FORUM East

I have also been struck by what is missing, what is absent from the *Distance Learning Report* and from so many of our discussions around development of computer technology at the College. For example, in reading the *Report of the Empire State College Distance Learning Task Force*, I never get the sense that it is concerned with distance "learning." Instead it seems to me to describe – in its own words – an "academic program delivery system," an apparatus for controlling the distribution of program information. Except in the cover letter, apparently written by a committee member, never once do I see the concept of the virtual, or "online community" that you, Gary, rightly identify as a core value, a requisite of computer-mediated communication and learning. Though the report repeatedly acknowledges that mentoring is central to what we do, it so far describes mentoring only in terms of educational planning outcomes – programs integrating various kinds of student learning within a coherent, educationally sound degree – never venturing how computer technology might support the entire mentoring process, beyond providing access to more information.

I hope some of our voices will fill these silent places. We need to explore how digital technology can support our values and our mentoring. Rather than considering only how we might manage information by trying to interpose an essentially hierarchical system onto the essentially anarchic structure of the web, I hope we will look at how the web can foster a more democratic space, where student voices can be heard and academic freedom supported. Why not, for example, talk about new possibilities inherent to networked, malleable learning spaces and texts and how they can support the growth of a curriculum born out of and developed by student and faculty need and collaboration? (At any rate, I doubt that we can or should require faculty to wait in line until studies are first sanctioned by the "Networked Learning Teams," then technically supported by the much-beleaguered CLT. It's a lot easier to "publish" our studies and ideas ourselves in the new writing space created by networked computers than to negotiate being published by others, including by an academic bureaucracy no one at the College really wants.)

Before we talk about how to manage distance learning, we need to talk about what kinds of distance learning we will foster. I hope we will talk about how computer spaces can model the relatively free, relatively private "spaces" where we mentor – offices, phone conferences, seminars – where cooperative, collaborative learning spaces give primacy to the learners' experiences and voices, helping us to build bridges to one another's discourses, facilitating multiple learning styles. I think we better talk about ways networked computers and software tools can help us to communicate with each other and with our students so we can create, in addition to a learning delivery system, a community of distance "learners." Without that, what do we have?

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Response to Gary Goss-Imagining Networks

Deborah Kleese, Middletown Unit

Gary Goss asks an interesting question: what does the Empire State College community mean when we say we are committed to serving individual student needs? The difficulty in answering this question is that, despite all of the rhetoric about being "one college," we may actually have very different assumptions, norms and practices concerning serving the individual needs of students. If there are differences in our conceptions of individualized learning, then we need to have a dialogue about those differences. In our haste to unite as "one college," we may be suppressing differences and "otherness".

We are rapidly expanding our Internet course options. Student access to online courses increases the possibilities for serving individualized student needs. Now, in addition to paper, e-mail and phone-based distance approaches, we offer computer-based courses. Since our students come to us with very diverse backgrounds and needs, a diversity of learning options makes sense. The problem arises, though, when we try to silence the tensions, or differences, among our approaches. I contend that one college can still maintain several diverse models of learning simultaneously. However, there seems to be an attempt to define our "one college" one way. The July, *1997 Report of the Empire State College Distance Learning Task Force* seems to imply one view of serving students.The report's language is indicative of this monologic approach. It continuously speaks of courses (as opposed to tutorials); the Internet becomes a vehicle for course instruction (as opposed to a means for conversations between tutors and students); the online courses strive for uniformity (as opposed to being tailored for student needs and student interests). The program seems to be, to use Mayra Bloom's framework, content-based rather than student-based.

Rather than maintaining that several models of learning can occur simultaneously, the report implies universal agreement about distance learning and "networking". I was much taken by the abrupt shift in meaning that occurred in the concept of "networked learning". In the task force's opening memorandum to President Hall, networked learning was explained as the practice of exchange of ideas among mentors, tutoring of each other's students, and the sharing of advice about program design. Those notions matched very well my ideas about networking. I tend to think about networks in other ways as well; my academic training involved the study of neural networks, which involve converging, diverging and feedback patterns of connection. I can visualize my own work with students and colleagues in that way, too. In that sense, networks are functional subcomponents of a complex system, and surely Empire State College, with its many modes of service delivery, can be envisioned that way. However, the language in the report seemed to be of one sort: computer-based learning. None of the functions of networked learning mentioned in the memo to President Hall seemed to make their way back into the report. Nor was there any mention of the other possible meanings of networked learning.

As Goss so aptly points out, public discourse about distance learning is necessary. This process must truly be dialogic; the "individual student" cannot become the serviceable "other" against which course-based, online learning becomes the monologue. The idea of "one college" must include diversity; otherwise, we will be forced to choose between two

colleges: one virtual, and one real. That choice is a pseudo-choice. The College needs both options. Some students will benefit from Internet courses; it will open up new markets and widen our student base. But many of our students will never want, or be able to, access courses online. We need to carefully explore the language of "one college." Our discussions cannot be dominated by one voice, to the exclusion of others, and our reports should recognize that differences in practice exist. Even though our practices may be different, we may still be able to come to some agreement about educational criteria.

I am once again thinking about networks. Many years ago, when I was reading about neural communication, one neuroanatomist likened the process to a passage he had read by J. L.Borges: "...a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times." I have since forgotten the text , but I remember that wonderful passage. My vision of networked learning for the College would embrace just such a dizzying array of possibilities.

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Response to Gary Goss-Core Values at the College and the Future

Fernand Brunschwig, Long Island Center

What's "universal" about Empire State's approach to education? What do we share as one college? What are our practices, beliefs and educational values? What do we mean by individual student needs, self-directed learning skills and a range of learning options?

This is quite a challenge that Gary threw out. I'm going to start by responding more or less directly to his questions. Then I want to look beyond his questions and to think about the context and the future of the College.

Basically, I take Gary's questions to be about the mission and the "core values" of the College as interpreted by the faculty. I would say that the core values can be explicated in relationship to four items: 1)service to students as adults, 2) the liberal studies ideal, 3) advanced level work and the concentration, and 4) independent learning. I also think that there is one underlying practical rule of thumb we have relied on from the outset, which transcends all of the basic principles and values. This rule of thumb can only be expressed indirectly; here are three different attempts:

1. "Do the best you can with what you've got, even if you don't have a clear policy, structure or guideline to follow; even if you are pretty sure that you are reinventing the wheel; and don't be afraid to elaborate the rationale on the spot,"

2. "Don't stop answering the phone and listening to what students say they want and moving the students you've got right now one step along, even as we polish our vision of educational ideals and work on improving our structure, our system, our curriculum and our policies,"

3. "Don't spend a lot of time waiting or searching for a prescription from the world or the College about what needs to be done to help a student learn. Discuss it with the student right away, and, to the maximum extent, find something specific that the student can investigate, even if it isn't an approved, tested solution." My experience has been that by the time the tested solution arrives, the world and the student will have changed, and it will be too late! In the meantime, most students can come up with something that will fill the bill, even if it is not an ideal solution.

Now, what are the "core values"?

1. Service and responsiveness to students as adults. We set ourselves the goal of paying attention to what real people say – what the prospective students walking in the door and calling us on the phone are telling us they want to do. This is quite deep in the culture of ESC and a very important piece of what we all do. Many, possibly most of us, do in fact speak directly with students before they enroll; as a result, we are aware of the decision making involved and conscious of what is on prospective students' minds when they are considering enrollment. In fact, many of us help students work through that decision making. The students are saying that they want to advance in their careers, or to switch careers, as well as to learn how to think and communicate better. They are also saying that they want to do this

efficiently, using the time and resources they now have at their disposal as adults; this includes having the opportunity to show that they have mastered college-level content and skills outside the classroom.

This orientation leads almost immediately and directly to the idea, and the reality, that students can and should articulate their goals and, in consultation with the faculty, plan their degree programs and construct their own rationale for their programs. Our vision and our values are inclusive rather than exclusive; we aim to discover value and meaning where there was previously a blank, or, more accurately, an unanalyzed potpourri of yearnings, goals and achievements. Rather than exclusive checklists stating what should NOT be included in a degree program, or a limitation about what must be in ALL degree programs, we believe that there is a universe of good, high-quality degree programs waiting to be discovered, which, once articulated, can be groomed to higher quality. Furthermore, we think that, while there are a general set of "values" which should guide the creation and grooming of such degree programs, the specific criteria by which such programs are judged also can be developed and articulated as part of the process and not, entirely, beforehand.

2. Liberal studies. We share the values related to a "liberal education" quite strongly, going back to Plato's Academy if not before, seeking to define what a person needs to know in order to "liberate" him or herself. In Plato's time, liberation meant, literally, freedom from slavery, as well as the capacity to choose an occupation, rather than being confined within a predefined trade, occupation or status. Study of the liberal arts and sciences focuses upon generally applicable ideas and concepts, as well as on the ideals (the "forms" for Plato) of beauty and truth. Liberal studies should introduce students to dialogue with other members of the community and should enable them to contribute effectively to that dialogue as enlightened participants.

3. Formulation of a concentration and advanced level work. A graduate at the bachelor's level should have organized knowledge of a discipline or professional specialty, including a usable set of skills for generating new knowledge and solving problems. A "good" concentration implies a productive relationship with others in the field, and, most important, a way of earning a living and serving others through use of knowledge. Our thinking at ESC about what a concentration means goes back to the development of the modern culture of the university at the beginning of this century, when "departments" and "concentrations" or "majors" were first set up, as well as to the development of "professions" and of "professionalization" both within the university and in society as a whole. At one point, ESC focused on the ideas of "progression" and "integration" as central to our conception of the concentration, and I still use these ideas productively from time to time with students as a starting point for their DP rationale and to help them evaluate the potential of various study opportunities, to relate their various studies together and to deepen their learning.

4. Independent learning. This is, more or less, another way of saying "self-directed learning." I think it is centrally important, for all students. Practically speaking, it means that students can identify their own appropriate reading materials and can write up their own proposal for a learning contract. Most of the students who do academic (educational) planning with me do learn how to do this, to some degree, by the time they graduate. However, this process does take time, it often requires support for small steps away from total dependence upon the mentor as authority, and it sometimes forces a substantial reduction in the amount of "content" built into the learning contracts. It also helps a lot if the other mentors with whom students work also give them an opportunity to practice this essential skill.

Our process for advanced standing, particularly credit by evaluation is a direct outgrowth of our independent learning "core value." This extends the possibilities beyond "academe" itself, so that we can recognize learning outside of college coursework, and, in addition, outside of direct faculty/mentor control. This latter possibility also allows students to incorporate learning from outside the College into their learning contracts: from company courses, from industry-sponsored workshops and certifications, from projects on their current job and/or internships at outside organizations. Devotion to independent learning opens up a vast set of possibilities, and no single one of us can evaluate, organize and approve such contract studies across the board for all our students, but the benefits to our students from the variety of opportunities that we have been able to capture outside the "traditional" area is, and will continue to be, enormous.

What else do we share as a college? I think that we have somehow been able to maintain a certain sense of playfulness

and experimentation in our work with undergraduate students. We have not also not given up on a spirit of adventure, of an attempt to discover new ideas, particularly in connection with our development of curricula (degree programs) and in the design and development of particular courses and learning contracts.

The Context for Goss' Questions and the Future

The context within which Gary posed his questions is, clearly, how to go about constructing "criteria" for evaluating what kinds of programs and initiatives we, and the College as a whole, should pursue. I think that's worth thinking about, but I'm also very hesitant about using a given list of criteria, even if we all agree on them, even if they are very close to the list that I created above, to decide once and for all, what ***is*** valuable and what is ***not***. In fact, if we, or SUNY, or the state legislature, had waited to do this in 1971, the College probably would never have been created! There was a very substantial body of opinion, and probably a majority of faculty and administrators (both within and beyond SUNY), who would have created a set of traditional criteria that would have clearly placed the idea for ESC outside the bounds of what was thinkable, let alone doable!

In fact, we have to use our guts, in addition to our critical, evaluative side in making such decisions. We have to try to incorporate what is happening right now, what students walking in the door may be telling us, what our intuition is telling us will be significant in the future, in addition to what our knowledge base shows were the established criteria for success in the past.

I believe that both our historical, evaluative criteria, as well as our gut impressions of the future, should be encouraging us to move forward, particularly to find ways to utilize the computer, the Internet and the new communications methods to help students learn. There's no question that this is what many students are telling us as they walk in the door, and there's no question that there is enormous potential for students to exploit their own computers and Internet access to expedite and intensify their learning. I know this because I've experienced it, and there are many examples. I also know that the College can and should, indeed must, continue to evolve and change to serve students' current interests, aspirations, capabilities and resources.

Expanding our capacity to communicate using the computer, to utilize the Internet, to deliver Web-based courses, to track our students' contracts and degree programs – all of these initiatives are very important to the future of the College. This overall effort, while demanding, is not different in kind and intention from the original transition from campus and course-based learning confined within defined curricula to independent study. The College must substantially expand our hardware and our software capability in order to be able to take advantage of the new tools and capabilities, to help students and faculty learn and teach better. We have to remember that we are devoted to the "liberal" ideal of helping students to learn, not simply in the narrow trade of doing degree programs and learning contracts. More important, we as mentors need to expand our own abilities to utilize these new ways of keeping in touch with our students and helping them learn. This isn't by any means the only way that the College, and we as mentors, can grow, but it is now critically important, both for us and for ESC.

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Response to Gary Goss-The Heart and Suns of Icarus

Lee Herman, Central New York Center

Above the computer on my desk at home there hangs a poster- size reproduction of the Matisse cutout, "Icarus." The image is familiar from museum store greeting cards and calendars: In a royal blue background of sky and surrounded by an ellipse of six yellow suns, Icarus is. Suspended, floating, flying, falling? It's hard to tell what the solid black silhouette is doing. The legs are thick, very strong looking; but there are no feet and no ground. The arms gracefully bend and stretch outwards, one angled up and the other down, from the upper torso, like the wings of a soaring bird banking. But they look too slender to fly the heavy body. The featureless head is also angled, but one can't tell if it is looking up in aspiration or down in despair. Just right of center, in the upper third of the picture, in the dark chest, a small, intensely red, spheroid heart seems to pulsate, catching the viewer's eye even more brightly than the ring of suns.

This is the moment of Icarus's fate. The heavy legs, the too slender arm-wings suggest, as the ancient story tells, that he is about to fall. But the figure is so strong, arms so graceful, and the head, possibly, so aspiring in this richly soothing sky and delightful ring of suns, that it's hard to be sure that Icarus has met the moment of despair. Amidst all these possible suns and otherwise featureless heavens, he would seem utterly lost, neither rising nor falling, without compass direction or past and future – were it not, that is, for the small red heart glowing in the upper third of the picture, in his breast.

We began to fly, more than a quarter century ago, with a high heart. The dazzle of our possibilities and the fire in our purposeful heart gave us an energy seemingly more than enough to compensate for the perennial, increasingly powerful fact of our insufficient resources, our too slender wings. Quite like our overbusy students, whose success in college is so often improbable if judged strictly by traditional academic criteria and records, we set out to journey by flying when the roads were too old and stuffed with traffic. Along with our students, we have soared wonderfully high. But now, like Icarus, we are at one of those fate moments. Our wings were always too thin, but we were too busy flying to rest, reflect and learn to make them stronger. Like Saul Bellow's manic-depressive poet, Von Humboldt Fleisher, we were going to drape the world in radiance, but, we're finding, we don't have enough material.

Tired and disoriented, we might neglect our heart. We might just let ourselves fall. We might look at all those bright suns around us: IFRs, FORUM, distance learning, virtual colleges, prepackaged independent studies, study groups that are really classes that don't meet very often, centrally synchronized curricula, semesters and grades. And, instead of gliding by, exploring, sampling, gleaning and learning from them as we go, we might just let ourselves gravitate towards the one with the most weight, the most material for our already too heavy body to ingest. We shall still think we are flying, but as we fall closer and closer to whatever that conveniently dense attractive sun might be, our heart within will, by comparison, inevitably seem dimmer.

So, what is in our heart? To me, the stigmata of our neglect and consequent disorientation are that we've had two strong, discussion-ending answers to this question. One is our custom of breathlessly applying labels instead of

thinking through meanings: "individualization" and "student centered learning." The first hums and buzzes like a piece of machinery, best left alone lest we dirty ourselves with its grease or mess up its intricacy. At worst, it hardly suggests the intellectual intimacy we are otherwise so justifiably proud of cultivating with each one of our students. And "student centered learning" is embarrassingly tautologous. What in the world would non-student centered learning be? At other colleges, do students enroll so that they can teach their professors? Do inspiring lecturers and brilliant scholars hope that students will ignore what they are asked to hear and read?

Our other response to this question about our essence is the insouciantly ritual statement with which we so often conclude our infrequent discussions of the topic: "Well, we're just so diverse! Isn't it confusing and marvelous? But at each of our centers and in each of our programs we try to meet the needs of our students." Do we? How could we possibly tell? It is striking that in 25-plus years of institutional reports, self-studies, task forces, outcomes and quality discussions, we have not consistently discovered, agreed upon and energetically nurtured even one specific practice which represents "good" mentoring or excised even one specific practice which represents "bad" mentoring. Well, that's not entirely fair. Most of us do seem united in our disapproval of rigid, professorial pontification. But ... I've been present at discussions of examples of this "bad" practice, which have concluded by blaming the student for not being "proactive" or "adult" enough deal with the situation.

For all that, we do have a heart. It's the learning contract. As the words imply in ordinary usage, the learning contract is an agreement between rational agents – each equally though not identically empowered, and neither subjected to duress from the other – to engage in a specified learning project. Generally, but not necessarily, mentors bring to this contract their academic understanding of concepts and resources relevant to the learning agreed upon; generally, but not necessarily, students bring their relevant experiences, purposes and interests. However, it can happen, and often does, that the student brings academic material to the contract (e.g. books, learning activities, essay plans), and the mentor might bring her or his own enthusiastic curiosity for what the student wants to learn, as well as his or her own general experience of how a learning project can be managed in an academic institution. An essential feature, however, of the contract, is that the agreement itself results from a collaborative inquiry, a dialogue, a process of common exploration between mentor and student. Every genuine learning contract is a sharing of authority, skill and curiosity between mentor and student.

A beautiful and inspiring feature of the learning contract is its non-exclusive nature. It is beautiful because the contract offers a coherent, palpable but flexible form for an endless number of learning possibilities. It is inspiring because the mentor and the student do not presume omniscience about what is to be learned. They thus relive the journey into inquiry, the searching-flying into the unknown which, I imagine, students and teachers at any college would regard as true learning. And the contract is non-exclusive because it permits the creation or use of whatever materials, methods, times and places the inquirers agree will suit their learning abilities and purposes. Thus, while a learning contract could not be a mentor simply delivering to students, once they had evinced some interest, a "canned" study or assigning them to a course or a group study, a student and mentor might well agree in a carefully collaborative discussion, that the best way to engage in a particular inquiry would be to take a course or participate in a group study. Defenders of prepackaged curricula and courses sometimes suppose that advocates of genuine learning contracts believe that such ready-made learning materials are bad. But they are no more or less so than books. If they suit the curiosity and readiness of the student, as student and mentor have agreed to view them in a contract, then they are fine. (A striking though silent assumption of the recent *Distance Learning Report* is that such collaborative discussions are unlikely in electronic communication or other media of distance learning – hence the emphasis in the report on centrally coordinated, prepackaged curricula and courses. My own, albeit limited experience, suggests that this assumption is false.) But if the ready-made materials happen to represent only the interest of the mentor, or, worse, if the mentor presents them as the end of the matter, as the only available avenues to and reifications of "the truth" of the subject, then there is no contract, nor is there even any learning except as the reproduction of the opinions and information of a presumptuous, temporary and local authority.

Of course the essence of contract learning is most readily visible when students and mentors (yes, even in groups) actually invent the content and the process of the inquiry, indeed develop them as the curiosity and readiness of the students become apparent as the inquiry proceeds. This is not impossible in prepackaged curricula and courses (most of which, in my experience, allow students to do something "independently"); it's just that there is less room and time for this possibility. I often like to offer the example of a former student who was concentrating in operations

management. Near the end of her undergraduate work, we were doing a study of management theory and philosophy. She happened to describe a sophisticated machine, which she had just purchased for the production department she directed, as "beautiful." I asked her what she meant. She answered but also indicated that she wondered (as did I) why this quality was an important factor in her purchasing decision.

That began a conversation, an inquiry, lasting several months and represented in an amended learning contract description. It took us into aesthetics, ethics, and the design of work and workplaces as activities and locations for creating and savoring human communities. The flexible or non-exclusive nature of contract learning allowed us to suit the time, the materials, the process, the academic credit and even the place (since we often communicated by phone) of learning to the inquiry we were inventing together.

Why should contract learning be the heart of our college? There are two reasons, one normative and the other pragmatic. The latter is perhaps easiest to accept when our soaring is so distracted with worries over resources and anxiety to stay close to the dazzle of currently hot educational stars around us. Simply, contract learning works well. Though our own research on the issue might not have been very rigorous, others have done it for us. For example, thanks, ironically, to the likes of E.D. Hirsch (whose extensive research on learning is adduced on behalf of standardized curricula), we know reasonably well that people learn most energetically, deeply and lastingly when what they learn and how they learn are closely connected with their individual experiences and interests, group histories and contexts. Similarly, we know from the research of Alexander Astin that the students most likely to graduate from college are those who form strong relationships with faculty and/or other students. Given the non-academic obligations most of our students have, it's not so easy to foster community among them. However, designing a learning contract requires intellectual intimacy between mentor and student. Moreover, because contract learning means that the contents, methods, time and place of every inquiry are collaboratively selected or created to suit the purposes, curiosity and readiness of each student, our students are being served to succeed.

The normative reason for contract learning might seem more ethereal, but is no less important. It is the same reason why it was as essential as "doing the job" that the million dollar machine my student purchased for her co-workers be beautiful. She knew that people go to work not just to earn money and exercise power; she knew that people, if given the chance, also want to live their waking hours, including the third or more of that time they are at work, being fully human, really being there, being active with one another truthfully, justly and even beautifully. Similarly, we speak of our college not just as a piece of practical machinery that produces graduates by assigning credits in exchange for demonstrated learning. We speak of a community. And, if we wait, listen and take care, our students say things amounting to the same. To be sure, they enroll, often, primarily because they are driven by economic exigencies to get credits and degrees. But once they see that we respect and will help them attend to that necessity, other concerns emerge. They too have deep questions about what is true, what's right, what is beautiful. They want to talk and inquire with someone who also cares about these questions, and contract learning allows and encourages us to do that together. They too live in a harsh and disorienting world, an awful space filled with many bright suns and tremendous voids. But they want to soar. They too are Icarus. If we remember this, our intense red heart will not be so alone and might just become strong enough to keep our slender wings flying us high.

"Lifelong education, which began its days as a series of policies predicated on remedying past educational exclusion, has turned predominantly into the construction at the individual level of a series of policies and practices which support individuals in maintaining themselves employable, and at the organisational level in maintaining and increasing competitiveness and profitability. Learning throughout life is constructed more and more as a necessity and less and less as an option, for those who want to stand a chance of being employed. What used to be termed post-compulsory education by its very nature...is now taking on both formal necessity...as well as more widely, or more importantly, as informal necessity for those who want to remain attractive in the labor market. It would now be seen as an act of rebellion or resistance (depending on one's point of view) to refuse training on the grounds that one had other things to do with one's life!"

–from "The Convergence of Distance and Conventional Education" in *Collected Papers: The Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning* (p. 185)

Alan Tait

ALL ABOUT MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Alain Leroy Locke (1886-1954)-Philosopher and Adult Educator
Rudy Cain, Long Island Center

The literature has fully documented Alain Locke's leadership role in the Harlem Renaissance. Long recognized as an elder (along with W.E.B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson) of the cultural movement in Harlem, Locke often referred to himself as a "Socratic midwife." That is, in addition to holding the distinction of having mentored many of the African American students of philosophy attending American universities, from 1912 until his death in 1954, he was a willing adviser to emerging young writers and artists.

There is another dimension of this intellectual griot and the man who has been called the "Proust of Lenox Avenue" that has received little attention. Until recently, the historiography of adult education in 20th century America has given only passing mention to Locke. Yet, he was one of the most visibly productive African Americans in the movement to transform the philosophy and practice of adult education during the period of the 1920s through the early 1950s.

As the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in philosophy from Harvard, and the first African American Rhodes Scholar, Locke was a pivotal mover and shaker in reforming the profession of adult education. A noteworthy testament to his profound impact on the movement was his 1946 election as the first African American president of the American Association for Adult Education, the flagship professional organization for adult educators. Throughout the period of his involvement in adult education, Locke championed the intrinsic value of adult education generally, and the significant need for greater inclusion of African Americans as both service providers as well as recipients of relevant services.

Alain Locke was the first chair of the Philosophy Department at Howard University and had been greatly influenced by George Santayana and William James during his Harvard days. He ultimately conceptualized his own axiology which illuminated the nature of conflicts among groups, and articulated a philosophy of cultural pluralism that would value those very differences that he also knew create conflict. Such an orientation was significantly infused in his overall philosophy of adult education which broadly focused on "teaching adults how to live" in such a culturally pluralistic society. In this and many other ways, Locke – like Hannah Arendt and Jean Paul Sartre – sought to relate philosophy to practical affairs. He would have been in good company with contemporary proponents of multiculturalism. In addition to focusing on conventional literacy and the vocational needs of adults, Locke envisioned that adult education should also assume the role of providing programs of culture-based education which would ultimately have the impact of reducing culture conflict. For Locke, adult education could serve as a catalyst and a conduit for transforming attitudes that fueled stereotypes and negative behavior. He firmly believed that it was critical for all groups to know their history and culture as well as the history and culture of others. However, he believed that for African Americans, who had been systematically denied an opportunity to affirm their history and their culture, the need was even more pronounced. Indeed, Locke was obsessed with the possibility of a global community that valued individual and group differences while it rejected absolute standards of valuing.

As a significant adult educator, Locke should be credited with two sterling accomplishments. First, he was responsible for the successful publication of the *Bronze Booklet Series* (made up of eight essays by prominent African American scholars

and intellectuals) which chronicled and heralded a broad range of cultural and historical developments in the African American community. This work symbolized Locke's insistence that groups must know their traditions if we are ever to realize a culturally pluralistic society that respects differences. Importantly, these booklets were intended to provide some intellectual and scholarly legitimacy to the African American experience. It was noteworthy that, like Locke, four of the invited authors were Harvard graduates: Sterling Brown, Ralph Bunch, Carter G. Woodson and Eric Williams (who subsequently became the prime minister of Trinidad and provided an extended picture of Africans in the Diaspora in his essay, "Negroes in the Caribbean"). Locke served as the general editor and authored two of the booklets. (The *Bronze Booklet Series*, originally published during the period 1936-1941, is still available through different publishers.)

Second, Locke was the guiding force in organizing four national conferences which focused on the adult education needs of African Americans. These conferences, jointly sponsored by the American Association for Adult Education and the Associates for Negro Folk Education, were held at historically Black colleges and addressed issues that ranged from agricultural extension to the role of African Americans in national defense. A broad cross-section of representatives from government, education and practitioners in the field attended these conferences, which to some degree resulted in changing public policies regarding adult education. Mary McCloud Bethune was one of the luminary conference leaders.

Unfortunately, scholars have given a disproportionate amount of attention to the classic debate between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois regarding the direction of African American education. There is yet another voice to be considered as we continue to struggle with recurring issues of inequity in education and the poor state of race relations in this country, for which many of our educational institutions must bear some responsibility and accountability. A reexamination of Locke's views on race and race relations within the context of the mission of liberal arts colleges, such as ESC, is certainly warranted. As he so often noted, the creation of an environment for students and faculty that fosters an appreciation and tolerance of differences should constitute one of the imperatives of a liberal arts education. This should be a pedagogical as well as a faculty mandate. Alain Locke's voice should be heard in our contemporary adult educational (and "culture war") discourse.

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ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Women, Work and the Changing Expectations of Time Commitments: Some Implications for Mentoring

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Recently, scholarly work in the area of women and the economy has focused on the increasing burdens women are facing as members of the paid labor force. Women have to assume multiple roles as paid workers and at the same time, continue to maintain primary responsibility for the care of home and children. The pressures they face are increasing as employers ask workers to expand their time commitments to the job.

As I began my career at Empire State College, I explored some of these issues in a book about women who watch the television show "Thirtysomething." In the book, *Television Culture and Women's Lives: Thirtysomething and the Contradictions of Gender*, I argued that women used their involvement with "Thirtysomething" characters and plots to think and talk through their own struggles to balance work and family life. Now, as a mother of two young children, with a full-time job as a mentor, the pressures and contradictions facing working women are even more apparent to me. Scholarly work on where these pressures come from and how workers are handling them is more important than ever. I believe this work holds relevance not only for those of us mentors, male and female, who are asked to assume multiple responsibilities in our lives, but perhaps more importantly, for the students who we are presently serving.

The historical backdrop for our current situation is women's young children, whether married or single. For example, by 1990, 58 percent of all married women in the U.S. were in the labor force. In addition, fully 62 percent of white and 73 percent of black married women with three-year olds were in the labor force as well. (U.S. Dept. of Labor and Commerce, 1994.) In fact, it has been estimated that by the year 2000, if present trends continue, as many as 90 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 40 will be working, and fully 80 percent of these will be mothers (Carnevale, 1995: 366). While it is true that, in many respects, women have always worked, and many of them in the paid labor force, the relative increase since earlier generations, has been substantial.

Women have assumed these new responsibilities in part due to economic changes since the early 1970s. Since that time, due to falling "real" wages, it has usually taken at least a second income to maintain the standard of living which had previously been attained with one income (Coontz, 1992). Additionally, more women than ever have found that they simply don't have a male wage to depend on in the first place. By 1988, for example, 45 percent of all employed women were single, separated or divorced. The "feminization of poverty" is a term that accurately captured the experience of many of these women and the families they had to support. (Amott, 1993) Despite women's entry into the labor force, then, most American families have not been able to experience a significant increase in their standard of living, even when a husband still contributes to the family income.

In addition to the trend toward increasing participation in the labor force, working mothers are now also finding themselves in a situation where the work environment itself has dramatically shifted, particularly with respect to the increasing amounts of time people are asked to spend at work. Women who are now entering the workforce are coming into a workplace whose values are themselves in flux. Expectations for longer and longer work hours are the norm, at all levels of employment (Hochschild, 1997; Schor, 1992). The committed employee is the one who is available for "just in

time" production to the company whenever he/she is needed. (Ritvo, et al. 1995) Because of steep competitive pressures, companies now implicitly expect their workers to demonstrate loyalty through putting work ahead of other responsibilities.

In this environment, women are expected to fulfill not only their earlier role as practical and emotional caregivers to the household, but to somehow squeeze in those tasks into an increasingly lengthening workday. It is now not uncommon, for example, for working mothers to leave the house before 7 a.m. and return after 6 p.m. Even with the most supportive spouse or partner, one who is shifting his or her traditional gender roles to cope with the new reality, the odds are still high that the needs of those outside the workplace are getting short shrift. Though the increase of mothers in the labor force has been dramatic, then, these changes have not been met by a serious accounting of how women's earlier roles as reproducers of the household would now be fulfilled. Mother's increased involvement in the workplace raises serious social questions, but outside of a handful of conservative critics of "the breakdown in family values," there has been little social debate about the consequences of this shift.

The research I undertook for my book explored how women negotiated between their new roles as full-time wage earners and the need to fulfill family responsibilities as well. If, for example, two-thirds of all pre-school children now have mothers in the labor force, how are these women balancing between the intensive needs of very young children, a full or part-time job with increasingly long work days, as well as shared or single parenting tasks which include the physical maintenance and reproduction of the household?

The short answer, I discovered, is that many women are having a very difficult time trying to balance these increasing pressures on their time, and the multiple roles they are being asked to perform. While my study was focused on women, this is not to say that men were not experiencing their own pressures, brought on by increasing expectations by their wives for more participation in the household. However, the disproportionate burden has fallen on women. Sociologist Arlie Hochschild has written eloquently about the "second shift" women are still expected to perform of home labor after the "first shift" of paid labor. (Hochschild, 1989) In fact, Juliet Schor, a noted economist, estimates that women are now putting in the equivalent of an additional month of work a year as compared to men, once their hours of home labor and outside labor are added together (Schor, 1992).

The mostly middle-class women I interviewed, whether they were married or single, divorced, with children or without, felt overstretched in their role expectations as workers, mothers, wives and housewives. This "role-spillover," manifested itself in feelings of inadequacy in either or both the realms of work or home. "Balance" was simply out of the question for most of these women, and those who felt the most cheated were the ones who felt they had ended up sacrificing a homelife and/or children, because the demands of their work were so intense. At the other end of the spectrum were women who had been unable to enter the labor force at other than a low level of employment, and felt that their commitment to spending some years at home with their children had jeopardized their future potential for having meaningful careers.

These women expressed their frustration at their "role strain" and "role spill-over," through their discussion of a particular television show which had gained an almost cult status by the time I interviewed the women. "Thirty-something" was a television show which ran in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and which was geared toward this demographic blip of white, urban, female, middle and upper middle-class television viewers of childbearing age. Each week the show raised to dramatic heights the ordinary conflicts of the women who watched the program, and in this way, provided a vehicle for the women to imaginatively "play out" many of their own internal conflicts over negotiating an increasingly difficult life of intense work and family needs.

The show ended up offering arguably conservative resolutions to the dilemmas it posed, but at least it gave voice to the dilemmas these women were experiencing. Like most television shows, the program posed the dilemmas in the language of consumer culture, by offering viewers the sense that it was up to them to "choose" to be single or married, working or not, childless or not, but at least it articulated the agonizing conflicts that arose in the life situations of its female viewers.

My research interests these days have moved from the realm of looking at popular culture, to exploring in more detail the various alternative work options, including part-time, flextime, telecommuting, compressed work weeks, job sharing, and the alternative job category of "consultant". Has the workplace shifted enough to accomodate individuals with different

time needs, without making them sacrifice their professional development or mobility? I am interested in finding out more generally how various work cultures have responded to the changing family needs of their employees, many of whom find themselves in the so-called "sandwich generation" of having responsibilities for different generations of family members, whether younger children, adolescents and/or elderly relatives, sometimes all at the same time!

In terms of the work we do as mentors, some of my original research questions may still be of relevance. Those of us who mentor the adult learner have always understood how difficult it is for these students to achieve a balance between their work life and home life, one which would give them a modicum of space to take themselves seriously as students as well. Since I came to Empire in 1993, I have increasingly heard from my students how the demands of their workplace are expanding and the sense that things have gotten "out of control."

As a mentor, this has posed a number of dilemmas. It is one thing, for example, to learn to become more flexible in terms of extending paper deadlines or offering incompletes. It is another to see students who simply cannot put in the kind of hours of study needed to fulfill the requirements of a 4-credit learning contract. Added to this is the pressure of knowing that students need to complete their coursework as a requirement of their job, and a kind of implicit pressure develops which extends from their work environments into our own expectations as mentors.

Given these tensions, how do we, as mentors, learn to navigate in this new, time-pressured environment? And, how do we continue to mentor responsibly students who are under a time-squeeze? How do we balance our own increasing expectations to develop "professionally" and the additional hours that means for us as mentors? That is, how do we balance our own expanding workweek and increasing expectations of our job, and at the same time offer the intensive one-to-one mentoring to a group of students who may not even have time for that kind of educational experience? Finally, how can we as mentors balance our own time commitments to our job with our responsibilities to others; to family members, to friends and to our larger community?

To conclude, in a recent article in *Fortune* magazine, John Clendenin, chairman of BellSouth, was quoted as saying that "People have always had to make choices about balancing work and family. It has always been a personal issue, and individuals have to solve it." (Morris, 1997:80) Given this attitude on the part of many in corporate America (and Clendenin's attitude is typical), it makes little sense to speak of policies regarding flextime, compressed work hours, job shares and the like until the work culture itself begins to shift to encourage employees to adopt these solutions to accomodate their family needs. What fundamentally needs to take place is a sustained commitment to changing the work cultures in which attitudes like Clendenin's can be voiced unproblematically. As our own institution continues to face escalating budgetary pressures within an increasingly competitive environment, we too will be asked to make difficult choices between balancing our work and personal lives. Hopefully, though, we may be able to take the lead and demonstrate to our corporate partners the utility of setting limits on what we ask of our professional and support staff. In this way, in an alternative college, we might begin to serve as a model of an alternative work culture, one that values the whole individual and what she or he can bring to the workplace.

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ALL ABOUT MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Communities: Virtual vs. Real
Amitai Etzioni and Oren Etzioni

Editor's Note: *During the summer, Deborah Kleese sent along an e-mail message letting us know of an editorial in* Science *by Amitai Etzioni and Oren Etzioni. (Amitai Etzioni has written extensively on "communitarianism" and is the director of The George Washington University's Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies; Oren Etzioni is a computer science professor at the University of Washington.) As Deborah noted, the kinds of issues raised in the editorial are clearly linked to some of the discussion around ESC about technology and community (among ourselves, with our students and among our students). They are also relevant to the some of the comments offered in this issue of* All About Mentoring *by Gary Goss and those who responded to his reflections. The* Science *editorial is reprinted below:*

Research on virtual communities has been dominated by the question of whether online communities can be designed in ways that allow them to match the accomplishments of offline communities. The answer, at least according to several leading students of virtual communities, is that human relations in computer-mediated communities cannot be as intimate, strong and affect-laden as in social communities. Howard Rheingold concludes his book *The Virtual Community* with the words "(we) must pay for our access to each other by forever questioning the reality of our online culture."

Michael Dertouzos, in his new book, *What Will Be*, writes about "the forces of the cave." He notes that the primordial feelings of fear, love and anger cannot be transmitted online, because the participant knows "intellectually, but more importantly, intuitively, that he can turn off the machine" and avoid the impact of the forces. He adds that for this reason, while MIT is planning to provide virtual classrooms for its students, the students will also be required to come to the campus once in a while – to return to the cave, the real community.

But the question of whether virtual communities match real ones is slanted: Virtual communities must somehow live up to the accomplishments of real ones. Those psychologically inclined might suggest that this one-sided approach reflects an unconscious aim to reassure us that the new Frankenstein we have created will not outsmart us and dominate our real communities. As the recent brouhaha over Deep Blue's chess victory over Gary Kasparov indicates, the computer is still viewed with apprehension by some.

A different view emerges when we recast the question: What virtues of online communities are absent in offline ones? Computer-mediated and face-to-face communities each have their own advantages as well as their own weaknesses. We should investigate what real communities can do that virtual communities cannot do, and vice versa.

Even with current technical limitations, online communities have several advantages. They let people bond without being in close proximity either spatially or temporally (unlike phone conversations, online communication can be asynchronous). Communities can evolve across national borders and time zones. They can encompass individuals who are homebound because of illness, age or handicap. They are safer – a major consideration in many cities. Online discussion groups or forums can accommodate many more individuals than offline meeting rooms can accommodate. And online communities have much stronger memories than offline communities in matters ranging from the resolutions passed many

town meetings ago to names of the founders of the community. Finally, people can explore new relationships or even new identities online – they are not constrained by their physical appearance or offline identity, as Sherry Turkle of MIT has documented. An embodiment of these features of online communities is the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link). With its carefully crafted community guidelines, the WELL boasts a large membership and numerous discussion groups on topics ranging from "Women and Men" to "Science and Technology."

Real communities are better than virtual communities (at least as currently designed) in communicating affect, identifying participants and holding them accountable, and in providing group feedback (for example, cheering a speaker at a "real" town meeting). Which combinations of virtual and real communities are able to overcome the weaknesses of each and combine many of the strengths of both? Several studies show the advantages of mixed person-machine systems over pure interpersonal or computer-mediated systems. For quite a few years, members of the AAAS [American Association for the Advancement of Science] have combined face-to-face communications at annual and committee meetings with a rich diet of e-mail exchanges. In the future, such communities, whose members have close in-person relations and are all "wired" together as well, may benefit from a high volume of asynchronous communication and strong memory (features of online communities) and also from the accountability and communication of affect allowed by offline communities.

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ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Prior Learning Assessment and the Politics of Memory: The Experience of South Africa

Elana Michelson, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies

Perhaps because it is so deeply grounded in the College culture, the assessment of students' prior learning (PLA) never seems to play much of a role in our discourse about mentoring. I think we tend to see it as a student service that, like financial aid and flexible scheduling, helps us respond to the needs of adults. As proposals are made to change our assessment policies – to encourage standardized tests such as CLEP and to charge more for individualized assessment, for example, – the discussion seems to focus on the practicalities. I don't think we pay sufficient attention to what these changes might mean politically or epistemologically. That is, I don't think we stop to ask ourselves what PLA has to say, about knowledge, about power, or about the ways in which knowledge and power collide.

For the past two years, I have been working on the implementation of PLA in South Africa. I have been in residence periodically at the University of Cape Town, and I have done a series of workshops for the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the historically Black trade union federation. That work has encouraged me to revisit PLA as a site at which a specific relationship between power and knowledge is enacted. In some ways, I have come to see PLA as more conservative than I used to imagine. While recognizing alternative sources of knowledge, PLA has never challenged the university as the sole legitimate arbiter for what is or isn't accreditable knowledge. It has therefore not proved an opportunity to enrich academic learning with alternative ways of knowing or to value knowledge for its difference from rather than its similarity to academic expertise. At the same time, I have a renewed appreciation for PLA as an aspect of social struggle and as a potential aid to the kind of social transformation South Africa represents.

To appreciate the significance of PLA in South Africa, we need to bear in mind some of the specific horrors of its history. We need to remember that apartheid was rationalized, in part, by racist distinctions between supposedly "educated," "scientific," "rational" Europeans and supposedly "primitive," "superstition- ridden" Africans. We need to understand that slave wages were justified by the claim that Black workers were ignorant and unskilled. Mining "assistants," nursing "helpers" and similar job titles not only reflected unequal access to formal education and the racist division of labor but hid profound stores of knowledge and experience on the part of the Black South African working class.

Seen in this context, it is not surprising that PLA is being promoted in South Africa as a mechanism for educational and economic redress. According to the ANC's White Paper on Education and Training, PLA can "open doors of opportunity for people whose academic or career paths have been needlessly blocked because their prior learning . . . has not been assessed and certified" (White Paper on Education and Training, Johannesburg, 1995). Similarly, PLA has been written into the South African Qualifications Act to provide "redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities" (SAQA, Johannesburg, 1995). South Africa thus places PLA in a broader socio-political context than is usually visible over the piles of portfolio essays on our desks. On the one hand, it allows us a moment to feel good about the relationship of PLA to progressive social goals and the promise of a just and humane society. On the other hand, it challenges us to understand that PLA serves as a venue for negotiating economic prerogatives and social visibility, and not only in South Africa. Indeed, the emergence of PLA in South Africa is an occasion to ask and demand answers to fundamental questions:

- Whose knowledge will be seen to count?
- Who will judge whom, and on what basis?
- What ways of knowing will be legitimated, and what will that mean for historically marginalized groups?

As a way of beginning to ponder these questions, I'd like to share some of the issues that emerged from my work with the South African trade unions. The first of two stories I'd like to tell concerns the Construction and Allied Workers Union (CAWU), which had supported PLA enthusiastically as a way to prove that the Black "bricklayer assistants" they represented had informal, on-the-job learning equivalent to that of highly paid graduates of historically whites-only apprenticeships. A standardized exam was developed and administered through the Technikon of South Africa, but when the first group of their members was evaluated for certification, only 29 percent of the workers in some sectors passed.

What had gone wrong?

According to CAWU, the new exam tested bricklayers' knowledge of humidity and air pressure and ability to judge when mortar would dry. That seemed sensible enough, but it was those questions that the Black workers tended to fail. It is only though understanding the historical context within which knowledge is generated that this "failure" can be understood. Under apartheid, Black construction workers who left homes in distant townships long before dawn and travelled for hours by horrendous public transport went home unpaid if they had to leave work because of bad weather. They had long since invented a form of mortar that would dry in the rain and passed it on informally to each group of young workers. Thus, the problem wasn't the workers' lack of knowledge, but, as CAWU organizer Bhabhali Nhlapo said to me in utter frustration, "the relationship between their standards and what we actually know."

What makes CAWU's experience so ironic, of course, is that the so-called standards served to render knowledge invisible rather than allow it to be evidenced. Arguably, the bricklayer assistants knew more than their evaluators did, at least about laying brick in the rain. One can imagine an alternative scenario in which the test administrators called the Ministry of Public Works with news of the workers' invention and got these workers to teach their technique to civil engineers. That, of course, never happened. Instead, the workers "failed."

I would like to think that our practice at ESC, in which individual students can articulate their knowledge outside of pre-set standardized testing, might preclude this situation. Yet we also set our own knowledge as the norm, however implicitly, and I am not convinced we go as far as we must to invite and recognize the prior learning of those in what might be thought about as epistemologically marginalized communities. The need to do so became clear to me in a workshop I conducted with the National Union of Mineworkers. The union sees PLA, among other things, as a way of certifying worker-friendly safety inspectors who will help end the relentless string of South African mining disasters and the long-standing indifference to mineworkers' lives.

This second story of mine requires a bit of background about Kimberlite rock. According to metallurgical explanations, Kimberlite rock is "highly acidic." When water seeps into Kimberlite-rich mines, the acid in the Kimberlite "reacts to the water," producing heat and occasionally causing a deadly mud rush that then kills everyone in its path. According to the mineworkers themselves, who have evolved their own explanations in the absence of formal education, Kimberlite is "afraid of water." When it touches water, the "rock boils."

The actual PLA policies for evaluating potential safety inspectors will be designed, in large measure, by labor-management committees, so at one point in the workshop, I divided the group into worker and management representatives and asked them to identify the standards they would like to see in place. The management reps echoed what they knew of the position that the mine owners were actually taking: college-level literacy in English, a knowledge of mine finances, and the equivalent of a two-year college knowledge of chemistry and metallurgy. The worker reps protested.

"Hey, that's not fair. You're designing the standards on purpose to keep us out. Our members have never had occasion to gain a theoretical knowledge of chemistry."

One of the management reps slammed his fist on the table in a wonderful bit of role playing.

"You say you want safe mines and competent safety inspectors," he contended. "Yet you want to accredit safety reps who wouldn't know a periodic table if they fell on it. Rock is afraid of water? Rock boils? You want safety officers who believe that nonsense? We don't call that safety standards!"

One of the worker reps narrowed his eyes and leaned forward.

"Look," he said, "we are certifying safety officers here, not chemistry professors. The two accounts of what causes a mud rush – that acid reacts to water and that rock is afraid – may have very different value at the University of Pretoria, but when it comes to predictive value, of knowing when dangerous conditions exist, the two are precisely equivalent. What we want are experienced mine workers who can tell by the sound and the smell that something's wrong, and who feel it in their backbones when something isn't safe. And when we say standards, we mean people who understand the value of every single mine worker's life."

That workshop took place a year ago, and in some ways I'm still puzzling over it. Or, more precisely, I still don't entirely know how to relate that exchange to our practice at ESC. Certainly, I do not quite know what to think about "rock boils" in terms of academic credit, and we are an academic institution, with some institutional loyalty to a particular Western, urban, masculinist way of knowing of which science is a part.

Yet the above exchange points to a larger issue than the distinction between academic and vocational qualifications. What it made me understand is that, seen in slightly different terms, experience is another word for history. PLA is a way of negotiating the politics of memory – whose counts, whose is remembered, whose attains the status of exemplary – and it seems to me those questions are at least as much about the future as the past. The meaning of PLA in that sense is contained in a verse by Langston Hughes that kept running through my head while I listened to these trade unionists debating the question of mine safety:

So we stand here
at the edge of hell
in Harlem
And look out at the world
And wonder
What we're gonna do
In the face of
What we remember.

"Adult development is seen as an adult's progressively enhanced capacity to validate prior learning through reflective discourse and to act upon the resulting insights. Anything that moves the individual toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning perspective, the validity of which has been established through rational discourse, aids an adult's development."

– from *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (p.7) Jack Mezirow

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ALL ABOUT MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Tutorial Evaluation in a Postmodern World
David Starr-Glass, Jerusalem, Center for International Programs

In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of
ignorance. In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.

– T.S. Eliot, *East Coker*

Eliot was older than the average students that I normally tutor or mentor. He was also a good deal scruffier. At our first meeting I had work hard to keep a window of communication open. I had realized, and was uncomfortable in the realization, that I have a low tolerance to filthy clothes and those who inhabit them. I had tried to fight my way through the stench to search out the real Eliot, who lay beyond his accumulated dirt. This might have been a metaphysical search, or a struggle to establish our underlying humanity, but it was also more than that. It was an attempt to engage in a process of learning which might leave both of us richer.

Now, admittedly, sentiments such as these are not usually the preeminent ones when I receive my salary check or I pay the mortgage, but they were present in that room when Eliot sat, half asleep, in front of me. This learning contract was going to be a considerable challenge; in turbulent times I tend to seek out the tranquility of idealism. Muttering something about the heat, I opened the window wide and tried to breathe creative life into challenge of mutual enrichment. I knew this would be a situation in which I would have to be dispossessed of many of my preconceived attitudes.

In the weeks which followed I learned a good deal about Eliot:

- his academic excursion into several community colleges,
- his intermittent treatment at the Veterans Administration, and
- something of his current street life.

He never told me about his dreams for the future, but then I lacked the courage to delve too deeply. What he did reveal were his immediate educational and career expectations, which seemed at best unrealistic, at worst delusional fantasies. But all of these fragments of knowledge were the incidental products of our meeting: ostensibly we met to explore rather esoteric areas of accounting.

In those weeks, I came to appreciate Eliot as a part of my own humanity. Perhaps it should not have taken me so long to recognize that, but then most of us live in the glass houses of our own projections and prejudices. I found it hard work keeping the window open, and I cannot say that the process became appreciably easier. It was hard work trying to overcome my inclination to disengage from all aspects of the learning contract. It was hard work trying to coax Eliot

through the text which proved too fine-tuned for him. I tried to make Eliot understand why accountants do things the way they do, and the implications of those decisions. I tried to make him appreciate underlying principles and structures which – according to his previous college transcripts – he should have known already.

I tried to encourage, to motivate and to facilitate an understanding of our text and our computational problems. Perhaps I tried too hard, or simply tried to do things which should not have been done. Perhaps, on reflection, Maslow's hierarchy of needs should have warned me that self-actualization through accounting theory may be somewhat limited when the student has an ongoing fight to find adequate food and a place to sleep. But then, we reasoned, he had signed up to study accounting theory, not for an elective in personal counselling or urban survival.

The learning contract came to an end and, on reflection, I do think that a positive knowledge gain took place. Eliot did know more about the way in which accountants think and encapsulate their logic in generally accepted accounting principles. That was what he wanted to do. He told me that he saw his future in terms of the CPA examination and a steady accounting job. This seemed implausible, but I did not object or reject. It was hard for me to see accounting theory as particularly relevant to his life. It seemed to me that so many more areas of his existence could have been improved and enriched. But Eliot was adamant: The world of accounting was where he wanted to be. He did not want me to give him advise, social commentary or arm-chair therapy. He wanted me to help him come to a fuller understanding of accounting theory. I did, and in doing so exposed his lack of prior accounting knowledge and his less than sharp appreciation of the present material.

I now struggled with the task of communicating Eliot's knowledge gain to others. Until now, the tutorial had been a private affair, even if it had of necessity been infused with institutional imperatives and professional responsibility. But the evaluation – the recording of the educational outcome of our tutorial – was going to be a matter of record, transcripted and available to those that Eliot designated. How best to serve the legitimate, but differing, needs of tutor, student and transcript reader ? How best to disentangle the web of subjectivity and objectivity in reporting the outcomes of this tutorial engagement ?

Working with Eliot emphasized an aspect of the tutorial and mentoring process which I have always found difficult: evaluation. When dealing with a lecture-based mode of instruction the task always seems easier. There, the course is defined in terms of learning objects, which can be quite objective and grounded in demonstrated competencies.

The evaluating instrument – examination, project, research paper, etc. – can be crafted to test whether the defined objectives have been met.

There are always interesting issues connected with any evaluation process: selection of an appropriate evaluation instrument, assigning weights to the different learning objectives, determining the taxonomic components of the learning gain and giving a grade to those who have been examined. The actual selection of what is to be measured, and the construction of the measuring instrument, may present difficulties, but the overriding direction of evaluation is clear: the attempt to give an objective measure of how well the learning objectives have been met.

In the lecture model, whether we like it or not, the communication flow is predominantly unidirectional. The lecturer, while sensitive to feedback from his/her class, talks at them. The lecturer sets the agenda: the learning objectives, the pace at which ideas are presented, the tone and language, the mode of evaluation. There is an asymmetric distribution of power, and an assumed asymmetry in knowledge. While some of us may try to redistribute these parameters – allowing students degrees of participation in the content, delivery and evaluation – the lecture mode still defines the lecturer as the primary agent in the process. Perhaps that is why evaluations in lecture based courses seem relatively straight forward: Objectivity is expressed in terms of a single person's objectivity, the lecturer's. But in the tutorial there are of necessity two participants. While there may indeed be asymmetries in knowledge and authority, these will be challenged, laid aside and re-evaluated during the tutorial process. To enter into a tutorial is to enter into a dynamic experience where both parties have to engage, reflect and change. The tutorial is a private rather than public engagement. The tutorial is an exploration of shared subjectivity rather than of objectivity. While I have experienced the different qualities and opportunities in both the lecture and tutorial it seems that, on reflection, I am using "lecture" and "tutorial" as shorthand; that there are much broader issues here and that the specific instructional mode is nucleus around which these issues cluster. Beyond the specifics of the lecture mode of instruction is the broader concept of what Diana Bilimoria has termed "modern

pedagogical perspective" (Bilimoria, 1995), in which the active metaphor is performance. Beyond the specific features of the tutorial, I see another paradigm of education, what she has called "postmodern pedagogical perspective." In the postmodern perspective the more appropriate metaphor is that of learning, with "students and teachers as coparticipants in the learning process."

The tutorial can obviously be more than a cozy chat over a cup of tea. Intellectual positions may change; new ideas may be grasped and lost and resurrected in a strangely transformed guise; active communication can take place even when one is looking at accounting theory. The central themes which permeate the tutorial mode are: encouraged dialogue, mutual respect and engagement in a process of learning which might leave all participants richer. Perhaps this can indeed be called education in a postmodern age. The difficulty is in making a transcripted evaluation of the outcomes of this postmodern process.

The tutorial evaluation reflects a much richer set of learning objectives than is available to those using the lecture mode. The dynamic process – not simply the different delivery form – should be part of the tutorial evaluation. Thus, communication skills, perceptiveness, reflection on shared ideas, are as essential as subject areas knowledge, and the evaluation should reflect this. How to measure these elements still remains a challenge: intuition often means idiosyncratic, and objectivity can mean unrecognized personal bias. I prefer my students to read their evaluations and discuss them with me. Sometimes I will write an evaluation and ask the student to do the same thing; we then discuss the differences in the two documents before a final evaluation is drafted.

All of this might be reasonably straightforward, except that, at Empire State College, the tutorial evaluation becomes part of the student's official transcript. How is a reader of the transcript – often quite of unaware of the richness and subtleties of the tutorial mode, or sensitized to postmodern concerns – to understand what the learning outcomes were? Learning outcomes may be thought of as synonymous with grades and, by extension, grades might refer to competencies levels in subject matter. How can an evaluation document reflect the unique, subjective experience of the tutorial while at the same time be expected to convey the kinds of assumed validity which the lecture orientated reader is accustomed to? The problem, interestingly enough, is the same one which the accountant has in auditing a set of financial statements. She must certify that the statements have the qualities of consistency, comparability, relevance and reliability.

However, she knows that the multiple report users, for whom the financial statements are prepared, will have quite different appreciations of what these qualities mean
and will value each differently.

So what do I write about Eliot ? He does want to be an accountant and, sooner or later, someone will want to know about his accounting skills. They are very poor. Someone might be interested in how receptive he is to new ideas. There he is a good deal better. What about perseverance and the fortitude of overcoming his daily grind to complete this learning contract? That rates very highly. But who wants to know, and who wants to know what?

What is the best thing to do?

The zero possibility – that is the possibility which existed before those which now confront me – was never to have accepted this student into a tutorial relationship. It turned out that Eliot was not prepared for this kind of advanced level study and I did not have the kind of therapeutic counseling skills which might have been more appropriate for him. It might all have been put down to poor judgement, poor initial assessment or simply bad luck. The only consolation is that it has happened before. Eliot has passed through a number of educational systems, has completed courses and has the transcripts to prove it. Perhaps he is simply less lucid these days?

There is the option of reworking the initial learning objectives. Since contract evaluations are appended to the learning contract, and since the initial learning contract is viewed as a tentative proposal, I could redefine our learning objectives and make them match more closely with what has really happened. This would give me the opportunity to de-emphasize accounting skills while stressing broader inter-personal and communication objectives. If the reader of the final transcript ever takes time to read the revised learning contract and its evaluation he/she will get a more realistic appreciation of the true change which took place during this contract. Fudging?

There is a story of a person who was acclaimed as a skillful archer because people always saw that the targets in his garden had arrows at the center. When confronted with this he seemed somewhat embarrassed as he explained his technique. First, he would let his arrow fly towards an unmarked target. Then, he would paint concentric rings of color round about the still quivering arrow.

Or perhaps another possibility would be to give the student a standard accounting exam, fail him and report this in the evaluation. This raises an issue which I am frankly ignorant about. Can someone actually fail a tutorial? If failure is possible in a tutorial, who fails?

The educational model may be constructed around a student-centered, postmodern paradigm but what about the subject-centered student, or reader of his/her transcript? How best to incorporate the quite different expectations of tutor, mentor and involved third parties into the process? How best to explain – perhaps to counter balance – the centripetal forces which are generated in the tutorial and which affect, or cloud, the evaluation? How best to report honestly what took place so that it may provide the greatest utility to all?

These are the questions which Eliot has left me with on my way of ignorance. There are, undoubtedly, other issues and possibilities which I have not considered. I would like some help. Have you had to deal with the Eliots of this world in a mentoring or tutorial setting? How do you understand evaluation in this setting?

Can you give me some feedback?

Perhaps, within our shared community of knowledge and concern, there are some among you who might help me think this through?

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ALL ABOUT MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Book Review
Mayra Bloom, Nyack Unit

Paley, Vivian Gussin
***The Girl With the Brown Crayon* (1997)**
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

Vivian Gussin Paley, the MacArthur winning author of a nutshell library of books, has spent the past 30 years examining life in the preschool classroom. In the process, she raises personal, academic, political and ethical issues of profound concern to Empire State College mentors.

The Girl with the Brown Crayon is an account of Paley's final year of teaching. As she prepares to leave the classroom, she considers, among other things, the degree to which her personal and professional identities have merged: "What if the mirror that holds my truest reflection is the one that hangs on the classroom wall? When I no longer hear the name teacher,' will I be left with no name at all?" (89)

She also introduces us to Reeny, "the girl with the brown crayon." Early in the school year, Reeny announces her close identification with Frederick, a poet-mouse character in an illustrated book by Leo Lionni. "That brown mouse seems to be just like me," Reeny declares one day, and shortly thereafter, Paley "...looks up to see five children drawing mice; by some unspoken agreement, they are following a new curriculum." (6)

Soon the children are reading, drawing, painting and enacting all of the books in Lionni's considerable opus. They discuss his major concerns – particularly the conflict between self expression and belonging – with insight and sensitivity at the same time that these themes are being played out in their social interactions and in their families' lives. The children's involvement with literature so impresses Paley that she makes a conscious commitment to follow the Leo Lionni curriculum wherever it may lead. She is not without trepidations, however, for she is aware that she – and the students – will be swept into an organic, unpredictable process in which synchronicity and stories rather than pre-and- post testing will hold sway. Ultimately, however, she finds that when the curriculum is shaped by the students' authentic interests and developmental needs, the learning that results is deep, profoundly textured and permanent. Paley reports: "In the course of the morning, the children have taken up such matters as the artist's role in society; the conditions necessary for thinking; and the influence of music and art on the emotions. From Reeny's simple assertion that, 'That brown mouse seem to be just like me,' has come a preview of the introspective life."(8)

Paley documents the year in her signature style, by alternating meticulous observations and transcriptions of the children's words with questions about what is going on in the classroom and inside herself. She wonders, for example, whether she is really teaching the children anything, or whether she has simply prepared an environment in which learning can spontaneously unfold:

I wondered if Reeny's ability to use [new] metaphor[s] is due in part to the practice we've had in analyzing Leo Lionni. Yet isn't it more likely the other way round?

That is, the Leo Lionni stories...work so well because the children come to school knowing how to think about such matters. We need only give them the proper context in which to demonstrate and fine tune their natural gifts.(86)

For Empire State College mentors accustomed to defining our work by what distinguishes adults from other learners, it may be surprising to find such familiar educational themes unfolding in a kindergarten classroom. Yet part of what makes mentoring meaningful is the search for connections with those aspects of the teaching/ learning process which persist across cultures and endure throughout the life cycle. And part of what inspires us to continue is corroboration of our basic educational and philosophical commitments. Whether documenting the impact of race in the classroom in *White Teacher*; recounting the moment-by-moment process through which a withdrawn student becomes part of a narrative community in *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter*, or carrying out bold experiments in peace education in *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, Vivian Paley's work is a fine place to find and build on such connections.

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ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Refuge: The Newest New Yorkers
Mel Rosenthal, Metropolitan Center

I am very pleased to be able to show my work about refugees in New York State in museums that consider themselves teaching institutions. When photographs are put on a wall they can get separated from the meaning you think they have. They can be seen as works of art and their subjects can be lost. We worked hard to make sure this didn't happen to the images in *Refuge*. Refugees are seeking refuge because they feel that they will be persecuted, imprisoned or killed as a result of their race, religion, nationality or political beliefs. Most important are their stories and who they are. The show has a good deal of text written by Dr. Jack Salzman, a scholar of American Studies. He works hard to do justice to these complex lives.

The staff of the New York State Museum and I created this "Family Activity Guide" to encourage more interaction between visitors to the show and the images. It was specifically thought of as a way to involve families with the issues raised by the photographs. Thousands of these forms were used in the five months the show was up in Albany.

The pictures included here are taken from the section of the exhibit, "Earning a Living."

Family Activity Guide

Refuge:
The Newest New Yorkers

Photographs capture moments and often tell stories. This photography exhibit explores the lives of people who were forced to leave their homelands and come to America. They were no longer safe in their own countries and are now trying to feel "at home" in New York. The questions in this family activity guide may help you to learn a little more about our "Newest New Yorkers."

Imagine what it would be like if you and your family had to suddenly move to a new country. You don't know anyone and you don't even speak the same language! How would you feel? (Circle one or more)

Scared Happy Confused Peaceful Excited

Did anyone in your family come to America from another country? ____________

My ____________ came from ____________
[relative(s)] [country]
to live in the United States.

An immigrant is often described as someone who chooses to leave her/his country because she/he wants to build a better life in a new place. Someone who is forced to leave a country because war and/or prejudice makes him or her feel unsafe is called a:

____

In "Honoring Tradition," people are doing activities which remind them of their homeland. Family and religious traditions bring people together. List 3 activities or events found in this section.

1. ____________
2. ____________
3. ____________

Does your family come together for any traditional events? ______________________

What kinds of events ? ____

____

Learning a new language can be challenging! Look at the photo's in "Expanding Visions." All of these people are students. By looking at their faces, can you guess how they feel about learning in a new language? (Circle one or more)

Happy Curious Angry Tired Puzzled Excited

Most of the people in these photographs came to America with hope, and little or no money. List 3 types of jobs found in the section called "Earning a Living":

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Look at the photographs in "Making it Home." Although it isn't easy to start a new life in an unfamiliar place, the people in these photo's find comfort in everyday activities. List 5 activities found in this section.

1.____________ 2.____________ 3.____________

4.____________ 5.____________

What are some of your favorite activities? ______________________________

____

Look at the final four photographs in the section called " A Dream Fulfilled." Draw a picture of the object which appears in all of these photo's.

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM

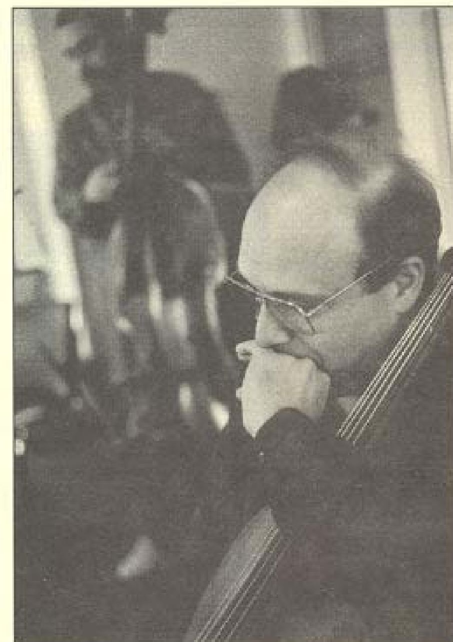
The New York State Museum is a Program of The University of the State of New York/ The State Education Department
All programs are jointly sponsored and supported by the New York State Museum and the New York State Institute

Haitian Migrant Worker Mother & Child, Putnam County, N.Y.

Vietnamese Restoring Brownstone, Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

Haitian Police Officer, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Women from Uzbekestan & the Ukraine, Brighton Beach Ballet, N.Y.



Russian Playing in the New American Chamber Orchestra, New York City

ALL ABOUT MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Isabel Archer Pauses to Make Photographs and to Read the Bible

Lee Herman, Central New York Center

"I should like to make her rich."
"What do you mean by rich?"
"I call people rich when they're able to meet the requirements of their imagination. Isabel has a great deal of imagination."
– Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

"School," from the Greek, "skole=leisure"
– *The Oxford English Dictionary*

For 5 credits, Isabel Archer is reading the *Bible*. She is reading the *Bible*, both Old and New Testaments, from beginning to end. Isabel Archer is reading the *Bible* and learning photography, reading the *Bible* and learning photography, 5 credits for the one, 3 for the other.

Isabel Archer is reading the *Bible*, learning photography and helping her oldest daughter get ready for college. Isabel Archer is reading the *Bible*, taking photographs, planning for her oldest daughter, while watching her younger daughter play soccer every week. Reading, photographing, helping, watching, Isabel Archer is carrying with her at all times a cellular phone. Isabel Archer is carrying with her a cellular phone at all times, even in the darkroom and in her bedroom, because she is always working, working as the human resources manager of a company which is growing more than 15 percent a year, every year, for the last seven years, and she is always expecting an urgent call from her boss, one of the owners, from New York, Paris or Jakarta, in the darkroom, by the *Bible*, during a campus visit, at a soccer game, in bed, at three o'clock in the morning when Isabel Archer might be sleeping but probably is not, because she is working and she is wondering, right now, beginning to wonder, while she is working, reading, learning, photographing, helping, planning, watching, whether she wants the next half of her life, her next 45 years, as she thinks of it, to be quite like this.

Late one evening, while she is the darkroom, in the darkness, struggling futiley to secure to a developing tank reel a roll of exposed film – pictures to be, she hopes, of an egg – the green call light on her cellular phone begins to blink. The bright green light spoils the film. This is her third roll. Isabel Archer has never seen a picture she has taken. She has to rush outside the darkroom, outside the building, late at night, to receive the call clearly, and realizes, Isabel Archer realizes while she is talking with her boss, an owner of the growing company, calling from New York, Paris, Jakarta or somewhere, that she is locked out. Her keys, her spoiled pictures of an egg are inside.

While she is banging and calling at the door, hoping a custodian will hear her and let her in, Isabel Archer is wondering why she wanted to learn photography, why she so enjoys taking all these pictures, which she has never seen, of an egg. Late at night, outside in the dark, Isabel Archer is thinking that she likes taking pictures, that she likes reading the *Bible*, that she will be glad, though she loves her daughters, when the younger daughter's soccer season is over and the older one leaves for college. Isabel Archer is being happy that she decided to change her plan to do a combined, accelerated bachelor's/master's degree in business administration. Late this night, turning off the phone, waiting to be let back in the building where the darkroom is, where her keys and her egg pictures are waiting for her, Isabel Archer is content that,

after completing Corporate Finance and Business Statistics, she, Isabel Archer, decided to drop from her curriculum her final two courses in business, and she is content, Isabel Archer is, that she replaced them with reading the *Bible* and learning photography.

In the late cooling air of an early summer's night, she is thinking about the rest of her life. Isabel Archer is not thinking that she knows she will not finish reading the *Bible* or learning photography by the end of this enrollment period, which, she knows, will now be her last one for her bachelor's degree, not thinking "only" a bachelor's degree. Isabel Archer is not thinking that she no longer cares so much to become a vice president of her company; Isabel Archer is not thinking that she will tell her boss that she will no longer keep at all times the cellular phone within reach of her ear. She is imagining making photographs of an egg. And she is wondering about the *Bible* story she has been reading several times over.

It's the one about Moses telling Pharoah to let the Israelites go. Moses is scared, Isabel sees, but listens to God. Pharoah is proud and stubborn, won't listen to Moses's God. Isabel wonders why. Why, she wonders, does this god-on-earth not give up? After the turning of the staffs into serpents, the plagues of locusts and frogs, the poisoning of the river Nile, after the deaths of the first born, including Pharoah's own, why after all these and other potent signs, why, Isabel asks, until his entire army is drowned, the Israelites escape to the other side of the sea, and he is left alone and powerless, does Pharoah not let go? Isabel wonders. She wonders also, Isabel does, why God bothered to go through Moses, a frightened mortal, why God prolonged the contest with Pharoah and didn't, with just an omnipotent sentence, like "Let there be light," free the Israelites. And Isabel is wondering, why is this episode, containing the contest between Moses and Pharoah, just about the longest, maybe the longest one in the whole *Bible*? Wondering still, Isabel thinks about long, long "takes" she remembers seeing in movies, the scenes of building suspense and conflict where there are no edited in cut-aways to other camera shots, no pauses until there is some relieving resolution.

Late the next day, the day after Isabel Archer's night inside the darkroom and locked outside of it, after Isabel Archer leaves working at the office and before she returns to the darkroom for another evening trying to make her pictures, Isabel Archer comes to see me. She asks me all of the questions she has been thinking about. For more than a year, I have been waiting for Isabel to ask me questions like these. I could not ask them for her. I will not answer them now, even the ones I think I know the answers to. But now we can begin.

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ALL ABOUT MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

Circle News

Tom Hodgson, Central New York Center

Can We Keep Hi Touch with Hi Tech?

As the influx of increasingly more sophisticated means of extending the mentoring relationship beyond our offices has been made available in recent years, my concern for our ability as faculty to foster student development in the absence of personal (i.e. face to face) contact has risen accordingly. I found a like-minded adult developmentalist (both of us having studied with Robert Kegan and Larry Daloz) in Kathleen Taylor, Ph.D., who coordinates portfolio development at the College of St. Mary's of California. Together, we completed a survey of faculty and administrators from adult degree programs across the country, asking for their sense of the present dilemma we face as educators: How do we take advantage of the positive contributions of the new educational technologies and modes of communication while holding to our charge, and, for many, our raison d'etre as mentors, to help students negotiate the circuitous paths of adult development in the context of learning and career/life planning?

Procedurally, we conducted about 20, in-depth oral interviews of adult degree program professionals ranging from new faculty to senior administrators. Our sample covered a variety of instititional types and sizes, although we did not recruit our participants randomly. We followed a structured line of questioning followed by probes as appropriate. Transcriptions of all interviews were assembled and analyzed, yielding some interesting results which I will briefly summarize.

We have found thus far that most educators from both faculty and administrative positions have a positive regard for electronic communication (i.e. e-mail) under certain circumstances, such as needing to disseminate information quickly and extensively, or responding to student/colleague's inquiries where an uncomplicated, short replies are preferable and more economical uses of time than personal dialogues and/or meetings. E-mail was not considered helpful when more sensitive, involved issues needed to be discussed, particularly subjects which might prove painful to one or both parties.

In addition, we received considerable commentary about the inequities across the information highway. Our respondents cited that many of their students do not have access to and/or training on how to use computer technologies which maintain pace with the current demands of the newer systems and software. On the other hand, those students with access to contemporary systems and who have the requisite skill are seen to benefit by the use of educational technology in their studies. Similarly, those faculty and administrators who are technologically inclined, and who have been able to keep pace with the continual change inherent to computer systems, find it invaluable to their work. In some institutions, though, these folks are in the minority in their departments, and are often called upon to solve the riddles of educational technology without the allocation of the time or compensation to do so.

To keep this a brief report, I will conclude with one final observation that attends to the interests of the faculty "Circle" studying student development. When the question was raised about whether or not the use of educational technology had any impact on fostering student development, a clear voice was sounded by the respondents that while ET had a valuable future in facilitating students' access to educational resources and interesting methodologies, it was necessary to maintain

some personal contact in the faculty-student relationship to be most instrumental in a developmentally facilitative role with adult learners in higher education.

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Disabled But Enabled and Empowered Conference Update

The 4th Biannual ESC Conference, "Disabled but Enabled and Empowered: Building Common Ground for the Next Millennium," will be held in Rochester on March 19-22, 1998. Keynote speakers invited and expected to attend include John Hockenberry, correspondent for NBC, CNBC and MSNBC; Judith Heumann, Assistant Secretary of Education, US Department of Education; Heather Whitestone-McCallum, Miss America, 1995; and John Lancaster, Executive Director, President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. The conference will explore six interrelated themes: education, employment, arts, assistive technology, advocacy and inclusion, and social policy. A number of sessions will focus on adult and non-traditional higher education and distance learning.

Opportunities for undergraduate and graduate study will be available through cross-center mentoring. Information on the call for proposals is available through electronic mail and in print. Deadline for receipt of proposals is December 15, 1997.

For more information, see the Web page at www.esc.edu/disabled/. Send questions by e-mail to DISABLED@sescva.esc.edu or contact David DuBois (Rochester), Nancy Gadbow (Canandaigua) or Mary Klinger (Corning/Elmira).

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ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Issue 12, Fall 1997

MI News

Journal Updates

In this and subsequent issues of All About Mentoring we will provide information on academic/professional journals devoted to adult education and learning. Our goal is to make us more aware of on-going scholarly work in the field and to offer us options for the publication of our own research and reflections on mentoring.

Adult Learning

Adult Learning is a magazine for adult educators designed to provide short, well-written, professionally oriented articles with a problem-solving emphasis. The audience for Adult Learning includes all individuals who design, manage, teach, conduct, and evaluate programs of adult and continuing education broadly defined.

Address: Adult Learning
American Association for Adult &
Continuing Education
1200 19th Street, NW Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202 429-5131

The journal publishes personal reflections (including a focus on "innovations that worked for me"); reviews of relevant book, video or other teaching materials; and theme articles (recent issues have focused on such themes as the older learner, educating the work force, special learning needs, intercultural education, assessment, and learning to learn).

(Note: *Adult Education Quarterly* is the more scholarly of the two journals sponsored by the American Association for Adult & Continuing Education. More information on the *AEQ* will be provided in the next issue of *All About Mentoring*.)

Scholarly Note

If you have read a book that interested you, if you have attended a stimulating conference, if you had a valuable, surprising or difficult mentoring experience you would be willing to describe, or if you have a comment on any part of this issue or on topics/ concerns relevant to our mentoring community, please consider writing about them for All About Mentoring. If you have developed written materials for your students that may be of good use to others, if you have a scholarly paper-in- progress or something you presented, or if you have a short story, poem, drawing or photograph, please consider submitting them as well. Please also let us know if there are specific topics about which we should try to develop a dialogue in these pages.

Please send submissions to Alan Mandell (ESC, 225 Varick Street, NYC 10014-4382), and note that it is most convenient if your submissions were sent via e-mail or on a disk. We very much look forward to your contributions. The next issue of *All About Mentoring* will be published mid-Spring, 1998. Please send your contributions to Mandell by 15 February. Thanks very much.

Submissions to *All About Mentoring*

1998 Program Announcement has been posted for Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowships for Minorities. (Applicants for the award are required to have earned the PhD or ScD degree no earlier than January 5, 1991 and no later than March 10, 1998.) This program (administered by the National Research Council) is intended to identify and support "outstanding researchers and scholars who are members of minority groups whose underrepresentation has been severe and long-standing in the professoriate and in formal programs of postdoctoral study and research in the United States."

Further information and application materials are available through the NRC, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington DC 20418; 202 334- 2860; or on e-mail: infofell@nas.edu. Applications are due on January 5, 1998.

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