

ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

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From the Editor

Alan Mandell, Metropolitan Center

Fear plays a role in all teaching and learning.

For example, the professor about to deliver a lecture is always slightly nervous. The professor might ask: Are my words clear? Are my arguments well presented? Do I have enough relevant examples to offer? Will the students gathered in this hall find my talk interesting, even entertaining? Is there anyone out there who will understand me at all?

The faculty member sitting across from a single student faces other anxieties. He or she might ask: How do I best organize this meeting? Is it even mine to organize? Am I prepared? What does "preparation" even mean in this setting? Am I talking too much? Have I said too little? Is there something I really think is important to communicate to this student today? What is this student thinking about me?

And placed in front of a computer monitor, the online instructor worries too. Is this course well planned? Are the assignments self-explanatory? Are there sufficient opportunities for students to pause and work with their own questions regarding the course material? In what spirit are my comments, typed in this office, and then sent off to my students with a simple "click," received? Do my students feel my connection to their work?

No doubt, there is fear in each teaching type. That is, teachers in all three instructional forms are worried about their roles and their responsibilities, about the quality of their communication with their students- about what is taught and what is learned. The presence of fear does not distinguish these teaching forms from one another. But the quality of the fear, its particular nature, and even more importantly, one's response to it, is distinctive.

In the first example, the professor's response to his/her nervousness is either to acknowledge that the little drama it creates gives him/her a productive "charge," or, more likely, to simply wish it away: "If only I wouldn't feel this each and every time I step up to that lectern!f. That is, the fear is typically experienced as an annoyance. Its presence might influence the quality of the performance (it could strengthen, but more typically weaken it), but in the professor's eyes, the fear is external to the pedagogical enterprise. With practice, it just might disappear.

In the second example, the faculty person seeks some reasonable comfort level for him/herself and the student, and wants to muffle the anxiety, at least to keep it in check. The immediacy of sitting with a student exposes; it is harder for anyone to hide: "I just have to appear calm and unthreatening to this person." Thus, in this situation, the teacher also knows that to acknowledge his/her own uneasiness is to potentially exacerbate the student's own fears, thereby jeopardizing both the well being of interaction and the learning process itself.

The online instructor faces less drama than the professor does, and fewer opportunities to be reminded of the particular worries that come with face-to-face human interaction. Yet with this teacher's situation comes a distinctive strategy of fear control. The urge to clarity is at its heart. Ease of understanding, transparency of direction, and the elimination of the ambiguous become central to the teaching enterprise: "This assignment must be clearly and effectively presented." In this

way, for teachers-at-a-distance, management of their own fears lessens the anxieties of their students as well.

If this little typology is accurate, most of us want to eliminate, subdue, control and/or manage the fears we experience. Indeed, our sense of ourselves as effective educators (in whatever teaching contexts we reside) is tied up with our success in this fear-abating enterprise.

What is the connection between fear and mentoring? What if we wouldn't think about mentoring as a single unmovable structure? Is all mentoring necessarily a pedagogy of one-to-one, face-to-face faculty-student encounters? What if we defined mentoring as a set of specific qualities that could characterize any learning situation? Isn't all mentoring about listening, about questioning hierarchy and knowledge claims, about constructing teaching and learning collaborations, about attending to the particular interests, styles and experiences of a student?

From this angle, mentoring depends upon fear. That is, mentoring needs the stops and starts, the reciprocity of confusion, and the skirmishes that fear's uneasiness promotes. Our fears often reveal the tentativeness of our knowledge claims, remind us of our delicate connections with our students, and strip away the sureties that protect us from deeper intellectual engagement.

Mentoring depends on these qualities and on the imbalances that necessarily come with them. By not only acknowledging the fears that emerge in any teaching terrain, but by understanding and playing with the learning possibilities that fear opens, we find ourselves participating in a distinctive pedagogical world. And, as active participants in that world, we cherish the encounters that push us out of what we know. Mentoring is certainly a frightening business.

Could the professor, the faculty member seated next to a student, and the online instructor all be mentors? In many ways, some version of this question is at the heart of our debate about what mentoring truly means. To argue that the answer is "yes" helps us separate a teaching form from a set of principles about teaching and learning. To argue that the answer is "no" suggests that a single architecture of instruction is necessary to carry out a particular quality of inquiry. Our conversations about this question are critical to our understanding of what we do and to the future shape of our College. But the fear is with us here too. Just as it can nurture the way we work with ourselves as we work with our students, fear can serve as our ally as we talk with each other about what mentoring really is.

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Technology and Education

Xenia Coulter, Central New York Center

Xenia Coulter offered these comments as part of the opening panel of the Alliance/ACE Conference held in October, 1999 in Saratoga Springs. In addition to a slightly edited version of Xenia's remarks, we also include a few responses to her ideas by ESC colleagues.

I am very honored to be here today with such a knowledgeable audience and distinguished panel. When I was first invited, I thought it was to be the token Luddite, even though I was assured that wasn't the case. Well, it is true that I am not a Luddite; I don't use yellow pads to write my papers; I have integrated software into several of my tutorials with students and published a little on that topic; and at one time I was even what you might call a technophile.

Indeed, I thought I might begin with a little story about the culmination of my technophilia that occurred when I was a first-year graduate student at Princeton. I worked that year with Joe Notterman, a psychologist, who believed that Skinner was wrong to concentrate only upon the frequency of responding and therefore did research on other aspects of behavior such as the force or duration of a response. We used, in case any of you can recall those days, a PDP-8 computer with a grand total of 4K of memory. Using a strain gauge attached to an isometric rod that could be handled by squirrel monkeys, we were able, with an A to D converter, to digitize the characteristics of their responses. Programming that computer was an enormous challenge. The entire program, which was written in what we called "machine" code, recorded the timing and force of the animal's behavior, determined whether the individual responses met a criterion for reward, and, if they did, sent signals to the food dispenser on a random schedule, converted the data to a decimal format (the computer did not have enough memory to hold the floating point conversion code), summarized them and performed some initial statistical analyses, and continuously printed out the data on paper tape and also a teletype. I was captivated by the challenges presented by this new computer and immersed myself in the task of making this research work, which included, of course, trying to imagine what other experiments this computer could do. It was not unusual for me to wake up in the middle of the night with a solution to one problem or another, leap out of bed, drive to the lab, and try out the new coding. I felt intellectually stimulated, busy with an important task, motivated to succeed, and sufficiently often rewarded by success to keep me interested no matter how difficult the problem.

I don't know exactly when or why, it is now been so long ago; but somewhere along the line, I had an epiphany. I realized that this work, seductively rewarding as it was, was nonetheless distracting me, perhaps even helping me avoid, the real reason I was in graduate school which was not to solve problems or to acquire knowledge about computers, but to learn about psychology. I recognized that learning about psychology was going to be much more difficult than mastering a computer and with a much less certain outcome. Not only was the sheer size of the field overwhelming, but many of the old familiar ideas that defined the discipline were, upon examination, not all that clear or even defensible, and the new ideas that were emerging were at best vaguely formulated and even less easy to understand. Plunging into the field of psychology was a truly frightening prospect. But I saw that if I wanted to grow intellectually, I had to turn away from the immediate rewards of this new technology and, putting it in Robert Kegan's term, cross a bridge that seemed only to lead into a fog in the hope that over time I would make significant progress in my intellectual and scholarly development. Although it was heart-wrenching to give up the excitement of working with this new computer, I left Joe Notterman's lab

to do research in a setting that was dominated, not by fascinating tools, but by tough, intriguing and important questions about the psychology of behavior. Once I made that switch, I determined that I would never again allow the lure of technology to seduce me away from the true challenges of scholarly work that had led me into the world of higher education in the first place.

This story, I hope, is a metaphor for the concern I'd like to share with you now. Namely, that today our attention, that is, the attention of adult student educators, is being similarly distracted by the dazzle of new technologies away from the more serious and certainly discomfoting questions we should be confronting instead, questions such as: What do our students already know when they come to us? How did they learn it? How can new learning make a difference? Indeed, what is new learning? What is knowledge? What, in fact, do we want them to learn? And, most importantly, are they actually learning what we intend?

In the wings of psychology, researchers are beginning to explore these questions, starting with various investigations on the nature of experiential learning and extending to studies that are reexamining our assumptions about intelligence, competence and knowledge. Examples include work being done on distributed cognition, tacit knowledge, practical intelligence, expertise, embodied cognition, knowledge-in-doing. And moving toward center stage in psychology (see, for example, the recent July issue of *The American Psychologist*, the principal journal of the American Psychological Association) is the growing awareness that the role of conscious and intentional thought in problem solving and decision making is apparently much less important than we ordinarily believe. Taken together, these different areas of research are beginning to raise serious questions about one of the most fundamental assumptions of most educators ó that what we teach is what our students learn.

The evidence of a striking disconnect between what we teach and what our students actually learn has probably always been there in the world for us to see, but which for many reasons (e.g., selective attention, uncritical acceptance of tradition, overwork) we do not notice. Let me give a few examples. Close to 100 percent of my students tell me that they are poorly managed at work. And yet almost all of their managers are college-trained who do in practice what they could not possibly have been taught to do in school. We don't do anything at all like what the Organizational Behavior textbook describes when we hire staff, one of my students told me who works in the Human Resource Department of a major university, which is administered by very highly educated individuals. Or, look within our own ranks. We profess tolerance, open-mindedness, an appreciation of diversity, but with each other we can be routinely arrogant, intolerant, elitist and downright unkind to those who disagree with us. If you want to read unpleasant letters that show little or no tolerance for points of view different from the writers, try a dose of those written for the New York Review of Books-letters all by highly educated individuals.

Other examples relate to the measurement of educational outcomes. The few such studies that I've had a chance to examine have been amazingly disappointing. It used to be routine at the beginning of an introductory psychology course to give students a list of questions for which common sense suggests answers that research has shown are wrong, and which the students, not surprisingly, answer incorrectly. Then, of course, throughout the course, students are explicitly taught just why their original answers are wrong. One enterprising researcher decided to pose those questions again at the end of the course, and he was horrified to discover that there had been no significant change in the student responses (a finding that has been replicated several times since). Indeed, a very well designed outcome study was reported here at this conference a number of years ago that was similarly striking in this regard. After four years of college study, student knowledge did not improve. Indeed, in a number of instances they performed more poorly than when they first began college. A couple of years ago, I was involved in evaluating a small outcome study in which middle-management students were given case studies before taking a management course and then given the same case studies afterward, and there was no significant change in the quality of their analyses. The theories and issues and concepts they presumably had just learned in college were seemingly not drawn upon in any significant way. When I examined some of the answers carefully, it seemed as if students, once out of the classroom, simply reverted back to what they had always done on the job.

Chris Argyris in his research on managers has reported a similar phenomenon. What he sees is that while managers readily espouse a particular set of beliefs, in reality they hold another, usually contradictory, set of inarticulated and tacit beliefs upon which they really act. And, as a consultant, he notes that because these managers are unable to articulate, much less discuss, their real beliefs, it is very difficult to instigate any kind of real change in their behavior, at least not

without considerable effort. True learning, as he puts it, takes at least as much practice as is required to learn a not-so-decent game of tennis. What he sees repeatedly is that while managers are easily taught to acquire new pronouncements, these teachings generally have no important impact upon the tacit belief system that actually governs their behavior.

What he's studying here is, I believe, the underside of what Mezirow and others have referred to as transformative learning. In other words, he is trying to show that it takes hard work, very hard work, to "really" learn, that is, perceive things in a new way, recognize hitherto unacknowledged assumptions, struggle to unlearn them, and make significant changes in one's habits of work, life and thinking. In so doing, Argyris is also providing us, not only with another example of the disconnect between teaching and learning, but also a partial explanation for this difference. Students do not come to us as blank slates, certainly not adult students and most likely not younger students either, and yet our teaching methods typically assume, without serious question, that if we give them the right information and they can feed it back to us, that is all that is required for them to be changed. Students need to be environmentally sensitized? Our best solution is to require that they take a 3-credit course about the environment. Do we want them to be scientifically literate? We believe that this literacy will occur if we simply require all students to take any science-related lab course. When we sometimes suspect that this learning hasn't really taken hold, we think the problem is merely that we somehow failed to package the information in a sufficiently compelling way. The truth is that there is almost no evidence that any given course produces the insights we hope for, much less a significant change in behavior, and that the easy comfort we take from seeing such a course on a student's transcript is probably unwarranted. The evidence that we do have suggests again and again that the conditions for changing people's thoughts and behaviors are far more difficult and a whole lot less well understood than many educators seem to realize.

So what does this apparent disconnect between teaching and learning have to do with technology? Obviously, my principal concern is that our enthusiastic embrace of new technologies is effectively distracting us from taking on these important questions about the nature of learning. Indeed, the energy expended in discussing new technological innovations shoves our concerns about what our students are actually learning even further out of sight than might ordinarily be the case. Worse yet, we too experience disconnects between what we have learned to espouse and what we actually do because we are no more immune to the power of our tacit belief systems than are our students. Even if my 20-minute presentation today convinces you that there are serious questions out there about learning and knowledge, you will still continue to act upon your own unacknowledged beliefs about learning as you reproduce your courses on web sites, develop computerized laboratories, and incorporate various new technologies in your classrooms. When we embed education into technological structures, or put more baldly, when we mechanize education, our unstated beliefs about how students learn become increasingly embedded in stone.

Obviously, this state of affairs is not technology's fault. I am fully aware that if we knew what to do, technology could be developed that would help us to do it, if not today then probably tomorrow. But the immense amount of energy, time and money that is being made available right now in tying education to the technology we have in hand makes it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to stop the flood and say, "Wait a minute, we aren't really all that sure about what we are doing here. It is sad and unfortunate, but not surprising, that we have not been able to muster the same kind of energy, money, and certainly the time we need for research and reflection on what is a much harder topic to study, the nature of human learning and knowledge. To turn away from the challenges of a form of technology that offers so many interesting problems, the rush of solving them, and various other enticements (particularly of control, mastery, rewards) in order to enter the murky and uncertain world of human learning is no doubt even more difficult for us now than it was for me to take a comparable step when I was in graduate school.

But if we don't make the effort to stop and try to control the direction of technology, we will find ourselves perpetuating our errors in education and becoming ever increasingly under the control of the technology itself. The expensive and novel computer that I encountered as a graduate student in Notterman's lab took over the direction of our research. We were no longer able to ask theory-driven or even curiosity-driven questions about the nature of responses; instead, our questions revolved around what the computer could be programmed to do. In essence, we said, "Now that we have this wonderful device, what else can we make it do for us?" Once I left that lab, however, I was no longer controlled by a technological device into which too much energy and money had been invested to ignore, and my research questions were no longer shaped by the means we had available for answering them. Instead, I was free to ask whatever questions seemed important, and only after the question was posed, to contemplate the technology we might need. Today, as our nation and schools proceed to invest heavily in what seem to me to be in essence expensive communication devices, we as teachers

are being increasingly tied to the concept of teaching and learning as primarily a process of communication. With each passing day, we will be less and less able to release ourselves from that paradigm, to challenge it, or look in wholly new directions in order to ask, much less pursue, questions such as I have raised about the apparent disconnect between teaching and learning.

In the few minutes I have left, I'd like to do a little speculating about some of the issues we might want to consider if we were able to focus more upon the nature of learning and less upon the current technology of education.

For example, one could rightly argue that many students do learn in college. Engineers learn how to build bridges. Mathematicians learn new ways of doing math that are not even imagined in high school. When, as an undergraduate, I went to music school, I learned new works of music, how to sing better, the vocabulary of harmony, and so forth. One way to reconcile the disconnect between teaching and learning that I've just described with the obvious fact that some learning clearly does take place in college is to posit more than one kind of learning. Although philosophers suggest three or even more forms of learning (depending upon whom you cite), many psychologists have suggested primarily two major types: the acquisition of procedural knowledge (which is learning how to do something) and the acquisition of semantic knowledge (which refers to learning new thoughts and verbal concepts). Apparently we are relatively successful in the first realm, but perhaps not so much in the second. Why? What makes the difference?

One problem in answering this question is that when researchers closely examine procedural knowledge, it turns out that it is supported by a lot of complicated intellectual skill not much different from what we typically regard as semantic knowledge. Some of you are probably familiar with Scribner's study of the sophisticated skills that underpin seemingly simple labor in the diary industry (such as taking inventory). Her research has been followed by a number of other detailed studies, for example, Keller and Keller's investigation of the complex cognitive processes that underlie the profession of blacksmithing. It is interesting and perhaps significant that these underlying intellectual skills are largely tacit, that is, unarticulated, but that does not make them any the less conceptual what we would ordinarily consider as semantic. Thus, the at-first-glance obvious difference between "doing knowledge" and "cerebral knowledge" is not as clear as it might at first appear.

Certainly, practice in the sense of active repetition seems to be one important distinguishing factor. In "higher learning," that is, when we want students to acquire conceptual (or semantic) knowledge, repetition is strongly discouraged. We disallow redundancies between courses, and within a course, we organize our presentations so as to avoid repetition and encourage maximum "coverage." Only in those courses where students are clearly learning to do something do we build in opportunities for repetition. Perhaps, as Argyris implies when he compares learning tennis to learning new theories of management, opportunities for repetition should be extended to all kinds of learning. Even so, we also know from years of research related to procedural learning that practice alone is still not enough. For such learning to take place, there also has to be feedback. Old ways of doing things have to significantly fail and cause the learner to experience surprise or discomfort. New ways of learning must be offered in a variety of contexts. Opportunities to learn have to be distributed in time, and so forth. It is interesting to note that textbooks, indeed most written sources of information, don't typically or easily accomplish any of the above. Of course, that's not surprising if you consider that textbooks aren't really intended to be learning devices but rather a means for archiving currently known information. And yet, note how much we have come to depend upon the structure of a textbook in designing our courses. And how readily some of us have transferred the textbook approach to course design to the development of our web-based courses. Even if we eschew a textbook (which most web courses do not), is it all that different if we refer students to information that is summarized on the Internet? Thus, a case could be made that the disconnect between what we teach and what students learn may be due to faulty assumptions about the necessary conditions for conceptual learning concepts. But this case will never be examined closely if we perpetuate our current assumptions in our new technology.

And what role should the Internet play in the education of our students? The Internet itself, to say nothing of the media, conveys a very strong and constant message that the major problem facing our students, and maybe even the world, is the overwhelming amount of information out there and the importance of learning how to manage it all. Just as the barrage of advertisements on television have succeeded in convincing people that somewhere someone has a quick fix for whatever ails you, the Internet message seems to be that somewhere, if you can just get good enough at searching, there is an answer to whatever you need to know. But isn't it really the case that the major problem we face is the enormous amount of critical knowledge that we still lack? Isn't our ignorance the real message we want our students to absorb? We don't

know how to prevent war, how to stop corruption, how to control violence, how to lose weight or even whether we should. If the disconnect I've described is a real one, we as educators don't even know how to effectively promote learning. Could it be that our enthusiastic promotion of the Internet as a critical tool for student learning may in fact be misguided? Could it be that instead of promoting the kind of learning we hope for in higher education, the Internet may actually be conveying a tacit message that undermines our traditional ideas about critical thinking and reflection?

Many of you may be familiar with Edward Tenner's book, *Why Things Bite Back: The Revenge of Unintended Consequences*. If you haven't read it, I recommend it highly. He does not write about education, but the point he makes is one that we should surely take to heart: that when we embrace technology to solve a problem, we inevitably create new problems, which emerge out of the technical solution itself. We already know about such problems emerging from use of the Internet, for example, the new psychological disorder where students withdraw from society as part of an addiction to the net. We can no doubt expect other as yet unimagined problems developing out of web-based courses and our increasing dependence upon software in the regular classroom. Clearly, and Tenner makes this point as well, we cannot go backwards, erase what we already know, and pretend that new ways of learning and teaching aren't occurring all around us. But we can become more vigilant about what we embrace and learn more about anticipating problems before we are bitten too severely.

In the spirit of his book, I would like to suggest, as we consider here today the increasing use of technology in education, that we actively promote a program of research about adult learning and move as slowly as we can in our use of technology. If we cannot slow the pace of change, then perhaps we can at least create some time for ourselves in which we attempt to uncover and discuss some of the assumptions we hold about education. And if we are unable to find the time necessary for such reflection, then we should at least be aware that an ever-increasing dependence of education upon technology will produce outcomes we do not expect and we must be prepared when it doesn't all work out as we hope. And if we are not even able to prepare ourselves for technology's inevitable revenge, we can at the very least hold tight to what originally called us to become teachers in the world of higher education so that we never forget that our ultimate goal is to open minds and not just our student's, but also our own. If we must wed education to technology, let's never stop asking ourselves why.

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Response to Technology and Education

Nancy Gadbow, Genesee Valley Center

Xenia's thought-provoking presentation as part of the panel considering technology and education gave us several important points to consider. First, she reminded us that the real purpose of technology is to enhance and support what we really should be doing as adult educators. Instead, for some, technology has become addictive. She notes that technology can also become a distraction from the issues that we should be confronting regarding our students: What knowledge do they bring to the learning setting? How did they learn it? How can new learning build and add upon that prior learning in meaningful ways?

From her strong background in psychology, Xenia challenges us to think about what learning really is and what the various dimensions of it are and can be. We are reminded of the research studies that have explored such areas as distributed cognition, tacit knowledge, practical intelligence, and expertise. However, she points out that the assumption of most educators still is: What we teach is what our students learn.

What is the relationship of teaching to learning? How do we consider such aspects of learning in planning instructional strategies and approaches to help individual learners learn effectively? I would add that we also should consider how individuals learn: learning styles, learning disabilities, motivation and barriers to learning. These factors are not considered by many faculty who continue to "teach as they were taught," and in so doing, ignore the range of options that may be helpful to their learners. Robert Smith (1982), a greatly respected adult educator, wrote *Learning How to Learn: Applied Theory for Adults*, a book that had a profound influence on my own understanding as a graduate student of our role as adult educators. He emphasized that the most important thing any of us do as educators is to help an individual "learn how to learn."

Another important issue that Xenia raises is the nature of the learning that individuals bring to the educational setting. For example, is such prior learning helpful, and can the student build on it; or, are some past experiences and learning a real barrier to openness and readiness to explore new understandings and meanings? As an ESC mentor who has worked with students on studies in biology, I have run into the following situation a number of times. A student chooses a topic to research for a final project that is of personal interest (not a bad idea). However, on occasion, a student has made up his or her mind on the subject and seeks to "prove" what he or she already knows to be true by using only selected or limited sources that support preconceived ideas. In such a case, the challenge to the mentor is to help the student become interested in seeking out the best information available- to have a desire to find out what is known.

Xenia also notes the overwhelming amount of information that is available and that bombards us, raising the question of how we can manage it. How we consider all this information and how we help learners think about it is another part of our role as educators. In a very helpful ERIC document called "Information Management," Sandra Kerka (1997) puts this concern into a useful perspective by helping us think about the information overload and some of the myths

and realities related to its impact on us. She suggests that we as "adult educators can demonstrate for learners that the key to information management is also self-management." (p. 4)

A number of questions and issues were raised in Xenia's stimulating presentation. We have been challenged to examine our own understanding of learning and technology and their relationship. Further, we are called upon to check out our long-held assumptions and question how we are seeking to promote learning. According to Xenia, "if we must wed education to technology, let's never stop asking why."

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Response to Technology and Education
Judith Gerardi, Metropolitan Center

Xenia Coulter's comments to participants at the annual conference of the Adult Higher Education Alliance address technology and education, but center on wider issues of what students learn and how we know that they learned it. I shall examine two of her points in relation to our work as ESC mentors. She cautions us that we cannot assume that what we teach is what students learn. She raises questions about how learning is evaluated.

We talk and students smile, nod, look at us with focused expressions. We take these signs as indicators of understanding. Has it happened to you that you merrily talk about and expand upon subject matter that the student has read, see signs of comprehension (smile, nod, focus), and then ask a question or invite comment and hear the student provide a complete misunderstanding of the reading? Even when student comments reflect accurate reading, how much student learning do we or can we sample? What do each of us do to satisfy ourselves that students learned what we and they contracted for? Do our indicators of learning, written as methods and criteria of evaluation, measure intended learning? Or do they measure measurable learning?

Compelling packaging does not reliably produce learning because information is understood in relation to existing knowledge. When Xenia writes that beliefs and assumptions shape learning, she makes a "constructivist" argument. Constructivists describe the knower as one who builds knowledge in part by fitting new ideas to existing ones, certainly by customizing knowledge in some way. This explanation of learning predicts that academic achievers continue to achieve, as we often see, and do so because their existing conceptual schemes are consistent with the new knowledge. New knowledge is encountered through reading, experience and discussion, and it triggers conceptual schemes. It must do so. However, conceptual schemes triggered by the new knowledge may be wrong, undeveloped or irrelevant. It is for this reason that educators must determine what students know in order to teach them successfully. In some cases, as when students bring homogeneous past learning experiences, teachers can successfully make assumptions about student knowledge and can teach with that in mind. In some cases, teachers and students have past learning experiences that are consistent with each other; this also promotes success in learning. Our experiences as mentors often are different from these.

Empire State College students often bring with them sporadic and unsuccessful earlier educational experiences. Often, such experiences create beliefs and assumptions about the nature of knowledge as well as particulars of knowledge that undermine current college study. If beliefs and assumptions shape learning, as psychologists have found, we must explore student beliefs and assumptions if we are to teach successfully. In our practice, that may be achieved in the tutorial model. That model provides opportunities for lengthy and deep academic exchange with students. In such exchange, we would be careful to hear the student's voice. Soon and continually, we would follow a constructivist approach. Initially, often, students report what they read or offer opinions. That provides an opportunity for us both to determine what students know about the subject matter, and to listen for the conceptual schemes that are triggered by what they know. When we see a mismatch, it is our task to discuss it with students. "Discuss" does not mean that we correct or otherwise dismiss the student's ideas. Rather, we can accept their beliefs and assumptions but also examine

the value and applicability of those schemes in mastering new material.

Returning to Xenia's article, it is my suggestion that we think often and long about the disconnect that can occur between what teachers teach and what students learn and that we do so in terms of the connection of student beliefs and assumptions to what they learn. Certainly, we, too, bring beliefs and assumptions that direct our learning. We can discuss that at another time. In a constructivist approach, we guide students in their examination of new ideas by analyzing beliefs and assumptions. Our task is one of bridging a student's initial conceptual scheme to the new information. Failing to do so brings failure in helping students learn, our goal as mentors.

The second of Xenia's points that I wish to address is one of measurement. Do our indicators of learning, written as methods and criteria of evaluation, measure intended learning? Or do they measure measurable learning? Educational psychologists find that one measures that which is most amenable to measurement. We measure what can be measured, not what should be measured in order to provide the information that one seeks. Often, if we allow one or two student papers to reflect learning of the subject matter, we are using a small sample of work to stand for the whole, the content of the learning contract. We can allow a paper or two to reflect learning of the content addressed in the paper, but does that content reflect the entire contract component? What do you do to satisfy yourself that the student has earned the credits planned for the component?

These questions are difficult to answer. We could welcome an exchange of the methods that mentors use to determine that students have learned the subject matter of the learning contract. Although I cannot offer answers here, I can offer suggestions that might guide us. These suggestions draw on research in both educational psychology and higher education.

First, measurement should be ongoing. Second, multiple types of measures should be used. Third, feedback should be quick and detailed. Finally, findings should shape the learning activities to follow. Practical considerations can undermine the efforts of mentors who wish to follow these suggestions. I am thinking of time, in particular. Yet, I believe that even a small amount of time devoted to these suggestions would enhance student learning as well as mentor comfort in the instructional role. The measurements can be brief although more frequent. Multiple measures can be spoken or written. Feedback can be offered during mentoring sessions. Shaping learning activities as we proceed through the contract can occur either within a developmental contract or by modifying existing learning activities.

Thinking about these questions, raised with clarity by Xenia, can enhance our work with students and improve their learning experience: our shared goal. Thank you to Xenia for articulating important issues and for representing Empire State College so well at the Alliance conference.

ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

A Publication of Empire State College

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Response to Technology and Education

Susan Oaks, Center for Distance Learning

My immediate reaction to Xenia's thoughtful comments on teaching with technology had nothing to do with technology, and a lot to do with teaching. Her comments sparked two scenarios. The first was a flashback to my initial experiences in the college classroom as a teacher. I started teaching at a college that had been built in the late '60s "the low ceiling, cinderblock wall era of construction" and to heighten the bland boxiness of the surroundings, the walls and floor tiles were beige, as were the chairs with their arm-rest-desks. Despite the blandness of the surroundings, I was determined not to be a bland teacher, not to offer a bland class. I wanted to get students excited about writing or at least conscious of ways to approach a piece of writing. I don't know that I knew much more than what I wanted, even though I had planned my syllabus carefully. I knew what I didn't like in the classroom experience as a result of my own years in college, I knew some educational methods, and I knew some theories of writing instruction. So I plunged in, messed around with those bits of learning, gauged student reactions as we went along, and progressively developed the way I structured and taught the course.

The other, more recent, scenario took place in a ubiquitous grey-blue conference room, with the standard conference table, lunch fare and assorted college faculty. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about our experiences with web course training and design. Most of the faculty who attended the session were relatively new to teaching on the web; some had already designed and taught a course for one or two semesters, and only a few were there as "experienced" web faculty. The most vocal of the group were faculty who were very proud that their online courses were the same as their classroom courses. They spoke of offering the same lecture information in class and online, and commented that students who missed class liked having access to the online material. They spoke of using the same type of structure online that they used in their classrooms: lectures, self-assessment exercises, papers, tests. And they spoke of having the same experiences with students online as they did in class- late assignments, the need to prod discussion, and so forth.

Of course, what struck me are the similarities in the two scenarios. When I started in the classroom, I didn't quite know what I wanted, so I stuck with the context that I knew: a combination of lecture, writing workshop and individual work. By the time I left classroom teaching to start with ESC, my classes were very different than when I started, consisting mostly of workshop and individualized work. The new web faculty were also starting with the context that they knew, reproducing classroom functions and traditional instructor roles on the web. They were enthusiastic about online teaching, but hadn't experienced enough of it to be creative with the medium. One experienced faculty member exemplified the creativity that can occur in time if the faculty person is thoughtful about his work; he stated that he could foster anything he considered to be an important learning activity (more thorough student responses to other students' work, more thorough research, etc.) through course design. He had also moved away from the lecture/self-assessment/test format of a traditional classroom and structured his courses around discussion and writing, an approach that he felt was more appropriate to both his academic content and the medium.

From my own relatively limited look at online courses, especially those developed at ESC, I know that there are many

ways to structure the learning experience and many different types of learning activities feasible for the web, from case studies to role plays, workshops, and even individualized learning contracts. Online courses offer a variety of ways to learn, based on what Xenia identifies- the tutor's goals, assumptions and skill levels with the technology, and his or her awareness of what can be done. This is obvious. And yet, what about the student in all of this? And especially the ESC student? The concept of structuring a learning experience online does not have to be antithetical to a learning experience that grows organically from the student and the student-mentor conversation. The environment in which the organic student-mentor conversation occurs is initially structured by the mentor through listening and questioning, to let the student know that his/her own direction will prevail. Why can't that happen on the web? I think it can.

But, I'm concerned about some of the questions I heard at that meeting of new online faculty: "How do you teach a distance course?" "What should I be doing first, second, third?" The unspoken message here ó the assumption- seems to be that there is a standard online environment that one "learns," a standard way of doing things. There may be a standard "look" to the front page of an online course, for the purpose of ease of student use, but the course environment itself can vary widely. I know that these questions come from a lack of experience with the context of online learning, a need to understand the possibilities inherent in the medium. And I think that the only way of learning that is to do it, to play intellectually with online environments so that you know enough to at least be able to start articulating wants and assumptions about online learning, to know enough to keep experimenting and developing. In the end, there'll be effective and ineffective online courses, just as there are effective and ineffective college classes and effective and ineffective mentoring relationships. What's important, I think, is to get in there, develop some understanding of the context and its possibilities, and then keep trying.

Personally, I have enjoyed the spur that the online environment has given to my thinking about teaching. For example, in the online college writing course, students have the flexibility to start with whatever kind of writing they choose, and discussion is structured around their insights and comparisons of their writing experiences. I could have instituted that organization in a site-based study group, but didn't think of it at the time! The less linear nature of the online environment opened up my thinking and my approach to this particular study. And this is just one example of many. The point is that online learning really can be an environment in which students have ultimate control.

A colleague at another university writes, "The biggest challenge for me has always been to design self-directed activities that illuminate themes while encouraging students to explore on their own the implications of those themes in their own lives. I don't merely want to post my lecture notes on a web page; I want to create an environment that is non-threatening but challenging, engaging but also meaningful; I want students to think, to direct their own learning, to set their own goals, and to assess their results. My role ideally should be that of project manager, trouble shooter, technical supporter and cheerleader. Now I happen to think that technology gives us unprecedented opportunities to do that."

I think that faculty at ESC are uniquely positioned to work creatively with online learning, given our similar, student-centered orientation. I think that we have the ability to create learning environments that are imminently personal, student-centered and student-directed. I hope that we all have the opportunity to try.

ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
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Invisible Men and Women: Mature Writing Students in Modern Higher Education **Maureen Kravec, Central New York Center**

Adult students comprise approximately 45 percent of the college population (U.S. Department of Education). We at Empire State College, and our colleagues at other nontraditional colleges, appreciate their unique needs and abilities, and many of us contribute to the growing body of knowledge about adult education. Yet the disciplinary-based research that informs the assessment of both student writing and college writing programs has so far provided little insight into the needs and learning styles of adults. Large universities, where much of the empirical research takes place, attract primarily young, residential undergraduates. Because many adult students attend community or nontraditional colleges whose faculty devote most of their efforts to teaching and mentoring, these students are less likely to be studied systematically. As a result, they remain the "invisible men" — and women — of higher education.

The research on adult development and learning offers fascinating implications for those of us engaged in composition studies. But while compositionists have recognized and studied the importance of gender, racial and ethnic affiliation, and economic class on writing skills, they still largely ignore age and developmental maturity as potentially significant variables. Furthermore, when researchers do consider age, they tend to group students into two broad age categories: "traditional" (under 25) and "nontraditional" (over 25), even while realizing intuitively that the 25-year-old and the 55-year-old in the freshman writing course are likely to exhibit differences at least as significant as those between the 18-year-old and the 25-year-old. The U. S. Bureau of the Census, while it has categories for students 14 to 17, 18 to 19, 20 to 21, 22 to 24, 25 to 29, and 30 to 34, places all students over 35 into a single category. The number of students in this bracket has risen significantly, from 1,867,000 in 1986 to 2,778,000 in 1996, the last year for which data are available.¹ The attention adult students have received has been largely pragmatic, not programmatic: enrollment managers at "traditional" institutions have noticed the over-24 crowd: most colleges have added some night and weekend sections of composition, and most composition texts include a few essays on adults, usually on single mothers and working women. So perhaps "translucent" is a better metaphor for these students: the academic community knows they are there but misses the details. Broad policy and curricular decisions at the departmental, institutional, and local, state and federal levels still seem to rest on the assumption that student bodies move directly from high school to college, study full time, and graduate in four to five years. Legislators themselves usually hail from the upper middle class: they and their offspring have the means to move away from home directly after high school to attend prestigious universities where research on the student population is most likely to occur. Therefore, legislators may not be fully aware of the realities of their constituents' needs for accessible higher education.

To provide appropriate learning opportunities for adult college students, instructors first must study their characteristics, as well as recent discoveries about their learning styles and preferences. Many adult learners are first-generation college students, unschooled in the vocabulary and form of academic writing; yet their critical thinking skills and fund of experientially gained knowledge often enable them to produce insightful, interesting papers. Unsure of their abilities, some older students request "refresher" courses. In age-diverse classrooms, they often excel, while providing younger students a richer social and intellectual environment. Mike Rose, as early as 1980, found that traditional models, which abstract the composition process into step-by-step building blocks but fail to recognize the content of cultural and experiential learning, tend not to be the most effective for this population. As Hansman and Wilson note, entering adults

may lack confidence in their own abilities and, if they are unfamiliar with the academic environment, "may also have little knowledge concerning academic conventions and behavior, including academic writing conventions and expectations." (1998, p. 21) These observations raise both pedagogical and political issues: what sorts of approaches, and what sorts of programs, will best serve the needs of adult students?

To answer these questions, we will need better data on who our adult students are and how this population may be changing. The last quarter-century has seen a large influx of women, mothers raising children alone or deferring education until their children have grown; this group has attracted attention from feminist theorists interested in the development of "voice" (for example, Belenky et al., 1986 have fostered the inquiry). Yet other groups appear to be seeking higher education in increasing numbers. At SUNY Empire State College, surprisingly, only 54 percent of the student population are female (Middle States Institutional Self-Study, SUNY Empire State College). Since despite major changes in the workforce, many men still think of themselves as the primary breadwinners in our culture, adult males have been reluctant to commit to spending two to four years of their lives in a traditional college schedule. With more for night and weekend classes and distance learning venues, along with the uncertainty of long-term employment and the need for retraining in technology, men may return to higher education in increasing numbers. Will they — and will returning adults in general — be predominantly working class, first-time college students, or will they be professionals with previous college experience who wish to finish a degree begun earlier in life or update and enhance their knowledge and skills? As the baby boomers age, with prospects of early retirement, or of being "downsized" before they feel ready to retire, we also may expect them to return to college. In the last decade, research has yielded much useful information about the learning styles and needs of the growing numbers of women and minority students. If the demographics shift toward adult male students and older adults of both genders, we should be sure to include these groups in our research.

Erikson and others have contributed much to our understanding of adult development as an ongoing process. Erikson sees young adulthood as marked by the conflict between intimacy and isolation, maturity as marked by the conflict between generativity and self-absorption, and old age as marked by the conflict between integrity versus despair. As adults develop, their sense of self, their critical thinking skills, their relationships, and their moral and ethical sense evolve as well. Levinson (1986) suggests four stages: Preadulthood (0-22); Early Adulthood (17-45); Middle Adulthood (40-65); and Late Adulthood (60 and over). These stages overlap and hold transitions; he suggests adults alternate between stages of "structure-building" and transitions of "structure-changing." We often meet our students at this point of "structure-changing."

Mezirow (1990) notes that in such times of transition, adult learners engage in "perspective-changing." "Adulthood is the time for reassessing the assumptions of our formative years that have often resulted in distorted views of reality." Life events such as divorce, loss of a job or death of a loved one can catalyze critical reflection. "Changing social norms can make it much easier to encounter, entertain, and sustain changes in alternative perspectives." (pp. 13-14)

Kegan (1994) suggests that higher education often serves as a developmental, transformational process for adult learners. His theory of human development posits "orders of consciousness" that evolve as we develop the capacity to reason and make critical and moral judgments. In his framework, "traditionally aged" students have achieved a "third order of consciousness," in which they have begun to understand "durable categories," to draw inferences and reason abstractly. They are ready to be initiated into the conventions of their culture (pp. 289-90); hence, the currently popular approach to composition that socializes students into a "discourse community" and its conventions (in preparation for choosing a "major") is developmentally suitable for this age group. However, he suggests, if we expect these students to see the "partial, ideological" nature of these disciplines — their subjectivity and limitation as modes of inquiry - we may be expecting them to function at a developmental level they have not yet achieved. Older adults, though, often are entering, or are striving to enter, a "fourth order of consciousness" of "self-authorship" characterized by both a recognition of interpersonal interdependence and a sense of autonomy and self-directedness that few 8-to-21-year-olds have achieved. For them, college creates a "bridging environment" (p. 294) in which the demands of arranging relationships and work priorities to allow time and climate for study provide just as rich a learning experience as does actual academic "work." By the end of four years of study, Kegan reports, the majority (70 percent in one study) of adult students have entered this more autonomous "fourth order of consciousness." (p. 293) Assignments that stress the conventions of a discourse community may hold little appeal: "there is no order of consciousness that holds less charm for us than the one we have recently left behind." (p. 292) Adult students may not care about assignments designed to introduce them into "academic conversations" they have no inclination to join voluntarily, but may exhibit keen interest in assignments that challenge

them to draw connections between personal experience and abstract theory. The displaced factory worker who studies the impact of free trade or the nurse who questions the ethical aspects of managed care have the opportunity to analyze issues that concern them personally, and thus hence prove both appealing and challenging. These students may frame their discourse in the language of the professional and personal communities in which they work and hope to advance.

Some of these communities (for example, law enforcement, health care) have their own conventions and expectations, which may exert a stronger pull than the academic ones we believe are necessary for academic success. Thus, "bridging the gap" may involve not only a transformation of consciousness but a negotiation between worlds and modes of discourse.²

Three decades ago (1970), Malcolm Knowles, dissatisfied with the connotations of the word "pedagogy" (literally, teaching of children), coined the word "andragogy" (which can be translated loosely as "educating the individual person") as more appropriate to describe an approach for teaching adult students:

As a person matures, (1) his self-concept moves from being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being; (2) he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning; (3) his readiness for learning becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles; and (4) his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness. (p. 39)

Hence, assignments that feature real-world problem solving, that move from autobiography to critical thinking, are particularly suitable for adult learners (Smith 1988). Often, adult students arrive with some understanding of their areas of competence and success. Nevertheless, they often believe they need major assistance with grammar and punctuation; yet, a more productive and satisfying place for them to begin working on their writing is often in developing ideas, working from autobiographical narrative to critical reflection.

Despite the problems of having been away from school for many years, adult learners bring with them life experiences that give them an excellent preparation for college. Yet, often, they do not realize this! Brookfield (1986) notes that the adult student's lack of familiarity with academic conventions and with the current youth culture may be a source of stress and low self-esteem. Thus, the adult student presents a paradox: she is likely to enter college better equipped to think critically and ethically, but less confident than her younger classmate of her ability to do so. And, despite all the "romantic" idealizations of self-directed, sophisticated adult learners we see in the literature, we often encounter students who say, "Okay. Tell us what to do. How long should the paper be?" Individuals move back and forth among the developmental stages and may occupy several at the same time. To some degree, the lesson of high school is socialization: it teaches students how to conform. A student whose very nonconformity — whose abilities to think independently might have led to success in business, a helping profession, the arts, or technology — or to early parenthood — may cringe with fear at the prospect of writing a research paper. Furthermore, a generation ago, school systems did not have their represent capabilities for diagnosing and working with learning disabled students, and members of this population may enter college feeling uncomfortable about their writing skills.³

What, then, can a composition instructor do to bolster the confidence and enhance the learning environment of the older student? In his wonderful book on teaching composition to adults, Robert F. Sommer (1989) suggests the following premises for a freshman composition course for adult students (which, incidentally, resonate with Empire State College's philosophy and practice):

- Connections among reading, thinking and understanding the educational process are essential to developing writing skills at the level of higher education.
- Self-realization is a critical component of an introductory writing course for adults.
- A student's educational and career goals have a place as subject matter in the composition course.
- The standards of the institution — its criteria for passing, its determination of how the composition course functions

in the overall curriculum — have a place as subject matter in the composition course.

- Freshman composition courses should not attempt to reprogram or orient students toward an ideal academic model intended for traditional students. (In fact, traditional students themselves should not be forced into such models.) In other words, the institution and its programs will benefit by allowing new populations of students to change their shape and direction. (p. 177)

If, as Kegan argues, the rearrangements and revisions adult students must make in their outside lives and relationships constitute an integral part of their learning processes, if we recognize that many adult students come to us in a period of transition, and that the uncertainties of transition, loss and the “growing pains” of adult development cannot be separated from the “subject matter” they study in college — further, if we recognize that as composition teachers (particularly at ESC) we have a unique freedom to determine our own “subject matter” and tailor it to the individual learner — we can make their tutorials and classrooms into areas of opportunity for exploration, growth and holistic learning.

Sommer’s guidelines could be applied not only here, but in classrooms that contain “mixed” groups of traditionally and nontraditionally-aged students. In my own past experiences at Mater Dei (a junior college), such mixed-age groups provided wonderful opportunities for “intercultural communication:” at the beginning of the term, students would “clique together” according to age, but through participating in collaborative learning groups, younger students began to accept the sort of diversity they would encounter in the work world. Older students could enjoy — with varying degrees of vicariousness — a stage they might have missed by having to assume other responsibilities early in life: they could be “kids,” but still enjoy the respect of their younger peers.

Although so far, we have considered classroom experiences, an increasing number of adult students participate in independent and distance learning programs. SUNY Empire State College opened in 1971 with a mission honoring diverse learning styles, experiential learning, and the importance of the mentor-student relationship. Although the College has changed with the times and now offers some small group studies as well as distance learning and web-based courses, students still cite “mentoring” as the most important aspect of their education. We know that many students cite Educational Planning as both the most challenging and the most rewarding study they take. Perhaps this is because it is in a sense an advanced composition study that fulfills Sommer’s criteria.

Even though distance learning has existed for many years, it has become increasingly popular with the advent of computer networking. Yet, distance learning, particularly if it isolates students from peers, is not a suitable mode for all students, and even the best programs are marked by a high attrition rate. Telecourses, which have existed for 40 years, have never become popular on a broad scale — probably because they allow learners little opportunity for active engagement. Even the modern interactive television courses seem to have drawbacks: students have reported their shyness at participating because it means being “on camera” and the focus of attention, and their dissatisfaction with the synchronous scheduling. Web-based courses, which usually allow asynchronous communication and more democratic, less intimidating access to the “conversation,” perhaps hold greater potential for composition studies.⁴

Our former colleagues Marion Fey (1994) and Dan Eastmond (1994), among others, have explored the benefits of computer caucuses in which students can discuss their writings and ideas. Fey believes that, particularly for some female students who may feel intimidated by males in a conventional classroom setting, the computer caucus often can be liberating. Freed from the nonverbal cues that allow male students to dominate classroom discussions, female students have equal time and opportunity to express their opinions and find their “voices.” But other students, those who do not possess basic computer literacy or even access to a computer, and those who are insecure about their writing skills, may feel discouraged from participating fully in computer-caucus courses. As new technologies become available, we need to encourage access, and continue to study interrelationships between delivery modes and learning styles.

Another area that virtually cries out for more research is whether adults fare differently in developmental studies than do traditionally-aged students. Developmental writing programs at traditional colleges have come under scrutiny from both the left (who worry that the courses label and demean students) and the right (who believe remediation should occur in secondary schools but has no place in higher education). Both arguments seem to assume a young student body. Most research on adults who succeed in developmental writing courses has taken the form of narrative case study. We need a

more systematic approach, too. If, indeed, many adult students lack confidence and an understanding of academic conventions, then we might assume that programs such as the Higher Education Opportunity Program, which serves educational and economically disadvantaged students through instructional and counseling services as well as financial aid, might work well for this population. (Perhaps, though, the conventional 16-week, 3-credit format may not be the most appropriate for developmental writing courses.) Yet when I contacted the HEOP office in Albany, New York to obtain statistics on success rates by age of participants, I was told (after some hunting-time had elapsed) that no such data exist. Although at ESC we have the luxury of being able to individualize our students' curricula, at other institutions, programmatic decisions must be made that affect the instruction of large numbers of students. And some of these students later come to Empire State College — so, for that reason if for no other, we should care about the quality of writing programs at our sister institutions. Many questions deserve study. For example, what criteria should be used to decide whether to admit and how to place nontraditional students, whose high school or previous college transcripts often reflect little of their present abilities? What sorts of texts, approaches, and programs would best serve all our students? We would not wish to segregate our classrooms by age any more than by ethnicity or gender; therefore, we need to devise a multiplicity of assignments that will accommodate students' diverse learning styles, backgrounds and cognitive and affective development. And we should devise assignments that recognize the true diversity among our learners — younger or older, male or female, “mainstream” or “minority.” We at Empire State College are members of larger academic and civic communities. Our research can have benefits that reach far beyond our own students. We also should encourage study of adult learners attending other institutions. All too often, governmental policies are being shaped according to the assumption that students move directly from high school into college. Plans that strengthen high school curricula in hopes of eliminating the need for “developmental studies” at the college level, or those that seek to shorten students' time to graduation by limiting financial aid to full-time enrollees, are apt to have little, no, or, sometimes, adverse impact on adult learners.

Our adult students are a welcome clientele who bring a fund of experiential wisdom. But to return to the metaphor in my title: they are a largely invisible group in higher education as a whole. Their numbers have been increasing; and they are not going to go away. To serve them — and their younger classmates — and to ensure that they will continue to have access to the education they find so enriching, we must give them a visible, solid presence in research and planning activities at all levels including the halls of government.

Notes

¹For example, in *Composition in the Twenty-First Century: Crisis and Change*, ed. Bloom, Daiker and White, while there is much discussion of the ways in which composition faculty must consider the changing demands of the workforce and civic culture, as well as changing demographics of class, gender and ethnicity, there is scant mention of the demands being created by the influx of older students. While we at Empire State are in a good position to study adult writers, junior colleges, with mixed groups of younger and older students, would provide excellent comparative data. Unfortunately, junior college faculty are usually too busy teaching to devote major time and resources to such research. A roadblock in collecting age data on students is that, to avoid age discrimination, we usually do not ask them their ages in application or registration materials. We could solve this dilemma by making such data optional, as is the case now with racial and ethnic data. Many students would give us the information voluntarily, providing us a rich base of data.

²Thanks to Xenia Coulter and my former Mater Dei colleague Nadine Jennings (now at Jefferson Community College) for their input about the importance of the students' workplace discourse communities and concerns.

³Thanks to Frances Mercer for contributing this insight.

⁴Kember (1995) and Moore and Kearsley (1996) discuss studies of distance learning programs, Kember from the point of view of student support, and Moore and Kearsley from a systems perspective.

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All faculty have an obligation to teach well, to engage students, and to foster important forms of student learning - not that this is easily done. Such teaching is a good fully sufficient unto itself. When it entails, as well, certain practices of classroom assessment and evidence gathering, when it is informed not only by the latest ideas in the field

but by current ideas about teaching the field, when it invites peer collaboration and review, then that teaching might rightly be called scholarly, or reflective, or informed. But in addition to all of this, yet another good is needed, one called a scholarship of teaching, which we describe as having three central features of being public (community property), open to critique and evaluation, and in a form that others can build on. A fourth attribute of a scholarship of teaching, implied by the other three, is that it involves question - asking, inquiry and investigation, particularly around issues of student learning. A scholarship of teaching is not synonymous with excellent teaching. Fully done, it requires faculty to frame and systematically investigate questions advancing practice beyond it.

Pat Hutchings and Lee S. Shulman,
"Teaching Among the Scholarships,"
Change, September/October 1999.

ALL ABOUT
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Reflecting on Origins: An Interview with Arthur Chickering **Richard Bonnabeau, Center for International Programs**

As part of his research on the history of Empire State College (The Promise Continues: Empire State College, The First Twenty Five Years, The Donning Company, Virginia Beach, VA 1996), Richard Bonnabeau interviewed many of the key figures in ESC's early years. What follows is an edited version of one section of the interview Bonnabeau did with Arthur Chickering, the founding academic vice president of the College. Thanks to Bonnabeau and Chickering for their rereading, patience and permission to include the following in All About Mentoring.

RB: Everyday at Empire State College, the faculty are busy designing, with their students, learning contracts, degree programs, and evaluating contract learning. We use these terms frequently, casually, and we really don't know their origin. Who coined the term learning contract, for example? Who coined the term mentor?

AC: Well, I'm quite unclear about the learning contract. The language, at that time, for what we did was independent studies. There was a lot of variability around independent studies in terms of their degree of rigor, the degree to which they had explicit objectives, the degree to which there was tough-minded evaluation. Often, independent study meant you had a reading list and you read it and wrote a paper something like that. We were quite clear that we wanted something that was tougher, that was more rigorous, that would really be in the nature of a binding agreement between the institution and the individual, because this was what the educational program was going to be and the basis of the persons enrollment. So, the language of contracts between the institution and the individual, and the reciprocity there, was appealing, and we were focusing on learning. But I can't remember who created that term. It probably just grew out of the conversations among Jim (Hall) and Bill (Dodge) and maybe some of the early faculty members; something like that.

RB: Do you recall when the term was first used?

AC: Well I think it must have been used with our first students.

RB: Right away?

AC: Yes, right away with the new students we admitted to the Albany Learning Center. We had to call it something. By then we had a form and a digest and evaluation.

RB: Do you know who designed the contract learning form?

AC: Well, I think I probably just lifted it. It was very similar to the independent study forms. Those basic agreements, the objectives and the learning activities and the evaluation sort of obvious components. Obviously, we got more sophisticated about that as we went on, but that's the way we thought about it at the beginning. The importance of articulating prior learning relevant to the contract became more apparent after we had more experience with these adult learners.

RB: That is the connection of the contract with previous learning?

AC: Yes, learning that had occurred before. And some kind of self-assessment of where one was in relation to the contract. It was an extension, at the level of the contract, about the whole notion of the assessment of prior learning in relation to the degree program. But I don't know who coined the term. I remember the word mentor. Again, it was just all of us talking all the time. It's hard to know who suggested that term. I remember looking it up, and I remember that Mentor was the name of the advisor to Odysseus and the teacher of his son, Telemachus. But the dictionary definition, as I recall, was an older person, or a senior person entrusted with the education of another. Although that was a little more hierarchical and paternalistic than we liked I remember we had these debates we couldn't find anything else that seemed to work as well. So we settled on that and it seemed to work well for students and faculty. We didn't want a faculty member to be called professor, because we didn't like the didactic dimension of that, and we didn't want faculty, obviously, to be called instructor. Teacher was too general in terms of the range of meanings it had. We wanted something that would signify the special kind of quality of an Empire State faculty member in a special kind of relationship. So mentor seemed to be as good as anything else.

RB: Can you say something about that relationship, that special quality? We know from the term that you selected, mentor, that it was not professional, not didactic. Students would not be passive learners.

AC: We did get more detailed about spelling out the role of the mentor as we got more experience, which is another point I want to come back to. But, there were some things that we knew that we wanted. First, we wanted a relatively egalitarian role - egalitarian in that you had two individuals that were coming together whose purpose was to create a series of learning experiences. These would be helpful to the student entering this relationship, and probably the mentor would learn too. We recognized that the faculty member was knowledgeable, was going to be the resource person and ought to have very wide, broad-based expertise because he or she would be dealing with a wide range of students rather than great depth in a narrowly defined area. We wanted a person who was very good at listening, who would be skillful in helping people clarify the purposes for their degree programs and their contracts, and who would not have a pre-packaged set of objectives or assumptions to impose on students. So they had to have a flexible response to students with very diverse backgrounds. That was important.

RB: At that time, when you were thinking about the faculty role, did you give thought to choosing between someone who might be an academic counselor with an M.S. in counseling and someone with a Ph.D. in a discipline?

AC: Yes. That was a very clear and intentional choice. There was a lot of talk during those late 60s about teachers as facilitators, advisors and counselors. And that certainly is a key part of the role. But we explicitly decided that we wanted more people with that perspective and those skills, but who were really very, very strong in a broad range of subject matter. Although they would be helping students connect with a variety of resources in the community, we wanted people with enough sophistication in the content area to make some sound judgments about the relative strengths and weaknesses of a degree program, or a set of readings, or a field experience, and so on. Facilitators may be skilled at enabling, but they aren't in a capacity to make those judgments. So, we placed a very high emphasis on a broad gauged competence and the demonstration of it. You didn't necessarily have to have lots of publications, or what not, but you clearly had to know your stuff.

One of the most useful things we did when we were recruiting initial faculty was to use two-page vignettes describing three different students. We did this because once the word got out, I got stacks of letters of inquiry and applications to process. I remember Jeanne Brockmann and land a couple of other people were trying to figure out how to deal with this effectively. The vignettes were on two men and a woman, as I recall, or vice versa, with different backgrounds and somewhat different kinds of amorously defined interests: one in the humanities, one in the social sciences, and one in the natural sciences. The first thing we did when we'd get an inquiry or an application was to say, "Thank you very much. We got your application. Here's more detailed information about the College." We sent them all out literature about the learning contract, the new programs we were creating. We also gave them the following task: Here are three students, like the kind you may run into. Pick the student that your background is most appropriate for, and layout a degree program and a hypothetical first learning contract for that person.

That was wonderful because, in the first place, it had the effect of reducing the pile by about 70 percent. Most people were not interested enough to do that task. It also required people to confront, in a real way, what the institution was about, and to read the literature seriously. When we did get responses back we had very rich information about the way those persons thought about students, the richness of their imaginations, the interdisciplinarity of the learning plans and contracts, and the degree to which they built in the experiential components. So when we brought people for interviews, we had a very nice rich foundation, beyond the typical resume. That, I think, was one of the reasons we were able to recruit a very strong initial faculty. Plus, there were a few key faculty members that I was able to recruit whom I had known at other institutions.

RB: Who were they?

AC: Well, George Drury was one. He'd been at Monteith. Dennis Cowan was another. He had been at Shimer. John Hall, as admissions director, had been at Goddard. John McCormick had worked with me on the project on student development. And Forest Davis was another. I think there were a couple more, but I can't remember who they are. Once we got the learning centers started, then they could bring people in and have them work with live students. Then that whole initial screening moved out to the levels of the dean of faculty at the learning centers. But when we were creating the Albany Learning Center and the Rochester Learning Center and the Labor College, and so on, we didn't have that. We were talking about the role of mentor and how we thought about it. But, there's one thing I want to say that I think is the most important decision we made in creating Empire State, and that was to begin immediately with students and faculty. I went on the payroll in July (1971) and worked with Jim (Hall) and Bill (Dodge). We started hiring administrative staff and started recruiting faculty. By late August, we had a dozen or so faculty members for the Albany Learning Center. We had our first orientation workshop, I remember, in October.

RB: Was that for students or faculty?

AC: For students. We admitted 25 or 35 students with these faculty, and Bill was acting dean *for* a while. The point is that we created the College in direct interaction with students. So we evolved these early learning contracts and degree programs, and other kinds of things, out of our direct experiences with students. That is totally contrary to what one might expect. We had identified a set of principles, as I mentioned, but I had watched other institutions, e.g. Hampshire College and Evergreen State, spend two years planning. And they'd bring together some dynamite faculty and administrators. The problem was that once they got in business with students, they were so wedded to those forms they'd created that it was very hard to change those in response to their experiences with the students.

So we chose to take our chances and get going and create the institution. But as we went along, we were very clear with students about it, the fact that that's what they were getting into. But the demand from students was very great, and the interest among students was very strong. At one level, it was an expression of the fundamental philosophy of the institution, to pay attention to the students and be responsive to them, but it also programmatically was a wonderful way to create the new institution. I'm sure, if we had sat down and depended solely on our abstract wisdom, it wouldn't have worked out nearly as well.

RB: And, as it turns out, the fiscal situation of the state started to sour.

AC: Yes, it did. By 1973-74, it had gotten very, very tough.

RB: So, by moving so quickly you had a college in place.

AC: Exactly. It also enabled us, and we were very aware of this, to get accredited in record time. Not only because we got this quick start, but also because, with the assessment of prior learning, we were able to have an early crop of graduates in 18 months or so. By the time we were three years old, we had a pretty good supply of graduates scattered around the state.

RB: How did the assessment of prior learning enter your plans? How was that designed and executed? That is a critical piece in the students degree program.

AC: Well, there were these examination programs around. But it just was obvious that you needed some way to recognize the knowledge and competence that adult learners were bringing. And the traditional tests were so anchored in disciplinary conventions that they could only serve a limited purpose. You need to remember the broad-gauged objectives we had and our emphasis on what we're now calling generic competencies and more broadly-gauged personality characteristics. So content acquisition was not a high priority for us. Testing for content knowledge, particularly in ways that were related to formal academic studies, was not functional. So we realized we needed to find ways to make much better judgments about what people knew. We had community leaders and small business owners coming and wanting degrees, so there were all kinds of prior knowledge and competence from formal, but also from all walks-of-life experiences.

That need was being recognized by other institutions dealing with adult learners. We were among a few tackling that problem. Minnesota Metropolitan State College was at the same time.

The portfolio process, which was a traditional method in the arts and in some other areas, seemed to have the kind of flexibility and capacity to help a person present him/herself in an effective way much better than trying to develop umpty-umpty standardized tests, or home-grown tests or whatnot. It also required students to go through a process of recognizing their own knowledge and competence that we thought was terribly important.

We also tried to design the admissions process in that light. We were always trying to help students coming into the institution, for example, to think about themselves and their education in ways that were consistent with our principles and philosophy. The assessment of prior learning was very consistent with that and a very powerful instrument. I remember one of the first surveys that Ernie Palola and the research staff did asking graduates about, among other things, their most significant educational experiences. Something like 85 percent of them said that far and away, their most significant educational experience was going through the assessment of their prior learning. It gave them a sense of empowerment and of competence, abase for thinking they really knew a lot and there was a lot they could do; a sense that they could really get into this program and fill in those gaps off a basis of broad-based competency.

RB: In looking at independent learning, which we discussed earlier, did you see a broad spectrum within that category? For example, structured learning, structured independent study, correspondence courses on one side of the spectrum, and individualized learning contracts on the other side of the spectrum? How did you visualize that spectrum and what was the most important element in your thinking at the time?

AC: I was so... I was going to say disenchanted. I guess that's not the right word, because I never was enchanted. I was never very positive at all about mediated instruction, televised instruction, correspondence study. The British Open University model, which obviously was a major addition to the British higher education scene, seemed to me not at all appropriate for the United States. Our population at that time, and now even more so, was much more heterogeneous. Our educational system is much more diverse; the resources for learning are much more varied. My own thinking was anchored in responding effectively to particular individuals, not batch processing people. So it was not congenial to my way of thinking to assume it made sense to take any number of diverse adults and have them all learn the same content at the same pace in the same sequence to the same level of performance. That ran contrary to everything I believed about education.

By default and without much thought it has been decided for us that communication ought to be cheap, easy and quick. Accordingly, more and more of us are instantly wired to the global nervous system with all phones, beepers, pagers, fax machines and e-mail. If useful in real emergencies, the overall result is to homogenize the important with the trivial, making everything an emergency and an already frenetic civilization even more so. We are drowning in unassimilated information, most which fits no meaningful picture of the world. In our public affairs and in our private lives we are increasingly muddle-headed because we have mistaken volume and speed of information for substance and clarity.

David Orr, "Speed," *Resurgence*, January-February 1999 no. 192

ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

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Castles in the Mind

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This is an abbreviated version of a lecture Regina delivered at the Ashkenaz Conference, sponsored by the Jagiellonian University and Ohio State University, in Cracow on 28 May 1998.

To paraphrase a poet, stability of the continents is a lie we tell ourselves, so that we can sleep. Similarly, stability and safety of their homes was a lie Polish Jews have had to tell themselves to acquire a feeling - however tentative - of domicile and rootedness. For the Polish Jew's home has rarely been his castle. Some claim that the self-deception and misguided denial of reality kept Jews in Poland until it was too late to escape. Certainly, the repeated pogroms, threats to their homes and lives, and frequent expressions of ill will by their neighbors must have contributed to a strong sense of vulnerability even before the Holocaust. And yet Jews have lived in Poland for centuries. A few thousand live there to this day.

Relying on literary texts, memoirs and oral histories, I am attempting to explore the psychological maneuvers and mental adjustments necessary to develop a sense of home, rootedness and security under such adverse circumstances. What coping mechanisms did the Polish Jews resort to? How could they create a sense of home being an alien and alienated minority? How did they anchor themselves in the largely inimical social environment? Some of the adaptive mechanisms are well known: religion (an ardent belief in a benevolent and caring God), Zionism (creation of a putative home in Zion), establishment of a domicile in mythical realities (e.g., in an embellished image of the *shtetl*, or clinging to a sustaining faith in social progress promised by leftist ideologies. My focus, however, is on the individual path to self-appeasement and the creation of metaphysical spaces which became homes, or "castles" in the mind.

I have engaged in close textual analyses of literary texts in pursuit of the strategies of self-appeasement, and the means through which Polish Jews repaired their damaged souls. I wish to ferret their engineered mental solutions to circumstances of oppression and threat, or at least to infer them from their testimonials and behaviors. To be sure, Jean Paul Sartre's lessons about "bad faith" (*mauvaise foi*) have not been lost on me. Deluding oneself in order to make one's life bearable is an all too common strategy. Yet, the need for self-deception and self-delusion -arguably -was particularly urgent as a result of the Jewish experience.

To date, I have relied primarily, though not exclusively, on two anthologies published recently by the Universitas Press in Cracow, Poland. One volume, edited by Prof. Eugenia Prokop-Janiec, is titled *Miedzywojenna Poezja Polsko-Zydowska* (*Polish-Jewish Interwar Poetry*, 1996). The other anthology, published in 1997 and edited by Henryk Markiewicz is titled *Zydzi w Polsce: Antologia Literacka* (*Jews in Poland: A Literary Anthology*).

One of the possible readings of Polish-Jewish literature is as an inscription of Jewish experience, as a Jewish "self - portrait," which has both individual and collective dimensions. The literature favors very strongly an autobiographical perspective. It is this perspective that legitimizes the search for evidence for individual paths to self-appeasement in literary texts. I believe firmly that literature makes visible in language that which is innermost, and which history and journalistic accounts have often passed over in silence. Moreover, my assumption is that writers are among the most

introspective, insightful and eloquent explorers of their souls. That is why I've chosen to rely on their texts in my attempts to determine the coping mechanisms in question.

The two anthologies recently published in Poland offer ample evidence of various strategies of appeasement and mental escape. They also document very well the socio-political context, and point out the intermingling of utter despair with grand hopes. Literary texts reflecting the inimical, anti-Semitic environment, the sense that Jews were *personae non gratae* in their communities, are abundantly represented in the writings of both Jewish and Christian writers. Vitriolic anti-Semitic texts by Christians are included in the Markiewicz anthology, along with texts by Jewish poets and prose writers who bemoan their degradation and abuse. Blatantly and aggressively anti-Semitic literary texts, some dating back to the Middle Ages, can be found in many other sources. Sebastian Klonowic (1545-1602), for example, wrote about Jews as follows:

What is this cunning breed of snakes doing here
Hoarding unlawful gains most greedily... 1

The lines by a Jewish poet, Maurycy Szymel (1903- 1942) can serve as a counterpoint and contrast. His imagery is a telling reflection of the sentiments generated by the anti-Semitic ambience. Describing a Jewish home, he writes: "*Niepewnie czuje sie pod dachem chata...*" (the hut feels insecure under its own roof). The projection of human anxieties on the hut is followed by a reference to grandparents whose "bags are filled with tears, instead of gains/ tears and bitterness, wind and despair ." 2

The visual arts as well provide excellent documentary material regarding the Jewish experience. The pain of persecution is grippingly reflected in Jozef Mittler's painting titled "Po pogromie" (After a Pogrom), a reproduction of which included in the volume *Zydzi polscy : dzieje i kultura*. 3 The fear and horror expressed in the eyes of the woman depicted in the painting and the bitter resignation of the man epitomize the predicaments of the Polish Jews. They felt terrorized, rejected and oppressed.

Even entry into the presumably enlightened circle of *literati* was hampered by anti-Semitic attitudes. As Eugenia Prokop-Janiec concludes in her introduction to *Polish-Jewish Interwar Poetry*, for Jewish writers domicile or "settling" in Polish literature was very problematic. Entry into Polish literary forums, to quote her, was difficult in the first decade (after 1919), and virtually impossible in the second.4

Even if not all Jews lived in "unsheltered terror ," to borrow Carlos Fuentes' phrase,5 literary works by Jewish writers clearly reflect the profound sense of discrimination. There is repeated evidence in literary and documentary materials from pre-World War II Poland of the brittle and shifting foundations on which Polish Jews' security was based. Their strategies to counter the inevitable fears, the sense of threat and the repeated bitter pills of humiliation varied.

In very broadest terms one can say -echoing the Israeli writer Amos Oz -that some Jews hypnotized themselves by looking to the future and others by adherence to the past.6 Hypnosis in relation to the future was linked to diverse ideologies. Aspirations to dignity, equality and social justice were expressed and sustained by Zionism, Jewish Socialism (Bundism), and Communism. Appeasement and consolation derived from and were fueled by these ideologies. Messianic beliefs were another source of self-appeasement. As Abraham Joshua Heschel put it,

On the outside [Jews] were often beset by poverty and political humiliation, which they had to endure. Inside, however, they carried the riches of pain of this world and the noble vision of salvation for all people and all creatures.7

The arrival of Messiah, which some believed to be imminent, was merely one of the futuristic beatitudes employed to assuage the present pain.

The religious or political or assimilationist gestures of Jews are merely the beginning in one's attempt to understand fully their adaptive strategies. What accounts for the uniqueness of Jewish experience on both the individual and the collective level is the peculiar mix -religious, ethnic, cultural, mythical and mystical, emotional and ideological -which constitutes the grounds of the Jews' enduring existence. Above all, one needs to focus on the uses of the past to unravel the Jews' unique way of being in history and coping with history .

Very often, the mental maneuver consisted of a kind of intellectual and emotional distancing. Michael Stanislawsky of Columbia University wrote that Jews created "a virtually self-contained Jewish universe," closer in beliefs and way of life to the farmers of ancient Palestine than to the peasants of the surrounding villages.⁸ Indeed, Biblical personages were not only part of the historical Biblical lore; they had a palpable presence for many Jews. The past was a living past. One striking testimonial will illustrate the point. Ilex Beller, in his album of paintings and reminiscences depicting Grodzisko, the town where he was born in 1914, described a Passover seder early in his life as follows:

Since I was the youngest in the family, my mother told me to go and open the door to let the Prophet Elijah in. I did so, terrified, and returned to my place as fast as I could. My eyes stayed glued to the cup of wine left for the Prophet. The cup began to tremble and the wine began to disappear -the Prophet Elijah was with us, drinking his cup of wine! ⁹

People in Jewish communities blended the past with the present. They created a "mental" reality in which they lived together with personages from the Biblical past, not only telling tales about them, but also sensing their presence, sharing their feelings, their dreams. A symbolic order with Jerusalem as the center was adopted, but Jerusalem, too, had acquired a palpable presence. There were no barriers between the past and the present. In theological realm as well, a 20th century rabbi would jump in to resolve inconsistencies between the opinion of an 11th century rabbi about some Biblical verse and that of a 19th century sage.

Perhaps plagued by expulsions and persecutions, Jews had to accept the truth that only thoughts and feelings are their own, while possessions aren't. That view led to the creation of a "Jewish virtual reality" which had little to do with concrete reality. As Heschel stated in his book, *The Earth Is the Lord's*, Jews have found what is authentically valuable in the "Kingdom of Time rather than the Kingdom of Space." ¹⁰

Self-appeasements, or self-hypnotes with reference to the past or the future, do not exhaust the full spectrum of strategies. Escape into art, into humor, into cosmopolitanism are some other frequently used methods. A very short epigrammatic poem by Wacław Potocki (1621-1696) titled Jewish Trade provides a fitting coda to this paper:

I asked a Jew whom shuffling along the road I met
Where to? To Yaroslav.
What bring you? Just my head.
Ignoble Jew, may they cut your throat!
Who'd leave his head behind when hitting the road?
Dear Sir, try to understand, my words please heed.
Others carry it for appearance sake;
I do it out of need."

The poem drives home the message that to survive, a Jew had to use his head. He had to use it for economic survival, but also for mental and emotional survival. "Castles" in the mind were a key to that survival.

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Exploring Multicultural Perspectives in Academic Discourse **Irene Rivera de Royston, Genesee Valley Center**

The exploration of culture's impact on learning has been a passion of mine for over 20 years. Since 1996, I have engaged in research on the theories that intersect learning and aspects of individual cultural orientations. Of particular interest has been the work of James Banks in regards to multicultural education and his writings regarding multiethnic educational perspectives. He explores knowledge from various angles and offers a model which introduces the concept of personal/cultural knowledge. It is precisely this form of knowledge that drives my passion in regards to culturally centered aspects of learning. Investigating Banks' concepts and considering the idea that students' cultural identities may in fact impact their learning has created opportunities to engage in observational and didactic activities. Over 300 students have participated in some form of discussion regarding their ethnic and cultural heritage and its possible impact on their learning experiences. While these discussions have been general in nature, some observations have been noted in regards to Bank's concept of personal/cultural knowledge. The participation of these students in this research has been through individual and group study offerings. Most of the students participated in a residency on multicultural perspectives; many of them have written about their personal/cultural experiences and shared their perspectives on the effect their identities may have had in regards to life long learning.

For the past nine years, Genesee Valley has hosted a one day residency on multiculturalism/cultural diversity for students. At the most recent residency a student expressed that, "The passion suspended me." How taken I was by this statement. Passion for learning is a common feature at Empire State College but to actually hear a student express it is more than moving. For all the effort put into creating an enticing learning environment, when the moment comes when one feels apart of this passion it is truly a suspension of thoughts.

One common feature of these past nine years has been the use of an autobiographical assignment. Although some students have actually written out the full autobiography, this assignment is generally used as an ice breaking activity .They are given a sheet which directs them to think about their lives in segments: childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Students are asked to consider the significant events, institutions, individuals, places and experiences that shaped their development in regard to ethnic, racial, and gender identities. They are further asked to think about how ethnicity , race and gender have influenced their life experiences and their individual development and behavior. The questions on the handout encourage them to think deeply and to explore their first awareness of being from a particular ethnic/racial group; first awareness of being male or female. They are asked to consider the ways in which race/ethnicity/gender impacted upon their studies, learning style and extracurricular activities. What careers did they explore, was there an impact in regards to racial/ethnic/gender consideration? Additionally, students are directed to consider whether their selection of reading and literature has been influenced by racial/ethnic/gender factors. What achievement and accomplishments are they aware of that may have had implications of racial/ethnic/ gender identity? The assignment attempts to makes explicit what is often subliminal.

While raising questions within discussion helps students to consider their cultural context, written assignments may provide an opportunity for more reflective consideration. A student essay, on a culture clash and the unspoken assumptions and expectations that caused it to be a culture clash, offers an example of the application of cultural context.

Marie is an adult student who works in a pharmaceutical company within its sales staff. She cites her experience in Asian-based markets and discusses the incidents of cultural clashes in regards to collaborative and competitive societies. In regards to individual behaviors, she identifies social psychology and sociological perspectives when engaging in work related activities. Within her essay she discussed the importance of knowing culture-specific customs. In an interesting and insightful essay, Marie takes the opportunity to reflect on these culture latent experiences and applies this knowledge and recall in order to understand socialization concepts and psychological drives. Whereas Marie's essay may give us ample material for recognizing the benefit of student focused culturally relevant material, it does lack explicit points regarding personal cultural impact on learning. Marie is outside of herself in her analysis of the Asian and U.S. native exchanges. It is possible that she has not reflected on her personal cultural experiences as an Anglo Saxon female, educated in traditional American schools and working in middle class America. To ask Marie to apply a personal consideration of her assumptions would be to create another level of evaluation regarding academic and scholarly material. The autobiographical paper encourages this level of consideration.

Angela, a student of African American decent, discussed her racial identity's impact on classroom dynamics. She attended a predominantly white grammar school and felt that her learning environment enhanced her understanding of Western European history, and yet she felt that this history was not part of her heritage. She reports that these early experiences created within her an outsider perspective regarding her educational experience. Although she is now an adult, her segmented learning approach causes her to have trouble integrating knowledge with personal experiences. She "banks" information rather than engaging in synthesis or evaluation. Her written assignments tend to be concrete and factual rather than reflective and analytical.

Another student, Leo, writes about his awareness of sexist thinking when he reads material on corporate efforts to diversify work teams. In a study on organizational behavior, Leo challenges his own reaction to theories regarding women in the technical and construction trades. Leo is a 24-year-old Italian male raised in a rural township. His interaction with diverse people is limited, yet the assignment to consider how his personal cultural experiences influence his learning activities provided him an opportunity to engage in content integration, prejudice reduction and knowledge construction.

Over the past years, many discussions have ensued as a result of this assignment. Particular student responses are vividly remembered. The impact of this assignment varies, but on at least one occasion, a white student informed me that he now understands what "white male privilege" means. I recall this student discussing his new awareness that being white had a level of privilege in the United States. His particular consideration of this phenomena had to do with jobs and the reality that he could move around in promotional opportunities without having to consider whether he would be the only one, as opposed to a coworker, whose ethnic and racial identity would be different from the rest of the shift managers at the plant.

Creating an inclusive learning environment which is hospitable to diverse perspectives can encourage students to integrate their personal cultural experiences and knowledge into academic discourse and scholarship. As educators of adult learners, it is recognized that students bring a wealth of experiential learning into their academic environments. While nontraditional educational institutions have opened their doors to the prospect of credit by evaluation and independent study, there is a lack of evidence of these institutions' direct connection to multicultural education and to the various models which encourage transformation of standard disciplinary approaches in teaching.

Morey and Kitano (1997) present a historical review of multi-cultural education within higher educational institutions. This review expands the "content infusion model" and suggests that curriculum reform calls for transformation in the ways of teaching, thinking and learning. James Banks has written extensively in the area of multicultural education; his writings suggest that at the highest level of course transformation students are empowered with knowledge which encourages decision making and social action. Ognibene (1989) speaks to the strengthening of the canon, adding significant events and people to traditional information and then challenging the canon with alternative definitions from diverse perspectives. Although the literature on multicultural course transformation is grounded in research on teaching approaches, there is little evidence of a student focus or a recognition that students can be the avenue to culturally relevant material within a study area. While there is some discussion of the practice of selecting content, material and resources that reflect the cultural characteristics and experiences of the students, there is a lack of discourse on how to access students personal cultural knowledge (Banks 1994) and its application to academic and scholarly discussions. In related research, Pederson (1988) has proposed a model which integrates a learner centered approach that begins with the

individual's experience then builds a knowledge base and enhances skills which call for the application of critical thinking and reflective analysis.

These models can be expanded to encourage knowledge construction from a personal cultural perspective and going beyond the mere inclusion of multicultural perspectives. This learner centered and culture focused approach can provide ownership to the learning experience by including the impact of culture centered context. Consider the experience of embedding cultural aspects of learning as students are asked to become more aware of cultural scripts. In a study of community organizations and basic helping skills, Ford, a student in his late forties who is African American discusses the concept of disclosure and observes that mainstream Americans often feel uncomfortable with silence and tend to ramble in order to fill in quiet gaps. He indicates his discomfort with this pattern and during a review of the concept of confidentiality he engages in a long discussion on the meaning of silence. By directing this discussion into a consideration of his own values and his own interpretation of the process of disclosure, Ford is able to see where he is affected by his orientation to maintaining a more private stance in communicating with others. While Ford has every right to his own understanding of communication patterns, he begins to understand the need to encourage disclosure if he is to enter into the study of counseling theories and therapeutic helping professions. He cannot expect to develop skills in counseling concepts without engaging in disclosing conversations with the people he hopes to work with. At the same time, Ford's sensitivity to the need for private reflection and silence can be an added benefit during the counseling process. Facilitating personal cultural reflection supports Ford's critical consideration of both theories of psychology and the application of helping skills such as listening and reflection or paraphrasing.

Beck, a student in her early 30s is of Jamaican decent and has been in the United States for approximately three years. Her previous educational experiences were in institutions which approach educational models with a highly authoritative, disciplined and rigorous attitude toward knowledge acquisition. She has entered into a guided independent learning institution which encourages critical thinking and reflective analysis. Her initial work shows her pattern of being rule directed, concrete and deferring to the instructors as the authority. In her study of Carl Rogers she has difficulty understanding the effectiveness of the non-directive approach to counseling and helping relationships. Additionally, she comments that she questions both the effectiveness of this approach and her own capacity to function in an non directive model. While her reflection is extensive, she is possibly identifying what Brislin (1992) calls a culture clash which can signal conceptual misunderstanding.

These examples of a learner centered approach to multicultural knowledge construction show the opportunity to direct students to make explicit their cultural context. In both cases, students are simply asked to consider concepts in regards to their own interpretations, belief systems and experiences. The inquiry into knowledge construction from the students culturally centered context is a powerful engagement for the student and the teacher. It encourages co-construction within the knowledge building experience and encourages the development of an inclusive learning environment. It models to students that knowledge and understanding is situated within the parameters of our own social and educational background. At the same time, it recognizes that as learners students bring a broad spectrum of experience; connecting this experience to the academic domain enables critical thinking and reflective analysis. Perhaps one of the side benefits of encouraging culturally centered context is the ability to witness that cultural learning is not unitary but rather dynamic. This knowledge construction process helps students to understand, investigate and determine how their implicit cultural assumptions influence the way in which concepts are understood (Banks, 1994).

The ongoing research on personal cultural knowledge (Banks, 1994); its impact on learning as well as its application to course transformation (Morey & Kitano, 1997) deserves consideration within nontraditional independent study programs for adult learners. Recognizing the strategies for making explicit the presence of cultural context by simply asking for it through discussion and written assignments can encourage faculty to continue to integrate the learners experience from contextual and student centered perspectives. The guided autobiographical sketch provides a beginning basis for reconstructing meaning and enhancing collaborative learning experiences.

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ALL ABOUT

MENTORING

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Unlimited Time Frances Mercer, Central New York Center

Periodically, I feel resentful that I don't have enough time for everything I "must" get done, and begin to grump and despair about the demands of "my" time. However, I recently encountered a wonderfully different way of thinking about "my" time in *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation* by Thich Nhat Hanh. (Beacon, 1992) Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk and Zen master, tells the following story:

Yesterday Allen came over to visit with his son Joey. Joey has grown so quickly! He's already seven years old...During the two hours that Allen and I were talking, Allen had to keep a constant eye on Joey. Joey played, chattered away, and interrupted us, making it impossible to carry on a real conversation...Later, Joey put on his jacket and went outside to play. ..I asked Allen, "Do you find life easy?" Allen didn't answer directly. He said that during that past few weeks, since the birth of Anan, he had been unable to sleep any length of time. During the night, Sue wakes him up and -because she is too tired herself- asks him to check to make sure Anan is still breathing. "I get up and look at the baby and then come back and fall asleep again. Sometimes the ritual happens two or three times a night."

"Is family life easier than being a bachelor?" I asked. Allen didn't answer directly. But I understood. "A lot of people say that if you have a family you're less lonely and have more security. Is that true?" Allen nodded his head and mumbled something softly. But I understood. Then Allen said, "I've discovered a way to have a lot more time. In the past, I used to look at my time as if it were divided into several parts. One part I reserved for Joey, another part was for Sue, another part to help with Anan, another part for household work. The time left over I considered my own. I could read, write, do research, go for walks."

"But now I try not to divide time into parts anymore. I consider my time with Joey and Sue as my own time. When t help Joey with this homework, I try to find ways of seeing his time as my own time. I go through his lesson with him, sharing his presence and finding ways to be interested in what we do during that time. The time for him becomes my own time. The same with Sue. The remarkable thing is that now I have unlimited time for myself!"

Allen smiled as he spoke. I was surprised. I knew that Allen hadn't learned this from reading any books. This was something he had discovered for himself in his daily life. (pp. 1-3)

Ironically, "from reading (a) book" I had gained access to Allen's insight about "unlimited time for myself." But, I immediately suspected that the long-term *practice* of such an insight was more difficult than discovering the insight in the first place. And indeed, Thich Nhat Hanh, later in his book, writes:

Allen said that since he's begun to consider Joey's and Sue's time as his own, he has "unlimited time." But perhaps he has it only in principle. Because there are doubtless times when Allen forgets to consider Joey's time as his own time..., and thus Allen may lose that time. Allen might hope for the time to pass quickly, or he may grow impatient because that time seems wasted to him,...And so, if he really wants "unlimited time" he will have to keep alive the realization that "this is my time" throughout the times he's studying with Joey...(O)ne must practice mindfulness in one's daily life...People

usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to talk on earth. (pp. 11-12)

The moral I derived from this story is: Pay attention to what I am doing, no matter what I am doing and no matter who I am doing it with or for. Those moments are "my" time. Those moments are my life.

The educator's task is to promote an understanding that is held, perhaps with some passion, but against a deeper understanding that this is a particular position that might have to be yielded sometime. One's understanding might change tomorrow

Ronald Barnett,
The Limits of Competence, 1994

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Assessing Prior Learning Assessment **Tai Arnold, Office of Academic Affairs**

Prior learning assessment is controversial in that it presents institutional challenges in establishing programs that maintain integrity and are, at the same time, responsive to the needs of an increasingly diverse population of adult learners. Institutions that grant credit for experience alone, rather than for learning, contribute to the diploma mill image. This makes the implementation of prior learning assessment more difficult for those institutions that do make an effort to ensure academic integrity. (Pilon, 1998)

For institutions concerned with quality programming, many issues of daily practice affect institutional integrity. Concerns about evaluator objectivity and the validity and reliability of assessments are well documented in the literature. (Fisher, 1992; Knapp, 1981; Koenig and Wolfson, 1994; Wolfson, 1996) However, little is known about how these issues are addressed in practice. Trowler (1996) reproached advocates of prior learning assessment for lack of clarity in how evaluations are to be conducted. In addition, practitioners have observed differences in faculty evaluation behavior that may be attributed to a number of factors, including individual traits, beliefs and attitudes. (Shaughnessy & Bloor, 1995, Trowler, 1996)

Knapp (1981) identified three major issues relevant to the evaluation of learning in portfolio assessment of prior learning: 1) who assesses the learning, 2) the accuracy and fairness of the evaluators judgements, and 3) the standards used in prior learning assessments. The responsibility for evaluation may lie either with the faculty, with administrators, or with some combination thereof. Such a decision clearly affects the implementation of policies and procedures. When faculty are responsible for the evaluation process and for setting standards and criteria, faculty autonomy and academic freedom become significant to the evaluation process, creating variations in the evaluations that are related to an individual faculty member's beliefs and philosophies. (Wolfson, 1996) At the other end of the spectrum lie programs with centralized administrative structures that contract with outside subject and academic experts. Within these programs, there is greater latitude to impose and enforce values, standards, procedures and evaluation criteria. (Knapp, 1981)

Several factors are related to evaluator objectivity: 1) similarity or dissimilarity between evaluator and learner in values, style or life circumstance; 2) evaluator reluctance to make a judgement, which may lead to safe credit awards (approaching the average award with very few high or low recommendations); 3) vague or ambiguous standards of achievement; 4) the evaluator's area of expertise; and 5) the evaluator's lack of familiarity with prior learning assessment through portfolio. (Koenig and Wolfson, 1994) Further, evaluators' beliefs about the meaning of a college education profoundly affect evaluations, as does the difficulty of balancing the tension between portfolios being "highly personal and academically rigorous." (Trowler, 1996, p. 25) Koenig and Wolfson (1994) point out that ensuring validity, reliability and predictability is largely dependent upon the training of evaluators and the degree of objectivity they are able to achieve.

Guidelines and standards for assessing prior learning through portfolios, such as those endorsed by the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), are widely accepted and employed by the regional accrediting associations and by higher education institutions. Despite these standards and CAEL's involvement in addressing principles and standards in

evaluating experiential learning since 1974, Fisher (1992) reports that institutions are still evolving processes and policies to ensure academic integrity; and Trowler (1996) criticizes accepted standards for allowing too much latitude for interpretation by academic experts. He remarks that most standards are vague and inadequate in an environment where quality control is important. For Trowler, how to ensure that the level of an individual's learning is sufficient is unclear and glossed over in the literature. (p.26)

Enhancing institutional quality control and improving training of higher education faculty responsible for making judgements about academic credit for documented prior learning is an important aspect of improving practice. The following describes an exploratory study of how faculty evaluators assess prior learning portfolios used for requesting college credit. Rather than focusing on all of the details specific to the institution used in the investigation (American University in Washington D.C.), this discussion covers issues and concerns of broader interest, and will hopefully be useful to the ESC community.

Methodology

American University's Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) program, a long-standing portfolio-based program, served a sufficient number of students to allow the examination and compilation of student credit award records. A questionnaire was administered to all of the active evaluators, drawn from the full-time faculty of American University, as the program employed a minimally sufficient number of evaluators to make analysis useful. With a few exceptions, there was one evaluator from each academic department. Using the information gathered through the survey and from student credit award records, the research project: examined how faculty evaluators applied standards and criteria for the evaluation of portfolios documenting prior learning; described faculty evaluators demographic, personal and professional characteristics and ascertained their attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about prior learning assessment; and analyzed the relationships between and among criteria for evaluation, characteristics of faculty evaluators, academic discipline and credit award outcomes.

CAEL Standards and Criteria for Evaluation

Based upon the results of the questionnaire and data collected from students' evaluation reports, the evaluators in this study were mixed in their responses regarding the application of the GAEL standards in the evaluation of prior learning portfolios. The GAEL academic standards (Whitaker, 1989) were applied less often than anticipated, providing impetus to revisit these standards and examine their current usefulness in light of information about tacit knowledge (Polyani, 1967; Sternberg, 1995) and knowing in action. (Schon, 1983) Further, evaluator comments indicated uncertainty about the meaningfulness of the standards. Most evaluators felt strongly about their responsibility to maintain academic standards, but perhaps these evaluators were loyal to academic standards that derived from their disciplines, rather than to the externally developed GAEL standards.

The evaluators reported that they were most inclined to consider the students' presentation of content and knowledge, analytic and critical thinking skills, writing skills, and evidence of reading and research. Interestingly, even though the first GAEL Standard states that credit should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience, a students' experience had some effect on the outcome of the evaluation, and it may difficult for some evaluators to separate learning and experience. In addition, half of the respondents indicated that they considered the intensity and length of a student's experience in their evaluation of prior learning.

Two areas of thought may help in understanding this attention to experience: tacit knowledge and situated cognition. Literature about tacit knowledge points out the difficulty in articulating what is known, but is often quite clear through actions and professional judgements. For example, "knowing how" is often more integral to the knowledge needed to be successful than "knowing that." (Polyani, 1967; Schon, 1983; Sternberg, 1995) Many evaluators may recognize learning even when it is not described in direct declarative terms. Another, perhaps complementary, explanation is provided by proponents of so-called "situated cognition." Michelson (1996) points out that in this construction of knowledge "because experience cannot be known in the first place outside of socially available meanings, the knowledge through which we organize meaning cannot be separated from experience." This may, in part, underlie the evaluators' consideration of experience in the evaluation of learning components and explain an evaluator's dismissal of this particular standard. A logical next research step would be to conduct studies that directly examine faculty beliefs about these two theories.

Credit Award Outcomes

Just four academic departments reviewed and evaluated over half of the learning components in the APEL program. There were also statistically significant differences between each these departments and all departments in the level and number of credits awarded for prior learning. While there are plausible local and institution-specific explanations, the differences between the departments, especially in regard to the number of credits awarded, need further investigation. It is not clear, for example, whether the higher credit awards in particular departments constituted overly generous behavior on the part of the evaluator, if the evaluators were more accepting of prior learning assessment, or if the students in the APEL program had stronger skills in these areas. An investigation into the systematic variation between departments (or other administrative divisions) is essential for drawing any further conclusions. Second readers may be employed on some portion of the learning components to discover if there are any inconsistencies between the evaluations and if so, why they exist. This may serve to focus the primary evaluators on clarifying their reasons for granting credit and to stimulate internal discussion about these issues. Other academic review mechanisms could also be considered.

The information gathered from the narrative comments made by evaluators on the students' credit award reports provided very useful information about what faculty considered when evaluating portfolios. This information was provided with little structure on the evaluation report form to elicit narrative commentary. Development of a structured evaluation report requiring justification for the credit award may help to reduce subjectivity, both real and perceived, and provide evidence of academic integrity. Incorporating written guidelines would also be helpful, not only to new evaluators, but for experienced evaluators as well. In *Broader Implications for Institutional Quality Control*, Pylori (1998) reminds us that much of the controversy surrounding prior learning assessment comes from the challenge faced by institutions to meet the individualized assessment needs of nontraditional students and at the same time to ensure quality services for all students and to preserve institutional integrity. High quality assessments provide valuable information about program effectiveness and integrity and also offer information for program improvement. This project provides a model for defining and improving practice in portfolio assessment of prior learning in higher education and for enhancing institutional quality control.

Evaluators' questionnaire responses and narrative commentary on the evaluation reports provided evidence of the evaluators' understanding of the program and of their role as evaluators. An analysis of the information contained in faculty comments could provide information for day-to-day monitoring of program quality as well as information about longer-term trends, both of which can inform evaluator and portfolio instructor training.

As noted above, institutions differ in regard to who evaluates prior learning and in the administrative structures supporting programs. However, useful information about prior learning assessment program practices is likely to have already been collected in evaluation reports. The survey could be modified to suit the nature of the program and/or the institution. It could also be targeted to the pool of evaluators. Institutions that continually evaluate their programs will gain a greater understanding and appreciation for the needs of learners and the degree to which they are meeting those needs. More importantly, they will have information with which to make responsible decisions about program revisions and developments.

Revisiting Standards for Prior Learning Assessment

While the GAEL standards form the basis for the standards and guidelines established by most regional accrediting associations, discussions among professionals in the field indicate general dissatisfaction with the standards. In fact, many find them inadequate for their programs. This research showed that evaluators did not always apply the standards, and reported ambiguity and confusion about their meaning. Standards for prior learning assessment need broader discussion within the organizations supporting these practices and in the literature of the field. The concomitant variability in prior learning assessment programs affects students' ability to transfer prior learning credit from one institution to another, and prior learning assessment is plagued by concerns about disreputable institutions that award credit for experience rather than learning.

However, we should *resist* revising the prior learning assessment standards in any way that would move individualized assessment programs toward standardization. Issues of intrastate articulation agreements, which underlie some of the push

for standardization, should remain state issues. We should concentrate on standards that promote the development of programmatic assessments appropriate to the particular context in which they are used. These assessments should demonstrate program integrity, examine reliability and validity of prior learning assessment, and aid in program and institutional improvement.

It is important to recognize that in the present movement toward outcomes assessment and accountability, prior learning assessment programs -especially those subjected to legislative and political whims -may be expected to standardize in ways that affect fundamental educational principles. This may further preclude the recognition of knowledge that falls outside of conventional academic disciplines. Michelson (1996) points out that this is already the case: "(F)or all the celebration of the concreteness and diversity of experience, only *experience* can be exceptional; *knowledge* must be presented as being similar to that of others and recognizable in terms set by universalized academic norms." (p. 189) In effect, the similarity of the knowledge presented by a student to more conventional academic ways of knowing deems it credit worthy, yet may also exclude and denigrate non-academic kinds of knowledge as well as individuals from minority cultures.

Standardized and individualized are quite contradictory terms and the tension inherent in achieving a workable model for the assessment of prior learning is obvious. Institutions would do well to develop and use their own methods of assessing program effectiveness and integrity, as there will always be others who will do it for them. Despite the criticisms noted, the GAEL standards include a clear statement about the importance of regular reviews of policies and practices and the need for continuous program improvement. (Whitaker, 1989) This tenth GAEL standard is consistent with the current practice in institutional and outcomes assessment that leads to improvement in practice. (Banta, et al., 1995)

Next Steps

This project is the first of what is hoped to be a series of investigations into how prior learning portfolios are evaluated and the role of portfolio-based assessment of prior learning in colleges, in universities, and perhaps beyond. The similarity and differences between learners and evaluators must be investigated in light of program outcomes if academe is to make room for diverse sources of knowledge. The ideals of integrated curricula and respect for diversity need to be examined in terms of everyday practice, and responsible methods that are more inclusive rather than less need to be developed.

The role of higher education in accrediting non-academic knowledge warrants further examination and discussion. Colleges and universities can begin rational discussions about what knowledge may be accredited, how it should be done, and who should do it. However, discussions without an examination of current practices can often be abstract, idealized and too separate from reality.

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A One Moose Morning, But a Six Moose Night

Barbara Kantz, Long Island Center

"It was a one moose morning, but a six moose night" are not lyrics from a country western song, but a refrain that Amy Ruth Tobol and I sang during our moose viewing expeditions in Alaska. Amy Ruth Tobol and I were in Anchorage, Alaska to present a paper at the Oral History Association's annual conference. The OHA is a diverse organization of historians, folklorists, anthropologists, archivists, librarians, filmmakers and storytellers as well as people who just like to talk. I have been a member of the Oral History Association since 1966; Amy Ruth has been a member since 1991.

Our presentation, "Parallel Lives: The Ivory Tower and the Blue Wall -Oral History and the Shaping of Narrative at Empire State College," examined how we use oral history at ESC both as a pedagogical tool and as a method for preserving our institutional history. Our paper proposal provides a good overview of our presentation:

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, women and other minorities sought access to higher education and union employment. Empire State College, one of the first nontraditional public universities, was poised to meet the educational needs of the adult student. Empire State College was founded in 1971 and was truly a product of its time, offering individualized study, flexible scheduling and personalized programs.

Two oral history projects, one a history of the College as an institution conducted by an untenured faculty member using student researchers; the other conducted by an untenured faculty member and re- searched by female police officer students studying the NYC police department in the same years, present parallel stories in which the relationship of interviewers and narrator are intimately connected. Not only do they reveal stories of civil rights, institutional development and personal struggle, they reflect power relations between student and teacher, teacher and institution, worker and workplace.

Barbara Kantz will recount the difficulties she and her students faced in reconstructing a history of a 25 year old academic institution, 1971-1996. The project titled, "Promises Kept: Empire State College on its 25th Anniversary" was published in *The Long Island Historical Journal*, spring, 1997. She shares the issues about teacher/student power relations, collaboration, and her struggle to publish an accurate history when stories were told "off the record." How these issues are reflected in editing decisions, and how she dealt with power relations when the journal editor, a graduate of Empire State College, did not include the student researchers' names in the by-lines, are intriguing and challenging aspects of oral history publication.

Amy Ruth Tobol will describe an oral history project she is conducting with police officer students. These students worked collaboratively to design the project and conducted interviews with police officer colleagues, looking primarily at the experiences of the first women police officers integrated into the NYPD, 1971-1976.

Each case study presents similar issues for the oral historian: How do you do a history when you and the interviewees continue to work in that same institution? How do tenure, status and rank effect interviewer and interviewee? How can researchers present their findings without censure? What is the interface between individual and institutional struggle?

What are the power relations in the collaborative project when it involves teachers and students? How is information, which is offered off the cuff or reluctantly, included without violating the requests of the story tellers? What do the "Ivory Tower" and "The Blue Wall" have in common as institutions?

We presented our paper on a panel titled, "The Narrator's Voice," which examined the influence of the oral historian on the story the narrator tells. Our panel included a Lutheran minister who interviewed ministers on radical ministry in the '60s, and a biographer who interviewed a notable regional journalist, on the latter's biography. The panel was enlivened by the publication of *Dutch* that same weekend, which inspired provocative discussions about history, narration, creative non-fiction and storytelling. Our session was well attended, and the audience very interested in ESC -our mentoring model as well as our student population of police officers.

In sum, we had a great trip, and are continuing to work on our oral history project: "Women in the NYPD 1971-1976." We are also preparing an article for publication on the pedagogical value of using oral history to teach police.

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Mentoring and Psychotherapy Analogies **Robert R. Rodgers, Niagara Frontier Center**

The Question

In the "early days" of Empire State College and for about the first ten years there were occasional soul-searching discussions among faculty about whether or not mentoring was a form of counseling or psychotherapy that should make use of their principles and techniques, or if it was something entirely different. The consensus grew over time, encouraged partly by those mentors who did not feel competent to change other persons, partly by high work loads, and partly by changing student expectancies, that mentoring was *not* psychotherapy- it was itself, an independent form of professional relationship.

But perhaps the similarities still merit recognition. For example, by one definition, "modern psychotherapies may be described generically as involving .a *professional service* that provides *personal help* in the sphere of *private life* under the symbolic authority and guidance of *scientific knowledge* [italics in original]. As a professional service, psychotherapy is a contractual business relationship engaged in by recognized experts, for a fee or as an entitlement, with clients who wish to avail themselves of that expertise."

There is also an element of emotional attachment, leading to a "combination of professional service with personal attachment as contrasting and even contrary social structural element into a single relationship." (Orlinsky and Howard, 1995, p. 9) The former asymmetric relationship derives from economic exchange, is a complementary division of labor, the latter reciprocal relationship has a sense of community, identity and sharing. It is obvious that mentoring is similarly defined and has this same paradoxical combination of rational and emotional components and the dialectic interaction between them.

I submit, therefore, that the wrong question was asked. The more fruitful question should have been: Given that both mentoring and psychotherapy are time- limited, interpersonal relationships between a professional and a client, in which the goal is learned change in the client as a psychosocial human being, what are the conditions of the relationship that cause successful, desired change, and what can mentoring learn from psychotherapy about those conditions? The advantage of this question is that far more empirical research has been done on psychotherapy than is ever likely to be done on mentoring, and we can try to take advantage of that research.

The disadvantage is that reports of research findings on psychotherapy present an extremely dense, inter- laced and extensive thicket, in which even the clearings created by summaries and meta-analyses and the trail markers left by model builders may turn out to be illusory at a later time or indistinguishable from another tangle of special pleading by a different authority. Currently, the whole berry patch is being plowed, terraced and planted in rows by the demands of managed care, very much as the strictures of student loan and aid programs have for a number of years controlled the ability of mentors, and students, to enact some of the principles of individualized education. For example, there is now a controversy whether or not the medical model of randomized clinical trials of psychotherapy can draw externally valid conclusions for practice. (Kopta et al., 1999, pp. 450-451) A generation ago they were rejected as unethical. Yet, again

and again, the research provokes thought about mentoring and student learning. One specific example must suffice.

Expectancy Effects

In *The Influence of Client Expectancies Upon the Therapeutic Alliance: Promises, Problems, and Possibilities*, Higginbotham et al. (1988, p. 126-167) distinguish between *outcome* expectancy (e.g., optimism-pessimism) and *role performance* expectancy. Under "Therapist Expectancy as a Mediating Variable," they hypothesize that: "The effect of client level of outcome expectancy upon subsequent treatment gain is determined by the level of therapist outcome expectancy. A high correspondence between client and therapist expectancies strengthens the relationship between client estimate of success and actual outcome; a low correspondence between interactants' expectancies reduces or nullifies the relationship." (p. 148)

Their discussion includes results of one of very few "true experimental designs" in this field -a research by Berman and Wenzlaff (1983) on "the Rosenthal Effect" in which "therapists. ..were given contrived prognostic information that led them to expect that one of their incoming clients would exhibit rapid improvement during the early treatment sessions. No such expectancy was induced concerning a second control client. ..also treated as part of the study. Probes after the first, second, fourth and sixth therapy sessions indicated that [therapists'] expectations for experimental clients were reliably greater than [for] controls at each... point." The real zinger was that the *clients*," who had been falsely described to the therapists as promising rapid improvement, themselves "reported reliably lower levels of anxiety after the fourth and sixth sessions... and... also... lower levels of depression after the sixth session [than the controls]." (p. 151) However, an important qualification was that while therapist expectancy reduced clients' negative *emotions*, it "had no such effect on [more cognitive or complex] symptoms relating to interpersonal problems, obsessive-compulsive concerns, or somatic complaints [assessed by the same symptom checklist]." (p. 165)

On the other hand, a summary of conclusions about expectancy, while agreeing that many but not all researches report a positive relation between outcome expectancy and change, also states that fewer dropouts occur if role expectancies of therapist and client are *congruent* about the therapeutic role and process, regardless of direction of predicted outcome. (Barrett and Wright, 1984, p. 337) This is a slightly different perspective, complicating the control of expectancies.

Consider then the effects on mentors' (especially experienced ones) expectancies from reading students' applications before they ever meet or start to work with them; and the subsequent effect on students' learning outcomes. The form's information should lead to congruent mentor and student expectancies of successful or unsuccessful study, and that congruence should lead to the predicted outcome more often than would incongruent or no mentor expectations. But this will be true only if the form contains relevant information. Thus, it follows that the faculty should determine what information is requested on the application form -namely that producing mentor expectations congruent with student's (e.g., a brief, personal essay) not just demographic or financial information for bureaucratic record keeping.

General Implications of Psychotherapy Research

The research reviewed is full of such implications. It is surely impossible to take them all simultaneously into account in either the day-to-day work of mentoring, or the design of the College's situational and administrative provisions for effective mentoring and student success. Therefore, ideally this review should try to focus on those variables that are: a) at a level of generality and external validity that we can use them to contribute to our own general model and make our own specific deductions about mentoring; and either b) within the conscious control of mentors; c) useful in recruiting, assessing and recommending mentors in hiring and advancement processes to which the faculty contribute (including I hope, self-assessment); or, d) valid for attracting and admitting potentially successful future students.

I propose to present the implications for mentoring of research on psychotherapy in the form of hypothetical statements about mentors, students and learning that are quotes or paraphrases from the psychotherapy research summaries in which I have substituted italicized "*mentor*" for "*therapist*," "*student*" for "*patient*" or "*client*," "*learning*" or "*study*" for "*treatment*," and "*area of study*" or "*discipline*" for "*school*," "*theory*," or "*modality*" of therapy. This convention should be kept in mind.

A theme running through all the research summaries concerns the relative importance for outcome of the characteristics of

the different participants. Here is one from the 1995 *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychotherapy*. Again, I have transformed the conclusions or citations of others' research into *mentor-student* terms. "The best predictors of *learning* outcome are *student* variables, *mentor* variables and *teaching* techniques, in that order. Techniques are, in fact, a 'distant third' in that comparison... In statistical analyses of the relative contributions of different factors in *learning*, the person (though not necessarily the personality) of the *mentor* appears to be at least eight times more influential than his or her *disciplinary* orientation and/or use of specific *teaching* techniques in predicting the outcome of individual *learning*." (Mahoney, 1995, p. 479) That the *student* matters more than the *mentor* for predicting *learning* should surprise no one. Yet how often we have heard frustrated administrators urging mentors to work harder in order to prop up declining enrollments.

Another interesting persistent theme is the decline, perhaps disappearance, of schools or theories in favor of "eclectic" and "integrated" psychotherapy. Some studies report that two-thirds or more therapists describe themselves as "eclectic." Not the least interesting aspect of this is its contrast with our situation in which the importance of and potential conflict between business, human services and cultural areas of study has continued to increase.

Student Variables

Since client (*student*) variables are the best predictors of therapeutic (*learning*) outcome, it behooves us to review some of the research findings on them.

The salient *student* variables tested against outcome have been: social class, age, sex, race, personality, intelligence, "attractiveness," nature/severity/and duration of problem, degree of demoralization, voluntary *versus* coerced *study-seeking*, and of course, expectancies. Not only eventual outcome, but also seeking *learning*, entering into or refusing *study*, and continuing or dropping out have been examined for many of these potential causes. (Garfield, 1994, pp. 190-228)

Socioeconomic Status. The effects of social class, and of occupational and educational statuses, on these dependent variables have been demonstrated and widely known at least since 1958 from Hollingshead and Redlich's famous *Social Class and Mental Illness*. Many studies since then continue to confirm that seeking *learning*, admission *for study*, *students'* acceptance or refusal, and *learning* outcome are related to class and other socioeconomic factors -e.g., prior education and occupational levels. Even more detailed correlates of status have been discovered, such as:

	<i>Lower status</i>	<i>Higher status</i>
Rank of <i>mentor</i>	lower	higher
"Insight" <i>Learning</i> not recommended	to 64%	unkn.
Type of <i>learning</i> offered:		
"inpatient"	more often	less often
psychotropic drugs	more often	less often
individualized <i>study</i>	less often	more often
" <i>psychoanalysis</i> "	less often	more often
length of <i>enrollment</i>	shorter	longer

At least one uncharitable interpretation of these facts is that social distance between *student* and *mentor* is the underlying variable, but the relation is not linear, for professionals may, under some historical and cultural conditions, not only reject those below them, but also seek to affiliate with clients of higher status than themselves. (Levine and Levine, 1992, pp.155-160)

Sex. Older researches found men less likely than women to seek, accept or continue *learning*. More recent studies find no significant differences, especially in *learning* outcome.

Age. While a number of age-related changes in functioning exist that would theoretically predict poorer *learning* outcome, the research evidence is weak and contradictory. At least with respect to continuing *versus* dropping out, 'Age does not appear to be an important variable.' (Garfield, 1994, p. 197)

Race. Again, while there has obviously been much past reported selection bias in favor of whites with respect to seeking, being offered, accepting or continuing *education*; a recent research, using eight or more sessions of psychodynamic *learning*, with *mentor evaluations* as criterion of *learning* outcome, found "essentially similar outcomes" for four samples -both black and white *students*, each divided among both black and white *mentors*, showing that "*mentor-student* racial match has little influence on outcome in longer term *learning*." (Garfield, 1994, p. 206)

Personality. In the 1940s and '50s there were hundreds of studies of every conceivable personality dimension or test variable in attempts to predict *learning* outcomes, there was such diversity and consistent failure to replicate results that the research has largely stopped.

There are a couple of other findings with potential meaning for ESC programs:

1. In general the above kinds of *student* social variables are more strongly related to outcome success in "psychodynamic" than in "behavioral" *learning*. *The latter also has, in general, smaller outcome variability. Is this due to selectivity and attrition, or to something in the nature of the learning experience? Can this be related to area of study and concentration, to learning activities -i.e., verbal versus non-verbal skills and communications -or perhaps to cognitive learning objectives -i.e., comprehension, analysis and synthesis versus application?*

2. In general, the presence of manifest, measurable, reportable *student* anxiety at the start of *study* is a predictor of positive outcome. There are many possible meanings to this observation, and the question of equivalent meaning for *students* at ESC is not easy. Perhaps the most parsimonious is simply in terms of the presence of motivation for change.

There is also a paradox evident in the reviews. The general conclusion was that who the *student* is matters more for outcome than who the *mentor* is; yet many of the classic differences among people show little or no current relation to outcome when researched. Then, what is it to which the general conclusion refers?

Mentor Variables

Consider the following conclusions from research on variables of the quality of therapists and of the relationship:

"Seldom has it been possible to separate the effect of mentor from other uncontrolled variables. When that has been possible, the following conclusions seem to be warranted:

1. *Mentors'* emotional problems may interfere with effective *student learning*.

2. These attractive *mentor* variables have unclear, weak or unconfirmed effects on *learning*:

- a) Personality of *mentor*
- b) *Personal learning* experience of *mentor*
- c) Sex of *mentor*
- d) *Mentoring* experience

3. *Mentors'* qualities that were formerly hypothesized to be "necessary and sufficient" (e.g., accurate empathy, warmth and genuineness) now appear to be related to other variables in complex ways and do not stand alone.

When *mentor* variables are combined with *student* variables, research supports the following conclusions:

1. Dropout rate (but not *mentoring* effectiveness) appears to be related to the congruence of *mentor* and *student* expectations.

2. The effect of *studying* may be enhanced if the *student* is adequately prepared for it.
3. "Matching" of *students* and *mentors* on personality dimensions and on intellectual dimensions has not been shown to be useful, but some evidence suggests that this could be fruitful.
4. It may be useful within a given *learning center* to match *students* and *mentors* in order to utilize *mentoring* staff more efficiently.
5. The following have not been adequately tested:
 - a) Interactive roles of *mentor* and *student* on variables of race, social class and sex.
 - b) Effects of *mentor-student value* similarity. (Barrett and Wright, 1984, pp. 362-3)
6. "There is little to support the idea that, in the general sense, there is a personality pattern that defines 'the effective *mentor* .' Instead evidence suggests that different *areas of study* require different *learning methods*, and that *mentors* vary in their ability to conduct those methods." (ibid, p. 364)
7. There is still no strong evidence that the race of the *mentor* would be a major predictor of *learning process* or *outcome*." (ibid, p. 369)
8. The effect of "*mentor* gender may be confounded with *area of study*(*discipline*) and rank... [but] rather clearly... male and female *mentors*... differ in the way they perceive *learning* outcomes and their *students*. Further, some interaction of *students* and their gender affects perception of the *students*." (ibid, p. 372)

Sound plausible? Of course they do. Certainly plausible enough to pursue the question by looking at other, more recent research. The above summary actually concerned research before 1978.

The Therapeutic Alliance

The theoretical model of psychotherapeutic effectiveness that has elicited the most empirical research, and several books, in the past 20 years is the "therapeutic alliance," "therapeutic bond," or "working alliance" between client and therapist. Succinctly defined, using *student-mentor* terms, it is "the mutual liking, attachment and trust between the *student* and *mentor*," based on interaction "characterized by *mentor* understanding, *student* comfort, and reciprocal respect." (Raue and Goldfried, p. 141) Orlinsky et al. point out that this alliance does not develop in a social vacuum, but "the institutional and cultural patterns of the society constitute an overarching context for *learning*. They exert a direct influence on the *learning* delivery system and an indirect influence on the *learning* contract via cultural ideals and models for care-giving relationships. The *learning* setting is located within the *learning* delivery system and has a more direct influence on the *learning* contract." (p. 361)

There is some interesting evidence that the nature of the alliance, at least as perceived by the *student*, may change during the relationship. Early, the *mentor* is experienced "as supportive and helpful, with himself as a recipient"; later there is "a sense of working together in a joint struggle against what is impeding the *student*... on shared responsibility... [and] a sense of 'we-ness'." (Horvath, 1994, p. 277) Several researches found that *learning* outcome is better predicted by early assessment of the alliance than during the middle of *study*. Both these findings are almost certainly affected by attrition - by the later stage of *study* some have dropped out, the survivors holding a more equalitarian concept of the *alliance*, also reducing the outcome variance and predictive validity .

Ironically, one of the central concepts of this model is the "therapeutic contract." In its more implicit nature this differs from our explicit and formal "learning contract" .It also usually differs in duration, referring to the whole period of client-therapist contact rather than a specific, limited time span, usually of four or eight weeks. (Although it is worth noting that in the past learning contracts were often written with complex or multiple purposes that endured for months, and that short-term therapy and crisis intervention often have explicit time limits.)

Orlinsky et al. define the "therapeutic contract" between client and therapist as "their 'understanding' about their goals and conditions for engaging each other" in their social roles, including the limits on those roles. (p. 279) This includes the format, scheduling, term and fee arrangements. But they conclude from the meta-analysis that, "In and of themselves, the provisions of the *learning* contract studied to date show no consistent relation to outcome." (p. 352) However, analysis of how the contract is implemented leads them to conclude: "if an appropriately prepared *student* who is viewed as suited to the form of *study* in question becomes actively engaged in talking to a *mentor who* is seen as skillful, the result of *study* will be viewed as beneficial", whether viewed by *student*, *mentor* or an independent rater. (p. 359)

In their review of research, Orlinsky et al. conclude that "the strongest evidence linking process [events and relationships during *learning*] to outcome concerns the *learning bond* or *alliance*, reflecting more than 1,000 process-outcome findings. ...When outcome is assessed from the *student's* perspective. ...[it] is consistently related to 24 process variables, 13 of which reflect the importance of the *learning bond*. *Mutual affirmation*, *communicative attunement* and *global relational quality* [italics in original] reflect joint aspects of the bond."

They list a number of other relationship variables consistently associated with positive outcomes, some of which *students* and *mentors* assess similarly and some they diverge on, concluding, "What *mentors* do, when they do it, and whether they are credible in doing it all clearly matter to *students*, as does the level of the *student's* emotional involvement in the process. ... [but] the quality of the *student's* participation in *learning* - stands out as the most important determinant of outcome. The *learning bond*, especially as perceived by the *student*, is importantly involved in mediating the process-outcome link. The *mentor's* contribution toward helping the *student* achieve a favorable outcome is made mainly through empathic, affirmative, collaborative and self-congruent engagement with the *student*, and the skillful application of potent interventions such as experiential confrontation, interpretation and paradoxical intention. These consistent process-outcome relations, based on literally hundreds of empirical findings, can be considered *facts* established by 40-plus years of research." (Orlinsky et al., 1994, pp. 360-61)

"Contributions to the *learning bond* are influenced by their normative conceptions of how they ought to relate to each other. The facets of the bond that are most sensitive to such normative influence are interactive coordination (e.g., should one person lead and the other follow, or should they collaborate equally in deciding how to proceed?) and mutual affect (e.g., how much of their feelings should they expect or permit themselves to show to each other?). The compatibility of the *student's* and *mentor's* expectations about these matters determines the level of contractual consensus they achieve, and their expectations in turn influence how each contributes through interpersonal behavior to forming a *learning bond*. This is a matter of some importance, since actual modes of interactive coordination and mutual affect in the *learning bond* have been consistently linked with outcome." (p. 363)

Summary: Some Hypothesized Determinants of Successful Student's Learning Outcome

1. Who the student is, especially socioeconomically, matters more than who the mentor is, and who the mentor is as a person matters more than the specific instructional techniques he or she uses.
2. That mentors' demographic statuses with respect to age, gender and ethnicity matter less than their way of relating to others.
3. That the relation leading to success is best described as a learning alliance between student and mentor .
 - a) that the ideal learning alliance has both a rational and an emotional component acting together, and an equal and reciprocal relation- ship between the two parties.
 - b) that the facets of the learning alliance that contribute to successful learning outcome include: mutual liking, trust, respect and understanding; student security and open communications.
 - c) that the learning contract matters as a way of structuring the relationship to produce congruent expectancies and compatible actions of student and mentor, bringing them together in the interacting learning alliance, more than in the details of the learning activities.

d) that the societal and organizational setting and norms in which all this takes place matter, but that the nature of this influence remains to be specified by future research.

4. Although techniques matter less than the relationship, there is some evidence that techniques related to Socratic dialog matter more than others, for example, "experiential confrontation".

Afterword

Having learned, or reaffirmed, a lot about mentoring from psychotherapy research, it is proper to return the favor by asking if psychotherapists can learn anything of value from *us*. My answer is, "Yes." From my scanning of therapy research reviews, I would say that therapists should borrow from us the idea of *treatment planning* by involving their clients early on in stating and organizing their goals and their preferences and expectancies for the means to reach them. However, this would be wasted if the client's ideas for treatment were denied and not acted upon, in order to preserve the therapists' superordinate authority and professional mystique. So the *treatment planning* must itself be a joint activity - an activation of the therapeutic alliance -not lip service.

I recognize that the feelings of distress and demoralization motivating help-seeking may make this appear more difficult than it is for an entering ESC student, but the potential gains in self-confidence and commitment, both to changing and to the "therapeutic alliance," make it well worth the effort. More fundamentally, it is consistent with the goal of human development, attributed to Uncle Sigmund, "Where Id was, there shall Ego be."

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ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
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De Toin Goss
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Translator's Note: I should start by saying this is not a speech, but rather a translation of a heroic tale, one well-known to Gaelic scholars as De Toin Goss, or in the more corrupt Brooklyn text, De Monsta an De Goss. The original manuscript of De Toin was found severely decomposed but wrapped in the traditional Bal-Oney casing in an Arzon bottle at Eaton's Neck in Long Island at the turn of the millennium. Perhaps because of the greasy quality of the original, it was rather hastily translated from the Suffolk Celtic by my colleague Dr. Hessler, whose unhappily mangled version, De Fi Dolla Bil (Oxford Subcontracting, 1998) I have attempted to simplify and amend. My thanks to my editors at CK Auto, and my wife, Peggy, for their unflagging patience while I wrestled with this odiferous reconstruction. So without further prelude -De Toin. .

Few know it, but there are 58 counties in the place called California, and they say the Goss was born in the poorest of them all. In Siskiyou County the people are poor, but they have the blessing of being close to Oregon. In Sonoma County the people are poor, but they eat the seaweed they dredge from the ocean. And in Orange County where the people are too hungry to eat, they vote Republican.

But the Goss, heaven protect him, was born in the dirtiest, poorest and most abandoned county of all California, a place cursed by hellish convulsions of the land, with an atmosphere so foul the people go to the local dump for a breath of fresh air. He came, in short, from a place that was hardly a place at all, but more like a smear on the map where you dribble your coffee in the morning crawl on the freeway. Or perhaps none of this is true at all, especially in light of the indifferent scholarship in this area.

For the origins of the Goss remain obscure, especially as the people of the place customarily ate the records of their offspring, as the great Schimdt has told us, in their desperate scabble to sustain life in the mines, fields, factories, kitchens, pits, ditches and barns where they labored, heaven keep them.

Yet the father of the Goss, a carpenter, and a strong union man, said of him, "This one will be a mentor, and the greatest of them all."

It is said he was descended from Culain, the Irish king who, as we all know, founded the first supermarkets on Long Island. And after commanding that the shelves be filled to groaning with canned refritos and the cola and the chips, Culain called the father's father of the ancestor of the Goss before him.

And Culain said, "You will bear a line of heroes, and the last will be a mentor, and he will be called the Goss, and he will know these things: the plots of all books before they were written, the thoughts of dogs when they bark, the remaining cards on the deck, how long to microwave a cup of strong tea, how to go to meetings and not get fleas, the means of safely addressing Deansters and Deanishes, and other minor spirits, and how to slay the monster Woikload."

And of course the father's father of the ancestor of the Goss was terrified, and he fell on his knees before Culain and said,

"Blessings on you Culain, and all your house, and do you think we need any more paper towels in Aisle 3?"

It is said that after seven times seven generations the Goss rose out of the sea at Laguna Beach, fully clad in the garb of a mentor, with his mouse in his strong right hand, and a sheaf of paper in his left, and his beard shining with kelp. And he asked the people, "What disgusting place is this?" And the people there saw that he was tall, and in his tallness would take more suntan lotion to cover him than they possessed all together, and they did not wish to offend him.

So they said, "Yo, Goss, go East!" And he went to Alameda, where the people had blue smoke coming out of their mouths and noses, and they gave him his first pipe and a gobbet of Turkish tobacco. And when he asked for more, they replied, "Goss, yuh cleaned us out, dude. Groove on East!"

But first the Goss took himself to the University where he found a band of Republicans, and he saw many fair damsels with straight blond hair all dressed in black and swizzling cocktails, and biting on their pearls and hankering. But he left them looking after him with puzzlement and a terrible yearning. And he went instead to a wild tribe of Democrats where the women were strong and argumentative and laughed at their men and threw good advice at them. And he met there a warrior- woman called Susan who was a lover of the reform ticket and all other things beautiful who later bore him two bold daughters.

So the Goss took himself and the fair Susan to the East, driving his metal chariot into the sun and playing his music loud. And he went to the land of Buffaloes where he met the wizards Barth the Chimera Tamer and Fiedler the Word Flyer who taught him how to build a book, and make the characters in it curse believably. And he raised a wolf as it were his own son. And he and his bold daughters rode wizard machines faster than a man could run. And together he and the fair Susan ate better than any Republican and slew melancholy in its den.

And meanwhile, the Goss also did these things: he went to the council of the A-PC* (see Notes) where he met the Careys, the Flynns, the Finnegans and the Flanagans, the OWells, the OCongemis, the McSeidels, OVillines, and a great gaggle of lesser persons, and together went into the hall of the Kings of Sara- Toga (tr. Slicing the Frozen Fish?) and bid them restrain the foul monster Woikload that was ravaging the land of Esca. And the Kings and Queens of Sara- Toga and their wizard McFerroc heeded nought, and heaped even greater burdens on their minions, saying, "It is not We, but the fearsome Patak beyond us!"

And the Goss closed one eye and smiled quietly and said to himself, "This is what it is, and the burden will be evermore."

So the Goss returned home, and took himself to his lair where he prepared a potion of strong tea, and he waited a fortnight for the loading of the lists. And when the foul-breathed monster Woikload with the mark of FTE on its face, spewing untruth, its ravenous count rising above the thousands, the Goss was not dismayed, but sowing his contempt, displayed his war-banner showing the red jacket on the black Queen and smote Woikload stiffly with his stout sword, called Wittgenstein, or The Word Eater.

And the monster was stunned, and breathed hellfire and wined a reproach. But the Goss stayed as he was, reading and puffing his pipe, and Woikload went away limping and distressed.

There is much more: how the Goss gave heart to countless swains who would fain lie down to expire on the field of self-study; how he bore up the maidens and widows who strove beyond their ken in the toils of the dread AI-Jabber and the dreary Macro Economica. How he taught the magic of writing not to one or two, but to the hundreds and hundreds, whether they grasped it well or not. And he labored long in their fields and there was no end to it.

And to his fellow mentors he said, "Earn your pay, but give not a penny more to the King." And he said, "Paper is paper, but friends are the beginning and the end." And he said, "Tis no use to quarrel, all real problems solve themselves."

And in time the Goss grew weary, and yearned for his own land, where the young were proud, and the part-timers were honored, where mentors surrendered not to flattery or preference, and the comma was respected. And the Goss took himself to the beach with this faithful dogs Teeya and Cref and he bethought himself, "Surely, I have done enough."

And he drew a map in the sand with his pipe, and closed his eyes, and muttered at the sea creatures who rose with the tide saying, "I will go wherever I go, but the sun must rise in the East and set over the sea in the West, or it is naught but another bad day in Passaic."

Thus reasoning, he resolved to return to the land of his birth, leaving behind him all manner of kindred souls tall and short, clever and slow, mighty and weaktoiling still in the fields of Esca, together with the Deansters and Deanishes and wee haggling wizards and the demon Woikload.

Yet all these know in their hearts that the Goss has not gone, but is nearby, listening, as if he would come again. And if you would fain look for him, whatever your place or percentage, you will find him. He abides therein the rosy-fingered dawn, in the cell of the wild, in the humming paper jam of the new paperless printer, in the frothy white message the pigeon leaves on your wind- shield that you must leave wipe off with your latest Poc- Dokiana.** (see Notes)

For the Goss is all these things and more, and there is not an end to it.

Here ends the translation of De Toin Goss.

Notes:

* The name and function of the A-PC remains obscure. Cohen has suggested that it was a hereditary Abilone hunting league, but that would not account for the frequent bally-hoo and legerdemain for which they were notorious.

** Hessler considers the Dakiana a rudimentary set of computer instructions, which must surely be an error since we have no record of this before the Great Download. Besides, Poc is the traditional form of Paggah, or paper for the nose, which would imply a form of sanitary or dietary prohibition.

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The End of the World as We Know It **Gary Goss, Long Island Center**

John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler of the University of California at Berkeley once argued that in a universe at the critical density the electrons and positrons remaining after proton decay will begin to form bound pairs. This will occur after 10 to the 70th years. Each bound pair is effectively an atom; but the electron and positron will orbit each other in such a highly excited state that the region of space encompassed by the pair will be larger than the present observable universe. The encompassed space will grow progressively larger the later a bound pair forms. As time goes on, the electron and positron spiral inward and eventually annihilate each other, giving birth to high-energy photons. -adapted from a study by Duane A. Dicus, et al. *The Future of the Universe*, *Scientific American*, March, 1983.

Well, you know how things get exaggerated. I'll confess that I found Posy exciting at first. "Highly" exciting would be an exaggeration. She looked stunning (with her exquisite spin), but she was young and inexperienced. Posy- the Posy everyone knows today - became more interesting later as she grew older and more awkward.

The truth is that Posy and I met at a time when both of us needed someone. It was long after the big proton decay, an era when no body could afford to be choosy. In an instant of space-time Posy and I found ourselves a bound pair. I suppose there is some sort of open instinct involved: one looks for a long term relationship and a chance to produce new matter.

To this moment I don't know if Posy liked me. Her passion struck me as genuine, but she remained relentlessly distant. I'm reserved myself; for quite a long time I thought that her distance was a response to my own. In plain words, I believed that I was to blame. We circled around the topic. Posy agreed that the distance between us was my fault, that she was the innocent partner and I, the guilty one. Eventually she shifted her position. She began saying that we were obviously unsuited to one another (each of us might be better suited to someone else).

The door stood open; yet she didn't leave. Eventually I understood that Posy was distant with everyone. Perhaps this had to do with the continued expansion of the universe. No one felt close any more.

In my old-fashioned opinion, Posy might spin 16 billion light years away, on a road to nowhere, but we were always one in my mind. You can see that I made my own problems.

Two of my grandmothers spoke to me about Posy. They pointed out that a universe with something in it constantly changes. "Mass bends space," Grandma said. Mass falls along the bend. Space rebends as mass moves. Mass falls along the new bend etc. "Even in a perfect vacuum, particles and anti-particles pop into being out of nothing and nowhere," Grandma claimed. "Change is inescapable."

The way to cope with change, my grandmothers told me, was not to put all my eggs in one basket. I rebelled against this cliché. I didn't listen. I remained attached to one thing. I couldn't help it. Or so I said.

Lately I've noticed Posy is beginning to spiral inward. I suspect we're heading for a collision. She won't be satisfied until

she destroys me (at the cost of her own existence). To be fair, I notice that, as I spiral toward her, she's trying to wave me off.

There must be an infinite number of ways to view my relationship with Posy. I'll bet that it isn't the relationship that saddens me. It's how I perceive it.

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Journal Update

A new web-based publication, *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (JoSoTL), has recently been announced.

Submissions can include: reports of research on teaching and learning, teaching portfolios, or reflective essays on teaching practice. The journal is sponsored by Indiana University South Bend, its Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching, and the University Center for Excellence in Teaching.

Randy Isaacson, managing editor, will respond to questions at: risaacson@iusb.edu. The journal's web site is: www.iusb.edu/~josotl

When you open your eyes
we'll walk, once more,
among the hours and their inventions.
We'll walk among appearances
and bear witness to time and its
conjugations.
Perhaps we'll open the day's doors.
And then we shall enter the unknown.

Elizabeth Bishop, "January First"

(From *The Complete Poems*, 1983, p. 274)
(Quoted by Maxine Greene in her essay,
"What Counts as Philosophy of Education"
[1995])