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# Enhancing the success of SOTL research: A case study using modified problem-based learning in social work education

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*Abstract: This article describes a study which utilizes Modified Problem-Based Learning (MPBL) as a teaching method in undergraduate social work practice classes. The authors report both qualitative and quantitative findings of the research. Additionally, the authors reflect on the use of the MPBL method and on the lessons learned throughout this research on the scholarship of teaching and learning.*

*Keywords: problem-based learning, transfer of learning, social work practice*

## I. Introduction.

A primary objective of postsecondary education is to prepare students for their professional careers. As such, when students declare a major and begin to pursue studies in a particular area, they begin a trajectory of movement from thinking like a student to thinking like a professional in their chosen discipline. In any given field, thinking like a professional involves discerning meaning from information that is presented to them, organizing knowledge around major principles, responding to changes in context, and accessing and retrieving knowledge smoothly (Thompson, Licklider, and Jungst, 2003).

In schools of social work, as with other professional schools, faculty are responsible for developing and delivering curriculum that aids in the student's transition from novice to professional (Koerin, Harrigan, and Reeves, 1990). In social work educators must identify and teach the step-by-step thinking process used by professional social workers and also be sure that students know how to appropriately apply knowledge and use professional skills as they work with clients. However, despite best efforts students often experience disconnects in their learning when they move from the classroom to professional practice (Lager and Robbins, 2004). Classroom knowledge often is not transferred to the real world experience. Consequently, students struggle in their internships as they either don't use what they learned in class or apply very little of what they learned.

In this article we will describe a study in which modified problem-based learning (MPBL) was used in two undergraduate social work practice courses to teach students the process of thinking like professional social workers. We will also discuss the "lessons learned" by the authors during the research process. During phases of data collection and analysis, the authors learned invaluable lessons about teaching and learning and about research in the field of scholarship of teaching and learning. We hope our reflections on this project will help other faculty as they develop their courses and consider engaging in SOTL projects. The authors wish to thank Indiana University's Mack Center for Inquiry on Teaching and Learning for their

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support in this project, both in funding the authors as faculty fellows and in providing guidance and direction throughout the study.

## II. Literature review.

Problem-based learning is a learner-centered approach in which learners "conduct research, integrate theory and practice and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem" (Savery, 2006, p.12). In social work, the "problem" that students receive is a client scenario that is representative of a real-life situation that an individual, family, group or community might face. Students receive parts of the case a section at a time, replicating the process of working with a case in the field. Additionally, PBL is pedagogy based on the premise that acquiring process skills is as important as assimilating content (Margetson, 1991.) Using problem-based learning, students are presented with scenarios faced by social workers in the field and are challenged to find information, apply previously acquired knowledge and work with their colleagues (other students) in planning for assessment and developing interventions. As students work on the problem-based learning cases, faculty can help them learn the process of "thinking like a professional" (Middendorf and Pace, 2005).

PBL is similar to case-based learning with the primary difference between the two being the manner in which information relevant to the case or problem is presented to the students. Typically, instructors utilizing case-based learning techniques present an entire case study to student groups rather than in the discrete parts utilized in problem-based learning. Course instructors help students analyze the problem, consider solutions, and determine the actions that a professional would take in the situation (Herreid, 1994).

In addition to its use in social work education, problem-based learning has also been utilized extensively in other professional schools, including business (c.f. Saatci, 2008), medicine (c.f. Spencer, 2003), and education (c.f. Edwards and Hammer, 2005). In social work, Lam (2004) reports on a BSW program that utilizes PBL in four courses throughout the curriculum. This study measured students' change in competence, values, and clinical skills before and after PBL instruction and compared these scores with pre-test and post-test scores of students in prior years who had completed the traditional (non-PBL) curriculum. Lam found that students who received PBL instruction were more efficient in searching out information and in taking responsibility for their learning. Other program faculty, however, rated the performance of PBL students as weaker than non-PBL students in written examinations concerning theories and practice skills. Similar to Lam's finding, Chan and Ng (2004) reported that graduates from PBL training module were found to be "more self directed and creative than their predecessors" (p.316).

Altshuler and Bosch (2003) used PBL in school social work policy and school social work practice classes to prepare students for work in various school settings. At the end of the PBL course work, they sought student feedback concerning perception of content and skills learned. Overall, the students thought that the PBL approach was conducive to learning. Gelman and Mirabito (2005) discuss using PBL techniques with MSW students specifically to teach crisis intervention. While not an empirical paper, the authors present the vignettes used to teach students and provide teaching points about how instructors can utilize this method in the classroom.

While other authors have written about modifying problem-based learning techniques (c.f. Goodnough, 2005 and Baldwin, Bankston, Anderson, Echtenkamp, Haak, Smith and

Iatridis, 2002), there does not seem to be uniformity in what modifications are made. A method for using Modified Problem-Based Learning (MPBL) in social work education was developed by Chang and is described in Chang, Scott, Decker (2009). Like PBL, students using MPBL receive a section of a case at a time. This replicates what happens in most disciplines where the student has basic introductory information initially and gradually learns more. Also like PBL students work in groups in order to share perceptions and knowledge. Unlike PBL the students lead their own groups. With traditional PBL trained teaching assistants work with each student group. The teaching assistants are trained to ask the kind of questions that lead students to explore more deeply and to think like professionals. Since we do not have the resources for trained teaching assistants, we modified PBL first by teaching students to be leaders in their groups and second by following each section of a case with the kind of questions that professionals use to guide their thinking. The instructors provided consultation and guidance to the student groups as they used their life experience, knowledge from this course and previous courses, and new material found by doing research to fill information gaps to discuss and answer the case questions.

## III. Description of study.

This study was conducted on two campuses of a Midwestern school of social work with undergraduate students. One campus is in a large urban area where students are predominantly commuters. The other campus is in a traditional college town setting where the majority of students live on or adjacent to campus.

MPBL was simultaneously used in two undergraduate practice classes, one on each of the campuses. Each course has the same course objectives and uses the same textbooks. Students take this course in the fall semester of their junior year as their first introduction to practice skills prior to any practice experiences.

The research team included the two social work faculty members who taught the practice course at the two research sites, a postdoctoral fellow who has taught social work courses, and a graduate student/research assistant. All of the data was collected by the faculty members. The entire team participated in the analysis of the data. Human subjects approval was obtained from the university Institutional Review Board prior to the start of data collection.

### *A. Instructional methods.*

In each course, instructors spent the first four to five weeks of the semester reviewing and introducing theoretical foundations of social work practice. After completing this section of the course, the instructors introduced the concept of modified problem-based learning. Students were told that they would work in a small group. Each group would have a case that they would work with for the remainder of the fall semester. Instructors of the classes indicated that they would serve as consultants to the groups, but that the students were responsible for responding to the questions about the case. In the first week of working on the cases, each student group was given the first section of a case and questions related to that section. The fourteen questions on Part One of the case were designed to help students prepare to work with a client by identifying facts and knowledge needed and how they planned to work with and collaborate with their clients. Questions related to the first section of the case included:

> What are the key facts in the case? What additional information will you need prior to meeting this client? What concerns do you have about working with this client? What are your preliminary impressions related to the case? (Chang, Scott, Decker, 2009, p. 79)

Following each additional section of the case, students received additional questions to guide their thinking about the case. Questions asked about such things as changes in initial impressions, additional information needed, problems and goals identified, treatment plan developed, level of motivation, appropriate action, and eventually ending the work with the client. Student groups were given in class time to discuss their case, to share their perceptions and information gained.

Each group received a different case and turned in a written report answering each question. After they turned in their work related to Part One, they received Part Two of the same case. Again, each group was expected to collaborate and to turn in a written document that addressed the questions related to the second part of the case. Each group received written feedback from the instructor concerning their responses to the questions.

In one class toward the end of the semester, students were given time to share information about their cases and their responses to the questions about the cases. Each group engaged in a dialogue with the instructor and other students about their thinking related to their case. In the other class students reported on and discussed their case on the day they turned in each case report. In this class there were several discussions about the cases during the semester. The MPBL work was done in conjunction with more traditional course work of lecture, discussion, and role-plays. Parts One and Two of the cases were distributed in the fall semester in the first practice class. Students received the remaining five parts of their respective cases in their next practice course.

*B. Sample.*

The sample consists of thirty-five students. This represents 90% of the combined population of the two practice classes. Ninety-seven percent of the sample was female, 68% were traditional college aged (20 to 24) and 37% had worked in social service type jobs during the previous year. In terms of ethnicity, the sample consisted of 83% who identified as Caucasian, 9% who identified as Hispanic, 6% who identified as African-American, and 3% who identified as other.

*C. Data collection and analysis.*

During the first practice course, each student in the research project completed individual pre-tests and post- tests related to a case that had not been assigned to any of the groups. In the pre-test, students answered questions related to Parts One and Two of the case. This pre- test was conducted at the end of the first course module; i.e. after theoretical foundations of practice had been reviewed but before practice skills were introduced and before students began working in their MPBL groups. The post-test was identical to the pre-test and was administered at the end of the semester after students had been working in modified problem-based groups and after they had been exposed to new information and skills in the course.

Pre-test and post-test data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, a rubric was developed and used to score each student's answers on the pre-test and post- test. The rubric, which consisted of answers to the case questions that are consistent with best practices in the social work profession, enabled researchers to evaluate the information

on each test. Using SPSS, T tests were then run to determine if there were significant differences between each student's pre-test and post- test. Additionally, each student's answers to the pre- and post-test were entered into a database and then analyzed in ATLAS-ti. Content analysis (Stemler, 2001) was used to determine qualitative differences in the students' answers that might indicate improvement in the path of "thinking like a professional".

## IV. Findings.

Quantitatively, the findings were non-significant. Of course with such a small sample it would be very difficult to have significant findings. Qualitatively, there is indication that many students showed improvement from pre-test to post-test. Student comments on the experience of using modified problem-based learning illustrate many of these areas of improvement. Students appreciated the fact that the clients presented in the cases were real, not "made up", and that the problems faced by the social worker were ones similar to what they would face in their future practice. Students' reports included comments such as: "it was good to apply what we were learning to real people," **"**it allowed me to get a real picture of social work," "it was the next best thing to working in the field." Students also benefited from working with their peers. They said, "it was useful to learn to collaborate in a group and research relevant material" and "Being able to discuss situations with other people was great and it helped me prepare to meet with others to professionally and respectfully discuss issues." Students also recognized that the use of cases assisted them in thinking critically about client situations. Student comments to support this theme included, "this process taught me to look at a problem from all angles", "using the cases helped me to think of possible ethical dilemmas and value conflicts" and "this taught me the importance of researching more than the obvious information."

Finally, students perceived that the use of cases helped them be more effective and confident in their field placements. They said that "using cases helped me to have the opportunity to experience case management before entering my practicum" and "it helped me become more efficient in my field placement" and "using cases helped me to realize the magnitude of my work, that everything isn't easy and that there will always be bumps in the road".

In summary, doing MPBL enhanced students' confidence in their readiness to work with clients, increased their ability to think like professionals, to use professional vocabulary, to understand the need for assessment throughout the life of the case, and to realize the on-going need for more knowledge related to client issues, background and culture, and necessary about resources. While this is gratifying to see, without a control classroom the question remains as to whether these students showed this type of improvement because of MPBL or if they would have improved in similar ways in a traditional practice course.

## V. Lessons learned about teaching and learning.

Reflecting on this project, we learned ways to improve our teaching. First, it is important to do a pre-test at the beginning of the semester to assess students' knowledge related to all of course objectives as well as a pre-test related to a case. The pre-test used in this project did not cover all the course objectives. A better pre-test would invite students to evaluate their knowledge and skills related to all the course objectives. If on the pre-test a student identifies that they have knowledge related to a course objective, a follow-up question should ask them to identify how the knowledge was acquired, e. g., by reading, in another course, or on the job. Reviewing the

pre-test allows the instructor to tailor the course to the needs of the students. After identifying the strengths that the students bring into the course, the instructor can develop ways to build on these strengths. For example, in the pre-test a number of students identified the importance of building a relationship and establishing rapport in the pre-test. If the instructor had reviewed the pre-test, s/he would have noticed this strength and been able to enhance and build on it. In the post-test some of these students focused on exploring what was wrong with the client and didn't mention building a relationship with the client.

The pre-test also gives information about the gaps in the students' knowledge. Knowing the students' areas of weakness from the beginning of the course allows instructors to tailor their teaching and assignments to help students' master key course objectives. Using MPBL, instructors can design questions that invite students to explore, discuss and learn information and skills important to their professional growth.

Another lesson is the importance of allowing time for instructor follow through. If the students had been given the post-test a few weeks before the end of the semester, rather than on the last day of class, instructors could have reviewed the post-test answers and helped the students correct any misunderstandings. For example, some students wrote responses that focused on an aspect of the case that was accurate but less important than other aspects of the case. After realizing this problem, the instructor could have helped the students think through the case again and learn to identify the most important aspects of the case.

Since applying concepts to social work practice requires higher level learning, students need additional opportunities to practice. Therefore, follow through should continue in subsequent practice classes as well as in the field practicum discussion seminar. To enhance student learning, the field practicum seminar should emphasize the concepts learned in the previous course and require students to use the same MPBL case questions as they work with actual clients. The field seminar assignments should require students to demonstrate using the same thinking skills developed by using MBPL in the previous practice classes.

A third important lesson is the importance of establishing measureable, achievable course objectives. For this course the objectives were established by a committee that was focusing on accreditation standards rather than what was possible. As educators interested in scholarly teaching we need to continue to take a stand on the establishment of measureable, achievable objectives; otherwise instructors often try to put more content into each class than students can retain and appropriately use in practice. In this course the pressure to cover course objectives that include too much led the instructors to use lecture, role-plays, and MPBL. The instructors were caught between their belief in the value of active collaborative learning and their requirement to cover a great deal of content.

This leads to another important lesson. Adding a new approach or method of teaching can be positive, but in the case of MPBL it should have been the central focus and main teaching and learning method. Adding new approaches takes time. To enhance the value of using MPBL, more class time needs to be allowed for the student groups to discuss, process, work on the cases. Each student should have written out all the case answers before the group discussion of the case answers. Other course assignments should be structured to emphasize or use the work with the cases. Each student group should have regular opportunities to discuss their thinking about each case with the whole class.

We know that classroom assessment of learning is very important (Angelo and Cross, 1993). MPBL is an excellent way to assess learning. Since during the semester, the student groups were able to appropriately answer the case questions, the instructors believed the students

had learned to appropriately apply content to cases. However, at the end of the semester, some individual students were not able to replicate best answers to the same questions related to a different case. The students reported that working with the cases helped them feel more confident as they approached working with clients in field placement. If the instructors had spent more time on MPBL, all the students might have not only felt more confident but individually been able to demonstrate greater ability to critically think through case material. The lesson for us is that multiple ways of assessing learning should be used. Specifically we should have had individual students answer the case questions. The instructor who could identify thinking problems should evaluate these individual answers. The group could work with all the individual answers as well as do additional research to develop more sophisticated, professional responses to each question.

## VI. Lessons learned about SOTL research.

Besides lessons about teaching, we also learned some important lessons about research on teaching and learning. Before starting this research we studied the use of case-based and PBL with graduate students and were excited about the value of using MPBL with undergraduate students. The best course to introduce MBPL was a practice course that is offered only in the fall semester. Unfortunately, by the time we had developed our ideas the fall semester was starting. Not wanting to wait until the next fall, we jumped into the project too quickly. Both authors were teaching this practice course. Each course had the same objectives and same textbooks and we thought our plans for using MBPL were the same. Looking back we identified that our methods of using MBPL were similar but had several differences. One author spent more class time on MPBL than did the other author. One author had student groups report and discuss their cases more frequently during the semester. In retrospect we are aware that we should have taken the time to write a manual with step-by-step directions for using MBPL. Having a written manual would also allow the study to be replicated.

Also, we could have had one class use MPBL and had the other class serve as the control group. This method would have strengthened our research design. If we had a control class, we would have been able to assess whether the changes that occurred could be attributed to using MPBL. We didn't use a control class because both of us thought MPBL was a better way to teach this course. Our commitment to offering students what we considered the best teaching and learning method meant that, ethically, we could not utilize a control group. (Even if the use of a control group had been possible, however, sample size was too small to demonstrate significant findings.)

Although most students showed good improvement from the pre-test to the post-test some students did not improve and some had less satisfactory answers on the post-test. There could be many reasons for this decline. We believe a significant reason was that the post-test was given on the last day of class when the students were anxious to get finished. Some of their answers were very brief and seemed hurried. In the future we will not wait until the final class to do the post-test.

Finally, with more time we could have followed the students into their field practicum setting to assess whether what they learned using MPBL enhanced their ability to think like professional social workers in actual practice. Although this would strengthen the research, it would be very complicated to control because each student is in a different setting with a different field instructor. Even with a control group there would be many uncontrollable variables. Given all of these complications, we still believe that meeting with the students at the

end of their practicum semester to discuss their perceptions of the value of MPBL to their education would have been valuable.

## VII. Conclusion.

As indicated in preceding paragraphs, each author believed that utilizing MPBL in practice classes was the best way to teach social work students how to think like professional social workers. Each certainly expected the method to show success. When the pre- and post-tests were analyzed and the evidence of success was inconclusive, all members of the research team were somewhat disappointed because the level of student improvement was less than what we had hoped. However, the lessons learned about the MPBL method and about conducting SOTL research have been invaluable. Just as there is a process of learning to "think like a professional," there is, perhaps, a process of learning to "think like a SOTL researcher" as well.

It is our hope that other SOTL researchers will continue this research using MPBL with students in other disciplines. As researchers in other disciplines have found (Lundeberg, 1999; Wolfer and Scales, 2006), using cases can help students transfer learning from the classroom to the world of work. In MPBL the instructor models for students the questions that professionals use as they approach challenging case situations. Working with these questions seems to be a logical way to help students in any discipline learn how to think about challenging case situations.

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# Developing the scholarship of pedagogy: pathfinding in adverse settings

**Flávia Vieira**[1]

*Abstract: The paper looks at the feasibility and value of the scholarship of pedagogy (SoP) in an institutional context where it is not a common practice. I will draw on my experience with other colleagues at our university concerning the constraints, shortcomings and achievements of SoP, and use this as a springboard for reflection on its transitional nature as a "pathfinding route" in adverse settings (Shulman, 2004). I will also discuss implications on how we might assess its value, arguing that this assessment should take into account not only its quality as a research-oriented activity, but also its situational relevance. Ultimately, there may be no universal answer to the question "what is valuable SoP?"*

*Keywords: pedagogy, adverse settings, feasibility, value*

## I. Introduction.

I came across Shulman's (2004a) metaphors of *pathfollowing* and *pathfinding* as different choices in one's academic career when I was writing a report on a collaborative, multidisciplinary project carried out with a focus on transforming pedagogy at university through classroom-based inquiry (Vieira, Silva, Melo, Moreira, Oliveira, Gomes, Albuquerque, and Sousa, 2004). Shulman's reflection on the risks and challenges of the scholarship of teaching and learning, as a pathfinding route in contexts where research is mostly disciplinary and detached from teaching, resonated with our personal experience in a profound way. We had been assuming the role of teacher-researchers for the first time in our professional history, not knowing exactly what the result of our work would be, yet feeling that it ran counter to dominant academic discourses, practices and values, that is, it went "against the grain" as Shulman puts it. In our contacts with other colleagues, we could sometimes sense their suspicion and skepticism toward inquiry that does not follow the path of mainstream discipline-based research, reminding us of the dangers involved in pedagogy-oriented research, especially in terms of how it may affect your credibility as an academic researcher.

We have continued working on the scholarship of teaching and learning, here labeled *scholarship of pedagogy* (SoP) since the term "pedagogy" integrates teaching and learning as interrelated activities. We have developed two other projects and are now even more aware of the risks and challenges it involves, but less frightened by them as we became more convinced of the benefits. Our work has also become a bit less marginal, not only due to its growth, but also to the increasing preoccupation with teaching quality in Portuguese universities, mainly instigated by current reforms resulting from the Bologna Process. Nevertheless, SoP is far from being commonplace, and its value is not yet fully understood and acknowledged, as is probably the case in most institutional settings. This is why I decided to take feasibility and value as the main themes of this paper, hoping that my reflection may resonate with the experience of others in

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similar circumstances. Although many institutions around the world have embraced the idea of SoP for a long time, this is far from being a worldwide phenomenon[2]. I believe that we need more accounts of cases where SoP is the exception rather than the rule, so that we may enhance practices not yet established and better appreciate their dilemmas, outcomes and shortcomings, as well as the strategies used to find spaces for manoeuvre.

I will start with some considerations on what we mean by SoP and why it should (not) be developed in our setting, then move on to an overall evaluation of our projects and discuss the issues of SoP feasibility and value. My purpose is not to go into the details and results of our work, but rather to highlight some of its constraints, shortcomings and achievements, presenting it as a case of *transitional pathfinding* in adverse settings, with implications on how we might assess its value. My argument is that the value of SoP may not lie exclusively in its quality as a research-oriented activity, but also in its situational relevance. Actually, circumstances may reduce its research quality in significant ways, but that does not necessarily mean that it is worthless. Ultimately, there may be no universal answer to the question "what is valuable SoP?"

## II. What is SoP and why should it (not) be developed?

In order to clarify our understanding of SoP, I will tell a personal story that involves not only me and my students, but also the colleagues with whom I first engaged in it.

In my rather long professional history as a teacher educator in my university[3], I have always advocated an inquiry-based approach to teaching in schools and supported school teachers in using action research to become reflective practitioners in search of context-sensitive, learner-centred pedagogies. I myself have always tried to reflect on my practice and involve my students in evaluating its value and shortcomings. Nevertheless, it was not until 2003 that I began to understand more fully what *becoming a teacher-researcher* means.

I was then coordinating (since 2002) the collaborative project referred to above, and we had decided to undertake small-scale case studies of pedagogical innovation in our own classes, which was quite innovative in our context[4]. My case study involved a group of 13 experienced language teachers in a postgraduate course, and I took the opportunity to enhance and evaluate professional learning through school-based pedagogical inquiry documented in reflective portfolios. At the same time, I wrote a teaching journal that documented the approach I was implementing. That was the first time I inquired into my own pedagogy in a disciplined way, trying to understand its value and shortcomings through analysing data from the teachers' portfolios and my journal (Vieira, 2005, 2007a/b).

What struck me most at the time was the fact that, although I had been an educational researcher for a long time and had always advocated the use of pedagogical inquiry in schools, I

[2] For example, Tight's (2003) overview of research into higher education in 406 articles by 668 authors from 48 countries, published in 17 journals outside North America in 2000, shows that inquiry into one's teaching is not a preferred research mode among higher education researchers, even though teaching and learning are prominent themes. In fact, the expression "scholarship of teaching (and learning)" does not even figure in his book's index.

[3] The University of Minho is a teaching and research university in the North of Portugal with about 16.000 students, offering a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including teacher education in various subject areas. It is organised around schools or institutes (e.g., the Institute of Education and Psychology, where I belong), and these are organised into departments. I have worked in the department of Methodologies of Education since 1984, mainly on reflective teacher education/ supervision and pedagogy for autonomy in schools. My work on SoP has focussed primarily on pedagogies of postgraduate teacher education.

[4] In 2001, the research centre at the Institute of Education and Psychology set up an internal contest for projects focussed on pedagogy at university, since this was considered an understudied area. Our project was the only proposal presented to the centre, which accepted and funded it from 2002 to 2004. It was the first SoP project carried out in the Institute.

still had to learn how to investigate *my* practice. This also meant that I knew much less about being a teacher-researcher than I had previously assumed, which made me question my role as a teacher educator. What I had been missing all along was experiential knowledge, and the case study helped me understand, more clearly than ever before, that *improving the education of others depends on improving my own education*.

This very simple idea lies at the heart of SoP, and it resonated with my colleagues' experience as they conducted their own case studies. We began to realise that we were developing a bottom-up and side-to-side approach to professional growth through inquiry into our students' and our own education. Taking learning seriously, to take Shulman's (2004b) phrase, can not be dissociated from taking teaching seriously, and that means re-examining our pedagogical beliefs and choices.

Since that first experiment I have wondered about, theorised and improved my practice in a more purposeful and systematic way, and I have become more interested in the concept and practices of SoP[5]. By mid-2004, when the project was coming to an end, the team managed to institutionalise higher education research within the Institute of Education and Psychology, by setting up a larger interdepartmental research group that has integrated projects on SoP and other areas. From 2004 to the present date, I have coordinated two more SoP projects involving colleagues from various disciplinary fields[6]. As a result of this work, we have been talking and writing about our teaching experience more extensively than before, moving away from "pedagogical solitude" by making our pedagogical practice "community property" (Shulman, 2004c), and encouraging others to do the same. We have also developed a more critical view of academic work and cultures, and how they both hamper and justify SoP. In sum, pedagogy became a central professional concern and definitely entered our research agenda, even though pedagogical inquiry is not acknowledged and rewarded.

This story illustrates some features of SoP as we have understood it so far:

- It rests on the assumption that pedagogy is a valuable yet understudied activity, therefore it should become a field of inquiry;
- It is, first of all, a self-initiated path to become a better educator, instigated by professional motivations and concerns related to issues of student and teacher development in a given disciplinary field;
- It is also a collective enterprise, not only because students and colleagues become partners in pedagogical dialogue and inquiry, but also because it involves making that inquiry public and open to debate so that others can evaluate and build on it, thus seeking to enable change in institutional cultures and contribute to advances in the teaching profession as a whole;
- It is not something that academic researchers are necessarily ready to undertake, since it moves away from conventional disciplinary inquiry, especially by blurring the frontiers between research and teaching.

Of course, developing SoP is more easily said than done, and contexts of practice clearly affect its feasibility (see Hutchings and Shulman, 2004; Socket, 2000). In our context, there are various reasons why it should be promoted *or* avoided, depending on one's point of view.

[5] The website of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (http://www.carnegie foundation.org) was particularly useful at the beginning. The chapters of Shulman's paper collection edited by Pat Hutchings (2004) which I refer to in this text were firstly accessed on that website.

[6] Our work is summarised on the website: http//webs.uminho.pt/tpu (TPU stands for the phrase *Transforming Pedagogy at University*, which we have used as the main title of our projects since 2002).

The idea of SoP is quite unfamiliar to the Portuguese academic community in general. To a large extent, "discussions about teaching and learning tend to be fugitive affairs" (Huber, 1999, p. 1), and pedagogy is not yet seen as a worthwhile field of inquiry. Academics teach everyday and value their role as educators, and current curriculum changes within the Bologna Process have led institutional managers to become more committed to innovation and staff development. Yet, research is mostly discipline-based and only one aspect of scholarship, the "scholarship of discovery" (Boyer, 1990), tends to be given institutional and professional credit. Who we are and what we do *as teachers* gets little attention and merit in our academic career, and the relation between teaching and research tends to be either conflictive or null (cf. Hattie and Marsh, 1996; Gottlieb and Keith, 1997; Serow, 2000; Vidal and Quintanilla, 2000).

Scattered research groups have worked on higher education as an emergent cross-disciplinary area, though very seldom with a focus on self-inquiry. As in many other parts of the world, higher education research in Portugal is becoming a specialised territory owned by a few experts, which may explain why its impact on teaching practices and policies is often reduced or null (cf. Teichler, 2000). Furthermore, we have no specialised journals on higher education, no established in-service or postgraduate staff development programmes, and almost no institutional reward systems to enhance classroom innovation and research. Teaching quality is assessed through student feedback and a national system that combines internal and external course evaluation, but all this tends to have little impact on quality improvement, since we lack mechanisms for sustainable professional development.

Given this scenario, we might argue for the need to develop SoP as a strategy that might usefully contribute to changing the present state of affairs. Paradoxically though, it is also this scenario that hampers SoP and even discourages it. Actually, academic work is fraught with conflicting rationalities that make one's choices problematic.

A significant dilemma for any teacher wishing to engage in SoP relates to academic merit and success. In the foreword to a collection of SoP case studies, Shulman (2004a, p. viii) uses a four-fold table to represent (lack of) academic success in terms of "disciplinary and pedagogical virtue", identifying four kinds of scholars (see Table 1). He uses the metaphors of *pathfollowers* and *pathfinders* to refer respectively to "those who behave as most of their disciplinary colleagues expect them to, and those who elect to go against the grain" (p. vii). Engaging in SoP often means going against the grain and becoming a pathfinder, which is not compatible with academic cultures where border crossing among disciplines, peer collaboration and non-disciplinary research tend to be dismissed (see Bergquist and Pawlak, 2008). And even though successful pathfollowing can be seen as a kind of "specialised ignorance" (Santos, 1998), that is, knowing much about little and ignoring everything else, this is exactly what most faculty still cherish and get credit for.

**Table 1. Pathfollowing and pathfinding (Shulman, 2004a).**

| | | CONFORMS TO DISCIPLINARY CONVENTION? | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No |
| LEADS TO ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT? | Yes | Successful Pathfollowers | Successful Pathfinders |
| | No | Unsuccessful Pathfollowers | Unsuccessful Pathfinders |

Shulman (op. cit.) warns us about the risks and extra demands of becoming successful pathfinders in a world where pathfollowing represents the mainstream culture: "While being

'good enough' may be sufficient for many engaged in traditional research in their discipline, it is probably not going to be sufficient for work in education" (p. ix). He also challenges us to work on a vision of the possible and build a new, more balanced conception of the scholarly career, so that we no longer have to choose between the various facets of academic work. This is certainly an inspiring thought, but very remote from reality in most contexts of practice, where "teaching and research are frequently, even habitually, regarded as rivals: time and status pitting for the 'learning' of one against the 'learning' of the other" (Light, 2003, p. 157). This "pervasive and insidious 'rivalry of learning'" (p. 162) often turns SoP into a marginal, unsystematic, and inconsequential activity. This is something we have been increasingly aware of in our work, feeling that we are swimming against the tide, yet having to swim with it to avoid drowning. We have faced many constraints that affect the feasibility of SoP, and we have had to turn our backs on it more often than we would like, mainly because we are divided between pathfollowing and pathfinding, perhaps running the risk of not being successful enough in either one or the other.

We may therefore add some more ideas to the list of SoP features:

- It is difficult to implement in contexts of practice that undervalue pedagogy and pedagogical inquiry, even though it is most needed in those contexts;
- It takes self-determination and boldness to face its risks and challenges, and also resistance to historical and structural forces that counteract it in significant ways;
- It will most probably entail a tension between conformity to and subversion of mainstream academic practice.

In the next section, I will focus on the feasibility and potential value of SoP by drawing on constraints, shortcomings and achievements of our work, here taken as an example of transitional pathfinding in adverse settings.

## III. SoP as a transitional pathfinding process – feasibility and value.

So far, our projects have involved around 30 scholars from different subject areas, and our work can be understood as a developmental approach to SoP, seeking to explore and consolidate it (very slowly, I must say…), particularly by enlarging its scope in terms of the quantity and diversity of pedagogical experiments, and the number of teachers and disciplinary fields involved. Our goals have been: (a) to enhance an inquiry-oriented approach to pedagogy, based on a notion of "quality as transformation"[7], where student enhancement and empowerment are valued (Harvey and Knight 1996; Kreber, 2006; Vieira, 2002), (b) to develop case studies whereby innovative educational methodologies and resources are explored, evaluated and disseminated, and (c) to encourage the constitution of multidisciplinary teams of educational and non-educational faculty for the construction of educational knowledge and the renewal of educational practices.

To a significant extent, our achievements cannot be separated from our shortcomings, since the former relate mostly to how we have tried to face and surpass constraints. Although each pedagogical experiment has specific gains for the teacher and students involved, I will focus here on general aspects of our work on SoP as a collective undertaking, which may be of interest to others working (or wishing to work) along the same lines in adverse settings.

[7] According to this notion of quality, "Education is a participative process. Students are not products, cusomers, service users or clients – they are participants. Education is not a service *for* a customer (much less a product to be consumed) but an ongoing process of transformation *of* the participant" (Harvey and Knight, 1996, p. 7).

Table 2 summarizes a possible evaluation of our work, based on the research-oriented standards set up by JoSoTL to evaluate the quality of scholarship in general, including SoP: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique[8]. In using these standards, I draw a distinction between two facets of pathfinding in adverse settings:

(a) the first facet refers to the restraining effect (E) of circumstances (C) upon SoP development, that is, the shortcomings resulting from constraints (middle column);

(b) the second facet refers to strategies used and signals potential achievements (right-hand column).

From this perspective, pathfinding can be seen as a transitional process where the feasibility of SoP – as regards its scope, impact and sustainability – is affected by cultural circumstances.

**Table 2. Our work: pathfinding as a transitional process.**

| ***Qualitative standards of scholarship (JoSoTL)***** | ***Constraints and shortcomings…*** **[Circumstances (C) and Effects (E)]** | ***Achievements…*** **[Development Strategies]** |
|---|---|---|
| *Clear goals*<br><br>All scholars must be clear about the goals of their scholarship. What is the purpose of the scholarship and are the goals clearly stated? | (C) Lack of tradition in SoP may lead to (E) low sense of direction, difficulties in problem-framing, technical view of educational problems, and fuzziness of SoP goals<br><br>(C) Diversity of conceptual/ experiential backgrounds (as regards pedagogy and research) and a tradition of pedagogical solitude may lead to (E) lack of unity/ coherence among different case studies | Collaboration to find common ground and a shared sense of direction/ purpose (through dialogue, support, feedback, peer observation, joint paper presentation/ writing…)<br><br>Discussion of conceptual/ ethical assumptions and choices as regards pedagogic quality (e.g., learner/centred pedagogical principles ) |
| *Adequate preparation*<br><br>All scholars have the background knowledge and skills to successfully investigate the problem. Does the scholar have the prerequisite skills to thoroughly investigate the problem? | (C) Lack of (time to invest in) pedagogical knowledge and research skills (especially from non-educational scholars) may lead to (E) communication problems between educational and non-educational experts, over-reliance from the latter on the former for guidance, and low self-confidence/ ability to undertake pedagogical inquiry | Joint reflective sessions/ seminars on pedagogical issues and research strategies<br><br>Supportive environment and opportunities to share experiences and materials<br><br>Readings on higher education and SoP |
| *Appropriate methods*<br><br>Scholarship must be carried out in a competent manner for results to have credibility. Did the scholar use the appropriate procedures to investigate the problem? | (C) Lack of (time to invest in) pedagogical knowledge and research skills (especially from non-educational scholars) may lead to (E) over-reliance on well-established teaching/research practice within different disciplinary fields and inability to design creative teaching/research methodologies that are responsive to the complexity of educational problems | Joint reflective sessions/ seminars on pedagogical issues and research strategies<br><br>Effort to design pedagogical inquiry that is responsive to relevant educational concerns<br><br>Developing teaching and research skills as an outcome of pedagogical inquiry<br><br>Keeping open to diverse, more and less sophisticated forms of inquiry |

[8] The editorial board of JoSoTL (*The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*) present these standards in the Guidelines for Reviewers (http://www.iupui.edu/~josotl/review_guide.htm). They are taken from the book *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*, by Charles Glassick, Mary Huber, and Gene Maeroff (1997, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass). I came across the standards when I was searching for information about the Journal before submitting this paper, and I decided to apply them to our work.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Significant results*<br><br>One of the most critical criteria in judging the quality of scholarship is whether scholarship can be used as the building blocks of knowledge in the field. Scholarship may not always result in "significant" results but to have quality the results must inform scholars in the field. Does the scholarship help build the knowledge base in the field? | (C) Conflict between the demands of SoP, disciplinary research agendas and teaching/ management workload may lead to (E) research/ writing delays, insufficient exploration of data, and limited conclusions<br><br>(C) Lack of time and opportunities to share research results and undertake comparative analyses of case studies may lead to (E) limited understanding of the nature and impact of SoP | Context-sensitive pedagogical innovation<br><br>Analysis of pedagogical experiments in terms of potential value for teacher and student development<br><br>Focus on the implications of teaching/ research methodologies for future practice (continuity)<br><br>Supportive environment and opportunities to share experiences and results<br><br>Dissemination and supportive peer review/ critique |
| *Effective presentation*<br><br>To have quality it is essential that scholarship be accessible to the intellectual or professional community. There are many forums that provide opportunities for the review and critique by colleagues with each medium having different criteria for effectiveness. Does the scholarship meet the standards or quality for the medium in which it is presented? | (C) Lack of tradition and forums in SoP may lead to (E) low confidence in the credibility of SoP, lack of appropriate presentation/ writing abilities, avoidance of public dissemination, production of low quality reports (e.g., too descriptive), and reduced dissemination and internationalisation | Dissemination in educational conferences, especially through collaborative paper presentation and writing<br><br>Valuing different dissemination media and discourse genres, even though this means not publishing in peer reviewed journals and sacrificing academic prestige |
| *Reflective critique*<br><br>All scholarship must create an opportunity for collegial critique but it is also essential for the scholar to reflect on the scholarship and learn from the results. Insightful reflection is a necessary step in quality scholarship. Is there evidence that the scholar has learned from the experience and can apply this knowledge to future problems? | (C) Lack of tradition and experience in SoP, lack of multiple frames of reference to analyse pedagogy, and insufficient involvement in peer review and dissemination of SoP may lead to (E) low levels of criticality in terms of interpreting experience and drawing implications for future work on SoP | Joint reflective sessions/ seminars on pedagogical issues and research strategies<br><br>Dissemination, especially through collaborative paper presentation and writing<br><br>Focus on the implications of teaching/ research methodologies for future practice (continuity)<br><br>Readings on higher education and SoP |

[** Source: JoSoTL Guidelines for Reviewers in http://www.iupui.edu/~josotl/review_guide.htm]

The circumstances of our work certainly reduce its quality as regards research-oriented standards for assessing scholarship, and we are far from being a community of "successful pathfinders". However, my analysis also calls into question the universal validity of those criteria by introducing the idea of SoP as a transitional process, and therefore a notion of *value as situational relevance,* which presupposes that the assessment of SoP quality must entail an understanding of contexts of practice, since these largely determine its feasibility and potential outcomes.

I would then suggest that we need to look at the issue of value by taking into account three questions related to the context where SoP takes place: (a) Is SoP contrary to mainstream academic work as regards both teaching and research, that is, is an inquiry-based approach to pedagogy a form of "going against the grain"?, (b) Is SoP new to the teacher who engages in it, that is, does it involve a significant personal transformation in her/his teaching and research experience?, and (c) Is the impact of SoP felt beyond individual practice, that is, does SoP help

to build a knowledge base in the field, informing others of relevant educational issues and practices, and enhancing the teaching profession as a whole?

If we accept that these questions (the last of which was already suggested by Shulman, 2004a) are important to determine the situational relevance of SoP, then we would say that its value depends on how it relates to (a) the dominant culture(s) of the academy (value as cultural subversion/ innovation), (b) the teacher's history (value as professional transformation), and (c) the advancement of SoP itself as a field of inquiry (value as the enhancement of the teaching profession, both theoretically and pragmatically). Table 3 presents the situational relevance of SoP along these three value dimensions, in adverse and favourable institutional settings.

**Table 3. Situational relevance of SoP.**

| | ADVERSE SETTINGS | FAVOURABLE SETTINGS |
|---|---|---|
| CULTURAL SUBVERSION/ INNOVATION | Yes | No |
| PROFESSIONAL TRANSFORMATION | Yes | Mostly for novices |
| ENHANCEMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION | Probably not | Yes |

From this perspective, unsuccessful pathfinding as defined by Shulman is not necessarily a sign of invaluable SoP: it may be a sign of situationally valuable SoP, whose quality is determined by (and cannot be assessed without reference to) its feasibility. In fact, its value may lie exactly in the struggle to make it possible in contexts that disempower practitioners to pursue it, so that the state of affairs is eventually transformed.

Contributing to the enhancement of SoP in the academy is certainly difficult when pedagogy is not acknowledged as a legitimate field of inquiry. The impact of our work on disciplinary communities depends on whether we manage to disseminate it among our peers and involve them in SoP-like initiatives. This is extremely hard to achieve when pedagogy is not a priority of the professoriate. One of our team members points out: "The relevance of peers, particularly from the same scientific area, is very low: I'm not sure about other areas, but I have to admit that, even though some tiny interest in educational issues can be found here and there, in most situations each teacher sees her/himself as someone who 'has always taught good lessons and will always do so'. Discussion of pedagogical matters as well as the participation in pedagogical development sessions are considered to be a waste of time, even more since they do not count in anyone's CV" (J.A., personal reflection).

Before teaching is seen as an integral part of inquiry in *any* disciplinary field, the idea of generalized SoP remains an ideal. Shulman (2004d) points out several models for campus support of SoP through the constitution of what he calls "teaching academies". He further contends that "it may make perfectly good sense to shape an approach that does not presume to be 'institutionalized' in the usual sense of the word but that takes advantage of pockets of interest and potential" (op. cit., p. 212), an approach which he labels "the distributed teaching academy". I can identify emergent signs of this in our university, where groups of teachers in different schools and departments have carried out interesting research and staff development initiatives[9].

[9] For example, curriculum innovation projects in the medical and science schools; the implementation of project-led education in engineering courses; the use of action research in pre-service teacher supervision in schools; programmes on study skills training for first year students organised by colleagues in the psychology department; staff development courses on learner-centred methodologies sponsored by the rectory office; materials design projects to support and evaluate innovation on campus; and our own approach to classroom-based inquiry in a multidisciplinary setting.

However, more effort needs to be invested in making these rather scattered initiatives more connected, visible and accessible before we can start talking about a "model".

## III. Back to basics – what does pedagogy really entail?

As I come to the end of my paper and reflect on my professional experience, my mind keeps wrestling with this disquieting, back-to-basics question: *"what does pedagogy really entail?"* After all, the value of SoP also depends on the nature of pedagogy itself.

Reflective practitioners know that they often have to sacrifice rigour if they want their action to be situationally relevant, and that teaching often requires artistry to "make new sense of uncertain, unique, or conflicted situations" (Schön, 1997, p. 35). This means that professional reflection-in-action is at least as important as the reflection for/on action that is more typical of disciplined inquiry. It further means that an epistemology of practice cannot be reduced to disciplined inquiry and can never be fully captured by it. As van Manen (1990) suggests, pedagogy is ineffable, and if we take descriptions and conceptualisations of reality as reality itself, we will probably fail to seek and understand the deep significance of pedagogical encounters that such descriptions and conceptualisations often conceal (p. 149).

The ineffability of pedagogy limits our claims to certainty as regards research results: these only tell us part of the story. Even if we agree that SoP is mostly about pedagogical inquiry, dissemination and public scrutiny, we must also realise that its value lies in ontological, axiological and praxiological aspects of education that are not measurable or even liable to be studied in a disciplined manner. From this perspective, the situational relevance of SoP also entails the unexamined experience of teachers and students as they work together to make sense of the pedagogical encounter. Therefore, when we emphasise a research-based notion of SoP as distinct from scholarly or excellent teaching, we are perhaps dismissing important facets of pedagogy and casting SoP into just another measure of research activity, as suggested by Bowden (2007; see also Kreber, 2006, and Silva, 1999).

The view of pedagogy as a multifaceted and, to a certain extent, incomprehensible phenomenon may appear to reduce the worth of SoP. On the contrary, I believe it turns SoP into a moral and political imperative – if pedagogy entails continuous (self-)questioning on what is *good* education, then it must become a field for continuous inquiry. What this inquiry tells us about pedagogy is another matter: perhaps it does not tell us everything about teachers' and students' ways of knowing, acting and being, the three pillars of engagement in higher education (Barnett and Coate, 2005).

## V. Final remarks.

Ultimately, there may be no straightforward, universal answer to the question "what is valuable SoP?". Its value depends not only on its quality as a research-oriented activity, but also on how it relates to contextual factors, and it entails a consideration of the complexity and ineffability of pedagogy. Paradoxically or not, this state of "fuzziness" as regards the value of SoP is itself a result from trying to make sense of it.

Whatever form SoP assumes, one thing at least seems to be common to those who commit themselves to it – the hope for a better future in higher education. Fulfilling this hope affects our identity as academics and entails learning to deal with uncertainty as we embark on an exploratory journey that builds on our past histories as (mostly pathfollowing) teachers and

researchers, taking us in a more promising (hopefully pathfinding) direction. It is this transitional process that makes the journey purposeful. This suggests the need to investigate local cultures closely and the extent to which scholars reproduce and/ or subvert them, as a potentially fruitful path*understanding* strategy.

Reflecting about our work and the work of others on SoP, I feel tempted to use Shulman's statement in reference to the Carnegie scholars that "one of our central premises is that change is directed toward visions of the valued, the possible, the desirable and the imaginable" (Shulman, 2002, p. 6). However, educational visions and agendas in institutional settings are potentially related to multiple frames of reference and directed towards diverse, even competing purposes: "The ethos of the university, therefore, cannot be pure. The university knows, deep down, that its fundamental value structure is flawed" (Barnett, 1997, p. 15). As Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) suggest, we may need to learn to appreciate the different and often conflicting cultures of the academy, and develop an "ironic understanding" of those cultures through engaging critically with their paradoxes, thus developing a capacity for "transformative growth" (p. 228). This may well be one of the greatest challenges SoP practitioners face today.

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# Interteach preparation: A comparison of the effects of answering versus generating study guide questions on quiz scores

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*Abstract: Within an interteaching context, an alternating treatments design was used to compare the effects of answering versus writing study guide questions on quiz performance in a 10-week methods course in special education. Results indicated quiz performance was not substantially influenced by the type of preparation, but that writing questions led to slightly higher quiz scores. On a social validity questionnaire, most participants reported a preference for answering study guide questions because that condition better prepared them for quizzes. Interpretations of the results, the social validity responses, practical implications, and recommendations for future research are discussed.*

*Keywords: interteaching, study guide, college teaching*

## I. Introduction.

Research indicates attrition rates of approximately 20% for college freshman (Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange, 2003). Examining innovations in college experiences, including teaching methods, may reduce this rate. The traditional lecture format of college teaching has been criticized for providing limited in-depth learning, having reduced access to distance learners, lacking the promotion of practical skills, and facilitating insufficient levels of student participation. One alternative to traditional lecture is electronic lectures presented on computers (Stephenson, Brown, and Griffin, 2008; Varank, 2006). This has the advantage of being accessible to distance learners and systematically programming multiple levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956; e.g., knowledge, comprehension, synthesis, evaluation). To address the criticism of limited provision of practical skills, researchers have evaluated models of experiential learning in college classes (Li, Greenberg, and Nicholls, 2007). This technique has been shown to promote maintenance of interest and motivation. Co-teaching in college courses can provide dual expertise such as, for example, combining a physics professor and a science educator in one classroom to prepare physics teachers (Briscoe and Prayaga, 2004). Finally, a behavioral approach to increasing student participation in a college lecture is using response cards in which students write answers to review questions on dry-erase boards (Kellum, Carr, and Dozier, 2001). This form of active student responding increased both participation and quiz scores.

Interteaching (Boyce and Hineline, 2002) is another variation of traditional lecture-based college teaching that utilizes principles and practices from the behavior analytic disciplines of personalized systems of instruction (Keller, 1968), precision teaching (Lindsley, 1964), and cooperative learning (Halpern, 2004). Interteaching is comprised of four components: (a) students read assigned course material and answer study guide questions prior to each class

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session; (b) the instructor focuses a brief lecture on the concepts identified by students as being difficult from the previous class session during the first 15 min of class; (c) students then spend 30 to 40 min grouped in dyads or triads to discuss their answers to the study guide questions; and (d) finally, students complete an interteach record, which asks about the quality of the discussion and concepts with which they had difficulty. The instructor uses this information to prepare the brief lecture for the following class period.

Previous researchers have found interteaching to result in higher quiz scores and be preferred by college students when compared with traditional lecture-based teaching (Saville, Zinn, and Elliot, 2005; Saville, Zinn, Neef, Van Norman, and Ferreri, 2006). For example, Saville, Zinn, and Elliot compared interteaching to other traditional teaching methods in a laboratory setting. In this study, eighty-four undergraduates participated in one of four randomly assigned teaching conditions. In the interteach condition, participants were given a study guide for an article and 15 min to read the article and answer the study guide questions. They then spent 15 min discussing the article with a peer, then 15 min asking the instructor questions about the article. In the lecture condition, participants were given a 45 min lecture on the article. In the reading condition, participants were given 45 min to read the article. In each of these conditions, participants returned after one week to take a 10-question, multiple-choice quiz on the article. In the control condition, participants had no exposure to the article and took the quiz on their first, and only, visit to the lab. Statistical analyses indicated significant differences between the groups, with participants in the interteach group performing significantly better than each of the other groups.

In another study, Saville and his colleagues (2006) conducted two experiments to compare interteaching to traditional lecture. Thirty-five graduate students participated in the first experiment and 33 undergraduates participated in the second. In both experiments, an alternating treatments design was used to examine the effects of interteaching versus traditional lecture on short answer quizzes. Results from both experiments indicated that quiz scores following interteaching sessions were consistently higher than those following lecture sessions. Results of social validity questionnaires suggested that the majority of students preferred interteaching to lecture. The authors explained the success of interteaching in terms of active student participation in the discussions, social contingencies from peers, opportunities to earn bonus points, and guidance of the study guides towards important course material that was linked to quiz questions. However, the authors noted that a primary limitation of their analysis was that they did not identify which components of interteaching were necessary for improved quiz performance (p. 59).

Although the effects of prepared study guides as one component within the interteaching framework have not been examined, the effects of their use in other teaching contexts have been evaluated in a number of previous studies. For example, Altus, Welsh, Miller, and Merrill (1993) used points and fines as contingencies to increase university housing cooperative students' completion of study guides, which improved their scores on mastery tests. Flora and Logan (1996) found that commercially available, computerized study guides improved the test performance of students in general psychology courses as compared with a control group who had no study guides. These authors also found that 80% of the experimental participants reported enjoying the study guides. Finally, Dickson, Miller, and Devoley (2005) suggested that study guides help students focus on critical information.

Although the available research has found interteaching to be an effective teaching methodology, it would be meaningful to analyze the individual components of interteaching to

determine the relative effectiveness of each part of the package (Cooper, Heron, and Heward, 2007). One component that—as an individual independent variable—has been found to have positive effects outside of the interteaching context is the study guide (e.g., Altus et al., 1993; Dickson et al., 2005; Flora and Logan, 1996). Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to extend the research on interteaching by examining the effects of one component of the package, the study guide, on quiz scores in an undergraduate special education course.

## II. Method.

### *A. Participants, Setting, and Materials.*

Seven college seniors participated in this study. All were Caucasian females, between the ages of 20 and 22, completing a four-year undergraduate teacher licensure program in special education. None of the participants had any previous experience with interteaching, and all students enrolled in the course participated in this study. All participants attended each class session of the quarter. This study was conducted across eight weeks of a 10-week methods course in special education. Classes were held in a classroom on the college campus that was equipped with desks, a computer, an LCD projector, a screen, and chalkboards.

Study guide questions were developed by the instructor for the reading assignments for four class sessions and posted on the course website at the beginning of the quarter. Each study guide consisted of approximately 10 questions (i.e., two to three questions per reading) based on the reading assignments for the week. Students were instructed to respond to the questions and bring their typed responses to class. Weekly reading assignments (consisting of three to four research articles and book chapters) were posted on the course website or provided in a course packet that was available at the beginning of the quarter. Students could access all course materials (e.g., readings, study guide questions, assignment guidelines, etc.) at any time during the quarter with no restrictions. Interteach records were provided to the students during each class session (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Interteach record questions**

Date: _____
Duration of Discussion: ____
Sufficient time provided: yes ____ no ____
On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very), how prepared was (were) your partner(s)?
On a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult), how difficult was the material in this unit?
List topics that gave you difficulty and the nature of the difficulty.
List issues you would like clarified in the class lecture.
Provide any additional comments or suggestions.

### *B. Dependent Variable.*

The primary dependent measure was the mean percent correct on eight weekly quizzes across participants. Quizzes were worth 12 points each and had eight questions based on the weekly reading assignments. Each quiz was constructed with the following types of questions: (a) two factual multiple-choice questions worth one point each (e.g., Which of the following strategies is a reinforcement-based procedure?), (b) two factual fill-in-the-blank questions worth one point each (e.g., The last type of prompt in a least-to-most prompting hierarchy is typically a

_____.), (c) two factual short answer questions worth two points each (e.g., Describe at least two of the strategies presented in this article.), and (d) two interpretive problem solving short answer questions worth two points each (e.g., Describe a strategy you would use to increase the social interactions of a child with autism and explain why you would use that strategy.). For questions worth one point, no partial credit was given. For questions worth two points, students received zero points for incorrect responses, one point for answers that were either partially correct or did not answer all parts of the question, and two points if all parts of the question were answered correctly. Quiz scores were measured as the mean score out of 12 across participants. Mean percent correct on individual question types—multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, factual short answer, and problem solving short answer—were also reported.

*C. Interobserver Agreement.*

Two graders (i.e., two of the authors) independently scored 75% of the quizzes. All three authors prepared and reviewed all answers to the quiz questions. They met prior to grading each quiz to develop a grading rubric, which was used when grading all quizzes. For example, if the answer on the quiz matched the rubric, the answer was scored as correct. For multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions, if the answer on the quiz did not match the rubric, it was graded as incorrect. For both the factual and problem solving short answer questions, if the answer on the quiz only partially matched the rubric, then only one (out of two possible) points was given. Data from the two graders were compared for agreements and disagreements. An agreement was scored if the two graders assigned the same score to an answer. Any discrepancy between the two graders was counted as a disagreement. Interobserver agreement was calculated on a question-by-question basis using the formula: (agreements/(agreements + disagreements)) x 100%. Agreement on the different types of questions was variable. Interobserver agreement was 100% for the multiple-choice questions, 95% (range 78.5–100%) for the fill-in-the-blank questions, 83% (range 64–100%) for the factual short answer questions, and 75% (range 57–100%) for the problem solving short answer questions. Overall agreement for the quizzes was calculated to be 88% (range 82–100%).

*D. Experimental Design.*

An alternating treatments design was used to examine the effects of the two preparation formats on quiz performance (Kazdin, 1982). The study guide assignments were randomly assigned to class sessions, and each preparation condition was provided four times over the course of the quarter.

*E. Interteaching Procedures.*

Each class session occurred once per week and lasted 2 hr and 18 min and was broken into the following schedule: 5 min to address administrative issues, 25 min small group discussions, 5 min to complete the interteach record, 10 min break, 30 min lecture, 20 min quiz, 30 min discussion of practical teaching techniques and discussion of practicum experiences. Similar to Saville and his colleagues (2006), participants were randomly assigned to either of two dyads or a triad during each class session. They were then given 25 min to discuss either their responses to the provided study guide questions or the questions they had prepared. During the first 10 min, the participants discussed the material independently. For the remaining 15 min, two graduate

teaching assistants circulated through the three groups assisting with any questions and helping guide the discussion. Participants were given 25, rather than the traditional 35, min to discuss material because this was the amount of time it took them to discuss all of the material for that day. After 25 min, their discussions would shift to other, unrelated topics. At the conclusion of the discussion, participants were given 5 min to complete an interteach record, which provided them with the opportunity to request further clarification on particular topics as well as rate the quality of their discussions (see Table 1). Participants were then given a 10 min break, during which time the instructor and two graduate teaching assistants reviewed the interteach records to determine what material to cover during the short lecture. Following the break, participants were given a 30 min lecture on the material, with an emphasis on those topics that they found difficult. Unlike a traditional lecture, the 30 min lecture was structured as a group discussion, with students asking and responding to questions. Although each class session was 2 hours 18 min, only 1 hour 20 min were devoted to the material for that week.

*Answering questions.* In the *Answer Questions* condition, participants were required to download a study guide from the course website and provide answers to each question prior to class. Each study guide consisted of approximately 10 interpretive questions that required the participants to think critically about the material and could not be answered by simply skimming the reading (e.g., Why are functional skills for daily living important to teach? Provide 5 examples of functional skills for daily living and how each benefits a student.). Participants answered questions for four randomly assigned class sessions, and were required to bring a hard copy of their responses to class to use during discussion. Participants earned points for completed study guides, and all participants completed each assignment.

*Writing questions.* In the *Write Questions* condition, participants were required to develop their own study guide questions based upon the readings for that week, covering points in the reading that they thought were important or presenting issues that they did not understand. Participants were instructed to write interpretive questions, rather than questions that could be answered by simply skimming the reading, and a model was posted to the course website. Participants were required to write at least four questions per reading assignment for four randomly assigned class sessions and were required to bring a hard copy of their responses to class to use during discussion. Participants earned points for completed study guides, and all participants completed each assignment.

*F. Social Validity.*

On the last day of the class, each participant anonymously completed an eight-item questionnaire consisting of questions with Likert scale, open ended, and yes/no questions. The questionnaire examined the participants' preferred format of interteach preparation. (See Table 2 for the social validity questionnaire.)

**Table 2. Social Validity Questionnaire.**

1. Do you prefer preparing for interteaching by answering provided study guide questions or writing your own questions? Please list reasons for your preference.

| Mostly Preferred Preparing Questions | Somewhat Preferred Preparing Questions | Preferred Both Equally | Somewhat Preferred Answering Prepared Questions | Mostly Preferred Answering Prepared Questions |
|---|---|---|---|---|

2. Please rate the extent to which you feel you learned using the interteach method with answering provided study guide questions and writing your own questions. Please explain why you feel this way. What are some advantages and disadvantages that you experienced with each type of preparation (answering prepared questions and writing your own questions)?

| Learned Much More With Writing Questions | Learned Some More With Writing Questions | Learned Equally With Writing & Answering Questions | Learned Some More With Answering Prepared Questions | Learned Much More with Answering Prepared Questions |
|---|---|---|---|---|

3. How would you rate the extent to which you learned using the interteach method in this course as compared to courses that you have taken that did not use the interteach method?

| Learned Much More With interteach | Learned Some More With interteach | Learned Equally With and Without interteach | Learned Some More Without interteach | Learned Much More Without interteach |
|---|---|---|---|---|

4. What aspects of the interteach method would you judge as useful? (open ended)

5. What aspects of the interteach method would you judge as not useful? How would you change these aspects? (open ended)

6. What other feedback do you have about the structure of this class? (open ended)

7. Would you prefer to participate in interteach in another course? (yes/no)

8. Would you recommend a class that uses the interteach method to a fellow student? (yes/no)

## III. Results.

### *A. Quizzes.*

The mean percent correct on quizzes across participants is displayed in Figure 1. On quizzes 1, 3, 6, and 7, which occurred in the *Write Questions* condition, the class averaged 81% correct (range 62–93%). On quizzes 2, 4, 5, and 8, which occurred in the *Answer Questions* condition, the class averaged 82% correct (range 73–87%). The last two mean quiz scores in the *Write Questions* condition were slightly higher (i.e., 93% and 90%) than the last two mean quiz scores in the *Answer Questions* condition (i.e., 83% and 87%).

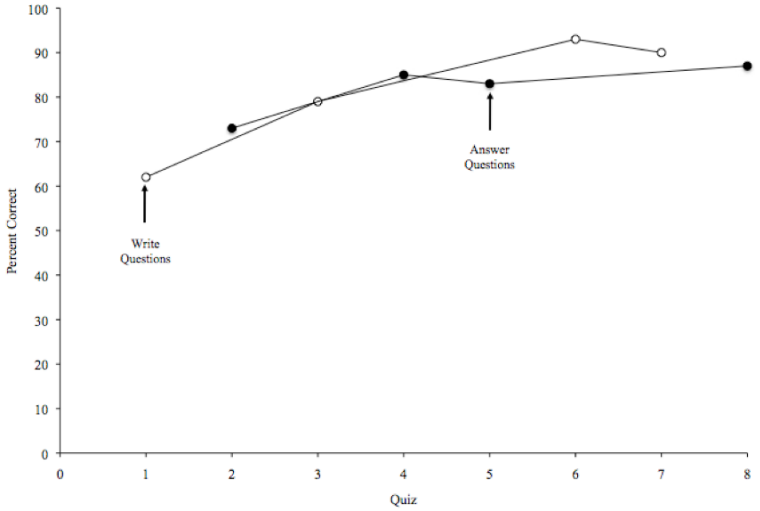


**Figure 1. Overall mean percent correct across eight weekly quizzes.**

Figures 2 through 5 display the mean percent correct on quizzes in the two conditions for each question type. On multiple-choice questions (Figure 2), participants averaged 86% correct (range 57–100%) in the *Write Questions* condition and 79% correct (range 57–100%) in the *Answer Questions* condition. On fill-in-the-blank questions (Figure 3), participants averaged 81% correct (range 79–86%) in the *Write Questions* condition and 88% correct (range 71–100%) in the *Answer Questions* condition. On factual short answer questions (Figure 4), the average was 80% correct (range 57–93%) in the *Write Questions* condition and 88% correct (range 71–100%) in the *Answer Questions* condition. On problem solving short answer questions (Figure 5), the average was 81% correct (range 61–93%) in the *Write Questions* condition and 75% correct (range 61–86%) in the *Answer Questions* condition. Mean quiz scores on problem solving short answer questions were consistently higher in the *Write Questions* condition.

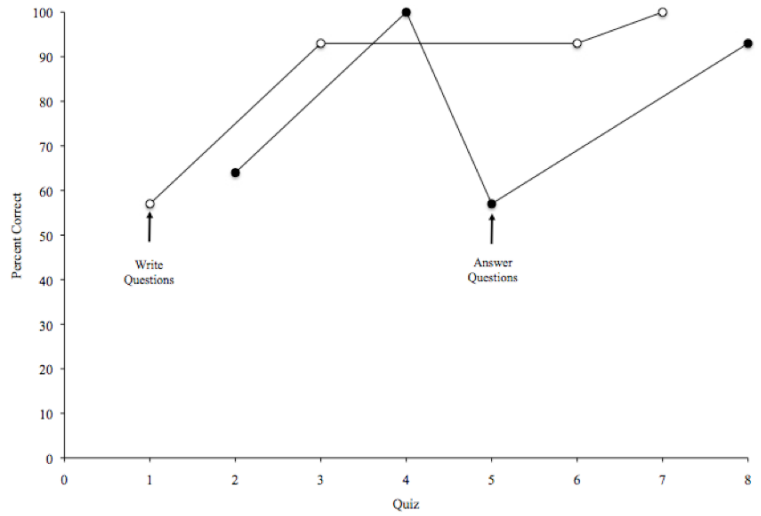


**Figure 2. Mean percent correct on the multiple-choice questions across eight weekly quizzes.**

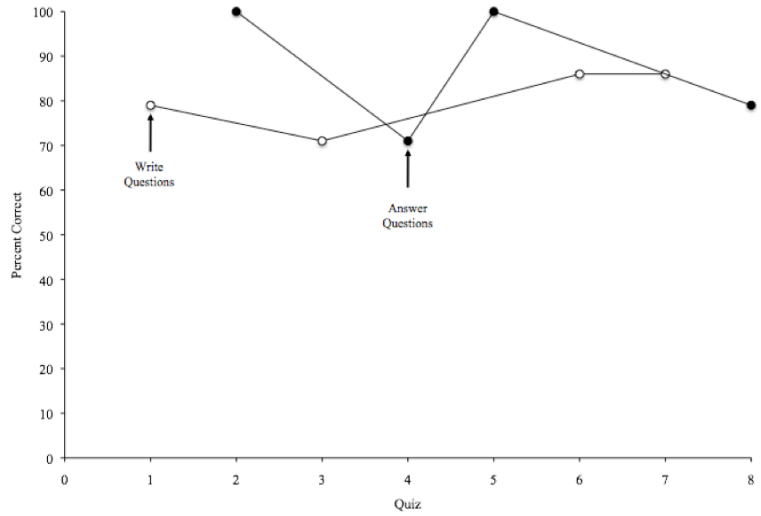


**Figure 3. Mean percent correct on the fill-in-the-blank questions across eight weekly quizzes.**

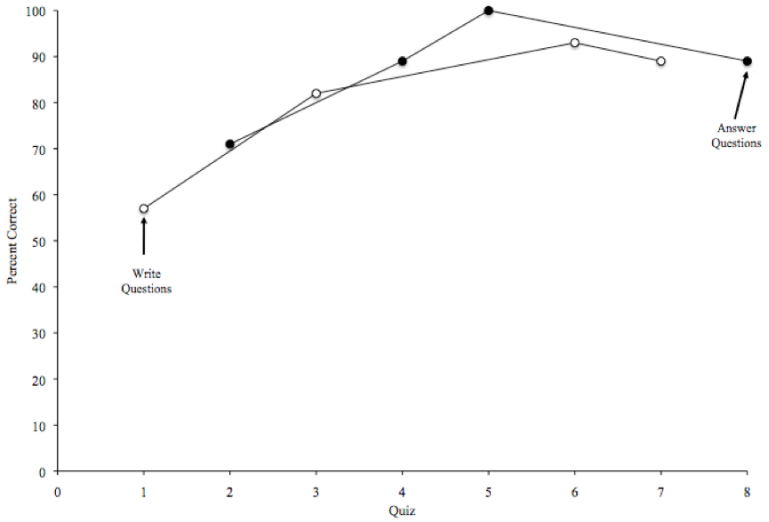


**Figure 4. Mean percent correct on the short answer questions across eight weekly quizzes.**

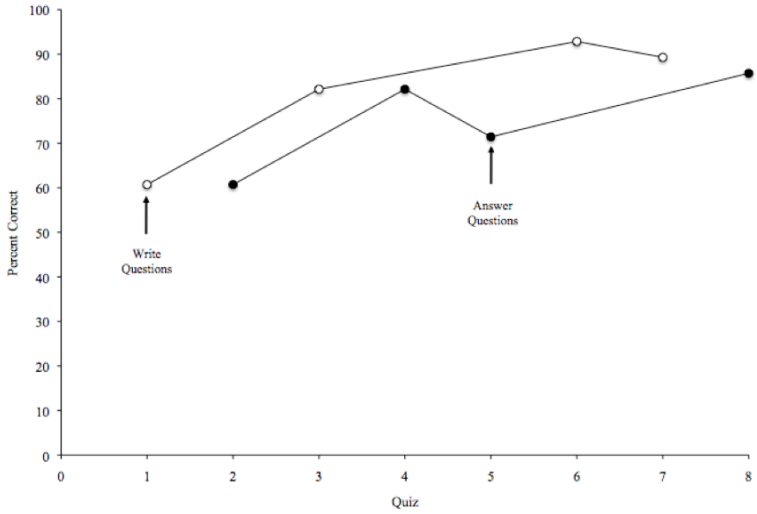


**Figure 5. Mean percent correct on the problem solving questions across eight weekly quizzes.**

*B. Social Validity.*

Based on responses to the social validity questionnaire, the majority of the participants preferred answering prepared questions, citing improved understanding of the material and feeling that these prepared questions would be on the quiz as reasons for this preference. The two participants who preferred preparing questions stated that writing questions helped them learn more information because it took less time and therefore they could spend more time reading and analyzing the articles. They also reported that coming to class with prepared questions was better because "everyone wasn't regurgitating the answers to all the same questions". The majority of the class reported a non-preference for interteaching, stating that they preferred whole class, rather than small group, discussions. These responses were similar in nature to the feedback provided on the weekly interteach records. While most participants did not like interteaching, three out of seven said that they would both take and recommend another course that used interteaching.

## IV. Discussion.

This research extends the literature on interteaching as a college teaching format (Saville et al., 2005; 2006). Quiz performance was not substantially influenced by the type of interteach preparation—answering study guide questions or writing one's own questions. The mean percent of correct answers to quiz questions across the two conditions differed by only one percent. However, visual inspection of the data in the alternating treatments design suggests that the *Write Questions* condition produced slightly higher quiz scores by the end of the course. Examining quiz performance across particular question type in the two conditions suggests some further findings. Participants scored slightly higher on multiple-choice questions in the *Write Questions* condition and performed substantially higher on fill-in-the-blank questions on two quizzes in the *Answer Questions* condition. On factual short answer questions, there were slightly higher scores in the *Answer Questions* condition and on the problem solving short answer questions there were consistently higher scores in the *Write Questions* condition. Differences in quiz scores were examined individually for each student (data not shown) and were not different from aggregate differences.

These results are variable and inconsistent and future research is required to substantiate any proposed findings. Nevertheless, potential explanations of the data are offered. One interpretation of the data is that the type of interteach preparation—answering study guide questions or generating one's own questions—is a weak variable in the interteaching package and does not influence quiz performance in a college course that uses interteaching. On the other hand, it may be that having any kind of study guide requirement, either answering provided questions or developing questions, could be too closely related to show significant differences. Additionally, it may be the case that the interteach discussion or the interteach record are more influential variables in the package and that their potency as independent variables should be studied. It may also be the case that, especially in a college course with a small number of students, the individual components of interteaching are not influential and only the contingencies for quiz performance (i.e., one's grade) influence preparation for class and performances on quizzes. Another plausible explanation for the insubstantial difference across the conditions is that quiz scores may be an insensitive dependent measure for these independent variables. That is, in evaluating preparation type for interteaching, more sensitive dependent variables might be the quality of interteach discussion, maintenance of the information over months or years, or clinical applications of the concepts from the course. These dependent variables are more labor-intensive to measure but might be considered in future studies.

Despite the small differences across the two conditions, some plausible explanations for these differences are offered. The most consistent results were that writing questions produced higher scores on short answer problem solving questions, which required participants to synthesize and apply the concepts in the readings to educational problems and might require greater critical thinking. It is possible that providing students with a study guide with questions for students to answer that indicate the important parts of a reading may limit their critical thinking. A student's critical thinking might be enhanced when they are required to generate their own questions based on what they consider to be important (Lampert, 2007). Conversely, because study guides indicate to students the critical information in text, they might help students perform well on factual type questions and this was the case in the fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions. However, because writing questions produced slightly higher scores on multiple-choice questions, another type of factual question, this interpretation is weakened.

*A. Limitations.*

A number of limitations should be considered. First, only seven students participated in this study. The classes in the two experiments conducted by Saville et al. (2006) had 33 and 35 students. Because interteaching is conceptualized as an alternative to lecture-based courses, which typically have significantly more than seven students, interteaching might be more effective with larger classes. Based on the results from the social validity questionnaire, a second limitation of the study is that the participants were generally not in favor of the interteaching format. This non-preference might have been especially strong with these participants, because they had taken two courses with the same instructor in previous quarters in which interteaching was not used. Although participants indicated on their interteach records that they did not like the interteach arrangement, deviations would have compromised the internal validity of the study. The added course requirements over previous course requirements (including in-class discussions and more difficult quizzes) also might have influenced the non-preference for interteaching and affected the results of the experimental comparison. A third limitation is that quiz scores might be an insensitive dependent variable to evaluate the effectiveness of the preparation conditions and other possible dependent variables such as quality of discussion and clinical applications of the concepts were not measured. A final limitation is that interobserver agreement for the problem solving questions was low. This may be due to the fact that the students had to discuss how they might use techniques in real-life settings, so there were no discrete correct answers. In future studies, it might be beneficial for the different graders to further discuss how they might answer the questions in order to develop a more comprehensive rubric for this type of question.

*B. Suggestions for Future Research.*

To address these limitations, there are at least four avenues for future research. First, this study should be replicated with classes of larger size (e.g., 30 students) at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to continue to evaluate the differences between the two preparation formats. Second, future studies should compare the use of study guides with no study guides and no other contingencies for preparation. This would provide a clearer evaluation of the effects of the study guide. Third, other dependent variables should be measured. These might include a measure of the quality of class discussion, quizzes with a higher percentage of problem solving and application questions, the clinical application of concepts, the designing of educational goals based on the concepts, and orally explaining concepts and applications. A fourth area for future research is to evaluate the effects of the other components of interteaching such as the in-class discussion or the interteach records. Data on the effects of these individual components may provide a more complete account of the construct of interteaching.

*C. Implications for Practice.*

Despite the methodological limitations of this study and the need for further research, some implications for practice are suggested. Based on this and previous studies, it appears that interteaching is a reasonable alternative to lecture-based formats of college teaching that provides many benefits to both students and instructors as outlined by Boyce and Hineline (2002) and Saville et al. (2006). Although there were not substantial differential effects of the two preparation strategies evaluated in this study, one conclusion is that contingencies for any

type of class preparation, including reading text and writing about it, help students learn content. Further, participants may perform better on quizzes that require critical thinking if they critically examine course reading and identify areas of importance. Finally, until there is more component analysis data, interteaching should be implemented as described by Boyce and Hineline (2002) and Saville and colleagues (2005; 2006).

*D. Conclusions.*

In conclusion, answering study guide questions or writing one's own questions based on course reading did not substantially differentially affect quiz scores in a college course using interteaching. It is possible that generating one's own questions produces higher scores on problem solving questions that require critical thinking, but future research is needed to support that conclusion. interteaching can be an effective, behavior analytic alternative to lecture-based teaching and should continue to be researched.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1. Sample Study Guide Questions Provided by the Instructor.

1. What are the differences between discrete trial training and embedded instruction? Describe at least three advantages and disadvantages of each.
2. Discuss the importance of examining the effectiveness of an intervention that is implemented by the classroom teacher and his/her paraprofessionals?
3. How was errorless learning used in this study? Would you use this strategy in your classroom? Why or why not?

### Appendix 2. Sample Study Guide Questions Written by the Participants.

1. How was the functional analysis conducted and what were the results? The article does not go into very much detail of this aspect of the experiment. It is not as important as what was done or the results, but it would have been nice to mention.
2. What is an analogue session? I have never heard of this term before.
3. How/why was each of the six assessments chosen? What was each trying to show?
4. Describe the graph, which depicts the results and what it means for the experiment?

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# Experiential learning in the scholarship of teaching and learning

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*Abstract: Experiential learning is making meaning from direct experience. Experiential learning is used in workplace training (Silberman, 2007), and is the theoretical foundation for all practicum and co-op program learning. Supported by findings on expert/novice learning styles (Boshuizen, Bromme, and Gruber, H., 2004), this essay reflects on the practice of experiential learning as a mode of inquiry in the scholarship of teaching and learning. When expert teachers experiment with becoming novice learners, or when professors become students, they can come to personal, enduring insights about the experience of teaching and learning.*

*Keywords: experiential learning, ethnography, faculty development.*

For a faculty member who has been teaching for many years, taking a class as a novice learner can be a valuable form of reflection on the teaching and learning interaction. The scholarship of teaching and learning promotes inquiry into the learning and teaching process, and different disciplines offer alternative ways of making this inquiry. One such alternative is experiential learning. Experiential learning, as comprehensively outlined by Kolb (1984), emphasizes reflection on direct, concrete experience. In the case of teaching and learning, the critical reflection involves the expert teacher being a novice student. Experts negotiate the learning experience differently from novices (Boshuizen, Bromme, and Gruber, 2004; Daly, 1999). A teacher who is an expert in his or her discipline can gain teaching insights from revisiting the novice learner experience.

Much scholarship of teaching and learning employs observation of learning and critical reflection on teaching by those engaged in teaching (Martin, Benjamin, Prosser, and Trigwell, 1999). Another method of inquiry that underlies this scholarship is the experimental method or adaptations of this method to the classroom environment. Experiential learning lends another method of inquiry to observation and experimentation, one that extends self-reflection on teaching and learning from the point of view of the teacher to that of the learner. The shift of perspective allows the observer to see the process of learning through a new community of practice, that of the novice learner.

Experiential learning involves participation and critical reflection on that participation (Kolb, 1984; Shon, 1983). Experiential learning is most often invoked in workplace adult learning, but is also branching out into more formal education venues (Fenwick, 2000; Silberman, 2007). In general terms, experiential learning conceives of the adult learner as participating in an activity, then reflecting on the activity to make generalizations that he or she can then apply in new situations. Critics have also extended the concept to include perception of and participation in power relations, personal motivation, and social processes (Michelson, 1996; Ellsworth, 1997). One of the specific values of experiential learning is the immersion of the participant in the social constructions and cultural expectations specific to the experience (Lave and Wegner, 1991). When a professor becomes a student, and enters into the classroom in that

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role, the experience will be different from the professor entering the classroom as a researcher to observe.

Part of the qualitative shift of perspective for a professor becoming a student as a way to gain insight into teaching and learning involves the shift from being an expert to being a novice. As experts in their fields, professors forget the confusion of novelty that students experience in classes. It is well documented that novices and experts have different strategies for negotiating problems, and it is insightful to be a novice and re-visit the novice strategies that an expert may have forgotten. Boshuizen, Bromme and Gruber (2004) document these differences at length. They observe, "Experts do not just know more than novices, they also have a different way of structuring their domain-specific knowledge" (p. 6). Experts have a different orientation not only to their subject matter, but also learning about their subject matter. Daley (1999) observes that novices need direction, rely on roles, are overwhelmed and anxious, and their learning is impeded by refusals to provide directions and clear roles. Thus, a professor might be irritated by an anxious student's question, "What do you want in this assignment," while from a novice's point of view, this is an essential question. Daley outlines that experts are self-creative, collaborative, and able to sift out important issues. The expert teacher would like to guide his or her students to this kind of orientation to learning but needs to build up to it. Reminding oneself of what it feels like to be a novice can provide important insight to help create the structured experiences required to help students move out of the novice state. Additionally, it can help professors avoid attributing student behavior to disinterest or incompetence.

A difficulty with reading published accounts of experiential learning is that these accounts can be perceived as idiosyncratic, subjective, and informal. At worst, these accounts can be seen as unethical. An example of a controversial episode of a professor becoming a student is the experience of Cathy Small, who wrote under the pseudonym Rebekah Nathan (2005). Using the participant/observation methodology of anthropology, Cathy Small provides an account of returning to the classroom as a student after many years as a faculty member in her book, *My Freshman Year: What a professor learned by becoming a student.*

When the book was published, it was met with both praise and stiff criticism. The book was praised as an insightful and realistic appraisal of the freshman experience (Donovan, 2008). It was also criticized as ethically suspect. A reviewer for the American Ethnological Society observes that "…she never achieved a student identity and … the revelation of her "secret" always produced difficulties" (Ethnoadmin, 2006, ¶2). The criticism of Small "deceiving" the academic community by shifting roles raises a serious consideration. It is possible that a professor becoming a student can be viewed as suspect by colleagues and students on the home campus. If the goal of the professor is to better understand the experience of being a student, in whatever guise that is possible given the professor's "dual citizenship", then deception is not involved. In fact, it is not necessary that a professor become a student on his or her home campus. A person can become a student in many contexts where the potentially conflicting roles of professor and student do not compete. The important issue is for a person who is an expert in his or her field to become involved in a class where he or she is a novice learner and then reflect on that learning process.

Small (Nathan, 2005) reports a number of observations about student life including the pressures of non-academic activities, the collegial code of silence where student do not speak in class so as not to embarrass their friends, and the pragmatic approach to read on a need-to-read basis. However, Small comments that one of the main lessons she learned was increased compassion for her students. Small asserts that she knew the facts of the situations she became

involved in from her experiences as a faculty member, but not the contextualized reasons for them, not the emotional backdrop of the decisions students made. For example, Small discusses one epiphany she experienced about student reading. She recalls chuckling as a professor put a web address up on the board for a reading assignment that, as a student, she didn't even copy down because she knew she would not be doing that reading as it was not going to be discussed in class. Small reports that she has changed how she assigns readings in her own classes, as a result of her time as a student, by explicitly linking all reading to specific purposes of class discussion and assessments.

Moving from professor to student is a significant change in relationships of social power, but the change from expert to novice is more personally and emotionally affecting. A group of faculty at a mid-western university came together in a faculty learning community to reflect on how becoming beginning music students affected their teaching (Benander and Pettit, 2007). These faculty members commented on the challenge of feeling incompetent, the importance of praise, and the need for structured clarity in exercises to gain the facility to improve. These faculty commented that by reflecting on their experiences and needs as novices in learning a new skill, it helped them change the structure of their introductory courses to make the structure of assignments and activities clearer; to create assignments that helped students move from being dependent on rules to slowly begin to learn to apply principles; and to create activities that would provide experiential background knowledge to be applied in new situations.

Of course these are points that have been made in the pedagogical literature, but as McGlinn (2003) observes, "These [changes in] behaviors don't come when someone else tells the student teacher what is needed; rather they come from the struggle to understand teaching and students' learning. They come from reflection"(p.147). McGlinn may be referring to student teachers in her article, but the observation holds for experienced faculty members as well. Reading an article about structuring assignments for clarity may not result in teaching change as effectively as personally experiencing the novice's confusion when faced with a complicated assignment.

For a professor to reflect on the process of teaching and learning, it may be more practical to find a learning experience outside the academy where the role of "professor as student" is not pertinent. However, it is also possible to engage in experiential learning on one's home campus. If one has a collegial relationship with another instructor, it is possible to join a class as a student. It is not necessary to hide that one is a professor in another department. I have attended foreign language and fine arts courses taught by my colleagues. The experience of taking these classes and becoming part of the group of students trying to understand what is going on has profoundly changed how I structure the classes I teach, how I give feedback on student work, how I design assignments, and how I deal with silence during class discussions.

As a novice student in a foreign language course, I often did not understand how different topics were related to each other. It was very helpful when the professor would explicitly explain why we moved from one topic to the next. I try to make the structure of my own classes very clear with explicit explanations of how the assignments and topics we cover build on each other. Equally explicit feedback was also helpful. As a novice artist, the teacher would quickly indicate what was wrong with my drawing and move on. The instructor's feedback confused me because now I knew what was wrong, but I would have also liked to know how I was supposed to fix it. As I became a more experienced artist, I came to know how to fix problems when the professor identified them. In my own first year classes, I try to use feedback methods that allow for detailed suggestions to help novice students acquire the tools they need to make corrections for

themselves. As a way to continue to guide novices to self-sufficiency, I try to design assignments that build on each other and which allow for continued practice of new skills. Finally, I am very much aware of how silence in a classroom can result from novices not knowing how to answer the question, or not knowing enough to even form a question of their own, but also from a desire not to betray each other by participating. I try to create participation scenarios that allow students to help each other participate, have enough time to answer, or to consult with each other before answering.

The previous examples of professors learning by becoming students demonstrate how experiential learning is not just for students but can be a valuable tool to reflect on teaching and learning. The attempt to shift roles poignantly emphasizes the social power that affects teaching and learning. Participation in the experience of the classroom highlights the emotional backdrop of how students make decisions about their learning. Professors who critically reflect on their own learning experiences may be able to take advantage of the idiosyncratic, subjective, and informal nature of this style of learning to understand how his or her personal style of learning responds to different kinds of teaching. As McGlinn (2003) points out, adult learners do not like to be told what to do, and Boshuizen, Bromme, and Gruber (2004) suggest that experts prefer to use resources and previous experience to inform their practice. The challenge with experiential learning for professors is that it is a calculated risk to give up the capability of the expert and the power of the professor.

The implication of experiential learning as a form of critical reflection for the scholarship of teaching and learning is that is adds another mode of inquiry. More traditional inquiry in teaching and learning involves observing from the position of the professor or as a non-participant. Alternatively, researchers institute interventions and controls to assess the effectiveness of a learning activity. Becoming a participant in the experience of learning, and engaging reflective practice in as a participant in the community of learners, offers insights not available to the other two modes of inquiry. In addition, being a student in the early 21st century is radically different from what it meant to be a student for many current mid- or late-career faculty members.

It is neither necessary nor advisable to duplicate the experience of Cathy Small to use experiential learning to reflect on one's practice of teaching and learning. The experience of being a learner can be found in many contexts. The greatest change as a result of changing roles often seems to be change of emotional orientation. Faculty who have participated in this role reversal comment that the greatest change was increased compassion for their students (e.g. Nathan, 2005; Benander and Pettit, 2007). Mid-career faculty have long experience with the many reasons why a person can be late for class or miss an assignment. The resulting "compassion fatigue" can sometimes lead to strained relationships with students. Renewing empathy for the novice learning experience can help create more positive interactions with the recurring difficulties instructors must negotiate with their students. It is also refreshing to have a new perspective on learning, assignments, and technology. For example, many instructors only use the instructor view of software like Web-CT or Blackboard. Negotiating assignments and quizzes through the student view of the electronic interface can help one anticipate student challenges.

Instructors who have returned to being students in one context or another, whether it is attending a course in another discipline or learning a new musical instrument, seem to report lasting and deep changes in their teaching as result of their critical reflections on being a learner. Silberman (2007) comments that experiential learning is a "sticky" learning: "when it is done

well, it adheres to you. Participants will usually forget a great presentation, but they often remember a great experience" (p. 4). When experts revisit the experience of being a novice, they may gain insights on how to help their novice students problem solve more like experts. In addition, the recommendations from research in the scholarship of teaching and learning may "stick" and be more readily applied in the classroom, resulting in enduring and real change in individual practice.

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# A single conversation with a wise man is better than ten years of study: A model for testing methodologies for pedagogy or andragogy

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*Abstract: This article creates the Teaching Methodology Instrument* (*TMI*) *to help determine the level of adult learning principles being used by a particular teaching methodology in a classroom. The instrument incorporates the principles and assumptions set forth by Malcolm Knowles of what makes a good adult learning environment. The Socratic method as used in law schools is applied to the instrument to determine whether it displays more pedagogical or more andragogical principles.*

*Keywords: andragogy, pedagogy, adult learning, adult education, Socratic method.*

## I. Introduction.

In his seminal treatise "*The Common Law,*" Oliver Wendell Holmes stated that the most important thing in the life of the law is "experience" (Holmes, 1881). Usually the first opportunity for students to gain legal experience is in law school. For many law schools, students are hoping to gain experience which they will be able to apply to their real world experience. Law programs tend to focus on the education of adults. Law students usually have already obtained undergraduate degrees and may have real world experience already. Once they arrive on the doorsteps of a law program they often want to gain additional experiences and knowledge to further their careers and lives. Eduard Lindeman, a seminal figure in the field of adult education, expressed adamantly that adults need to learn through experience (Knowles, 1980, 1984a; Lindeman, 1926). "Too much of learning consists of vicarious substitution of someone else's experience and knowledge" (Lindeman, 1926, p. 6). Lindeman (1926) further went on to write "[p]sychology teaches us that we learn what we do…Experience is the adult learner's living textbook" (pp. 6-7). A question emerges: Do the teaching styles used in law schools focus on providing students with experience that will adequately prepare them for their professions? To answer this question teaching methodologies must be examined and evaluated according to the principles of adult learning.

Over the past century, professors of law programs have used a variety of delivery tools of instruction. Although many methods of instruction exist, some focusing more on pedagogical principles (teacher-focused education) and others more on andragogical principles (learner-focused education), there is usually some of each in each methodology (Conner, 2004; Knowles, 1984a, 1984b; Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 1998). The amount of what type of techniques is usually determined by the instructor.

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The purpose of this article is to create an instrument to test a teaching methodology and determine whether it adheres more to pedagogical principles or andragogical principles. The instrument will be based on Malcolm Knowles' checklist of whether education and learning is more information based (pedagogical model) or experience based (andragogical model) (Saunders, 1991). An instrument is needed to establish empirical evidence related to the andragogical theory. Once the instrument is created a particular teaching methodology, the Socratic method in law schools, will be used to test the model.

## II. Why use a law school methodology?

Law school education has become a very controversial subject in the legal community (MacCrate, 2004). The American Bar Association released what is now known as the MacCrate Report in 1992. The report's primary conclusion was that there remains a continuing disconnection between what law school teaches and what "students need to learn for initial competence in practice" (Elson, 1994, p. 363). In recent years, law schools have been making several adjustments in an effort to improve the quality of education their students receive. These adjustments include restructuring curriculums (Bodie, 2006; Kozinski, 1997), emphasizing scholarship that would be beneficial to the legal community (Edwards, 1992), and identifying and naming the skills and traits necessary for the successful practice of law so that they may be taught to students (Chanen, 2007; Denney, 2007). Trying to decipher the literature on reforming legal education is difficult because there are so many different philosophies of legal education for different fields of law. The literature is very limited in empirical evidence and without evidence, law schools are reluctant to incorporate proposals such as the MacCrate Report (Elson, 1994).

Since law students are adults, the failure of gaining "experience" may be a reason for their struggles upon entrance into the practice of law. If so, determining whether "experience" is gained through current teaching methodologies for instructing adults in law school becomes a very important issue. Over the past century, law professors have used the Socratic method as the predominant delivery tool of instruction. Although many methods of instruction exist, the Socratic method appears to have gained the most attention in the academic literature (Kerr, 1999). One lens to look through to see if this method is providing the "experience" needed is the theory of andragogy.

A common theme found in the literature is the incorporation of "adult learning" principles in order to create an "experience" that is valuable to students. Currently the "pedagogical model employed by legal educators is designed to give students a set of experiences that will prepare them to adequately and effectively identify, classify and address legal problems once they pass the bar examination and enter the professional practice" (ButleRitchie, 2003, p. 43). The expectations of the legal profession and the practice of law are completely distinct, however, from what is learned in this law school "experience" (Elkins, 1996). A common doctrinal position of what legal education is intended to do was clearly stated by one law school professor: "legal education…is the place where you find out what law is, the place you begin to distinguish from what barstool pundits profess" (Elkins, 1996, p. 518).

This paper will be divided into four sections. The first section will examine what the Socratic method is and its application in legal education. The second section will compare andragogical and pedagogical types of learning and the model to be used for andragogical application. The third section will be the application of the andragogical model to the Socratic

method. Finally, the fourth section will analyze the findings of whether or not the Socratic method incorporates adult learning principles.

## III. Let's have a dialogue: The usage of the Socratic method in Law School.

When one thinks of the Socratic method, a vision of Professor Kingsfield from the movie *The Paper Chase* comes to their mind. Professor Kingsfield exemplified the Socratic method's use in law school, he would call upon a student to brief an assigned case, but would interrupt the student with questions until the student became so helplessly confused that the student's self-esteem was completely demoralized (Warkentine, 2000). Most doctrinal law professors believe that the Socratic method of instruction helps students to "think like a lawyer," with the goal of the process to provide students skills to analyze a case on their own (Niedwiecki, 2006).

The Socratic method has been an accepted fixture in law schools since Christopher Columbus Langdell began instructing law students in the 1870s (Friedland, 1996). The name comes from Plato's *Socratic Dialogues (1987)*, in which a dialectic method of inquiry is established between two individuals asking questions surrounding a central issue. Plato contends that Socrates was convinced that the human mind in its normal condition discovers certain truths through its own energies, provided one knows how to lead it and stimulate it (Compayré and Payne, 1970). The Socratic method in adult education "involves the use of systematic questions, inductive thinking, and the formulation of general definitions" (Paraskevas and Wickens, 2003, p. 6).

The legal community lacks a commonly accepted definition as to what constitutes a Socratic style. Different professors apply their own versions of the Socratic method, since most of them have never been trained in the actual instructional method that the *Socratic Dialogues* sets forth. For the purposes of this paper, the following definition will be adopted: the Socratic method is a:

> "pedagogical technique in which a teacher does not give information directly but instead asks a series of questions, with the result that the student comes either to the desired knowledge by answering the questions or to a deeper awareness of the limits of knowledge" ("Socratic Method," n.d.).

The Socratic method incorporates other preferred methods of instructions such as the "case study" or "case law" method, lecture, and small groups. Of these, the case study method is linked to the Socratic method, compared to other methodologies. Its design enables law professors to instruct and train a large class of students; and the discussion demonstrates the "logic, language and context of legal decision-making" (ButleRitchie, 2003). In a Socratic method-based class, students perform in a "variety of thought-demanding ways to explain, muster evidence, generalize, apply concepts, analogize, and represent in a new way" (Paraskevas and Wickens, 2003, p. 6).

In law school students are given an appellate case or a series of appellate cases to read. After they read these cases, they return to the classroom to participate in a discussion with the professor. The professor calls upon a student to engage in a dialogue with the professor what she has learned, why the courts came to decisions that they did, and how the legal rules adopted in the cases are important to the greater whole of that body of law (i.e. contracts, torts, property, etc.). The professor may either focus on one student by asking the series of questions, or may randomly jump from student to student with the questions. This process is known as the Socratic method. In using this method two particular strategies help the professor engage the students and

later enable them to get rid of their cognitive egocentrism: the *elenchus* and inspiring *aporia* (Paraskevas and Wickens, 2003). The mechanism of the *elenchus* works by probing each response from a student, and examining whether the entire set of beliefs held by that student is mutually consistent. The *elenctic* questioning aims at preparing the students not simply to replace passively their existing knowledge with new, but to actively pursue a new learning experience which is vital in the legal education process (Paraskevas and Wickens, 2003). As stated in Vlastos, the natural outcome of the mechanism of the *elenchus* is *aporia*, or confusion, because the Socratic inquiry never reaches the absolute truth (Vlastos, 1980).

Gregory Vlastos (1983), in his article *The Socratic Elenchus,* articulates four steps that should be taken in the application of the Socratic method. These steps, in the hands of a skilled instructor, would occur in the following manner:

*Step 1: A student presents a thesis which is elicited by the professor*

A professor calls upon a student to identify the holding of a case (the primary rule laid forth by the court). The student asserts a thesis: for example, "The defendant did not possess *mens rea* (criminal intent) because he caught his wife in bed with another man before he stabbed him." The professor considers the thesis false and targets it for refutation by playing devil's advocate.

*Step 2: The professor sets up the student*

The professor secures his student's agreement to further premises: for example, "Is one's criminal intent negated because of his passion? If that is the case, then passion is an affirmative defense and everyone would get off."

*Step 3: The professor dialogues with the student to think of the opposite position*

The professor then presents a string of questions that will lead the students in the desired direction. Each and every answer provided by the student goes through the *elenchus* process (tested, cross-examined, and possibly refuted by counter-examples). The professor must be cautious to not dismiss any answer; since it is the students who will have to refute inappropriate answers even if that means refuting the student's original thesis. In the example, this would be: "A defendant can still possess the criminal intent to commit a crime in the heat of passion, it just might be negated."

*Step 4: The professor provides the legal principle to be learned*

When a consensus is reached or in some cases not reached, the professor summarizes by presenting the students' solutions to the scenario. The professor should emphasize that this is the result of their knowledge and experience that was achieved through the continuous questioning. (Paraskevas and Wickens, 2003; Vlastos, 1983).

These four steps will continue to cycle as long as the professor is trying to guide the students to a desired outcome. One of the cornerstones of the Socratic method is that there is usually no correct answer, rather, the objective is to see how one can argue his or her belief of the truth. This method is an effective way to assist students in learning how to "think like a lawyer." This style is based on humility, irony, and fun: Humility on the part of the student, irony on the part of the student observers, and fun on the part of the professor (Stein, 1991).

## IV. Pedagogy vs. Andragogy: Who should we be focusing on in law schools?

Much literature has been written about the differences between pedagogy and andragogy (Cartor,

1990; Gehring, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980, 1984a, 1984b; Marshak, 1983; Ozuah, 2005; Saunders, 1991). Those reviews raise some central ideas concerning how adult college students learn best (Birzer, 2004). However, very little has been written on whether andragogy applies to law schools. Most law students, after all, are adults. In order to further this discussion it is important to first clarify the difference between pedagogy and andragogy.

The publication of Lindeman's *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926) began the mainstream discussion of adult learning. Malcolm Knowles, the "father of adult learning," began to synthesize the concept and brought to popular use the term "andragogy" which had previously been coined in Europe as the parallel to pedagogy (Saunders, 1991). Over the course of Knowles's work, he would eventually summarize six key assumptions about adult learners, which he said are the foundation of adult learning.

1. *Self-concept*: As a person matures, his/her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality towards one of being a self-directed human being. Adults tend to resist situations in which they feel that others are imposing their wills on them.
2. *Experience*: As a person matures, he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes a resource for learning. Adults tend to come into adult education with a vast amount of prior experiences compared to that of children. If those prior experiences can be used they become the richest resource available.
3. *Readiness to learn*: As a person matures, his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented to the development task of his/her social roles. Readiness to learn is dependent on an appreciation of the relevancy of the topic to the student.
4. *Orientation to learn*: As a person matures, his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his/her orientation towards learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness. Adults are motivated to learn to the extent in which they perceive that the knowledge which they are acquiring, will help them perform a task or solve a problem that they may experience, or are actually facing in real life.
5. *Motivation to learn*: As a person matures, the motivation to learn is internal. Although adults feel the pressure of external motivators, they are most driven by internal motivation and the desire for self-esteem and goal attainment
6. *The need to know*: Adults need to know the reason for learning something. In adult learning the first task of the teacher was to help the learner become aware of the need to know. When adults undertake learning that they deem valuable, they will invest a considerable amount of resources (time, energy, etc.) (Forrest III and Peterson, 2006; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1984a, 1984b; Knowles et al., 1998; Lindeman, 1926; Ozuah, 2005; Thompson and Deis, 2004; Tough, 1979; Yoshimoto, Inenaga, and Yamada, 2007, p. 81).

Knowles argued that the learning process of adults is drastically different than a child's learning process (Birzer, 2004). These six concepts encompass the concept of a self-directed learner. According to Mezirow (1981), "[a]ndragogy is an organized and sustained effort to assist adults to learn in a way that enhances their capacity to function as self-directed learners" (p. 21). These six assumptions become a personal interactive agreement between the leaner and the learning endeavor -- the "experience" (Birzer, 2004).

Malcolm Knowles distinguished these assumptions of andragogy with those of pedagogy

**Table 1. Comparison of the assumptions of pedagogy and andragogy.**

| Regarding | Pedagogy | Andragogy |
|---|---|---|
| Concept of the learner | Role of the learner is a dependant one. | The role of the learner is more self-directed, but the movement from dependency to self-directedness occurs at different rates for different persons. |
| Role of the teacher | The teacher is expected to take full responsibility for determining what is to be learned, when it is to be learned, how it is to be learned, and if it has been learned. | The teacher has a responsibility to encourage and nurture this movement towards self-directedness. |
| Role of learner's experience | The experience learners bring to a learning situation is of little worth. The experience from which learners will gain the most is that of the teacher, the textbook writer, the audiovisual aid producer, and other experts. | As people grow and develop they accumulate an increasing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning.<br>People attach more meaning to learnings they gain from experience than those they acquire passively. |
| Primary technique of delivery | Transmittal techniques – lecture, assigned reading, AV presentations. | Experiential techniques – laboratory experiments, discussion, problem-solving cases, simulation exercises, field experience, and the like. |
| Readiness to learn | People are ready to learn whatever society says they ought to learn. Most people of the same age are ready to learn the same things. | People become ready to learn something when they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems. |
| How learning should be organized | Learning should be organized into a fairly standardized curriculum, with a uniform step-by-step progression for all learners. | Learning should be organized around life-application categories and sequenced according to the learners' readiness to learn. |
| Orientation of learning | Learners see education as a process of acquiring subject-matter content, most of which they understand will be useful only at a later time in life. | Learners see education as a process of developing increased competence to achieve their full potential in life. Learners want to be able to apply whatever knowledge and skill they gain today to living more effectively tomorrow. People are performance-centered in their orientation to learning. |
| Organization of curriculum | Organized into subject matter units which follow the logic of the subject from simple to complex. | Should be organized around competency/development categories. |

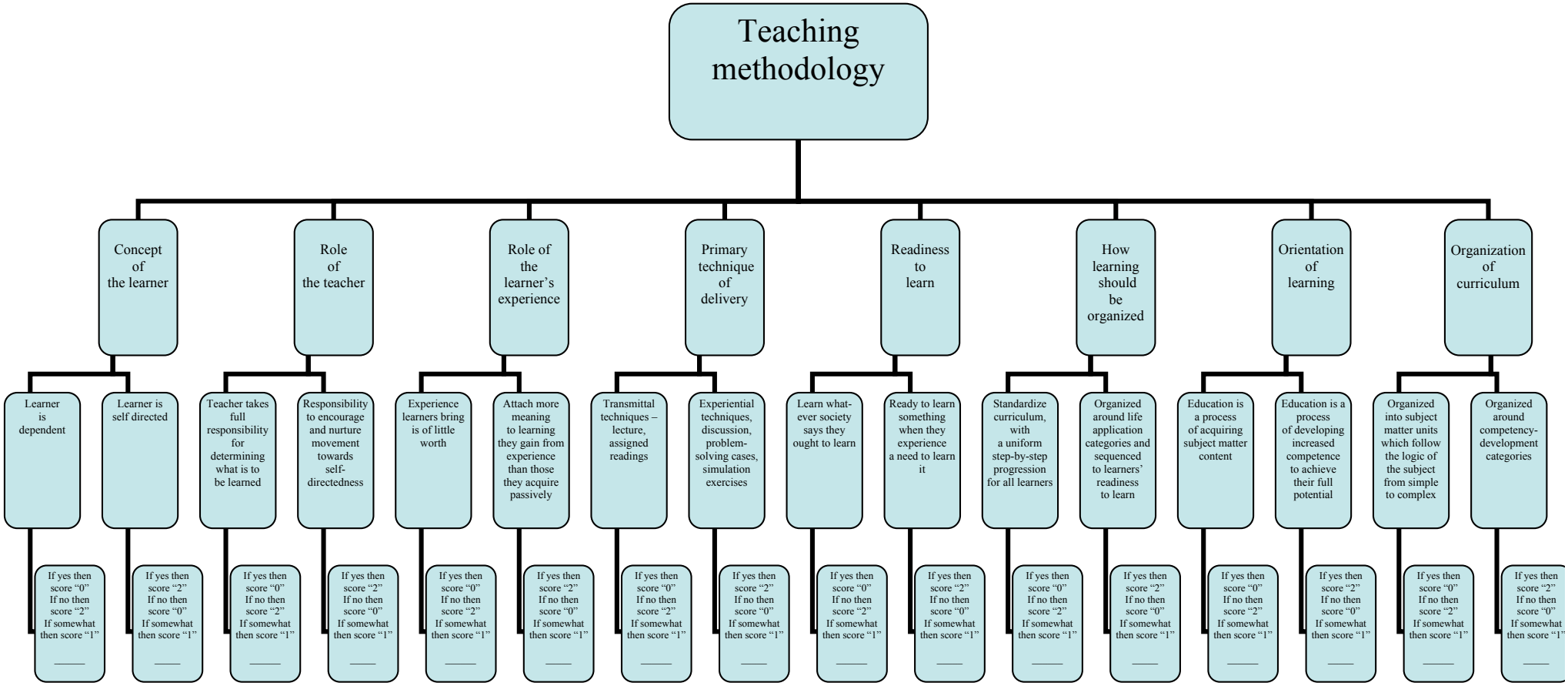
in an exhibit in his book *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (1980, pp. 43-44). Table 1 is an adaptation of that exhibit.

To summarize Table 1, individuals mature as their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed adult. Individuals also accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning. An individual's readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles. Finally, an individual's time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness (Knowles, 1980, pp. 44-45).

The comparison of the assumptions of andragogy and pedagogy provides a foundation for developing the *Teaching Methodology Instrument* (*TMI*) to examine whether a teaching methodology is using more andragogical principles or more pedagogical principles. The *TMI* can provide different levels of orientation. The instrument will help determine whether certain teaching styles are mostly learner-centered or teacher oriented. An instrument assesses the application of andragogical principles to a teaching methodology set forth by Malcolm Knowles. Figure 1 (below) is the *TMI* to test any teaching methodology to determine whether it is more pedagogical or andragogical. The model works in the following way:

1. A particular teaching methodology is chosen, for example, the Socratic method. It is inserted into the first box as the identified methodology to be tested towards adult learning principles.
2. Eight categories are examined as they apply to the method to be tested. The layer referred to as "Concepts of Regard" are the eight characteristics that distinguish pedagogy and andragogy according to Knowles.
3. The researcher would then answer the questions listed below each of the eight concepts. These questions are found in the next layer, the "Questions of Assumptions" level.
4. Below each question is the fourth level labeled as the "Box Score." For each box on the Box Score level the researcher is provided with three potential possibilities to choose from: "Yes" – meaning he or she overwhelming agrees with the statement, "No" – meaning that he or she overwhelming does not agree with the statement, "Somewhat" – meaning that he or she somewhat agrees with the statement because it depends on the situation.
5. The researcher then scores 0, 1, or 2 for each box on the Box Score level as indicated by the corresponding answer for that box. The scores will differ in each box.
6. After scoring each box, the researcher totals the 16 boxes. The sum is divided by 16; the resulting number is the score. The results may range from 0 to 32, with a median of 16. The closer to 32 on the scale, the stronger the presence of andragogy. The closer to 0 indicates stronger pedagogical principles. The researcher subsequently moves from top to bottom, and left to right throughout the model.

**Figure 1. Teaching Methodology Instrument.**



## V. Applying the andragogical model to the Socratic method.

In exploring whether andragogical principles are present, Knowles' assumptions can be examined in three areas: (1) Does law school instruction emphasize the skills of analysis and decision making through a series of job-related cases or problems? (2) Does the law school instruction establish a learning approach rather than a teaching approach by a series of planned structured activities enabling the learner to acquire the appropriate knowledge? (3) Is the law school instruction a practical, job-based approach keeping the learners constantly aware of the value of the training program to them and their work?

In applying the Socratic method to the *TMI* a researcher must provide a sixteen question questionnaire to the desired respondents. After a collection of a statistically significant number of responses the scores could be averaged and the mean score calculated. Once the score is calculated there would be a better understanding of whether the Socratic method is more andragogical or pedagogical. Table 2 provides an example of a questionnaire that may be applied. Simulated answers are created for the purposes of demonstrating how the model works. A simulated answer is italicized.

**Table 2. Sample Questionnaire for the Socratic Method.**

| Questionnaire of the Socratic Method | |
|---|---|
| **Question** | **Answer** |
| 1. In using the Socratic method is the learner dependent? | *a. Yes*<br>b. No<br>c. Somewhat |
| 2. In using the Socratic method is the learner self-directed? | a. Yes<br>b. No<br>*c. Somewhat* |
| 3. Does the teacher take full responsible to determine what is to be learned through the Socratic method? | *a. Yes*<br>b. No<br>c. Somewhat |
| 4. Does the teacher have a responsibility to encourage and nurture moment towards self-directedness through the Socratic method? | a. Yes<br>*b. No*<br>c. Somewhat |
| 5. Is the experience that the learner brings to the learning environment of little worth through the Socratic method? | *a. Yes*<br>b. No<br>c. Somewhat |
| 6. Do learners attach more meaning to learning they gain from experience than those they acquire passively? | a. Yes<br>b. No<br>*c. Somewhat* |
| 7. Does a teacher use transmittal techniques, such as lecture, dialogue, assigned readings, etc. in the usage of the Socratic method? | *a. Yes*<br>b. No<br>c. Somewhat |
| 8. Does a teacher use experiential techniques, such as discussions, problem solving cases, and simulations exercises when using the Socratic method? | a. Yes<br>b. No<br>*c. Somewhat* |
| 9. Do students learn whatever society says they ought to learn? | *a. Yes*<br>b. No<br>c. Somewhat |

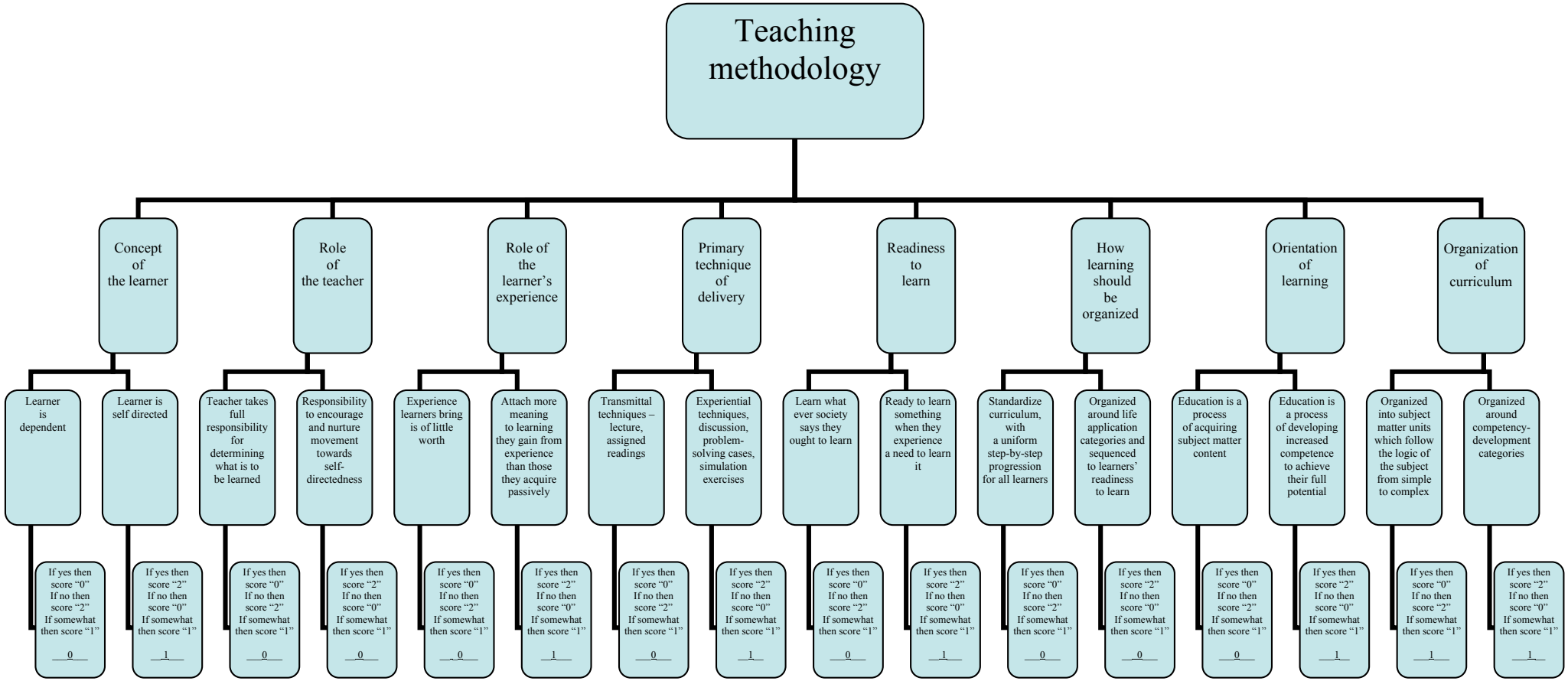
| | |
|---|---|
| 10. Is the student ready to learn something when they experience a need to learn it? | a. Yes<br>b. No<br>*c. Somewhat* |
| 11. Is there a standardized curriculum with a uniform step-by-step progression for all learners through the Socratic method? | *a. Yes*<br>b. No<br>c. Somewhat |
| 12. Is the Socratic method organized around life application categories and sequenced to learner's readiness to learn? | a. Yes<br>*b. No*<br>c. Somewhat |
| 13. Is the primary objective of the learning process of the Socratic method focused on the acquiring subject matter content? | *a. Yes*<br>b. No<br>c. Somewhat |
| 14. Is the primary objective of the learning process of the Socratic method focused on developing increased competence to achieve a student's full potential? | a. Yes<br>b. No<br>*c. Somewhat* |
| 15. Is the curriculum organized into subject matter units which follow the logic of the subject from simple to complex? | a. Yes<br>b. No<br>*c. Somewhat* |
| 16. Is the curriculum organized around competency and the development of categories? | a. Yes<br>b. No<br>*c. Somewhat* |

An example of the results from a simulated questionnaire is displayed in Figure 2. A total score of "7" resulted from the exercise presented. This would indicate that the Socratic method tends to apply more pedagogical principles than adult learning principles. The Socratic method from the score would indicate that it is more teacher-centered than learner-centered. The professor establishes the curriculum, identifies the principles to be learned, decides which questions to ask, and the method by which the students are to be instructed. This is a very pedagogical line of thinking.

The theory of pedagogy indicates that the value of practical experience is more minimized. If a survey was conducted and the results were as indicated in Table 2, conclusions could be drawn that the Socratic method does not provide practical experience. From a pedagogical approach students tend to obtain the didactic concepts of the law, without receiving more of the physical and psychological skills which would be cornerstones to experience. It is important that this instrument be field tested. The sample analysis conducted in this paper was based on the first author's experience with the subject matter. Although it was not intended as a rigorous research test, it does lay the groundwork for future tests and confirmation of the instruments validity. The instrument develops a questionnaire consisting of sixteen questions, and a scoring system. Using a significant volunteer sample, a statistical analysis of the scores would determine if the teaching methodologies used are incorporating andragogical principles or pedagogical principles.

**Figure 2. Teaching Methodology Model: Application to the Socratic Method.**

Total Score: 7



## VI. Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Research.

The *Teaching Methodology Model* is a model to help determine the level of adult learning principles being used by a particular teaching style in a classroom. The model incorporates those principles set forth by Malcolm Knowles of what makes a good adult learning environment. When applied to a particular teaching method, in this case the Socratic method, a clear delineation of whether the teaching style is more pedagogical or andragogical in its approach is made.

Although this instrument has preliminary been tested with a law school methodology, its desired usage would be for a wide array of disciplines. If this instrument truly can predict whether or not a methodology is pedagogic or andragogic, it will allow for instructors to reflect more heavily on their teaching styles. As the literature indicates adults learn differently than children. Incorporating the andragogical assumptions into their teaching methodologies may provide for the improvement for adult education.

When we explored the Socratic method, it was discovered that it tends to focus more on pedagogical techniques. It avoids incorporating practical "experience" into the curriculum. How many other disciplines do this as well? Students learn more of practical experience from on the job performance and conversing with more experienced attorneys than they do from law school. The Chinese proverb holds true that "a single conversation with a wise man is better than ten years of study."

The following are recommendations for further research:

1. The instrument should be tested with the Socratic method as well as other teaching methodologies to improve its ability to discriminate between pedagogical and andragogical teaching methodologies.
2. Although this instrument is intended to help assess how andragogical a particular teaching approach and methodology might be, it cannot assess the appropriateness or effectiveness of using one approach or another. Further research should be conducted to determine which approaches most effectively do prepare law students for the practice of law.

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# Students' perceptions of their connectedness in the community college basic Public Speaking course

**Hollis F. Glaser[1] and Shereen Bingham[2]**

*Abstract: This study explores what classroom behaviors and activities in the basic speech course contribute to student connectedness. The results indicate that student encouragement, humor, honesty, interactive exercises and individual speeches, can help student bonding and motivation, and impacts their overall college experience.*

*Keywords: communication, student relationships, classroom activities, student behavior, instructor behavior.*

## I. Introduction.

The purpose of this study is to understand what classroom behaviors, communication, exercises, and assignments in the basic public-speaking course at an urban community college increase student connectedness. It has been well-documented that students who feel a sense of community in the classroom report greater academic motivation, affinity for school, and enjoyment of class (Battistich, et al., 1995; Battistich et al., 1991; Schaps et al., 1997). Conversely, a lack of social support has been related to difficulty in adjusting to school, a propensity to drop out of college, and negative academic performance (Cutrona et al., 1994; McGrath et al., 2000). Rovai (2002) developed a "Classroom Community Scale," which researchers have subsequently used to parse this construct (Graff, 2003). A number of scholars have explored which classroom behaviors and pedagogical activities create a sense of community in the classroom (Allen (2000), Rovai and Whiting (2005), David and Capraro (2001), Summers and Svinicki (2007). Much of the research on classroom relationships has focused on K-12 (i.e. Doveston and Keenaghan, 2006; Wittse, 2006), internet classrooms (i.e. Rovai, 2002), and residential campuses (Zhao and Kuh, 2004).

Expanding this line of research into the urban community college speech class is important for a number of reasons. First, for the same reason it is useful to study student connectedness in internet courses, the students at community colleges are also often highly disconnected. Although they are in face-to-face classrooms, they live in big cities, come to campus only for class, and it is difficult to establish a campus community. The classroom, therefore, is often the only space where the students have an opportunity to experience a sense of community on campus. Second, because it is a basic course, there is a cross-section of students in the class, so techniques that work in this class have a great chance of working in other classes, those that are similarly heterogeneous and those that are more homogenous. Third, the course encourages active learning by presenting speeches, a pedagogical activity known to facilitate learning communities (Zhao and Kuh, 2004). Finally, because the basic speech course is required at colleges and universities across the country, the lessons from studying it may be applicable nationwide.

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This study is a collaborative project between the authors: Glaser, an associate professor of communication at an east coast community college, and Bingham, a professor of communication at a four-year metropolitan university in the Midwest. Glaser noticed that many of her public-speaking students seem to create very strong bonds during the semester. She perceived that they create stronger relationships than the ones she has seen students develop in her classes at other universities. There may be many reasons she has noticed this—her own biased perceptions, regional or cultural differences in the areas where she has taught, and differences in her teaching across time. The way the students relate to each other colors every moment of the class and Glaser has become increasingly interested in this aspect of the public-speaking course, becoming more conscious of making sure the tone of the class is respectful and the students come to know each other.

However, when trying to find scholarly work on student relationships, Glaser discovered that the great majority of research about classroom communication focuses on instructor-student interaction, i.e. instructor behaviors that influence student learning (Hays, 1970; Myers, 1995; Stuart and Rosenfeld, 1994). This void in the literature also has been noticed by Bingham, who is part of a research group of communication scholars who have studied specific classroom behaviors and student relationships in the basic public speaking course. While the Classroom Community Scale probes students' sense of community, it does not ask about specific student behaviors. The research group developed a self-report instrument, the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI) (Dwyer et al., 2004) (Appendix I), to understand how student connectedness relates to student learning (Prisbell et al, 2009) and communication apprehension (Carlson et al., 2006). The CCCI was developed based on students' individual comments and group discussions in speech communication courses at a four-year university in the Midwest. The questionnaire items were based on commonalities in the students' responses. Studies using the CCCI have found a positive correlation between student connectedness and student learning, and a negative correlation between student connectedness and communication apprehension.

Glaser wanted to understand her community college students' experiences in the classroom and how they perceive their relationships. At the same time, Bingham wanted to know if community college students would find the CCCI to be valid and comprehensive. So we decided to build on the quantitative CCCI research in this current study in two ways: first, we used qualitative methods to more fully understand students' perceptions of their classroom experience and how student behavior and communication helps them develop relationships with one another. A qualitative approach to inquiry is appropriate when the researcher seeks a rich and detailed understanding of human experience from the perspective of the people being studied. The participants are asked to share their perceptions and experiences unencumbered by the researcher's imposition of frameworks or expectations from the literature (Creswell, 2007, p. 40; Polkinghorne, 2005). Second, we asked community college students to complete the CCCI and then to answer some questions about its validity.

Two primary research questions guided this study: "How do urban community college students perceive their relationships in the basic public speaking course?" "Do community college students think the items on the CCCI do an adequate job of capturing their own sense of connectedness in the public-speaking class?" Secondary questions were: "What classroom behaviors do the students believe influence these relationships?" "What classroom activities do they believe influence these relationships?"

## II. Methodology.

In order to answer these questions, we gave 62 students in three of Glaser's public-speaking classes two questionnaires, one quantitative, the Communication Classroom Connectedness Index (CCCI) and one qualitative (see Appendix II). The quantitative questionnaire asks the students to rate the degree to which they feel connected to one another, on a scale from 1-5, 5 being the strongest. The qualitative questionnaire asks eleven open-ended questions about how connected students feel to one another and what behaviors and activities encouraged their relationships. The qualitative portion was administered first so that the students would not be influenced by the activities and behaviors mentioned in the quantitative portion.

Purposive sampling (Polkinghorne, 2005) was used to select three sections of the public speaking course to participate in this study. Glaser teaches five sections of the public speaking course during the academic year, and she chose three sections in particular because the students in them seemed to have a high degree of camaraderie; it appeared to Glaser that they had a good time in class and were creating friendships. One section was enrolled in a special program where they took four block classes together in the fall of 2007, so that the public-speaking class was one of those four classes. Most of these students were traditional first year students, immediately out of high school. The other two sections were evening classes in which the students were a little older and had no other classes together. One section met during the fall semester of 2007 and the other during the spring semester of 2008.

The community college where the data were collected enrolled 18,000 students (63 percent women, 37 percent men) with a median age of 23.8. Its students come from over 100 countries and according to their self-descriptions, 38% are Black, 30 % are Hispanic, 12% Asian, 10% White, and 10% are Other. The basic public-speaking course is required of almost all of the majors in the college and is one of the few courses open to students enrolled in the developmental skills (or remedial) classes. Therefore, the students in the public-speaking class represent a cross-section of the entire student population of the college.

Glaser gave the students the questionnaires the last day of the semester after the final presentations. She explained that the students did not have to complete the questionnaires and stepped out of the room so she would not know who chose not to participate. While not everyone answered every open-ended question, 54 out of 62 students completed the quantitative portion and answered at least some of the qualitative questions. It took the students about 15 minutes to complete. After Glaser calculated and turned in their final semester grades, she labeled the questionnaires according to the students' class section, typed all the answers under each question, then read individual answers to the questions. She then engaged in what Lindlof and Taylor (2002) refer to as "coding and categorization" analysis; she looked for patterns regarding common perceptions of relationships and consensus on the activities and classroom behaviors that influenced those relationships. She read the answers numerous times, labeled each answer according to a more general category, listed the categories, then looked for similarities among them. She synthesized the categories into a few over-arching concepts that included all of the answers. Finally, she interviewed two students during the following semester where she explained the results and asked for their reactions. The students confirmed her findings.

Bingham entered the numerical data from students' responses to the CCCI into an SPSS file and analyzed the data statistically. She calculated frequencies and group means for each class, and used one-way analysis of variance to compare the means among the three classes. She

also read the students' responses to the qualitative portion of the questionnaire and offered thoughts and feedback to Glaser on the interpretation of the data and identification of themes.

## III. Results.

### A. *Students Feel Connected.*

The students' responses to the questions 1, 3, and 10 of the qualitative portion clearly indicated that the students felt connected to each other. When they were asked how many of the students in class they felt connected to, 26 out of 54 responded "all," and the others ranged from "3" to "almost everyone." All of the students answered, "yes" in response to "Do you feel you are friendlier with students in this class than with students in other classes?" And in response to "Have you made friends in this class?" 14 of 15 students in the block section, 15 out of 17 students in the fall evening section, and all of the students in the spring evening section said they had.

When asked if the CCCI did a good job measuring how connected they felt to their classmates, the students all said "yes." It is therefore not surprising that the students' scores on the CCCI reinforced the qualitative portion of the questionnaire, indicating that the students, on average, perceived a high level of connectedness with one another (M = 85.98, *sd* = 7.90). The scores were slightly higher for students in the block section (*M* = (86.19, *sd*=5.38) and the first night section (M = 87.29, *sd* = 5.01) than in the second night section (M = 84.85, *sd* = 11.09), but a one way analysis of variance showed that the scores for the three sections did not significantly differ from each other [$F = 0.377$ (2, 50), $p = 0.69$]. By contrast, previous research using the CCCI reports lower CCCI scores. The average scores per section for students enrolled in 30 sections of a basic public speaking course at a four-year university ranged from 66.40 to 80.41 (overall *M* = 70.97, *sd*=9.91) (Dwyer et al., 2004). These results suggest that the level of connectedness among students in the three sections of public speaking at the community college was unusually high.

### *B. Certain Classroom Activities Increase the Sense of Connectedness.*

The activity that the students most often mentioned as one that increased their sense of connectedness was the speeches they presented in class. The students had to present three major speeches (two informative, one persuasive) and three mini-speeches (two about personal past experiences, and one about their futures). Most simply, the speeches were a way that the students got to know each other. One typical response was: "You get to hear everybody's stories and you get to know everybody better." However, those of us who teach public speaking know that to speak alone in front of others is a powerful, complex, and risky endeavor. One student captured the complexity and depth of this assignment and how it influences the relationships among the students: "People have to get up in front of their peers and recite a speech that can make them very uncomfortable emotionally and physically. Other students respect this and can bond on a deeper level to other individuals based on their emotional and physical needs."

Besides the speeches, any activity that required the students to interact helped them get to know each other and seemed to have deepened their sense of connectedness. Every interactive exercise Glaser assigned was mentioned multiple times as one that helped the students bond. The peer groups, which were formed for every speech round so the students could help each other

with preparation and feedback, were frequently mentioned, as were more general activities such as "working together" and "talking." The block section had the opportunity to go to a museum and a few of the students claimed this was a major bonding activity. The evening section had time for a spontaneous debate one day where four teams argued about the legalization of marijuana. Glaser was a bit surprised that this came up as an activity that students believed increased their sense of connectedness because it was a fairly contentious and lively event. However, a number of students found it to be a very powerful bonding experience.

It is also noteworthy that a handful of students mentioned "feedback" as one of the activities that made them feel closer. All of the students were required to offer written and verbal responses to the presentations, which included both positive and negative comments. Critical feedback can be a very sensitive communication act that can easily alienate the receiver. However, a number of students found that it helped them create stronger relationships. As one student wrote in response to "Do you feel you are friendlier in this class than in other classes? ": "Yes. We can joke and be [ourselves] without being judged, and when you are criticized, it is constructive."

In sum, all of the activities that required the students to interact—the speeches, the working groups, peer feedback, the class discussions and debates—were mentioned as activities that helped them feel a sense of connection with one another. When asked to explain why these activities worked in such a way, the students indicated that the power of these activities was in the opportunities they provided for exhibiting the behaviors the students valued in one another, behaviors that made them feel connected.

*C. Certain Student Behaviors Increase the Sense of Connectedness.*

One kind of behavior that the students frequently mentioned can be labeled "*friendliness*". This includes a variety of actions that are commonly considered to be friendly: being out-going and talkative, smiling, laughing, saying hello. A number of students in response to question #6 ("What behaviors from the students in this class make you feel connected to them?") answered with some form of "friendly behavior". As one student most directly stated, "Everyone is just friendly." A number of the students from the spring evening section appreciated that people come in early to class in order to talk to one another. It is significant that one of the friendly behaviors often mentioned was some type of humor. Many of the students mentioned laughter, joking, and people being funny. One student wrote (in response to #6), "They laugh at my comments." Another wrote, "Many of them have great senses of humor. I love to laugh and make others laugh." And a third wrote, ""Their personality, how they can just be themselves, funny and lovable." Clearly, common acts of friendliness were recognized and valued by the students as those that increased their sense of connectedness.

A second behavior that the students highly valued in one another was what they perceived to be as "*honesty*". In response to question #2 ("What happens in this class that helps people feel connected?"), #5 ("What was it about those activities that helped people feel connected?"), and #6 ("What behaviors from the students in this class make you feel connected to them?"), the students repeatedly wrote about "openness," "honesty," people "being real," "emotional," and sharing personal experiences. One student wrote, "The speech shows a lot what people think and believe. And each one spoke what they had in their heart, and it [made us] appreciate each one." In response to #5 one student wrote, "The mini-speech allows you the freedom to talk about personal experiences that others can connect with…." In response to #6

one student wrote, "Everyone seems incredibly open and accessible." Another wrote, "I like the feeling of sincerity and honesty that I got when everybody gave their speeches." As in other relationships, the opportunity and ability to be honest is a fundamental way to strengthen the connection.

The third kind of behavior that students perceived strengthened their bonds was "*supportive*" behavior. In response to questions #2, #5 and #6, students wrote that others listen, encourage, respect, and help each other. Perhaps significantly, when writing about this kind of behavior, supportiveness was the behavior that elicited the most complete sentences from students. Many of the responses were quite touching and it is worth quoting a number of them to give a deeper sense of the students' experience.

In response to Question 2 (What happens in this class that helps people feel connected?):

- "People learn to help and appreciate each other. "
- "Everybody listens and makes you feel comfortable. Respect, sympathy, friendly people."
- "We are all peers and we all help each other to feel important and worthy of listening to."

In response to Question #3 (Do you feel you are friendlier with students in this class than with students in other classes? Why or why not?):

- "You break down social barriers when a group of people all individually have to do the same trying task in front of their group. People typically respect this and can open to console their fellow classmates which typically turns into a strong friendship bond."
- "I think people are closer in this class because we are all vulnerable, and because of that we treat each other with warmth and respect."

In response to Question 5 (What was it about those activities that helped people feel connected?):

- "The camaraderie you receive when you feel other people good willingly are trying to help you and their group get positive goals accomplished."

In response to Question 6 (What behaviors from the students in this class make you feel connected to them?):

- "Everyone was here for a purpose and that was to learn and we all did it together."

In sum, students perceived that friendly, honest, and supportive interactions help them connect with one another. Specific supportive behavior--listening, encouraging, helping, and being respectful--seems to have been profoundly important for the students' sense of connectedness. Many of them appear to recognize their common feelings of vulnerability in the public-speaking course and respond compassionately and gently toward one another.

*D. Certain Instructor Behaviors Increase the Sense of Connectedness.*

The instructor activities that helped students feel connected to each other broke down into three kinds: structuring activities, the manner of her speech, and the content of her speech. First, the students recognized the import of structuring activities so that they had the chance to interact with each other. Indeed, the vast majority of the responses to Question 7 (Does your instructor engage in behaviors that make you feel connected to the students? If yes, briefly describe those behaviors.") discussed getting into groups, assigning speech topics that let students get to know each other, or structured "activities where we have to share our feelings." As already discussed, interactive student activities gave students opportunities to engage in the behaviors they valued in one another—friendly, honest, and supportive talk—and the students clearly saw the way that Glaser structured the class as her most important contribution.

A second instructor behavior the students attributed to their own sense of connectedness was the relaxed manner in which she spoke to them. One student wrote that class was "laid back and easy-going." Another wrote "She speaks to us on our level." And a third student wrote, "She joined in when appropriate with our collective insane humor."

The least-mentioned instructor behavior was what she said to them. Three students pointed out something about the content of her speech. One student wrote that pointing out similarities among the students was important for their relationships, and two felt that Glaser's sample speeches for each of the assignments helped them connect to each other. (Glaser's sample speeches talked about her trip to China, her dog, a life lesson she learned from a friend, her hopes for the future, and areas of knowledge, such as information about the genographic project, and an analysis of the University's budget.) One important note is that early in the semester, Glaser gave a few lectures about the importance of supportive behavior in the classroom, how listening effects relationships, and some basics of interpersonal communication. Evidently, these lectures were pretty well forgotten by the end of the semester.

In sum, when thinking about what instructor behaviors promoted a sense of connectedness, it appears that the students most valued when their instructor gave them a chance to talk to each other. Secondarily, they valued that she talked to them to in a relaxed manner, pointed out similarities among them, and shared her experiences with them.

*E. Student Connectedness Impacts the College Experience.*

Finally, we wanted to know if students' relationships in the class impacted their wider college experience. As discussed above, a number of studies have claimed that students who feel a sense of community in the classroom are more motivated and enjoy school more (Battistich et al., 1995; Battistich et al., 1991; Schaps et al., 1997). Those who do not have social support have a harder time academically and are more likely to drop out of college (Cutrona et al., 1994; McGrath et al., 2000). We asked two related questions: Question 9 "Has this class made you feel more comfortable at [this community college]? Why or why not? And Question 11: "How does feeling connected to other students in a class affect your learning in the class?"

In response to question 9, 51 of the 54 students answered "yes." The reason most often stated for their increased comfort at the college was that they know more people, made friends, feel there are people they can relate to at the school, and feel like they belong. A number of students from the block section even grew close enough to their classmates to claim that they felt like family.

While the students clearly felt that their friendships made them feel more comfortable at the college, the class also helped some students feel more confident about speaking to strangers. One student said, "This class has made me see that you do not have to be silent." Another wrote, "I don't feel as shy or embarrassed to speak in public and I also feel more relaxed at meeting new friends." "It's public speaking so you learn to open up more," wrote a third student. It seems that some students felt that the process of making friends in the basic speech course helped them make friends in other courses also. Wrote one student, "I feel there are people who I can relate to, just like people in this class." So there may be a certain ripple effect where strong student connections in one class increase the connections throughout the college.

Finally, two students felt that the basic speech course was a generally motivating experience. One wrote the class "makes me confident in my learning ability," and another that, "it gives us the motivation to get on with life." It is unclear whether these attributions are related

directly to the unique aspects of the basic speech course or if they are related to a successful experience in any course, so that feeling motivated might also occur in other courses in which the students did well.

The responses to question 11, however, relate specifically to the students' sense of connectedness in the public speaking course. Fifty-one out of 54 students answered positively to the question, "How does feeling connected to other students in a class affect your learning in the class?" The students perceived that their relationships helped their learning in a number of ways: *socially, motivationally, and cognitively*. In terms of the *social* aspects of the course, quite a few students said the class was easier, more comfortable, and more fun because of their friendships. One answer was typical: "It makes it easier and fun." Having friends also added a supportive element to the class so that they could call on each other for help. According to one student, "I know if I have trouble with anything I didn't understand, I can consult with my classmates." This dimension of comfort and support in the classroom wasn't simply task-oriented so that students had help with the material, but according to one student, also stretched into the emotional dimension: "I feel more comfortable like if I make an effort, no one is going to judge me."

Many students also found their classroom friendships to be *motivating*. Some felt that their friendships made them want to come to class and to do well in it. Wrote one, "It's a drive to want to do the work and attend class. It's that extra push." Other students said it made them want to learn, work harder, and "give that information to them clearly." It seems, then, that classroom friendships helped some students push themselves to get to class and work harder on their assignments.

Interestingly, two students felt that they benefited *cognitively* from their classroom friendships. One student wrote, "Connecting with others makes me think better." Another wrote, that it "improves my ability." While only two students mentioned an effect on their cognitive processes, it is certainly one directly relevant to our responsibilities as educators and deserves some serious exploration in the future.

In sum, students seemed to form strong connections in the basic speech course and highly valued those connections. They attributed interactive class activities (including the speeches) to helping them form those connections, as well as very specific student behavior, including joking, listening, talking honestly, and encouragement. In addition, having strong student connections in the classroom appears to have had some profound and wide effects for the students. They enjoyed the classroom experience more, found others to help them with assignments, were more motivated to attend class and complete their assignments, and consistent with previous research (Prisbell et al., in press), may even have learned better.

## IV. Conclusion.

This research suggests a number of important findings. First, it supports the validity of the CCCI, suggesting that it captures students' sense of connectedness. However, our qualitative findings also suggest ways the CCCI may need to be expanded to make it more comprehensive, for east coast community college students if not for college students in other regions and at other kinds of institutions. The CCCI appears to omit or underemphasize some key kinds of communication behaviors that help students develop friendly relationships and a sense of connection with each other. These include shared humor, openness, honesty, genuineness, vulnerability, helping each other, and compassion.

The CCCI may also be an important complement to Rovai's (2001) Classroom Community Scale (CCS). While the CCS explores a more general sense of community in the classroom, the CCCI focuses on specific behaviors and interpersonal connectedness within the classroom. In other words, the CCCI allows researchers to study student communication patterns that, as a whole, build a larger sense of community. By using both instruments, future research could explore this relationship more directly.

Second, student behavior and communication needs to be studied as much as instructor behavior is. As stated previously, the vast majority of the communication education literature focuses on teacher-student relationships and perceptions, and rarely on student-student relationships. Yet, this study clearly shows that the connections students make with one another have a profound impact on their college experience. Currently, education scholars (Rovai, 2001, Dawson, 2006; Gould et al., 2000) are focusing on this important aspect of classroom interaction; we hope our research encourages more scholars in the communication field and other disciplines to do the same.

Third, this research has clear implications for teachers of all disciplines who are using collaborative and interactive learning techniques in the classroom (Bean, 2001; Barley et al., 2005). As instructors are creating more opportunities for students to work and think critically together, this study focuses instructors on ensuring that the students behave in a supportive, non-judgmental, honest, and friendly manner while in those groups. Inversely, instructors may want to structure their classes in ways that discourage students from behaviors that undermine their sense of being connected. Inconsiderate and harassing "misbehaviors" by students, for example, are associated with diminished student connectedness, as measured by the CCCI (Bingham, Carlson, Dwyer, and Prisbell, 2009).

Fourth, on a more practical and administrative note: students found the course to be an important bonding experience. In support of previous studies (Battistich, et al., 1995; Battistich et al., 1991; Schaps et al., 1997), students reported that the relationships they built in the basic course helped them stay motivated, enjoy the class, and maintain their attendance. Many found the speech presentations to be very powerful experiences that helped them connect to one another. The presentations allowed students to get to know each other, gave them opportunities to support and encourage one another, and the ability to be vulnerable in front of each other. Certainly, the data indicates that any interactive task or exercise helped the students bond. Yet, the presentations, the singular task of each student speaking alone in front of the group, goes a long way in encouraging student connections. Many students reported that the class helped them talk to students in other classes and situations. The course introduced them to fellow students who they related to. This sense of familiarity then gave them a feeling of belonging in the wider college. It may be that the basic speech course is one way to help students build the community they need in order to succeed in college. To the extent that colleges are concerned about student persistence, perhaps this research supports current efforts in encouraging students to take the basic speech course their first semester, in order to make important connections with other students.

Finally, this study suggests the need for more research. We looked at three sections of one course in one institution. Because it is so important for students to have strong relationships with one another, it is also important for us to have a deeper and wider understanding of how students form these relationships in our classrooms. Future research could expand into other kinds of classes, educational institutions, go deeper into the student experience through focus groups and interviews, and probe instructors' attempts to influence student connectedness. This study

contributes to the exploration of student relationships, their significance for learning in the classroom, and the import of those relationships for the students' wider college experience.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1. Connected Classroom Climate Inventory

Students respond to the following statements with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

1. I feel a sense of security in my class.
2. I have common ground with my classmates.
3. I feel a strong bond with my classmates.
4. The students in my class share stories and experiences with one another.
5. The students in my class are friendly with one another.
6. The students in my class respect one another.
7. I feel included in class discussions in my class.
8. The students in my class are courteous with one another.
9. The students in my class praise one another.
10. The students in my class are concerned about one another.
11. The students in my class smile at one another.
12. The students in my class engage in small talk with one another.
13. The students in my class are non-judgmental with one another.
14. The students in my class laugh with one another.
15. The students in my class are supportive of one another.
16. The students in my class show interest in what one another is saying.
17. The students in my class cooperate with one another.
18. The students in my class feel comfortable with one another.

## Appendix 2. Interview Protocol—Student Connectedness

I am studying student relationships and what helps build friendships in the classroom. I am especially interested in the basic public-speaking course. Please answer the following questions as thoroughly as you can.

1. How many of the students in this class do you feel connected to?
2. What happens in this class that helps people feel connected?
3. Do you feel you are friendlier with students in this class than with students in other classes? Why or why not?
4. What classroom activities do you think make people feel connected to each other?
5. What was it about those activities that helped people feel connected?
6. What behaviors from the students in this class make you feel connected to them?
7. Does your instructor engage in behaviors that make you feel connected to the students? (Yes/No/Not sure) If yes, briefly describe those behaviors.
8. Was there a particular incident or incidents that made you feel more connected to the class? If so, please describe it.
9. Has this class made you feel more comfortable at BMCC? Why or why not?
10. Have you made friends in this class?
11. How does feeling connected to other students in a class affect your learning in the class?

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# Teacher as trickster on the learner's journey

**Kenneth W. Davis[1] and Scott R. Weeden[2]**

*Abstract: For tens of thousands of years, teachers have used stories to promote learning. Today's teachers can do the same. In particular, we can employ Joseph Campbell's "monomyth"—with its stages of separation, initiation, and return—as a model for structuring learning experiences. Within the monomyth, one tempting role for teachers is the sage, but we should resist this temptation. Instead we should acknowledge, and benefit from, our role as tricksters. To do so is to accept and illuminate the dual responsibility of the teacher as both supporter and challenger.*

*Keywords: myth, initiation, trickster, metaphor, course design.*

For tens of thousands of years, teachers have used stories to promote learning. We can imagine an early classroom, made up of would-be hunters gathered around a fire, listening to a tale of a successful or unsuccessful hunt. By hearing a story, the apprentice hunters learn what works and what doesn't. Storytelling comes naturally to us. As therapist and teacher Joseph Gold (2002) states in the title of a recent book, we humans are "The Story Species." Today's teachers are drawing on the power of story in a variety of ways. For example, in the health professions the field of "narrative pedagogy" is flourishing. Student doctors, nurses, and other health-care professionals are learning from stories how to see their patients, not as "presenting" conditions but as whole persons, with their own life stories. One especially powerful use of stories in teaching involves Joseph Campbell's "monomyth." We teachers can employ the monomyth—with its stages of separation, initiation, and return—as a model for structuring learning experiences.

However, we must be careful. We must resist the temptation to take on the role of sage, a frequent figure on the monomythic journey. Instead we should acknowledge, and benefit from, our role as tricksters. To do so is to accept and illuminate the dual responsibility of the teacher as both supporter and challenger.

## I. The Monomyth

Joseph Campbell (1949), in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* argues that many traditional stories are variations on a single story. Campbell, adopting a word coined by James Joyce, calls this story "monomyth." Campbell describes the monomyth as having three stages:

- Separation
- Initiation
- Return

He summarizes the monomyth this way: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive

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victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (30). Think of Jack (of Beanstalk fame), Snow White, Dorothy (of Kansas and Oz), Luke Skywalker.

Some critics have held that Campbell's monomyth is too specific, too detailed, to describe a large number of stories. For example, Donald E. Polkinghorne (1988) writes, "Attempts to uncover a single deep plot in all the world's stories are no longer held in esteem in narrative theory. In the end, there is no way to tell where these investigations are right or wrong, because finding similarities among the surface diversity seems to depend on the imaginative function of the person identifying them" (78). Others have found Campbell's account of the monomyth too male-centered, not taking into account differences between the male and female life journeys—the male more outer, the female more inner. But even if we are uneasy with the specifics of Campbell's monomyth as a descriptor of traditional tales, we can still find value in it—in general terms—as a model for structuring learning experiences. We can employ the three stages of the monomyth as a kind of map, guiding us and our students through a rich learning experience by showing us where we are, and what we have to do to get somewhere else.

Educational theorist Jerome Bruner (1986) makes a case for a generalized form of the monomyth:

> Narrative deals with the vicissitudes of human intentions. And since there are myriad intentions and endless ways for them to run into trouble—or so it would seem—there should be endless kinds of stories. But, surprisingly, this seems not to be the case. One view has it that lifelike narratives start with a canonical or "legitimate" steady state, which is breached, resulting in a crisis, which is terminated by a redress, with recurrence of the cycle as an open possibility. (16)

Bruner's "breach" is, of course roughly equivalent to Campbell's "separation"; his "crisis," Campbell's "initiation"; and his "redress," Campbell's "return."

Another educational theorist, Kieran Egan (1989), generalizes, and simplifies, even further. "There is, then," he writes, "at the simplest level a rhythm in stories. They set up an expectation at the beginning, this is elaborated or complicated in the middle, and is satisfied at the end. Stories are tied beginning to end by their satisfying the expectation set up at the beginning" (24). What Egan may be seeing is the influence of our own tacit cultural knowledge of the monomyth. Beginning with the first stories we hear, we learn to expect that the wrongs at the beginning will be redressed at the end.

However specific the description of the monomythic pattern, what is important to us as teachers is that this pattern is *always* about learning. We repeat, *always* about learning. As screenwriter Christopher Vogler (1998) says, "In any good story the hero *grows and changes*, making a journey from one way of being to the next: from despair to hope, weakness to strength, folly to wisdom, love to hate, and back again" (13, emphasis ours). This characteristic of the monomyth makes it an ideal pattern for the design of learning experiences, whether lessons, units, or entire courses. The monomyth is a model of what happens in *all* learning. To learn, we must leave the comfort of the familiar, of what we think we know, and enter an unknown territory, a territory that can be frightening. There we are confronted with challenges, even dangers. If we overcome these challenges, we can return "home" with boons, in the form of new knowledge and skills, and apply them to our lives. To explore the monomyth as a model for teaching and learning, let us look at each of Campbell's three stages in turn.

*A. Separation.*

For Campbell, the monomyth begins with a "call," a message that "destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown" (53). For the hero, "the familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit" (47). Such a realization is necessary for learning to occur. To be truly motivated to learn, students must be somehow dissatisfied with their present knowledge or skills. As English teacher Dan Lindley (1993) writes, successful teaching begins when "a student is puzzled, even upset, by a discrepancy, a painful occurrence in a story, a concept not understood" (126). Maxine Greene (1995) concurs: "The difficult task for the teacher is to devise situations in which the young will move from the habitual and the ordinary and consciously undertake a search" (24).

John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid (2002) express this principle by labeling learning as "demand driven." They write, "People learn in response to need. When people cannot see the need for what's being taught, they ignore it, reject it, or fail to assimilate it in any meaningful way. Conversely, when they have a need, then, if the resources for learning are available, people learn effectively and quickly" (136). One way of expressing the teacher's role at this stage is helping learners move from "unconscious incompetence" to "conscious incompetence" (Haines, 1998, 95), though this may not be the original source for these terms).

One helpful model for understanding the separation stage of the monomyth comes from systems theory. Consider the activity of any natural system, from atom to Earth: The system is in a *status quo*, a steady state in which internal and external forces are balanced. When, from time to time, new external forces disrupt the system, it quickly "corrects" and settles back into the status quo. Sometimes, however, greater external forces—forces ultimately directed toward disorganization and death—threaten the very existence of the system. Facing this stronger threat, the system is unable to "correct" itself, and so, at first, succumbs to those forces. But, in doing so, it uses them as a means toward reorganization. If this reorganization is successful, the system emerges into a new steady state, one more organized and resistant.

And we've just heard Campbell's monomyth.

If the monomyth is a Jungian archetype, a pattern inherited as part of one's collective unconsciousness, it's a small wonder. Humanity is the result (although, it is to be hoped, not the final result) of the precise process the monomyth recounts, over and over since the universe began. If any story is structured into our unconsciousness, it must surely be this one. The evolution story is truly the only story there is.

In these systems terms, learners begin their hero's journey with a comfortably ordered psyche, in a state of relative equilibrium. To learn, that equilibrium must be disturbed, thrown into disorder. In that relatively disordered state, far from equilibrium, a new order, a new equilibrium, can emerge, with a higher degree of complexity. As Michael Roemer (1995) writes, "We think of heroes as eager to act but only a few, like Don Quixote or Emma Bovary, *seek* great deeds or adventure. Most of them do not go looking for trouble but do what they must to return life to equilibrium. Odysseus, like Hansel and Gretel, is simply trying to get home" (6). The ideal setting for learning occurs when the learner himself or herself realizes that old knowledge, old ways of thinking, no longer suffice. One of the joys the two of us find in teaching at a "commuter" campus is the opportunity to work with older, nontraditional students who have come to this realization by themselves, who have—on their own—heard the call to adventure, the call to further learning. But more often, we as teachers have to facilitate this

realization. Jacqeline Grennon Brooks and Martin G. Brooks (1999), in their discussion of "constructivist" teaching, claim that "students' fundamental quest is discrepancy resolution" (28). They elaborate:

> Cognitive growth occurs when an individual revisits and reformulates a current perspective. Therefore, constructivist teachers engage students in experiences that might engender contradictions to students" current hypotheses. . . . Contradictions are constructed by learners. Teachers cannot know what will be perceived as a contradiction by students; this is an internal process. But teachers can and must challenge students" present conceptions, knowing that the challenge only exists if the students *perceive* it as a contradiction. Teachers must, therefore, use information about the students' present conceptions, or points of view, to help them understand which notions students may accept or reject as contradictory" (112-13).

A friend and colleague of ours, the late Tony Sherrill, sometimes wore a jacket and tie to the first meeting of his introductory religious studies course, and asked that his students dress similarly at future class meetings. At the second class meeting, when at least some students had complied with Tony's request, Tony himself would arrive in T-shirt, shorts, and sandals. The subsequent discussion, of why some students had complied and some had not, led to a discussion of authority, and of how we accept or reject it. The stage was thus set for the rest of the course, a course in which students inevitably struggle with issues of religious authority, the decision to follow, or not, the religious paths of their family and friends.

But the call does not have to *emphasize* the inadequacy of present knowledge or skills. It does not, and should not, have to make students feel incapable or unworthy of the proposed adventure. Rather, the call can be a positive experience, growing out of built-in desire for the beyond. Jonathan Culler (2000) points out that "the pleasure of narrative is linked to desire. Plots tell of desire and what befalls it, but the movement of narrative itself is driven by desire in the form of 'epistemophilia', a desire to know: we want to discover secrets, to know the end, to find the truth" (91).

Ultimately, the separation stage requires, of both teacher and learner, trust and imagination—the ability to see beyond the present situation. As Maxine Greene (1995) writes, "To learn and to teach, one must have an awareness of leaving something behind while reaching toward something new, and this kind of awareness must be linked to imagination" (20).

*B. Initiation.*

The second stage of the monomyth is the most difficult, for student and teacher. Leaving the safe and familiar can trigger fear and mourning. As Stephen G. Haines (1998) writes, "People experiencing change typically feel a deep sense of loss. They are heading toward new territory, with old, familiar ways—always so comfortable, and often valued—falling behind them" (175). Haines elaborates:

> When we go through change, whether personal or professional, we don't move on a straight line of productivity from *a* to *b*. Our thoughts, feelings, and experiences fluctuate between highs and lows; we feel as if we are on a rollercoaster. (175)

As much as anyone is the past century, Gandhi gave up everything safe and familiar in his quest for justice. He is widely reported to have said, providing us yet another instance of Campbell's monomyth, "Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph: a beginning, a struggle and a victory." One of the most important actions

a teacher can take at this stage is simply *naming* it, defining the stage as an essential step in learning. Haines (1998) continues:

> Often, just knowing about the Rollercoaster of Change helps people who are undergoing change. They see it is only natural to experience difficulties at such times. The key is 'hanging in there,' in developing persistence." (174)

One of us—Ken—teaches an advanced copyediting course that asks students, usually for the first time in their college careers, to follow an exacting set of mechanical rules, as preparation for jobs in publishing. For many students, the moment of truth comes about a third of the way into the course, when the first exam is returned and some students learn that they have received their first-ever D or F. At this point, Ken explicitly invokes the monomyth, telling these students that they may have been jerked out of their comfort zones, that they are in unfamiliar territory, with dragons to slay, but that they have been given what they need to conquer these threatening forces and return to their familiar lives with new, and valuable, skills.

In some courses the teacher also needs to assure students that mistakes are an important part of the initiation stage. Scott takes students through this kind of process in his first-year composition classes, requiring students to develop a drafting and revising process, submit their papers for initial feedback from both peers and the instructor, and make productive decisions about their writing based on instruction and the feedback they are receiving. Inevitably, most students find the process of dealing with error unsettling because they have learned to see error as an indicator of the degree to which they have strayed from being right.

But as many theorists and researchers point out, mistakes are often signs that risks are being taken. Haines quotes management theorist Rosabeth Moss Kanter, in her book *Men and Women in the Corporation*: "A basic truth of management—if not of life—is that nearly everything looks like a failure in the middle" (Haines [1998], 175).

Brooks and Brooks (1999), as well, emphasize the necessity of error:

> On most tests and homework assignments, students aren't asked to reveal and elaborate on their points of view. They are asked instead to be "right." Being "right" often diverts energy away from the generation of new views. We must remember that the Ptolemaic view of the solar system was a conceptual stop on a path that led to the Copernican views presently held by most astronomers. We think today that Ptolemy was not "right," but his point of view certainly counted. (68)

In this context, Brooks and Brooks point out that a key word for the hero's journey is *errant*—as in "knight errant"—a word closely related to the word *error*. By making and correcting errors, the learner moves from "conscious incompetence" to "conscious competence."

*C. Return.*

A friend and colleague from the Boston area has given us a piece of urban folklore for the return stage of the monomyth. We report it here merely as a folklorists, with no wish to slander the good people of Lynn, Massachusetts:

> Lynn, Lynn, city of sin,
> You never come out the way you went in.

In traditional stories, heroes are changed, for the better, by their adventures; otherwise they're not heroes. Campbell (1949) writes, "the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (28). The learner, as well, needs to move from the

initiation stage to a new integration, a new comfort, a new equilibrium. Dan Lindley (1993) writes that at this stage,

> the student *owns* the new idea. At that moment it ceases to be new. In fact, if the new idea is inherently true to the student's nature, true to human nature in general, then the newness will disappear insensibly into familiarity. At this point the student may very well say, with a certain wonderment: "I knew that. I knew that, all along." (126-27)

Bobbi DePorter, Mark Reardon, and Sarah Singer-Nourie (1999) use the concept "Theirs to Ours, Ours to Theirs" in describing the necessary cycle for teaching and learning. They begin by asserting that the teachers must begin the cycle with their own the separation stage, by entering the learners' world:

> Theirs to Ours, Ours to Theirs reminds us of the importance of entering the students' world first. In order for you to earn the right to teach, you must first build authentic bridges into your students' lives.

At the initiation stage, DePorter *et al* are a bit didactic for our tastes: "Once this link has been established," they continue, "then you can bring them into your world, and give them your understanding of the content." But we agree fully with their description of the return stage: "With this expanded understanding and greater mastery, the students can take what they've learned into their world and apply it to new situations" (6-7). At this return stage, the learner moves from "conscious competence" to "unconsciousness competence," as equilibrium is restored. But that equilibrium is, of course, never final. The hero's journey must be undertaken again and again.

Though Campbell represents the monomyth as a circle, the monomythic hero is inevitably changed by his or her journey. Therefore we might represent that change by having Campbell's circle gradually rise into a third dimension, like a thread of DNA. The hero returns to the place he or she left from, but "higher." indeed our life can be represented as a helix, as a climb up a circular staircase. As Alida Gersie and Nancy King (1990) write, using epic terms themselves:

> Every return is born of hope and expectation. Repetition offers us a second chance, a new future. Through repetition we enhance our experience, knowledge and skills. We demonstrate our mastery and control, our ability to make the unpredictable predictable. Thus we extend the past and defeat the transitory quality of time. (262)

## II. The Teacher's Role.

Within the monomyth, one tempting role for teachers is the sage. Many embodiments of the monomyth include in their casts a wise elder woman or man, guiding and protecting the hero along the journey. The temptation for a teacher to play a sage's role is a strong one: many of us have been inspired to enter our profession by a sage, in literature or film, or in real life. Who wouldn't want to be a Mr. Chips, an Anne Sullivan, a Mr. Holland, a Barbara Jordan? But there's great danger, to one's students or oneself, in consciously taking on that role. To attempt to be a sage can lead a teacher into smugness and arrogance, trying to rely on unearned power. Allan Combs and Mark Holland (2001) write of the archetype of

> …the Wise Old Man, the embodiment of deep and ancient wisdom personified in literary and film characters such as Merlin the magician, Gandalf the Gray, and Obi-Wan Kenobi of *Star Wars*. Each wields magic powers that derive from his mastery of ancient, all-but-lost knowledge. Other examples of less mysterious and more beneficent wise old men,

> such as the wise men from the East, touch upon another archetype, that of the God-Man, or manna man to use Jung's term. This is the ideal of a human embodiment of the essence of the divine. Projecting this image onto someone else is to give that person great emotional power over yourself. Needless to say, this can be very dangerous unless that person is a remarkably worthy individual. To identify personally with this archetype is a major obstacle to inner growth, for it virtually guarantees an absence of humility. It is fine for others to refer to Mohandas Gandhi as Mahatma, "the great soul," but beware of those who confer such titles upon themselves. (70)

However tempting the role of sage is, teachers should resist the temptation. But the monomyth includes another role they can play: the role of trickster. To consciously adopt this role is to accept and illuminate the dual responsibility of the teacher as both supporter and challenger.

The difference between sage and trickster is illustrated by *The Wizard of Oz*. In the film, the wizard himself is first imagined by the hero, Dorothy, and her three friends as the wise sage, the magus who can solve all their problems, remedy all their deficiencies, if they can only get to the Emerald City. But in fact, their expectations are met only when the wizard abdicates his magus role and plays a trickster role, setting tasks or obstacles for the four. By overcoming these obstacles, Dorothy and her friends find within themselves what they desire: a heart, a brain, courage, and something all human beings may unconsciously desire: the means of going home.

The trickster is the figure, seen in myths and legends across the world, who acts as fool, but who also initiates wisdom and insight, if not for other characters in a story, then for the story's listeners or readers. In some stories, the hero himself can be a trickster. For example, the wandering Odysseus is a trickster figure, engineering the Trojan Horse and fooling the Cyclops, among other tricks. So also is Prometheus, who steals fire from the gods and brings it to the earth.

In his extensive study of the trickster, Lewis Hyde (1998) notes that in myths and legends, tricksters can be thieves who bring boons to humankind. However, and more importantly, tricksters also help to create culture. Two examples illustrate.

Ridie Wilson Ghezzi (1998) reminds us that among the Ojibwa of the upper Midwest and southern Ontario, the trickster Nanabush was said to have created the present world and taught people the cultural arts. And, as Julie Cruikshank and Angela Sidney (1998) comment, for the peoples of the Yukon, the trickster "Crow creates the world, brings, light and fire and fresh water. He creates human beings and teaches them the principles of culture" (140). Thus, tricksters can be said to promote culture and to see to it that it is carried on.

One way they do so, Hyde (1998) tells us, is by both creating and crossing boundaries and bringing previously hidden distinctions into view. Hyde writes:

> We constantly distinguish—right and wrong, sacred and profane, clean and dirty, male and female, young and old, living and dead—and in every case trickster will cross the line and confuse the distinction. Trickster is the mythic embodiment of ambiguity and ambivalence, doubleness and duplicity, contradiction and paradox. (7)

And Nancy Hathaway (2001) notes:

> On the one hand, tricksters are slippery, selfish, and occasionally evil. They lie, cheat, do stupid things, and cause trouble for one and all. On the other hand, they perform the essential task of bringing culture to humanity. They show us how to hunt, cook, and make musical instruments, they force us to work, and, like the African-American trickster Br'er Rabbit, they teach us to tell stories. (42-43)

It is in this role as initiator of culture that tricksters and teachers can be said to have similar roles. But the similarity can go even further. Tricksters are not only the creators of culture and its distinctive boundaries; they are also disrupters of culture. Julie Cruikshank and Angela Sidney (1998), for instance, tell us that not only does Crow bring culture to the Yukon peoples, but he also marries Fish Mother so that he can "eat without doing any work, and then he treats her with disrespect" (140). In other words, rather than taking part in the important activities that sustain people, Crow refuses to accept his part of the necessary work, and in the process, he insults an important figure. For their part, not only do the Ojibwa recognize the important contribution Nanabush has made to the world, they also recognize that he is "a fool, a witch, a manipulator, and an example of behavior to avoid" (Ghezzi, 1998, 444-45).

However, this boundary-crossing role also proves beneficial, for as Hyde (1998) remarks, the boundary crosser or even destroyer brings with it benefits. Tricksters, he asserts, help to cut the ties that bind us in social and spiritual life, leading to what anthropologist George Foster and even Plato refer to as a lucky find. A lucky find, Hyde explains, reveals a larger view and helps us to realize that our conceptions of things are in our mind rather than out there. This process of cutting ties is important, Hyde adds, because cultures have webs of signification built around opposites that members can take as both natural and immutable. Tricksters help members of a culture disturb these webs, revealing the fallibility of the immutable ideas.

One example of the trickster as boundary-crosser is the First Gravedigger in *Hamlet*. He works literally on the boundary between life and death, between above-ground and underground, and (as he asserts) between kings and commoners. His jokes, like those of a court jester, speak truth to power and provide Hamlet with a new perspective on his way home from his sea voyage. It is significant that the skull Hamlet discovers (and which unmistakably identifies him in a picture) is that of the late jester in the Danish court. Think about that: when Hamlet's father occupied the throne, he employed a jester to mock him, and to tell him the truth when others would not. With his passing, the court of Denmark has no such professional fool. Hamlet's usurping uncle has no one to challenge him, no one to tell him the truth about himself. The self-deception that pervades Claudius's court ultimately leads to its destruction.

Note here the echo with Brooks and Brooks (1999): like good teachers, tricksters point out what is contradictory, and in this way they lead us to think about and even talk about what we assume to be true or known. When we quit talking about what we understand, and accept things as they are, we also quit thinking and live by convention. As Hyde (1998) reminds us, things become blocked and go stale when we accept convention without questioning it, accept what we have been told without scrutinizing it, or take truth to be a given. When our expectations are crossed, we often ask, "Really?" or we exclaim, "No, that can't be true." But each response is the opening for a discussion about what we know and what we find to be true.

Teachers know that in the classroom, discussion is an important source of learning, for discussion leads students to test both their ideas and their learning. Teachers who test their students' ideas know at heart that they must do so to keep language active and evolving, for as Hyde (1998) remarks when thinking about the trickster, "language goes dead [when] cultural practice has hedged it in, and some shameless double-dealer is needed to get outside the rules and set tongues wagging . . ." (76). The trickster, says Hyde, creates "lively talk where there has been silence, or were speech has been prohibited. Trickster talks freshly where language has been blocked, gone dead, or lost its charm" (76).

Humor can be one effective catalyst to get discussion going. Allan Chinen (1993) provides an example of this point when he recounts that among the Hopi, tricksters work to keep

people from taking life too seriously. "They usually appear," he comments, "by suddenly jumping down from high buildings, and then parody tribal priests and officials"; they also "poke fun at marriage and funerals and make light of love and death to prevent people from taking religious dogmas—or life itself—too seriously" (72). Echoing Chinen in this regard, Paul Radin (1972) tells us that while tricksters dupe others around them, they can also be duped. Thus, reactions to a trickster can be complex, marked by laughter on the one hand and awe on the other.

Here then is the significance of Tony Sherrill's classroom move. When he told students he expected a certain prescribed dress, he counted on their unquestioning acceptance of his authority. When he arrived in clothing that contradicted his own authoritative proclamation, a conversation easily began about what it means to accept without questioning, setting up later critical exchanges in his classroom. In addition, his "tricky" behavior reminded them that the voice of authority is situated rather than immutable, conferred as much as it is imposed, and in learning the lesson, they found themselves in the company of a teacher who represented culture and its boundaries, but who also disrupted accepted cultural training.

For many, thinking of teachers as tricksters may seem unnatural. What happens in the classroom is a serious matter, for the development of our students is at stake. Some teachers may have trouble imagining that they themselves could stoop to duping their students or doing anything except to complete the serious business of training the next generation. For these teachers, it is important to consider that whether we acknowledge it or not, the classroom is a place where life adventures can, and do, both begin and continue. In the television series *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth,* interviewer Bill Moyers asks Campbell why there are so many stories about heroes in the cultures of the world. Campbell (1988) responds that the hero's adventure is a fundamental part of being human. Any birth, and later any initiation, that helps to take us from one stage of life to another has the potential to affect us like a hero's journey. As he remarks,

> We are in childhood in a condition of dependency under someone's protection and supervision for some fourteen to twenty-one years—and if you're going on for your Ph.D., this may continue to perhaps thirty-five. You are in no way a self-responsible, free agent, but an obedient dependent, expecting and receiving punishments and rewards. To evolve out of this position of psychological immaturity to the course of self-responsibility and assurance requires a death and resurrection. That's the basic motif of the universal hero's journey—leaving one condition and finding the source of life to bring you forth into a richer or mature condition. (124)

In your reading of this article, you yourself are undergoing a hero's journey. You began on familiar ground, with a discussion of storytelling. You've entered what may be unfamiliar territory, with our discussion of the monomyth in general and the trickster in particular. We're about to help you come home to your classroom, bringing what we hope is a boon.

Every classroom holds the potential to begin a new adventure for the student, or to enhance the one already undertaken. By acting as a trickster, the teacher not only calls the student further upon the journey, but also does so in a way that would appear to reinforce convention. However, if the teacher is acting with insight, with wisdom—that is, craftily—then the teacher also calls convention into question in order to promote students' growth. It seems to us that the best teachers are those who acknowledge their role as people who will challenge their students to move beyond what the students know and help facilitate their hero's journey through

the classroom. Humor often accompanies these teachers, even if they are not the natural comics that we know among our friends and relatives.

Can playing the trickster have negative consequences? Yes, if the function of trickster-as-challenger comes to dominate over the function of trickster-as-supporter. If students perceive the teacher solely as trick-player, they may well just give up in frustration, believing that the educational deck will always be stacked against them. Trickster teachers have to remember that as Carl Jung (1969) argues, trickster figures can have a therapeutic effect, reminding people of the progress they have made as they gain insight about themselves and the world they live in. Jung even goes so far to say that in trickster stories the transforming presence of the savior is suggested, for the savior "brings liberation from the imprisonment in αγνοια, unconsciousness, and is therefore a bringer of light as well as healing" (272). Hyde (1998) builds upon the understanding of tricksters as transformers with his comment that tricksters can be thought of as "the spirit of the doorway leading out" to new insight (6). Thus, for scholars like these, tricksters help to transform what is thought meaningless into what is meaningful, and often in ways that echo what we expect of saints. We sometimes think of our own best teachers in this way, as figure who led us to insights we didn't think possible, even when we thought of them as fools or even unknowledgeable. By playing this dual role—the fool to laugh at but the bringer of wisdom and boons—teachers can use the trickster role to help students reach new levels of understanding,

Finally, we want to claim that teachers do not really have the choice whether to be tricksters or not. It is hard to avoid being a trickster in the students' eyes: we are boon givers to them, but we ask them to earn the boons in ways they may find frustrating. Thus, as they begin the journeys prompted by what they experience in our classes, our students may find us fools, first for challenging orthodoxy, and second for presenting new ideas so preposterous that they cannot possibly be right. As they descend into this realm of uncertainty, they may question whether we can truly be trusted. This, we think, is at the heart of the emotional response to teaching that challenges. By acknowledging our inevitable trickster role, we (1) accept that we cause frustration, we (2) take advantage of that frustration, and we (3) gain the awareness that we can accomplish what tricksters do in stories: changing the world, making it a better place for humankind. We bring about that change by recognizing that students' time in our classes as a journey from what is familiar to what is unfamiliar. Like the heroes of myths, our students feel separation from what they know, an initiation into a new world of expertise, and—with our intentions, skills, and (yes) luck—a return with boons for themselves and even their worlds.

John G. Parks (1996), in his article "The Teacher as Bag Lady," discusses the trickster as one of three metaphors for the teacher. He writes:

> The college years can be thought of as liminal space and time, to use Victor Turner's concept. It is a space and time between or at the margins or boundaries of normal historical time. It is the opportunity to explore; experiment; test ideas, identities, and beliefs. Liminality offers freedom but also risks, obstacles, and tests, possibly involving pain and suffering. The teacher as Trickster can be a guide during this experience. Such a teacher is open to improvising, to risking disorder, to threatening boundaries. (135)

As we have seen, the role of wise sage is not one should consciously take on. We think instead that we can be like the trickster Coyote, who, in the words of Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz (1998), "teaches humans how to live" (xiv).

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# A typology of relational turning point events in college teacher-student relationships

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*Abstract: The purpose of this brief report was to develop a typology of relational turning point events between college teachers and students. Participants were 640 undergraduates who were asked whether they could recall a turning point with a teacher, and if so, to report the turning point event in detail. Analysis of the data yielded 6 large categories of turning point events, including* instrumental *(discussion of grade; discussion of course assignment, course content, course more generally; discussion of college, major, independent study, and/or internships; discussion of course policy/rule),* personal *(discussion of coursework and personal information; discussion of common interest; compliment; invitation; name used),* rhetorical *(lecture topic or claim; teaching style),* ridicule/discipline, locational, *and* other person. *As the first of a series of studies on relational turning point events between teachers and students, the current study presents new insight into the literature on relational turning points and the larger body of literature on teacher-effectiveness. The current study also offers teachers an understanding of how to establish and build meaningful relationships with students.*

*Keywords: teacher-student relationship, relational turning point events, undergraduate students*

## I. Introduction and Literature Review.

Research spanning the field of teacher effectiveness has contributed a wealth of knowledge about the significance of instructor behavior (Frymier, 1994; Frymier and Wanzer, 2006), student motivation (Christophel, 1990; Docan, 2006), classroom climate (Dwyer, Bingham, Carlson, Prisbell, Cruz, and Fus, 2004), and teaching methods (Chesebro, 2003; Docan-Morgan, 2007; Wulff and Wulff, 2004) on outcomes such as student learning and motivation. One key element that cuts across each of these areas, albeit rarely recognized explicitly, is that of the *relationship* between teacher and student. Teven (2001) has argued that "in order to maximize learning, it is essential for teachers to develop a good relationship with their students, because the rapport established between teachers and students, in part, determines the interest and performance level of students" (Teven, 2001, p. 159).

The professor-student relationship has been conceptualized along a continuum of relational development (DeVito, 1986), which asserts that: (1) teaching can be described as a relational process from initial contact, intimacy or closeness, and dissolution; (2) teacher-student interaction that assists teaching and learning depends in part on the development of an interpersonal relationship; (3) the development of a relationship between student and teacher will

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lead to greater satisfaction and more effective learning; and (4) and a failure in teaching can be attributed to the ineffectiveness of the relational development process. DeVito illustrates that a good teacher-student relationship is not the only goal of teaching; "rather, the development of the interpersonal relationship is viewed as the means by which more effective, efficient, and satisfying teaching and learning may take place" (p. 53).

Similar to DeVito (1986), Dobransky and Frymier (2004) also conceptualize the teacher-student dynamic as an interpersonal relationship; however, in their analysis, the teacher-student relationship is marked by control, trust, and intimacy as conceived by Millar and Rogers (1976). Millar and Rogers posit that the ways control is shared, the level of intimacy, and the amount of trust help define the relationship. In their study, Dobransky and Frymier found that "students who perceived their teachers as exhibiting higher levels of shared control, trust, and intimacy reported greater learning" (p. 211). Not only do relationships exist between teachers and students, but they develop through distinct stages (DeVito, 1986), involve shared control, trust, and intimacy (Dobransky and Frymier, 2004), include relational elements such as control and affection (Lowman, 1984, 1994), entail relational communication behaviors (Graham, West, and Schaller, 1992), and are goal-based like other types of relationships (Frymier and Houser, 2000).

One of the most significant factors identified in relationships is that of *relational turning points*. A relational turning point is "any event or occurrence that is associated with change in a relationship" (Baxter and Bullis, 1986, p. 470). Turning points affect outcomes such as closeness and relational satisfaction (e.g., Golish, 2000; Surra, 1987), are deemed important by those involved (Baxter and Bullis, 1986), and often have a powerful effect on relational development (Masheter and Harris, 1986). Only a few studies have examined relational turning points in the academic arena. For example, Bullis and Bach (1989a, 1989b) examined turning points in the graduate student-professor relationship and discovered nine types of turning points: academic recognition, perceived similarity, mutual confirmation, advising, personal bonding, relational clashes, relational evolution, relational decline, and miscellaneous.

To date, only one published study has analyzed turning points in faculty-undergraduate student relationships. O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas (1992) asked 52 college seniors to "recall turning points pertinent to an out-of-the-ordinary (either very positive or very negative) and recent relationship with an instructor" within the classroom environment (p. 282). The results indicate two macro-categories of turning points divided into six sub-categories. The first category was labeled perception of instructional communication competence and character (including subcategories perceived competence and character) and the second was labeled perception of instructor's management style (including learning climate, course administration style, rhetorical sensitivity, and feedback). Although in many ways a useful investigation, O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas's sample consisted of only 52 students, all of whom were seniors, and only classroom interaction was examined, whereas out-of-classroom encounters may have contributed to relational turning points. O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas's study does, however, call for further investigation into the relational turning points experienced by students and teachers. In their call, O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas remark that "ultimately, the undertaking of such research can only add further to our understanding the 'how,' 'why,' and 'so what' of student-faculty relational dynamics" (p. 290).

The following study is the first of a series of studies aimed at unraveling the communication events that change the teacher-student relationship. The goal of the current study is to develop a typology of relational turning point events as perceived by students. The following research question was asked:

> What specific types of events do students report as relational turning points in teacher-student relationships?

## II. Method.

### *A. Participants.*

The sample for this study consisted of 640 students at a large northwestern university recruited from communication courses meeting general-education university requirements and enroll students from all undergraduate majors. Students were asked to participate in a study involving teacher-student interaction and accessed a questionnaire on the Internet, which allowed students ample time to decide whether to participate in the study, ask the researcher questions, and ensure confidentiality. The questionnaire took approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. Participants were offered extra credit and their participation was voluntary. Students ($n$ = 17) who did not want to take part in the study or who were enrolled in multiple classes that were solicited for participation were given the option of completing an alternative extra-credit assignment. Of those who did participate, six reported on a turning point with a K-12 teacher, thus their cases were deleted from the data set. Participants who were able to recall a turning point ($n$ = 394, 62%) subsequently completed open-ended questions about the turning point. The majority of participants *able to recall* an event ($n$ = 280) were female. Their ages ranged from 18 to 49 ($M$ = 20.49, $SD$ = 2.57). Two hundred fifty four reported as being White, 84 as Asian, 20 as Hispanic or Latino, 14 as mixed race, 9 as African American, 8 as native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2 as American Indian or Alaska Natives, 2 as Middle Eastern, and 1 did not report his or her race/ethnicity. Four people did not report their academic status; 42 said they were in their first year, 137 were sophomores, 130 were juniors, 79 were seniors, and 2 were graduate students.

### *B. Procedure and Data Analysis.*

Research demonstrates that the recall of specific events is less subject to distortion than summary judgments of events occurring frequently (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Schwartz, 1999); therefore, this study utilized the critical incident technique (CIT) (Flanagan, 1954). The CIT,

> involves asking a number of respondents to identify events or experiences that were 'critical' for some purpose. These incidents are then pooled together for analysis, and generalizations about the event or activity are drawn from the commonalities of the incidents. (Kain, 2004, p. 71)

The CIT is appropriate for analyzing relational turning points as it allows participants to provide accounts of their firsthand experiences. Given that relational turning points are experienced by relationship partners themselves (e.g., Baxter and Bullis, 1986; Johnson et al., 2003), an analysis of turning points requires that data capture their experiences. Kain (2004) remarks that the "appeal of the critical incident technique of research lies largely in this systematic approach to inquiry—into what significance others place on given events" (p. 72). Specifically, the CIT asks respondents to tell a story and explain why it is significant or important for a given context (Kain, 2004). By focusing on a specific event, the contextual and case-specific nature of the phenomena under investigation is captured. The questionnaire defined *relational turning point* and asked students to report the turning point in detail.

The current study utilized Flanagan (1954), Woolsey (1986), and Kain's (2004) approach for analyzing data. The CIT, according to Woolsey (1986), involves "an analysis of thematic content, arrived at by inductive reasoning" with the objective of providing "a detailed, comprehensive and valid description of the activity studied" (p. 248). To begin, I selected a small sample of incidents and sorted them into piles and tentative categories. Using the constant comparative approach, I compared examples for similarities and differences (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). After establishing these tentative categories, I developed definitions for each category, and added additional incidents to each category. Throughout this process, I added, redefined, combined, and revised categories until the categories did not need further modification. During the analysis process, I subdivided the larger categories into smaller groups and placed together the incidents that described very nearly the same type of behavior. I then re-examined the definitions for all the categories and major headings in terms of the actual incidents classified under each category and subcategory.

## III. Results.

Analysis of the data yielded 6 larger categories of turning point events, some of which were subsequently divided into more specific sub-categories. The six larger categories of relational turning point events were labeled as *instrumental*, *personal*, *rhetorical*, *ridicule/ discipline*, *locational*, and *other person*. Each of these categories, as well as their subcategories, are explicated below. The Appendix summarizes the types and frequency of turning point events reported.

### *A. Instrumental*.

*Instrumental* relational turning points ($n$ = 170, 43.1%) consisted of events based largely on reports of the teacher helping or assisting a student with class or college-related issues or concerns. Four subcategories emerged from the data, including *discussion of grade*; *discussion of course assignment, course content, course more generally*; *discussion of college, major, independent study, and/or internships*; and *discussion of course policy/rule*.

*Discussion of grade.* Turning point events that were reported to occur when the student and teacher discussed a student's grade on an exam, assignment, or a final course grade were categorized as *discussion of grade*. Other applicable turning points included in this category consisted of a teacher grading a student's work in his or her presence and discussing it, discussing consequences of a grade, and how to make up a bad grade ($n$ = 21, 5.3%). For example, one student wrote the following:

> I went to my professor to ask about a question I got wrong on a test to see if I could possibly get some points back. I showed him the question and explained why I think I should get it right in clear detail. He took very little time to hear what I had to say and did not give me any points or an explanation of why not.

As can be seen, the focus was on talking about the grade.

Another instrumental, grade-related turning point reported by a student entailed the following:

> I scheduled a meeting to discuss a possible error in exam scores. I knocked on the professor's door to find that there was a miscommunication with the meeting time. I had come earlier than expected, but was welcomed in anyway. We looked over the scores to find that I was actually given a higher score when I had thought I was graded lower. The professor gave me the higher grade and assured me that the low test grade would not affect my overall grade and that I had nothing to worry about.

Again, the primary focus of the event described was the grade discussion, be it a positive or negative experience from the students' perspective.

*Discussion of course assignment, course content, course more generally.* Turning point events that occurred when a student and teacher discussed an assignment (e.g., paper, upcoming or previous exam), course concept or topic, a student's progress or standing in course, or the course more generally comprised the current category ($n$ = 111, 28.2%). For example, one student's discussion with her/his teacher about a class presentation served as a turning point:

> In my class, we have to write a marketing plan that has to be 15 pages long, and we have to give a presentation by the end of the quarter. My team members and I were not sure how the presentation should be since the teacher did not give specific instructions. I decided to ask my instructor after the class is over.

Another student responded:

> My TA explained to me for two hours the entire overview of Political Science … International Relations and didn't laugh no matter how obvious the answer was to him. What I realized was that he actually cared about my learning and that this wasn't such a cold university.

*Discussion of college, major, independent study, and/or internships.* This subcategory comprised turning points that occurred when the main topic that a teacher and student discussed was college, a specific major or majors, what classes to take, independent study possibilities, job opportunities, job offers, future goals, studying abroad, and/or internship possibilities, and letters of recommendation ($n$ = 26, 6.6%). Some students reported a turning point occurring when they approached their teacher for career and graduate school advice:

> I went to her office to speak with her about my decision of where to go to school. She was a Communication teacher. She came from a smaller, intimate college for her undergraduate work. I wanted her opinion.

In another response, a student's instrumental request focused on a school-related opportunity:

> There were many other people in the cafe other then myself and my professor. The event was when I asked him to write a recommendation for me. I am planning on studying abroad this summer and I needed a letter of recommendation from him. This meeting was when I was able to give him more information about myself.

*Discussion of course policy/rule.* Turning point events that occurred when a student and teacher discussed a course policy or rule (e.g., turning in an assignment late, extending a deadline, time to complete a test) or a teacher allowing students to have extra time on an assignment or test were categorized as *discussion of course policy/rule* (*n* = 12, 3.0%). For example, one students reported the following turning point:

> It happened in the morning (approx. 9:20AM), at the end of class. In a classroom. I approached the teacher. A female grad student who was teaching the technical communication class. I asked why she had announced a pop quiz the day before, after I and several other students left the class early. I had notified her prior to this that I had a class far away right afterwards, and that some days I would be leaving early to make it to tests, quizzes, etc. on time.

In a similar discussion, one student perceived a change in her/his relationship with the instructor based on a conversation about making up an exam:

> I missed my midterm earlier that day, and after I emailed my professor and explained the situation to her, she was kind enough to let me take the midterm later that day with no consequence to my grade. She was extremely kind and considerate about my situation.

*B. Personal.*

Turning point events based largely on the sharing of private, personal information, or if there was a specific, approach/affinity seeking behavior or statement intended for one person (e.g., compliment, invitation, name used) were labeled as *personal* (*n* = 104, 26.4%). Five subcategories emerged from the data.

*Discussion of coursework and personal information*. Turning point events occurring when the teacher and student discussed *coursework* (e.g., paper, grade, participation, late work, course/topic/subject) or were in the context of the class (e.g., during class activity, after class) *and discussed personal information* (e.g., includes discussion of events that happened in life (e.g., life experiences, recent tragedies/sickness, family, background, personal life, weekends) (*n* = 46, 11.7%) were labeled as *discussion of coursework and personal information*. The following example illustrates one relational turning point event between a teacher and student coded in the current category:

> I had to talk to [my teacher] about my final project ideas. I arrived about 10 minutes early and my professor wasn't in yet. He had posters of "no war on Iraq" on his door, and on his window there were various signs of his beliefs and interest as well as student work (for example gay and lesbian rights). This explained that he is very interested in his students' interests, ideas, and works. During my session with him, he was first interested in who I am as a person. He asked about my ethnic background, my hobbies, my beliefs, and many other questions. Then we went into detail about my ideas. This was used in a way to bring out what I might want to do about for project. For the first time, I felt that a professor was engaged with what I had to say. It was the professor feeding me more and more information but we were working together to help me.

*Discussion of common interest.* Turning points occurring when a teacher and student discussed a common interest or experiences, either course related (e.g., chemistry research) or not course related (e.g., favorite car) were categorized as *discussion of common interest* (*n* = 15, 3.8%). For example, one student remarked, "…after class…We began to talk about authors and found a common interest in Faulkner. I was just introduced to the author and he was writing his doctoral thesis on it." Another student reported that a turning point occurred when:

> The class was asked if anyone knew the make/model/year of an automotive figure on an overhead projector in a course during my freshman year. The model car was a 1963 VW Type 1 Beetle. I raised my hand and nailed it dead on. I then went on to explain details which the model lacked, such as the standard production vent windows and a few other features. The teacher then mentioned that he was a VW Beetle enthusiast and owned a superbeetle. I stated that I also was a large VW enthusiast and had restored/customized a 1967 Beetle. We then talked for about ten more minutes during lecture about our vehicles.

*Compliment.* Turning points occurring when a teacher provided a student with an expression of praise, commendation, or admiration were categorized as compliments (*n* = 21, 5.3%). Responses indicating that a teacher thanked or disclosed appreciation for a student's participation in class, complimented student on their behavior in the classroom, or offered verbal or written praise on work returned to a student were labeled compliments. One student perceived a change in her/his relationship with the teacher in this event:

> It was outside of the regular class time and was just between the teacher and I. I sought out my accounting teacher for extra help. He was able to explain things much more clearly than in class and also displayed a strong desire to make sure that I truly understood the material. He also let me know how much he appreciated my class participation and eagerness to learn in his class.

*Invitation*. Turning points occurring when a teacher or student requested the other's presence or participation of the other, or a request to participate or be present or take part in something were categorized as *invitation* (*n* = 8, 2.0%). Invitations were made for attendance at a meeting, going out to eat or for a walk, and to participate in a group or activity. For example, one student responded "My TA asked me to go for a walk outside and asked me on a date." Another student reported:

> After enrolling in this class, I promptly found out it was not a regular class. We did not have regular meeting times, but rather we arranged times to meet with the professor personally. Additionally, the professor is very personable and invited a few of his students to attend a MIT alumni meeting that Google was hosting. I jumped at the invitation.

*Name used.* Turning points reported by students that focused on the teacher using or failing to use the student's name were labeled within this category (*n* = 14, 3.6%). For example, one student reported a turning point with her or his teacher at a basketball game: "I saw my

professor and he remembered my name. Out of 120 students in the class he remembered me!" Within the classroom context, another student responded:

> My professor had a seating chart the first day of class and the next day knew everyone's names. This helped me get engaged in the class and the material. I felt like she new me when she called me by my first name. This makes a huge difference and feel like I had a part in the class.

*C. Rhetorical*.

Turning points based largely on a teacher-directed behavior or statement intended for the entire class were labeled *rhetorical* (*n* = 57, 14.5%). Two subcategories include *lecture topic or claim* and *teaching style*.

*Lecture topic or claim.* Turning points that occurred when a teacher discussed a topic, made a claim, provided an example, or discussed experiences related to a topic, the course, or college *during lecture* were labeled *lecture topic or claim* (*n* = 31, 07.9%). The following response is a turning point reported by one student:

> The event occurred in…the afternoon during a 2 hour lecture. A discussion was raised regarding the general acceptance of illegal immigrants in certain regions of the country and whether or not this was acceptable.

In a similar response, another student reported:

> Rather than being taught from an objective perspective, this particular professor immediately used this class as a platform to instill his own beliefs onto us. We were talking about race matters in America when he concluded that we should all be active in our fight against racism through any means, including violence and destruction of property.

*Teaching style*. Rhetorical turning points also concerned the teacher's style (*n* = 26, 6.6%) or the manner by which the teacher engaged or failed to engage the students (e.g., informal, held everyone's attention, interacted in funny manner; used humor). Such turning points also included the manner by which the teacher led discussion and a teacher's overt discussion of her or his teaching style. For example, one student reported the following:

> [F]irst day of class I was just very impressed with the teacher's personality and teaching style. She had a great ability to catch and hold the attention of everyone in this huge lecture hall.

One teacher's discussion of her teaching style emerged as a turning point for a student when she

> explained to the class that part of her teaching style was not to shy away from controversial or potentially touchy subject matter during class discussions. she believed that encouraging lively debate about real-world issues would improve the quality of the essays we were to write for the class. i remember that this was a turning point for me because it represented one my first experiences outside of the high school environment

> where everything (especially subject matter) is so much more controlled and sterilized. i remember this event as being very refreshing, worthwhile, and effective.

*D. Ridicule/Discipline.*

Another larger category of turning points reported by students included being ridiculed or threatened by the teacher (*n* = 31, 7.9%). Responses mentioning ridicule entailed the teacher using language or behavior in a mocking or humiliating manner. Responses mentioning being disciplined entailed the teacher bringing the student to a state of order and obedience or punishing the student. The following event was reported as a turning point by one student:

> The event took place in a classroom during class in front of all other students enrolled. I had recently missed a day of class because I had to attend my grandfather's funeral. My professor asked me to get a note written by someone important having to do with the funeral in order for me to not lose credit for missing class. My mom wrote a note for me to give to him the next day. He took one look at the note and said that his name was not correct. At first I thought it was not correct because it was written in English and he was a Spanish professor. Then he proceeded to tell me that it was still not the reason he said it was wrong. So I again said another option of his name and he still said it was wrong. So the day after my grandfather's funeral in front of our entire Spanish class, I had to stand there and be ridiculed by him.

*E. Locational.*

Turning point events based on being in a different location or environment than normal with a teacher were categorized as *locational* (*n* = 25, 6.3%). Students' responses focused on seeing their teacher outside of the usual academic environment. The following example illustrates the location-based nature of this type of turning point:

> The location was at a barbeque at our professor's house during the day celebrating my professors birthday. The setting was very informal where we talked and ate and changed the dynamic between us lab students and our professor.

Similarly, students reported locational turning points off campus, including the following:

> I was at the train station and went into the bathroom to wash my hands. Next to me was one of my professors from the previous quarter. I had to say hello just because it was so weird seeing her outside of school. I told her I had been in her class and how I enjoyed it. Then we talked about where we were traveling.

*F. Other Person.*

The final category of turning points, labeled *other person*, includes turning points that occurred not because of the teacher's behavior, but instead as a result of someone else's behavior (*n* = 7, 1.8%). The majority of these turning points occurred because of a third party's interaction with the student. The following examples illustrate the *other person* category:

> The professor was sent out of the room and a lady from some sort of office came in and we discussed the good and bad teaching techniques used by our professor. The lady created a memo for the professor telling her what we thought she could improve on for the rest of the quarter.

Another reported,

> Early in the quarter, probably the 2nd week, another student came up to me during our 10-minute break in class. She asked me my name and then told me she would need to be absent from class one day the following week. She said our teacher had recommended for her to get the notes for that day from me.

**IV. Discussion.**

The purpose of this study was to identify relational turning point events that college students perceive occurring with their teachers. Previous research posits that the teacher-student relationship develops through distinct stages (DeVito, 1986), includes relational elements such as control and affection (Lowman, 1984, 1994), entails relational communication behaviors (Graham et al., 1992), and is defined by control, trust, and intimacy (Dobransky and Frymier, 2004). However, one of the most salient features of relationships—that of relational turning points—merits explication in the teacher-student context. The present study attempted to establish a typology of relational turning point events as perceived by students from which the teacher-student relationship could be more readily understood. The events identified in the current study provide a richer conceptualization not only of the teacher-student relationship, but helps us better understand one-time events that shape students' perceptions of their relationships with their teachers.

In their analysis of relational turning point events, O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas (1992) advance two macro-categories and six sub-categories of turning point events: *perception of instructional communication competence and character* (perceived competence and character) and *perception of instructor's management style* (learning climate, course administration style, rhetorical sensitivity, and feedback). The current study extends their work by providing six macro-categories, some of which are divided into sub-categories: *instrumental* (discussion of grade; discussion of course assignment, course content, course more generally; discussion of college, major, independent study, and/or internships; discussion of course policy or rule), *personal* (discussion of coursework and personal information; discussion of common interest; compliment; invitation; name used), *rhetorical* (lecture topic or claim; teaching style), *ridicule/discipline*, *locational*, and *other person*.

Upon a closer examination, there are notable similarities and differences between these two typologies of turning point events. Both studies address relational turning point events based on the use of a student's name, a course policy or course administration style, grading, and the location at which the turning point event occurred. When comparing these studies, three types of turning points appear to align more closely, however.

In particular, being ridiculed or disciplined by a teacher was a common theme in both studies. Although they do not provide a separate category for this type of turning point event, O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas (1992) refer to issues of ridicule in their sub-categories of *character* (e.g., students commented that their professor was "condescending to students," "yelled at the students," and "made derogatory remarks") and *rhetorical sensitivity* (e.g., one student reported

that a teacher stated, "Didn't you listen to me during lecture when I assigned the project?"). Similar types of turning point events were found in the current study and subsequently labeled *ridicule/discipline*. For some students, then, being ridiculed by their teacher appears to change their relationship. Seeing that students identify being ridiculed by their teacher as a significant moment in their education, teachers should be aware of the effects of their disciplinary strategies.

Another relational turning point event common in both studies concerned the teacher's style. O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas's (1992) sub-categories of *perceived competence* and *learning climate*, as well as the current study's subcategory *teaching style*, address the manner by which teachers engage or fail to engage students. For example, both studies discuss relational turning point events based on the teacher using humor, being enthusiastic about their teaching, and presenting lectures that were difficult to follow. A teacher's style, then, also appears to facilitate relational turning points for some students.

Finally, both studies found that one-on-one interactions in which the student and teacher engaged in what students described as a more "personal interaction" facilitated a relational turning point. O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas's (1992) sub-category *rhetorical sensitivity*, in-part, addressed getting to know teachers on a more personal level, as well as one-on-one interactions whereby teachers were described as understanding, helpful, receptive, and friendly. In the current study, the macro-category, *personal*, entailed the sharing of private, personal information, or the presence of a specific, approach/affinity seeking behavior or statement (e.g., compliment, invitation, name used). One-on-one interactions that involved sharing personal information and/or when the teacher is perceived as receptive appear to facilitate relational turning points for students. The commonalities between O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas's and the current study demonstrate that a diverse range of events work to facilitate relational turning points for students. More importantly, perhaps, students in both studies illuminated the importance of teachers acting in ways that are understanding, helpful, receptive, personal, and friendly.

Although previous research, specifically O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas's 1992 study, and the current investigation have important crossover, the differences between the two also help advance our understanding of relational turning points in college teacher-student relationships. Perhaps the most salient difference is that O'Neill and Todd-Mancillas's typology of turning point events focuses on students' judgments *of the professor* (e.g., perception of instructional communication competence and character, perception of instructor's management style), whereas the typology advanced in the current study focuses on perceptions *of events* (e.g., discussion of common interests).

In previous research, turning points events have been conceptualized broadly as *intrapersonal/normative* (individual evaluates him or herself, the partner, or relationship against an ideal or standard), *dyadic* (occurs in interaction with another), *social network* (individual from either or both partner's social network affects the relationship), or *circumstantial* (an event beyond the dyad's control affects the relationship) (Surra and Huston, 1987). Similarly, the typology advanced in the current study offers a description of turning point events that involve dyadic (e.g., labeled *instrumental*, *personal*, *ridicule/discipline*), social network (e.g., labeled *other person*), and circumstantial (e.g., labeled *locational*) turning point events. The general typology for turning point events asserted by Surra and Huston (1987) is therefore represented effectively in the typology advanced in the current study aimed at the teacher-student relationship.

Bullis et al. (1993) intimate that a typology of turning point events in any context should account for the entire spectrum of events. The typology of relational turning point events

articulated in the current study is descriptive of actual events and accounts for a wide range of behaviors enacted in the teacher-student context. The macro-categories in the current study clearly describe the nature of turning point events in adjective form (e.g., instrumental, personal, rhetorical), and the sub-categories offer a specific classification of events. The descriptive focus on types of events in the current study versus perceptions more generally offers a richer account of the many interactions that teachers and students engage. The typology advanced here also recognizes the diverse contexts in which teachers and students interact (e.g., *rhetorical* or during lecture, *personal* which is often one-on-one).

The current study elucidates that relational turning point events in college teacher-student relationships are dynamic. First, a diverse range of events can facilitate turning points, including using of a student's name, discussing a course policy, grading, ridiculing, sharing personal information, or interacting in a new environment, for example. Second, turning point events can occur in virtually any context of interaction (e.g., during a fieldtrip, lecture, office hours, walking around campus, in public, in a hallway). Finally, turning point events appear to come in a number of types in the teacher-student context, including dyadic, social network, and circumstantial. Overall, then, relational turning point events are dynamic in that nearly any event may work as a turning point for a student, turning points can occur in all communication contexts, and they can vary in type.

## V. Implications, Future Directions, and Conclusions.

One of the major implications of this study is that teachers have the capacity to change their relationships with students in a multitude of meaningful ways. Indeed, college teachers should understand that their everyday behaviors, or lack thereof, whether calling a student by name, providing a compliment, engaging in a discussion of common interests, discussing a course policy, ridiculing a student, disclosing personal information, or their own particular teaching style has the potential to and often does shape students' perceptions of their relationship. Further, taking steps proactively to change relationships with students will likely be advantageous (e.g., setting up clear grading procedures, calling students by name, engaging students in discussions about internships and careers, giving compliments, sharing personal information, avoiding ridicule). These behaviors may also have strong implications for instructional outcomes, including cognitive and affective learning and student motivation, each of which will be explored in a future study.

Additional studies investigating the turning points in teacher-student relationships will likely lead to other meaningful implications. Researchers need to examine relational turning points from college teachers' perspective as well as assess the ways in which teachers and students work together in their understanding of the event. Seeing that relationships involve interdependence (Wood, 2000), develop through interaction (Canary and Dainton, 2006), are maintained through communication (Canary and Dainton, 2006), and entail a bond that unites partners (McCall, 1970), teachers' experiences must be captured to understand the complexities of relational turning points with students.

A study similar in nature to the current analysis of turning points (i.e., large sample, use of the CIT), but from teachers' perspectives, may provide telling similarities and differences when compared with students' reporting of turning points. Important questions include: How are teachers' perceptions of their relationships with students affected by relational turning points?

How are important teacher outcomes such as teacher efficacy, job satisfaction, and motivation (see Mottet et al., 2006) affected by relational turning points with their students?

The current study opens up an assortment of other instructional issues to investigate. Keeping in mind that change is inherent in relationships (Wood, 2000), stage models of teacher-student relationships that identify when and how stages change have the opportunity to advance previous models of the teacher-student relationship (DeVito, 1986) and provide a fuller explanation and description of this dynamic between teachers and students. Some key questions include: What are the stages of teaching assistant-undergraduate student, teacher-undergraduate student, and professor-graduate student relationships? What prompts change from one stage to the next? At what stage, if any, is student learning at its peak? How can teachers facilitate their relationships with students to arrive at a stage optimal for learning?

The results of the current study expand and present new insight into the literature on relational turning points and the larger body of teacher-effectiveness literature. In particular, turning point events reported by students ranged from instrumental, personal, rhetorical, ridicule/discipline, locational, and other person events. As important, perhaps, the current study paves the way for future studies of relational turning points in the academic context. Finally, the current study offers teachers an understanding of how to interact with students in a way that establishes and builds meaningful relationships with students.

**Appendix 1. Turning Point Events.**

| Turning Point Event | Frequency |
|---|---|
| *Instrumental* | *n* = 170 (43.1%) |
| Discussion of grade | *n* = 21 (5.3%) |
| Discussion of course assignment, course content, course more generally | *n* = 111 (28.2%) |
| Discussion of college, major, independent study, and/or internships | *n* = 26 (6.6%) |
| Discussion of course policy/rule | *n* = 12 (3.0%) |
| *Personal* | *n* = 104 (26.4%) |
| Discussion of coursework and personal information | *n* = 46 (11.7%) |
| Discussion of common interest | *n* = 15 (3.8%) |
| Compliment | *n* = 21 (5.3%) |
| Invitation | *n* = 8 (2.0%) |
| Name used | *n* = 14 (3.6%) |
| *Rhetorical* | *n* = 57 (14.5%) |
| Lecture topic or claim | *n* = 31 (7.9%) |
| Teaching style | *n* = 26 (6.6%) |
| *Ridicule/Discipline* | *n* = 31 (7.9%) |
| *Locational* | *n* = 25 (6.3%) |
| *Other Person* | *n* = 7 (1.8%) |

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# Student stalking of faculty: impact and prevalence

**Robin K. Morgan**[1]

*Abstract: This study investigated the incidence of faculty stalking by students in a large university system (eight campuses). A subsample of stalked faculty members was interviewed. Results are discussed in relation to categorization schemes for stalking, faculty-student interaction, changes in teaching methods, and the unique problems engendered by students stalking faculty members.*

*Keywords: stalking, faculty-student interaction, harassment, teaching climate, social constructivism*

## I. Introduction.

In October of 2002, three nursing professors at the University of Arizona were killed by a despondent student who claimed, in a suicide letter, he murdered the professors for giving him failing grades (Lenckus, 2002). In the year prior to this attack, these nursing professors were repeatedly harassed and stalked by this student (J. Haase, personal communication, June 20, 2007). Fortunately, not all such incidents result in murder, as exemplified by the charges filed against a student at the University of Maryland at College Park for threatening a professor with a handgun in an attempt to manipulate the professor into providing him an A (Schneider and Basinger, 1998). More recently, a former graduate student at Loyola University attempted to burn his professor's house down in response to having received a failing grade (Collins, 2006). In the year prior to setting the fires, the student had made repeated harassing phone calls to the professor (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2006).

## II. Stalking in the United States.

Since the early 1990's stalking has emerged as a significant social and policy concern (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner, 2002). Today all fifty states and the District of Columbia have implemented anti-stalking laws (Marks, 1997), yet state-level statistics on the number of people charged, prosecuted, or convicted of stalking are not readily available, with estimates varying widely. This discrepancy reflects the ambiguity associated with the definition of stalking behavior itself. Several researchers have attempted to isolate and describe stalking behavior into categories that are easily accessible to both law enforcement and mental-health professionals.

Although studies differ in their definition of stalking, some elements are fairly consistent (Romeo, 2001). Stalking involves repeated and persistent unwanted communications and contacts that create fear in the target. Stalking differs from harassment in that harassment is annoying while stalking leads to fear, feeling threatened, or intimidated (Purcell, Pathé, and Mullen, 2004). A standard list of stalking behaviors might include: abusive/excessive telephone calls, letters, or emails to the person's home/work; trespassing, following or threatening the target or the target's friends/relatives, obsessively observing the target from a distance, driving by the

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person's home, school, or work, and vandalizing the person's property. Many of these activities can be seemingly innocuous in the beginning, but progress into a pattern of activities that introduces terror into the lives of victims.

The term "stalking" has only recently been used to describe behavior directed towards the general population (i.e., to someone other than a celebrity). The term first appeared during the 1970s primarily in the context of obsessed fans who intrusively followed and interacted with famous individuals, such as movie stars (Mullen, 2003). Since these initial accounts, researchers have reported rates of stalking between 2 and 33%, with a national average between 5 and 6% (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2003). Basile, Swahn, Chen, and Saltzman (2006), for example, report stalking in 7% of the women and 2% of the men contacted in a cross-sectional, random digit-dial telephone survey. Similarly, in the National Violence against Women Survey (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000), 2.2% of men and 8.1% of women reported being stalked. Some of this variability may be a result of how those who have experienced stalking perceive the level of threat. Turmanis and Brown (2006), for example, revealed that 23.4% report stalking when they are asked about behaviors that led to their being 'a little or somewhat' fearful, 12.3% when fear was moderate, and 4.7% when fear was of a 'significant degree.'

Across studies, women appear to be at higher risk for being stalked, especially when they are single and below the age of 55 (Basile, et al, 2006). The most common patterns of stalking involve a stalker who had a prior intimate relationship with the person being stalked (Roberts and Dziegielwski, 2006). Pathé and Mullen (1997) reported stalking behavior is frequently triggered when a close relationship ends, with the stalker attempting to affect reconciliation or gaining revenge. Key characteristics of stalking behavior in such situations are jealousy and possessiveness (Mullen, Pathé and Purcell, 2000). Dziegielwski and Roberts (1995) proposed three categories of stalkers: the domestic violence stalker (the most common representing 75-80% of stalking cases involving a need to establish, continue, or re-establish a domestic relationship), the erotomanic/delusional stalker (where the stalker becomes fixated on a person with whom no prior relationship may have occurred), and the nuisance stalker (where the stalker continually harasses with emails, telephone calls, or shows up at the victim's workplace or home). Hall (1998) describes two categories of stalkers: the domestic violence stalker and stalkers who seek revenge. Similar to Dziegielwski and Roberts, Hall also found the domestic stalkers to be the most common type.

## III. Stalking on College Campuses.

Studies investigating stalking on college campuses have almost consistently focused on student stalking of other students. Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (2002), for example, surveyed a nationwide sample of almost 4,500 randomly selected female college students. Approximately 13% of these women reported being the victims of stalking incidents, a figure much higher than the 5-6% generally accepted as the national average. Interestingly, 83% of these women had not reported the stalking to any university official. Bjerregaard (2002) also found that 21% of her sample of college students (24.7% of female students and 10.9% of male students) reported past experiences of stalking and 6% reported currently being stalked. Overall, female students are at a greater risk of being stalked and male students, typically an ex-boyfriend, are most likely to be their stalkers.

Little attention has been given to whether faculty members are at risk of being stalked by their students. This apparent discrepancy is even more disconcerting when considering the

pedagogical changes recommended to college faculty over the past two decades. Partly as a function of constructivist theories, faculty members have been encouraged to engage in teaching practices that increase faculty-student interaction. Social constructivism, most closely identified with Lev Vygotsky, argues that learning is enhanced when instructors create an interactive environment designed to enhance learning experiences (Llewellyn, 2002). Such interaction has been shown to enhance the quality of education provided to students (Astin, 1994) and has been the focus of numerous studies. Student achievement, whether measured by grades, standardized tests, or self-reported learning, increases as a function of quality faculty-student interaction (Anaya, 1999). Accordingly, faculty are encouraged to increase interaction with students (Holmes, Rupert, Ross, and Shapera, 1999). Faculty may become involved with students in multiple roles – as an academic advisor, an instructor, a mentor for research, a supervisor for internship – resulting in a blurring of boundaries (e.g., Biaggio, Paget, and Chenoweth, 1997; Feldman-Summers, 1989; Kitchener, 1992).

Increased faculty-student interaction may open the door for increased harassment or stalking of faculty by students. Batty (2004) reported that female academics in Great Britain reported physical attacks, stalking and heckling by students. It would seem evident that such experiences would have a significant impact on future faculty-student interactions. For example, Bloom (2000) reports on a course he taught where he was heckled by students in the classroom. As a result, Bloom changed his teaching strategy by providing an introductory motivational anecdote on the history underlying each topic, leading to less heckling and more positive interactions with his students. In this case, it can be argued that negative interaction with his students led Bloom to make a potentially positive change in his teaching methods. However, Bloom's experience may have been idiosyncratic. It seems just as likely that professors may be making changes in their teaching in an effort to protect themselves from such harassment and stalking that detract from teaching effectiveness.

In many ways, it is questionable whether the majority of research that has been conducted on stalking would apply to faculty who are stalked by students. As reported by Roberts and Dziegielwski (2006), in most stalking situations there is a prior intimate relationship between the stalker and the person being stalked. In the case of faculty, there should be no prior intimate relationship as such relationships are frequently forbidden by university policies (Wilson, 2007). The clearest parallel to faculty being stalked by students might be cases in which mental health professionals are stalked by their clients. McIvor and Petch (2006), for example, found that among mental health professionals male therapists were more likely to be stalked by female clients. This contrasts with the findings of females being more likely to be stalked in relationship based stalking incidents. McIvor and Petch also reported three distinct patterns of stalkers among clients who stalked their therapists: those who suffered from personality disorders, those who experienced drug and alcohol problems, and those who had a history of behavioral problems. In a similar vein, Hudson- Allez (2006) reported 24% of her sample of mental health professionals had experienced at least one incident of being stalked by a client. The clients most likely to stalk their therapist in this study were described as needy clients who made early attachments to their therapists, clients who were sexually attracted to their therapists, and clients who suffered from personality disorders, especially narcissistic personality disorder.

The present study, then, addresses three major sets of questions regarding the similarities between student stalking of faculty and stalking in the general population. First, what is the incidence of student stalking of faculty? Is the incidence of student stalking of faculty consistent with the rate of stalking in the general population, more similar to the rate of student stalking of

other students, or consistent with client stalking of therapists? Given the prior literature, there are several obvious sub-questions relating to incidence. Is stalking more prevalent on smaller, commuter campuses, or on larger, residential campuses? Is such stalking more common among faculty teaching smaller or larger classes? Are female faculty members or male faculty members more likely to be stalked? Second, what types of stalking behaviors do faculty most commonly report? Given the prior literature, there is an obvious sub-question relating to stalking behaviors. The literature reports domestic stalking, that is, stalking arising from a previous relationship, as being the most common form of stalking. Would this be true among students stalking faculty where no intimate relationships may exist prior to classroom interaction? Finally, the third major question concerns whether student stalking of faculty impacts future teaching behaviors of faculty? Specifically, does student stalking of faculty change the interactional patterns of faculty with their students? If so, what types of changes are faculty making in response to such incidents?

## VI. Phase One.

### *A. Method.*

*Participants*: Nine hundred and sixty-eight full-time faculty members from all eight campuses of a large Midwestern university volunteered for the present study; of these, 934 surveys were fully completed and usable for data analysis. Full-time faculty members were contacted via a university supplied email list, with a response rate of 31%. Response rates by campus varied from 23% to 70%. Faculty reported teaching a wide variety of classes with many teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate level; sixty-one percent of faculty taught graduate classes, 91% taught undergraduate classes, and 6% taught medical students. Twenty percent of the faculty reported teaching large courses (over 100 students). The age range of full-time faculty members was 27 to 81 with a mean age of 49 years (SD = 9.71). Of those participating in the study, 55% were men and 45% were women. This contrasts with a university-wide gender ratio of 62% men and 38% women. Time spent teaching in the university system ranged from ½ year to 40 years with a mean of 13 years (SD = 10.1).

*Materials:* A demographic questionnaire and a modified form of the Obsessive Relational Intrusion Scale (ORI) - Short Form was given to all faculty members choosing to participate in the present study. The demographic questionnaire consisted of the participant's sex, age, campus of employment, how long they have been teaching at the college level, and what type of students were taught. The Obsessive Relational Intrusion Scale-Short Form (Cupach and Spitzberg, 1998) consists of 28 questions assessing stalking behaviors on a five point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (over 5 times). For example, the ORI provides the stem, "Has anyone ever undesirably and obsessively pursued you by:" followed by possible stalking behaviors such as, "threatening to hurt him-or-herself," "verbally threatening you personally," "showing up at places in threatening ways or physically hurting you." The modifications for this study simply involved changing the wording to reflect faculty and students rather than intimate relationships. Cupach and Spitzberg (1998) report that the ORI has been shown to have satisfactory reliability and validity.

*Procedure:* All faculty members listed on the university supplied email list were asked to read an informed consent statement and, if choosing to participate, to click on a link to an online survey. The online survey included the demographic questionnaire and ORI. The instructions to

faculty members specified that behaviors on the ORI should only be reported if a student "undesirably and obsessively pursued" the faculty member and only if the faculty member felt "intimidated, anxious, or fearful" as a result of the student's behavior. Once the faculty member had completed the questions, the faculty member was asked to hit the submit button. All data were compiled and sent to the researcher with no identifying email addresses or names. Completing the demographic questionnaire and the ORI required approximately 10-15 minutes.

*B. Results.*

*Research Question 1: Incidence of Student Stalking of Faculty:* To determine the percentage of faculty reporting stalking, responses to the ORI were evaluated. To be considered as experiencing stalking, a faculty member needed to report repeated incidents where a student engaged in at least two separate behaviors on the ORI. Out of the 28 different stalking behaviors on the ORI, the range of behaviors reported by faculty who were classified as having experienced stalking ranged from 3 to 25 with a mean of 6.29 (SD=4.29). In addition, the instructions on the ORI specified that behaviors must lead to feeling intimidated, anxious, or fearful. Using this definition of stalking, 32.97% (n = 308) of faculty members who completed the survey could be classified as having experienced stalking by a student. The average age of those reporting being stalked (48.98 years) did not differ from the overall sample mean age of 49 years.

*Research Question 1a: Incidence of student stalking of faculty on smaller commuter campuses vs. larger, residential campuses:* The percentage of faculty members who reported being stalked by a student varied by campus, ranging from 22% to 57%, and these differences were statistically significant, $\chi^2$ (7) = 45.86, p<0.001. Overall, more stalking was reported on the six smaller campuses (Campuses 3-8) than on the two larger campuses (Campuses 1 and 2). Another distinction was found with respect to residential vs. commuter campuses. On Campus 1, a traditional residential campus, 31% of faculty respondents reported having been stalked. However, on the six primarily commuter campuses (Campuses 3-8), the average percentage of faculty reporting stalking incidents was 44%. Twenty-two percent of faculty on Campus 2 reported stalking incidents. This campus was importantly different from all others, in that it had the lowest response rate of any campus (23%), and, residing in a large city, has a mix of both residential and commuter students.

*Research Question 1b: Incidence of student stalking of faculty in smaller vs. larger undergraduate classes:* No significant difference was found in stalking between faculty members who taught in large or small undergraduate classes.

*Research Question 1c: Incidence of student stalking of female vs. male faculty:* Of those being stalked, 54% were female and 46% were male, a significant difference ($\chi^2$ (1) = 11.37, p. <0.001).

*Research Question 2: Types of Stalking Behaviors Experienced by Faculty:* Although not all faculty experienced all 28 behaviors identified on the ORI, each of the 28 behaviors was identified as having occurred at least once. Among those faculty who were identified as having been stalked, the most common behaviors reported were students invading the faculty member's personal space and students intruding uninvited into the faculty member's interactions with colleagues and students by 61% and 57% of faculty respectively (for all percentages, decimals points were eliminated by rounding). The least common behaviors, reported by only 2% of the faculty, were leaving or sending the faculty member a threatening object and kidnapping or

physically constraining the faculty member. Table 1 presents the percent of stalked faculty reporting specific stalking behaviors from the ORI. As can be seen in this table, 12 of the 28 stalking behaviors listed on the ORI were reported by approximately 25% or more of the faculty who had been stalked.

**Table 1. Percent of stalked faculty reporting on the ORI-Short Form (N=308).**

| Stalking Behavior from ORI | % of Faculty Reporting Behavior |
|---|---|
| Invading faculty member's personal space | 61% |
| Intruding uninvited into faculty member's interactions | 57% |
| Leaving unwanted gifts | 47% |
| Leaving unwanted messages of affection | 46% |
| Leaving unwanted threatening messages | 36% |
| Involving faculty member in activities in unwanted ways | 36% |
| Making exaggerated expressions of affection | 32% |
| Verbal threats | 32% |
| Following the faculty member around, | 28 % |
| Watching the faculty member | 28% |
| Engaging in regulatory harassment | 27% |
| Student threatening to hurt him or herself | 25% |
| Showing up in places in threatening ways | 17% |
| Intruding on family/coworkers | 17% |
| Invading faculty member's personal property | 16% |
| Approaching faculty member in public places | 14% |
| Monitoring faculty member's behavior | 11% |
| Obtaining private information | 10% |
| Student threatening to hurt others | 10% |
| Stealing/damaging valued possessions | 8% |
| Sexual coercion | 8% |
| Physical threats | 8% |
| Invading faculty member's property | 8% |
| Physically hurting | 8% |
| Physically restraining faculty member | 7% |
| Physically endangering the faculty member's life | 7% |
| Leaving or sending faculty member threatening objects | 2% |
| Kidnapping or physically restraining faculty member | 2% |

## V. Phase Two.

### *A. Method.*

*Participants:* For this phase of the study, participants were recruited through self-selection. After completion of the online survey and demographic questionnaire used in Phase One, faculty members who were willing to be interviewed about their experiences were asked to email the author. Fifty-five faculty members volunteered to be interviewed. Of these 55, 52 were interviewed. Of the three who were not interviewed, one decided not to be interviewed due to scheduling conflicts and the other two withdrew because they reported that it would be too painful to talk about their experiences. Similar to faculty in Phase One, faculty in Phase Two taught both undergraduate and graduate students; 17.3% of faculty taught only graduate or

medical/dental classes, 55.8% taught only undergraduate classes, and 26.9% taught both undergraduate and graduate classes. Approximately twenty percent (20.38%) of the faculty reported teaching large courses (over 100 students). The age range of full-time faculty members in this phase was 32 to 64 with a median age of 49, mean age of 48.27 years (SD = 6.56). Of those participating in this interview phase, 55.77% were women and 44.23% were men. Time spent teaching in the university system ranged from 2 to 35 years with a mean of 17.92 (SD = 6.53) years teaching. Of those interviewed 19.23% had a rank of Assistant Professor, 48.08% had a rank of Associate Professor, 3.85% had a rank of clinical professor, and 28.85% had a rank of Professor. No one discipline predominated, with faculty representing almost every school.

In comparison to the faculty who participated in Phase One, the participants in Phase Two were approximately the same age with a mean age of 48.27 as compared to a mean age of 49 for those in Phase One. Likewise, approximately 20% of the faculty in Phase One and in Phase Two reported teaching large courses (over 100 students). Two significant differences occurred between participants in Phase One and Phase Two. In Phase One, 55% of respondents were men while in Phase Two, 45% of respondents were men. In addition, the mean time spent teaching in the university was 13 years in Phase One but 17.92 years in Phase Two.

*Materials:* No additional materials were used in this phase of the study. The basic questions used to initiate discussion during the interviews may be found in the Appendix.

*Procedures:* Interviews of each professor were conducted on the campus of the faculty member being interviewed at the location of their choice. Each interview began by explaining the study and gathering demographic information. Following this, the faculty member being interviewed was asked to describe their stalker(s), the incident(s), and their reactions in their own words. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify the incident(s) and the reactions of the faculty member. Following this open-ended account, the interviewer asked the faculty member to describe the impact of the stalking on their subsequent teaching and interaction with students. The author conducted all interviews and data were recorded by hand. Tape recorders were not used to preserve confidentiality.

*B. Results.*

*Research Question 2: Types of Stalking Behaviors Experienced by Faculty*

*The Stalkers:* The number of stalkers reported by each faculty member varied from one to six with a mean of 1.67 (SD = 0.92) and a total of 87 stalkers among the 52 faculty members interviewed. Of the stalkers reported, 51.72% were men and 48.27% were women. Sixty-seven percent of stalkers were undergraduates, 31.03% were graduate students, and 2.3% were medical students. The age range of stalkers was reported by faculty as 19 to 45 with a mean age of 25.16 (SD=5.87). Faculty were not always sure of the student stalkers' ages so these are their best estimates.

*Behaviors Reported by Faculty:* The 52 faculty members interviewed reported on the stalking behaviors they experienced in the 87 incidents described in the interviews**.** Faculty reported a wide range of problematic behaviors with a mean of 8 behaviors per incident and a total of 696 behaviors. Using coding procedures similar to those outlined in other studies utilizing interviewing and open ended questioning (Dupuis, Bloom and Loughead, 2006; Holmes, 2005), all 696 of these behaviors were organized into categories by the author and two research students based on similar characteristics; agreement on categories was 100%. For example, being sent numerous email messages, letters, or being called repeatedly on the

telephone was placed into one category, unwanted messages. As can be seen in Table 2, the most commonly reported behaviors were unwanted messages, with 92% of faculty who had been stalked reporting receiving repeated unwanted messages, following the faculty member around campus and off-campus and obsessively watching the faculty member (73%), and regulatory harassment, that is, threatening to or reporting the faculty member to their superior (61%). Fifty-six percent of faculty reported being verbally or physically threatened and 32% reported sexually coercive behavior on the part of the student stalker, including attempts at kissing the faculty member, requests to engage in sexual activity, and unwanted caresses. Seventeen percent of faculty reported incidents in which their life had been endangered, in each case where a student either attempted to kill or actually killed another faculty member being stalked, and 46% of faculty reported incidents in which the student threatened to harm him or herself.

**Table 2. Stalking behaviors reported by interviewed faculty (N=52).**

| Stalking Behaviors | % Experiencing Behavior |
|---|---|
| Unwanted messages | 92.31% (n=48) |
| Following around, watching | 73.07% (n = 38) |
| Regulatory harassment | 61.54% (n = 32) |
| Verbally or physically threatening the faculty member, showing up | 55.78% (n = 29) |
| Spreading misinformation about the faculty member, exaggerated expressions of affection | 53.85% (n = 28) |
| Obtaining private information | 51.92% (n = 27) |
| Student threatening his or herself, monitoring behavior, intruding uninvited | 46.15% (n = 24) |
| Sexually coercing, intruding upon family and coworkers | 32.69% (n = 17) |
| Invading personal space, unwanted gifts | 30.77% (n = 16) |
| Physical restraint | 21.15% (n = 11) |
| Damaging or stealing possessions, Involving in activities, endangering life | 17.31% ( n = 9) |
| Invading personal property | 15.38% (n = 8) |
| Invading property | 11.54% (n = 6) |

*Research Question 2b: What is the most common category of stalking in this population?* Previous literature has reported that stalking may be subdivided into various types. As indicated earlier, a common categorization scheme for stalking has been suggested by Dziegielwski and Roberts (1995), who outlined three subtypes: the domestic violence stalker, the erotomanic/delusional stalker, and the nuisance stalker. The 87 reported stalking incidents were reviewed by the author and two research students to determine if they fell into one of these three subtypes. Stalking was labeled as domestic violence if the stalking incident was viewed as resulting from a need to establish, continue, or re-establish a previous relationship even if the prior social contact was misperceived by the student. For example, one incident of stalking in this category occurred following attending an off-campus conference with a faculty member. Stalking was labeled as erotomanic/delusional if the stalking was viewed as a result of becoming fixated on a faculty member with whom no prior outside-of-class social contact had occurred. For example, one incident of stalking in this category involved the student interpreting faculty gestures in the class as conveying personal, sexual messages to the student. Finally, the stalking was labeled as nuisance if there was repeated harassment of a faculty member without the intent of building a relationship with that faculty member. Students falling into the last category typically were perceived as trying to manipulate the faculty member into changing course

requirements or changing their grade. This category might be most similar to Hall's (1998) category of stalkers seeking revenge. There was 100% agreement between the three raters on placing each of the 87 stalkers into the three categories. Fourteen percent (n = 12) of the stalking incidents were classified as falling into the domestic violence or prior social contact category, 42.53% (n = 37) fell into the erotomanic/delusional category, and 43.68% (n = 38) fell into the nuisance/manipulative category.

*Research Question 3: Impact of Student Stalking on Teaching - Responses Reported by Faculty:* Faculty reactions were organized into categories based on similar response characteristics by the author and the two research students. For example, if faculty reported that they told their Dean or their Assistant Dean, this response was categorized under Contacted Administrator. The responses reported by faculty could be organized into two categories: general behavioral responses, and emotional responses. In terms of general behavioral responses, 67% of faculty had told their colleagues, 58% had told an administrator, and 38% had contacted city or university police; however, 27% had told no one about being stalked. Characteristic comments from faculty included: "administrators only interested in solving problems, can't count on them to help," "told a colleague about this latest incident and colleague blew it off … not very supportive … made me mad," "student would have to injure me to be taken off campus… someone has to get hurt before something is done," and "how has academia allowed these things to happen?" Those faculty who had told no one about the stalking typically continued to work with the student, reporting, "Teacher in me feels I can't ignore students – feel an obligation to help students."

Forty percent of faculty reported directly telling the student stalker to stop. Twenty-seven percent of faculty members reported that they had been accused by a colleague, an administrator, or the student stalker of having a sexual relationship with the student stalker. One faculty member, echoing the comments of several others, stated, "There is a tendency to immediately take the student's side over the professor … very unfair … professor has no rights in this process," and "I did not feel I had any rights, the students have all the rights – nothing I know of in system to protect the faculty member unless the student does something criminal and you can prove it."

Emotional responses were a large category of responses reported by the interviewed faculty. As can be seen in Table 3, the most commonly reported faculty responses included emotional reactions with 52% of faculty reporting embarrassment, 42% reporting helplessness, and almost 37% reporting feeling responsible for the student's behavior. Common responses of faculty included: "We're supposed to be accessible to our students. Where do faculty member boundaries come in? We don't have a life outside their (the student's) world," "Dose of reality, you lose your sense of trust – can never be fully replaced – can be somewhat mended but there's a scar – always in the back of your mind – could this be a situation?" and "Made me question what I was doing to promote this – what would make them think they could do this to me?"

*Impact on Teaching and Future Interactions with Students Reported by Faculty:* Responses to this question were also categorized based on similar reactions by the author and two research students. For example, if faculty reported that they had stopped using personal examples while teaching or no longer shared personal stories with students, this was placed in the 'less personal when teaching' category. Relative to the current incident of stalking, 40% of faculty reported giving a higher grade to the student stalker than what the student earned. For example, one faculty member reported, "Just easier to give them all B's than to have to deal with

**Table 3. Responses of interviewed faculty members (N = 52) to stalking incidents.**

| Response of faculty member | % Reporting |
|---|---|
| **General Behavioral Reactions of Faculty:** | |
| Told colleagues | 67.31% |
| Felt supported by colleagues | 31.25% |
| Contacted Administrator | 57.69% |
| Felt supported by administrator | 16.67% |
| Directly told student to stop | 40.38% |
| Accused of sexual contact with student by colleagues, administrator, or student | 26.92% |
| Contacted city or university police | 38.46% |
| Told no one | 26.92% |
| Considered leaving university | 23.07% |
| Caller id installed | 21.15% |
| Changed home telephone number | 21.15% |
| Coordinated with colleagues | 17.30% |
| Panic button installed in office | 17.30% |
| Divorced | 17.30% |
| Consulted union | 17.30% |
| Obtained a personal protection order | 17.30% |
| Faculty member moved to a safer community | 9.61% |
| **Emotional Reactions of Faculty:** | |
| Faculty member embarrassed | 51.92% |
| Faculty member felt helpless | 42.31% |
| Faculty member felt responsible | 36.54% |
| Stress related health problems | 32.69% |
| Contacted psychological clinic | 23.08% |
| Emotional reaction to student committing or attempting to commit suicide | 17.31% |

them." Another commented, "Give all multiple-choice objective test items now so students can't argue lack of objectivity."

Twenty-three percent of faculty reported that the student was banned from campus email, almost 10% of faculty reported that the student stalker was banned from campus, and almost 6% of faculty reported that the student was jailed as a result of the stalking incidents. Almost 83% of faculty reported that they were less personal when teaching subsequent to the stalking incident. Fifty-four percent reported reduced spontaneity when teaching and 56% reported that they now keep their office door open when meeting with students. Additional reports from faculty about how the stalking impacted their teaching are listed in Table 4. In general, the responses of the faculty members reflect their efforts to reduce any but the most necessary contact with students. For example, one faculty member commented, "Every year (I) get more and more distant; very cautious – treat them with kid gloves".

**Table 4. Impact on teaching reported by interviewed faculty members (N=52).**

| Impact on Teaching | % Reporting Change |
|---|---|
| **Reactions of faculty to current stalking:** | |
| Gave higher grade to student than deserved | 40.38% |
| Refused to talk with student or answer emails | 36.54% |
| Avoids office | 34.62% |
| Professor tried to be nicer to student | 32.69% |
| Attempted to cajole student | 30.77% |
| Banned student from email | 23.08% |
| Banned student from campus | 9.62% |
| Pursued legal action leading to student being jailed | 5.77% |
| Made changes to syllabus | 98.08% |
| Removed phone number/contact information | 88.46% |
| Reduced difficulty level/number of assignments | 53.85% |
| Increased structure/rules on syllabus | 40.38% |
| Substituted objective grading (multiple-choice) for subjective (essays, papers) | 30.77% |
| Less personal when teaching | 82.69% |
| Keeps office door open when meeting with students | 55.77% |
| Reduced spontaneity in classroom | 53.85% |
| More professional, No longer meets with students outside of office | 50.00% |
| Changed or cancelled office hours | 40.38% |
| Second guesses self | 30.77% |
| Only responds to certain emails | 26.92% |

## VI. Discussion.

Stalking was operationally defined in the present study when a faculty member reported repeated incidents of at least two separate stalking behaviors by a student that led to the faculty member feeling fear, threatened, or intimidated. In the present study, an average incidence rate of 33% was found. This rate is concerning given the national rate of stalking among the general population is about 6-7%. However, the rate seems more consistent with the rate of 24% among mental health professionals. Although female faculty members were slightly more likely than male faculty to report stalking, the discrepancy is not as large as found in the general population (e.g., Basile, Swahn, Chen, and Saltzman, 2006).

Likewise, the most common types of faculty stalking differ in significant ways from the most common types of stalking found in the general population. Among the faculty interviewed in the present study, it was clear that three distinct patterns of stalking were occurring, similar in some ways to the three types proposed by Dziegielwski and Roberts (1995). To recall, Dziegielwski and Roberts outlined the domestic violence stalker, the erotomanic/delusional stalker, and the nuisance stalker. In the present study, faculty reported what can be called a prior social contact based stalking where the student perceives an intimate relationship with the faculty member and begins the stalking as a way of increasing intimacy or of punishing the faculty member for refusing deeper intimacy. This might be similar to the domestic violence stalking described by Dziegielwski and Roberts. However, in the case of students stalking faculty, there has rarely been any intimate relationship. In the present study, for example, only one faculty

member admitted a previous romantic relationship with the student who later stalked her. In addition, most studies in the general population report that this type of stalking is the most common, accounting for up to 80% of all stalking. In the present study, this type of stalking accounted for only 14% of the stalking. Although there was only one instance of a faculty member reporting a prior romantic relationship with a student, there were ten additional incidences of student stalking following what might be perceived as blurred boundaries with faculty members. For example, one instance of stalking occurred following a pattern of interactions with the student that included going to the professor's house (working in the professor's bedroom) and attending conferences with the professor. In a second incident, the student had met with the professor off-campus at restaurants and in bars.

A second type of stalking occurs in students who appear, to faculty members, to be experiencing significant psychological difficulties. These students may have had little to no contact with the faculty member but have fixated on this faculty member in a delusional manner. This is what Dziegielwski and Roberts call the erotomanic/delusional stalker. In the general population, this type of stalking is considered relatively rare. In the present study, this type of stalking accounted for 42.53% of the stalking. In many ways, this higher figure parallels the findings of mental health professionals who are stalked by their clients. In those studies, the clients who were most likely to stalk the mental health professional suffered from personality disorders, had experienced drug and alcohol problems, had a history of behavioral problems, had quickly attached to the therapist, or were sexually attracted to their therapists. This seems very similar to the descriptions of the student stalkers in the present study. The fact that this percentage is so high is of concern as the majority of college faculty are not trained as mental health professionals. College campuses are filled with students at a very vulnerable stage of development (Fromme, Corbin, and Kruse, 2008). These students may be away from home for the first time, may be trying to attend school and work full-time, and on many commuter campuses, may be attending school full-time, working full-time, and caring for children. The pressure for all students to attain a college degree has become more intense. It may be that students who attend commuter campuses are even more stressed than those on residential campuses, increasing the dangers to faculty who teach on these campuses.

The third distinct category, that may be specific to faculty, is where students stalk faculty in a seeming effort to influence the grade the faculty member assigns. Although this may be considered a subtype of nuisance stalker, it seems evident that this subtype is specific to this environment and is relatively common, with 43.68% of the incidents in the present study falling into this category. Given the pressures that students are under to achieve high grades and an increasing consumer attitude that if they pay for their education, they are entitled to a good grade (Ritter, 2008), these attempts at manipulation of faculty are not surprising.

Faculty responses to incidents of student stalking included both teaching-related responses and more personal responses. Although personal responses were not a direct focus of this study, some reactions are noteworthy. Interestingly, most faculty members (84%) attempted to balance what they perceived as the best interests of their students with the stress being caused by the student. For example, although one professor was experiencing physical symptoms of stress, crying, intense fear, and embarrassment, this professor continued advising the student stalker as the professor believed that no other faculty member would be as familiar with the student and the student's issues. This was not always the case; several faculty members reported that they simply refused to teach students sharing characteristics of their stalker (for example, undergraduate

status or a major in, say, psychology), even though they recognized that this was not in the best interests of students.

One of the primary concerns of the present study was to assess the impact of student stalking on faculty teaching and interaction with students. Faculty have been encouraged to increase active learning approaches in the classroom and to engage with students outside the classroom in order to increase learning. Social constructivism—an instructional philosophy most closely associated with Lev Vygotsky—argues that learning is culturally and socially influenced; that is, the community around us affects the way we see the world. The classroom, from this social constructivist perspective, must be "active, constructive, intentional, and cooperative" (Jonassen, Howland, Moore, and Marra, 2003, p. iv), with instructors creating learning experiences that students find challenging and personally meaningful (Llewellyn, 2002). Within this framework, the classroom is much like a community, with students participating in both individual and group roles and seeking support and encouragement from their instructor as well as their peers. In order for such a classroom to succeed, it seems evident that the professor must be able to feel safe in the community of students.

Unfortunately for students, however, every professor interviewed directly identified changes in their willingness to interact with students. These changes varied from changes in the syllabus – more rules, more structure, and fewer opportunities for students to interact with the faculty member outside of the classroom – to increasing the difficulty level for students in contacting the professor by no longer providing a home telephone number, to preventing student access to the faculty member's office without supervision. Faculty members who were able to do so reported decreasing their exposure to students by refusing to teach particular classes or even particular populations of students (students from a particular major or students at a particular academic level, such as undergraduates). These changes may decrease student choices in terms of courses and may decrease the community cohesiveness in the classroom.

Not all of these changes are necessarily negative. For example, several professors reported no longer providing students with their home telephone number. Although students might enjoy contacting professors at home, there is no pedagogical reason to believe that this is necessary for student learning. Likewise, three professors noted that the stalking incident led them to reevaluate their course assignments, leading them to improve the clarity of their requirements. Such a change would benefit all students.

As a result of their experiences with stalking, many faculty reported a change in how they viewed colleagues, administrators, and the general climate of the university. Almost every faculty member attempted at some point to communicate their concerns about the student stalking to a colleague (67%) or an administrator (58%). In 62% of these cases, the faculty member reported a lack of concern, disbelief, or recommendations to 'let it go and not cause any trouble.' Both male and female faculty reported that frequently other colleagues viewed the professor as the instigator of problems or that the professor should be flattered by the student's interest. In these cases, the stalker was perceived by other faculty and, at times, by administrators, as having a 'crush' on the faculty member. Since students are almost always of legal age, the perception of many was that as long as the student was no longer in the professor's class, there was no problem with the professor and student dating. Conceptualizing stalking behaviors as simply dating attempts was frustrating and humiliating for the professor involved. In two cases, the student stalker sought out colleagues of the professor to try and help convince the faculty member to date the student, and the colleagues did so.

The results of this study indicate a potentially critical problem on university campuses. That is, stalking appears much more common than in the general population and highly likely to lead to changes in the professors' treatment of students. Faculty have a tendency to withdraw from students following stalking incidents, decreasing the very warmth so many researchers have argued is necessary for better classroom learning environments. Equally important is the significant distrust engendered by such incidents between the faculty members and the academic community. Almost two-thirds of faculty report negative experiences when attempting to report stalking incidents to their immediate superiors – deans or assistant deans – or to their colleagues. Faculty do not feel supported when these incidents occur, reporting that the students are more likely to be believed than they are. Efforts to address these issues will require significant campus efforts to educate faculty and administrators about how to handle potential stalking situations and the development of protocols to allow faculty concerns to be heard openly without fear of repercussions. Although only a few faculty members reported feeling supported by colleagues and administrators, those individuals were unlikely to have made potentially negative changes in their teaching or interactions with students.

## VII. Limitations and Future Directions.

Several limitations of this study caution against overgeneralization. Although eight campuses were surveyed, all campuses were within one university system. It is possible that the findings within this system would not be representative of other universities. Obviously, the next step would be to survey a larger set of faculty from a variety of campuses across the United States. Likewise, the present study used the ORI – Short Form. This survey instrument was designed for use in a more general population and with more traditional stalking situations, that is, in situations where there had been a previous relationship between the stalker and the person being stalked. There is no guarantee that this scale reliably and validly measures stalking in the present population. Future studies should modify this form to reflect the findings of this study. Specifically, the form needs to reflect situations in which no prior personal relationship existed between the professor and the student as well as asking more questions about how the faculty responded to the stalking incidents. Although there was considerable overlap between the stalking behaviors identified on the ORI and during the interview, the category rankings were not identical. Ninety-two percent of faculty who were interviewed described a pattern of unwanted messages including email, telephone, and traditional notes/letters from students. The ORI did not have a category that specifically meshed with this. On the ORI, unwanted messages were categorized into either unwanted messages of affection or unwanted threatening messages. At times, the types of unwanted messages described by faculty were rambling diatribes reflecting confusion, hatred, or incoherence and were not perceived by faculty as falling into either of the two ORI categories. Likewise, in light of the research conducted by Turmanis and Brown (2006), indicating that rates of stalking vary when assessing level of concern, it seems critical that this be assessed as well as simply stalking behaviors experienced. In the present study, although all faculty members reported the unwanted behaviors as threatening or intimidating, thereby fulfilling the definition of stalking, the level of concern about the stalking was not specifically addressed.

In addition, since not all faculty chose to complete the survey, it is impossible to know how the characteristics of those choosing to participate differed from those who did not choose to complete the survey. It may be that those who had experienced stalking incidents were more

likely than those who had not experienced such incidents to complete the survey. Likewise, female faculty who had experienced stalking incidents may have been more likely to respond to the survey than male faculty members. On the other hand, it seemed clear from the interviews with faculty who had been stalked, that they were reluctant to share their experiences with others. It may be that faculty experiencing stalking incidents are less likely to categorize their experiences as stalking and thus, were less likely to respond to the survey. In either of these scenarios, the actual incidence of student stalking of faculty may be misrepresented by the present study.

Despite the above limitations, the present study clearly illustrates the need for additional research in this area. The types of behaviors experienced by faculty who are being stalked by students identified in this study overlap with the general findings in the stalking literature but present some unique challenges in that such stalking incidents are less likely to be the result of prior, mutual emotional relationships. This suggests that student stalking of faculty may be more similar to clients stalking mental health professionals. These differences need to be added to future surveys of faculty stalked by students. The detailed interviews with the faculty in this study clearly suggest the significant emotional impact of student stalking and the toll it takes on the future interactions between faculty and students both within and outside of the classroom. Finally, the interview data suggest that college campuses need to develop a more supportive environment for those faculty members who may be experiencing student stalking. More specifically, the development of campus wide training for faculty and administrators on the potential problem of student stalking of faculty and appropriate measures would be of use. Such training needs to be coordinated with campus security and the campus improvement of teaching center, if available. The inclusion of administrators such as deans, assistant deans, and program chairs ideally should allow for a greater sense of support. Clear guidelines for faculty to document such incidents should also be developed. In addition, faculty need to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of meeting with students off-campus or in more isolated parts of campus. How stalking impacts teaching and the campus community also needs to be directly addressed. As stated by one of the interviewed faculty members, “Everyone knew this was going on…no one was stopping her…my colleagues were just glad it was happening to me and not to them.”

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## Appendix 1. Standard Questions Used to Initiate Discussion in Interviews.

For each stalking incident:

- Tell me a little about yourself: age, gender, race, marital status, length of time at university, rank, discipline, etc.
- Tell me a little about the stalker: age, gender, race, level of program, etc.
- When did these events take place?
- Describe the behaviors of the student – follow-up questions as needed.
- Did you tell anyone while this was occurring? Who? What was their reaction?
    - If not, why did you tell no one?
- What impact did this have on your teaching?

    - Do you have any indications that this impacted your teaching?
    - Do you believe this was a positive or negative change in your teaching? Why?
- Did you change anything on your syllabi as a result of this incident?
    - Get specific information on changes
- Did you change any of your classroom procedures as a result of this incident?
    - Get specific information on changes
- How do you believe this incident impacted your students?
    - Get specific information
    - Can I use this in any way?

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*Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 2009, pp. 121 – 123.

# Style Sheet for the *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

**John Dewey**[1] **and Marie Curie**[2]

*Abstract: This paper provides the style sheet for the Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Manuscripts submitted for publication should adhere to these guidelines.*

*Keywords: radiation, metacognition, identity theory, constructivism, educational philosophy.*

## I. General Guidelines for the Manuscript.

The final manuscript should be prepared in 12-point, Times New Roman, and single-spaced. Submissions should be double-spaced. All margins should be 1 inch. The text should be fully left- and right-justified. The title (in 16 point bold) and author's name (in 12 pt. bold) should be at the top of the first page. The author's name should be followed by a footnote reference that provides the author's institutional affiliation and address. The abstract should be indented 0.5" left and right from the margins, and should be in italics.

Except the first paragraph in a section subsequent paragraphs should have a 0.5" first line indent. Use only one space after the period of a sentence (word processors automatically adjust for the additional character spacing between sentences). The keywords should be formatted identically to the abstract with one line space between the abstract and the keywords. Keywords currently in use are indexed at the end of each volume. Authors should use keywords that are helpful in the description of their articles. Common words found in the journal name or their title article are not helpful.

Pages should be unnumbered since they will be entered by the Journal editorial staff. We will also insert a header on the first page of the article, as above.

References should be incorporated in the text as authors name and date of publication (Coffin, 1993), with a reference section at the end of the manuscript (see below for the desired format for the references). Titles of articles should be included in the references in sentence case. Unless instructed otherwise in this Style Sheet, please use APA style formatting. Footnotes should incorporate material that is relevant, but not in the main text.

## II. Section and Sub-Section Headings.

### *A. Major Sections.*

Major section headings should be flush-left, bold-faced, and roman-numeral numbered. Major section headings should have one-line space before and after. The first paragraph(s) of the article do not require a major heading.

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*B. Sub-Sections.*

Sub-section headings should also be flush-left, in italics, and alphabetically numbered. Sub-section headings should have a one-line space before and after. Sub-sub-sections should appear at the beginning of a paragraph (i.e., with an 0.5" indent, followed immediately by the text of the sub-sub-section), with the heading also in italics.

**III. Tables and Figures.**

Tables and figures should be inserted in the text where the author believes they best fit. They may be moved around a little to better correspond to the space requirements of the Journal. If necessary, tables and figures may occupy an entire page to ensure readability and may be in either portrait or landscape orientation. Insofar as possible, tables should fit onto a single page. All tables and figures should be germane to the paper. Tables should be labeled as follows with the title at the beginning (in bold), with data entries single-spaced, and numbered. Column labels should be half-line spacing above data.

**Table 1. The title of the table.**

| Unit | Length, inches |
|---|---|
| Point | 1/12 |
| Pica | 1/6 |

Figures should have their captions follow the image. Captions should be single-spaced, with title in bold. Additional text should not be in bold. The Editorial staff may adjust layout to allow optimal use of space.

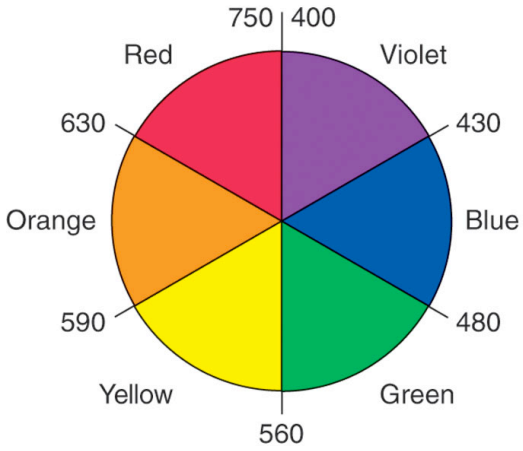


**Figure 1. Color wheel with wavelengths indicated in millimicrons.** Opposite colors are complementary.

## Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements should identify grants or other financial support for this research by agency (source) and number (if appropriate). You may also acknowledge colleagues that have played a significant role in this research.

## Appendix

Please insert any appendices after the acknowledgments. They should be labeled as follows:

**Appendix 1. The Title of the Appendix.**

## References

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