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Dwindling Community College Recourses
Puts Pressure on Presidents to Increase Fundraising Efforts

Yolonda E. Barnes, Ed.D.
College of Western Idaho
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ABSTRACT
The community college has long been associated with being all things to all people with the variety of services they provide to students and the communities they serve (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Not only do community colleges provide an educational starting place for students, they also provide continuing education to community members and serve as economic development centers for the communities they serve. As community colleges search for additional sources of revenue to meet community needs, fundraising efforts have become a component of the fiscal stability plans (Miller, 2013).

This mixed methods study, utilizing the AACC leadership competencies as a framework, explored the underlying themes among chief development officers. The study confirms the importance of the chief development officer position and the necessary leadership skills to fundraise successfully as it relates to the six AACC competencies.

INTRODUCTION
As state funding continues to erode, more burden is shouldered by students, threatening the community college hallmark of fulfilling their mission by way or through access and affordability. The community college has long been associated with being all things to all people with the variety of services they provide to students and the communities they serve (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

Not only do community colleges provide an educational starting place for students, they also provide continuing education to community members and serve as economic development centers for the communities they serve. As community colleges search for additional sources of revenue to meet community needs, fundraising efforts have become a component of the fiscal stability plans (Miller, 2013).

Fundraising for community colleges is a revenue enhancement strategy that is proving to be successful among the nation’s more successful community colleges. In order to be effective in the realm of fundraising, community colleges must include key partners such as the community college president, chief development officer, various college employees, and foundation board members (Carter, 2010). Further, qualified and competent employees must be hired to achieve the goals of the foundation and the institution. Due to the changing demographics, needs, and expectations of donors, today’s community college fundraising staff, including the institution’s president, must possess characteristics and capabilities that were not previously expected of community college leaders.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Community college funding was originally conceived to be based on the model of one-third state aid, one-third tuition and fees, and one-third local property taxes (Michigan Legislative Executive Summary (2013). On a national level, when community colleges were forming, they made modest demands on public funds and received funding support through the public K-12 school budgets. However, after community college districts began to form, this changed. According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), community colleges received state assistance, while the majority of the funding came from local taxes.
Much of the pre-World War II era saw state funding remain low and student tuition and fees providing the bulk of community college funding. Over time and especially more recently, community college funding has shifted dramatically as local taxes and state aid have declined as a percentage of overall revenue resulting in “an increased dependence on tuition as a source of revenue” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 158).

According to Akin (2005), the percentage of revenue from states in 1965 increased from 34% of the total budget to 60% by 1980. However, priorities have shifted; there are now more demands for state revenues and greater challenges to meet legislative funding requests (Ehrenberg, 2006) and, unfortunately, state financial support for higher education has become a lower priority.

To offset these funding declines, many colleges have initiated activities to provide additional revenues. According to Tony Zeiss (2003), president of Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina, increased lobbying has been one immediate response to recent budget cuts (2003). Other activities include grant writing, patents, real estate, revenues from fees and charges, appropriations, contributions and other non-exchange transactions, auxiliary enterprises, private donations, and millages in order to make ends meet. Millages, however, require a majority vote and since the 2007 housing crisis, voter attitudes toward tax increases have become challenging at best.

Many community college foundations are a relatively recent phenomenon given their establishment within the last 50 to 60 years (Gray, 2008; Jenkins & Glass, 1999; Myran, 2003). While some community colleges have achieved success in fundraising, there is much more to be done in order for this aspect of new resource development to become accepted practice and perceived as an essential focus for community colleges.

Among the attributes of effective practice in community college fundraising are access to and relationships with donors, presidential support, competent chief development officers and a direct reporting relationship with the president. Momin (2003) indicates that for an institution to realize its fundraising potential, the key institutional players—the board of trustees, the president, and the chief development officer—must clearly understand and effectively interpret their roles.

The role of the development office is to pursue commitments for financial resources (Satterwhite, 2004) in order to raise and increase outside financial support for the institution (Sturgis, 2006). It is critical for chief development officers (CDO) whom lead community college foundations to possess specific competencies in order to successfully raise private funds.

Chief development officers promote the mission of the institution with one foot in the academic realm and the other in the surrounding community. They raise money, communicate with various external constituencies, and link alumni to their alma mater (Kozobarich, 2000). According to Croteau and Smith (2012), little is known about the chief development officer from the standpoint of leadership and the important competencies necessary for success, but that is changing (p. 28). Panas (1988), lists what he believes to be the top 10 characteristics of a successful fundraiser: impeccable integrity, good listening skills, ability to motivate, high energy, concern for people, high expectations, love of the work, perseverance, presence, and quality of leadership (pp. 212-213).

Community college presidents are leaders of their institutions, and as such, are vital to the success of the college’s fundraising efforts—often with little or no formal training in this specialized area (Satterwhite, 2004). The literature indicates that given the historic reliance on public funding and without backgrounds in fundraising or public relations, community college leaders may not be prepared for the increasing need to raise funds for their institutions (Weinrich & Reid, 2003). According to Eddy and Rao (2009), the current environment in higher education is allowing the opportunity to transform from the academic CEO to a “fundraising” CEO primarily because community college leadership is in a state of transition. One study predicts that as many as 84% of present community college presidents will retire during the next 10 years. Several plans of action are under way to handle this changing of the guard, including more leadership preparation programs offered by such organizations as the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Council on Education, and the League for Innovation in the Community College.
The importance of fundraising is also supported by the American Association of Community Colleges (2006), which has outlined six leadership competencies. Among those is resource management, which includes “taking an entrepreneurial stance in seeking ethical alternative funding sources” (p. 4). In 2003, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) a grant titled “Leading Forward” to address the national need for community college leaders. The AACC began Leading Forward's work by hosting a series of four day-long leadership summits with a variety of constituent groups to build consensus around key knowledge, values, and skills needed by community college leaders and to determine how to best develop and sustain leaders. The constituent groups included experts in community college leadership from AACC affiliate councils, college and state "grow-your-own" programs, colleges in underserved areas, and university programs convened between November 2003 and March 2004 (AACC, 2003). The AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders are collectively organized below in six general areas illustrating specific behaviors, values, and attitudes (AACC, 2005):

**Organizational Strategy**
An effective community college leader strategically improves the quality of the institution, protects the long-term health of the organization, promotes the success of all students, and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends.

**Resource Management**
An effective community college leader equitably and ethically sustains people, processes, and information as well as physical and financial assets to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.

**Communication**
An effective community college leader uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community, to promote the success of all students, and to sustain the community college mission.

**Collaboration**
An effective community college leader develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, mutually beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships that nurture diversity, promote the success of all students, and sustain the community college mission.

**Community College Advocacy**
An effective community college leader understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.

**Professionalism**
An effective community college leader works ethically to set high standards for self and others, continuously improve self and surroundings, demonstrate accountability to and for the institution, and ensure the long-term viability of the college and community.

**PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY**
The purpose of this research study was to identify the key leadership competencies, characteristics, and professional skills necessary of community college chief development officers through the perceptions of community college presidents, chief academic officers, and chief development officers.

**Research Question 1:** What are the similarities and/or differences between the perceptions of the president, chief academic officer, and the chief development officer’s viewpoints regarding the AACC’s leadership competencies as they relate to the chief development officer?

As more community colleges step up their fundraising efforts, they find themselves at a tipping point of sorts. As Lanning (2008) said, “The momentum exists to take advantage of the growing public awareness of the challenges community colleges face and the benefits they provide.” Lanning indicates that while fundraising may seem like a daunting task, fundraising is about planning for the future. Community colleges need to take the necessary steps that enable them to foster relationships with individual donors, businesses and foundations that can build scholarships, fund operations and create faculty endowments in order to begin to provide long-term financial strength and sustainability.
strategy requires hiring capable fundraisers with the necessary leadership competencies to create and build successful fundraising campaigns and programs.

**DELIMITATIONS**

Because this study focused on responses of community college presidents/chancellors, chief academic officers, and chief development officers from within a Midwestern state, the generalizability of the results to other settings may be limited. In addition, participants’ responses will be reflections of their personal education, experiences, and insights from the vantage point of their positions as presidents, chief academic officers, and chief development officers, and, therefore, may not be generalizable to the entire population of their community college peers.

**LIMITATIONS**

Since convenience sampling was used, the researcher cannot say with confidence that the sample is representative of the population (Creswell, 2002). In the quantitative phase of the study, there is a potential risk of a non-response error, i.e., problems caused by differences between those who respond and those who do not in the event of a low response rate (Dillman, 2000). Due to the nature of qualitative research, the data obtained in the qualitative phase of the study may be subject to different interpretations by different readers. Because of the interpretative nature of qualitative research, the investigator may unintentionally introduce bias into the analysis of the findings. The study has a limitation to validity and reliability only to the particular population on which this study focused. As noted, only Midwestern public community college presidents/chancellors, chief academic officers, and chief development officers were studied. This sample, then, excluded private community colleges as well as four-year institutions.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study used a mixed methods design. The rationale for mixing is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation. According to Charles and Mertler (2002, in quantitative research, an investigator relies on numerical data and uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge, such as cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables, hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories. The researcher isolates variables and causally relates them to determine the magnitude and frequency of relationships. In addition, a researcher determines which variables to investigate and chooses instruments that will yield highly reliable and valid scores.

Alternatively, qualitative research is “an inquiry process of understanding” where the researcher develops a “complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, Goodchild, & Turner, 1996, p. 15). In this approach, the researcher makes knowledge claims based on the constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) or advocacy/participatory (Mertens, 2003) perspectives. In qualitative research, data are collected from those immersed in everyday life of the setting in which the study is framed. Data analysis is based on the values that these participants perceive for their world. Ultimately, “it produces an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors” (Miller, 2000).

Demographics

Respondent demographics from the quantitative portion of this study revealed that the majority of the presidents who responded were white males between the ages of 51 and 60 years, who hold doctorates as their highest degree earned. The majority of the chief academic officers who responded were white males between the ages of 56 and 60 years, and who hold doctorates as their highest degrees. In regard to the chief development officer, the majority who responded were white females between the ages of 35 and 55 years, with a master’s as their highest degree earned.

These demographic data are consistent with other studies that have gathered demographic information related to these same positions at colleges and universities. For example, findings for the presidents indicate that little has changed over the last decade with regard to presidential demographics (Duree, 2007; Rabey, 2011; Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2013), more than 60% of the nation’s community college presidents are between the ages of 55 and 64 years of age, with 86% holding doctorates as their highest degree earned. In addition, only 12% of the nation’s community college presidents are of color, while the 81% are white/non-Hispanic.
to Eddy (2010), the ethnicity of community college presidents, has remained virtually unchanged for the last decade.

Moreover, women are still underrepresented in the presidency position. Between the years 1991-2006, there was approximately a 20% increase in the number of female community college presidents, yet, the growth in the number of female community college presidents has slowed considerably since 2006 and it appears that the gender balance movement may have reached a peak (Thomas, 2013). In fact, the most current AACC figures show a decline by 1% in the number of female community college presidents since 2006 (AACC, 2013).

Core Competency Measurements

The survey was analyzed for reliability using Cronbach’s alpha. As Clark and Watson (1995) note, the issue of internal consistency reliability assessment is complicated by the fact that “there are no longer any clear standards regarding what level…is considered acceptable” for Cronbach’s alpha (p. 315). In the past, criteria have ranged from .80 or .90 alpha coefficients, down to .60 or .70 alphas. According to Rubin and Babbie (2010), a cut off of .60 is common in exploratory research. Researchers have found Cronbach’s alpha to be too sensitive to number of measures/items, and prefer the use of the raw mean correlation as a statistical marker of internal consistency. In their research, Briggs and Cheek (1986) found that “the optimal level of homogeneity occurs when the mean correlation is in the .2 to .4 range” (p. 114), Whereas Clark and Watson (1995) recommend that the average correlation fall in the range of .15–.50…if one is measuring a broad higher order construct such as extraversion, a mean correlation as low as .15–.20 probably is desirable; by contrast, for a valid measure of a narrower construct such as talkativeness, a much high mean intercorrelation might be in .40–.50 range. (p. 316)

Reliability measures for each of the six AACC leadership competencies ranged from .55 (Community College Advocacy) to .85 (Professionalism). Thus, these alphas indicate that the 45 specific dimensions within the AACC leadership competencies are generally measuring the same concept or construct

Analysis

The findings indicated that a difference did exist in the ranking of the leadership competencies among presidents, chief academic officers and chief development officers as they relate to the skill set of the chief development officer.

Presidents ranked Communication the highest level of importance \( (M = 3.73) \) and ranked Community College Advocacy the lowest level of importance was \( (M = 3.52) \). However, the mean scores only differed by 0.2 points, and were still at the Very Important level. The chief academic officers ranked Community College Advocacy the highest level of importance \( (M = 3.70) \) and Organizational Strategy \( (M = 3.27) \) the lowest level. The chief development officers gave Collaboration the highest level of importance \( (M = 3.90) \) and Organizational Strategy \( (M = 3.42) \) the lowest level of importance. No statistically significant difference existed among the rankings of presidents, chief academic officers, and chief development officers with regard to the categories of Organizational Strategy, Resource Management, Communication, Collaboration, and Community College Advocacy. A significant difference existed in the ranking of the Professionalism competency between the groups.

Qualitative research data were gathered from five Midwestern community college presidents via semi-structured telephone interviews. These presidents, both male and female, represented small, medium, and large colleges located in rural and urban settings. To interpret the qualitative data obtained from respondents, the researcher first coded the responses. According to Saldana (2009), “[A] code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). The qualitative portion of this study allowed the researcher to solicit attitudes and opinions that were not measured in the quantitative portion of this study. Based on the analysis of the codes from the qualitative interviews conducted with presidents, the researcher found a number of overall themes. Keats (2009) points out: “Studying narrative texts aids the researcher in understanding how participants experience, live, and tell about their world” (p. 181).
FINDINGS
Quantitative Research

While the primary purpose of this study sought to identify how presidents, chief academic officers, and chief development officers rate the relative importance of the leadership competencies, characteristics and professional skills identified by American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2005), it also considered descriptors factors of respondents that might influence their perception of the relevancy of the six competencies. Thus, quantitative methods and statistical analyses were appropriate for this investigation.

All data obtained from the respondents regarding the competencies were gathered and entered into variable fields using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences IBM (SPSS software version 21). All responses remained anonymous and were not associated with any institution or individual. The data collected in this research were analyzed using inferential statistics (independent-samples f-tests also known as ANOVA and Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients) and descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, range, standard deviation, and correlation), depending upon the nature of the question.

To further analyze responses regarding the similarities and differences between the perceptions of the president, chief academic officer and the chief development officer viewpoints regarding the AACC’s leadership competencies as they relate to the chief development officer, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. ANOVA is used to test for differences among more than two comparative groups (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). For this study, an ANOVA was used to determine if there were differences between the perceptions and opinions of presidents, chief academic officers, and chief development officers as they relate to the leadership competencies regarding community college chief development officers. An ANOVA procedure has three assumptions for the three independent variable groups: (a) they are independent of the population, (b) they have equal variances, and (c) they are evenly distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As the number of cases was not the same for each group, a Levene’s test of homogeneity of variance was used to examine whether the three groups had equal variances. Finally, Tukey and Scheffe’ post hoc tests were run to test for significant differences between the groups.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS
Qualitative Research

The primary qualitative technique utilized was in-depth semi-structured telephone interviews with presidents from five community colleges. The researcher examined the president’s role and thoughts regarding fundraising. The narrative identifies the commonalities and differences in the data by describing the themes that were analyzed and coded from the interview transcripts.

Theme 1 — Good communication skills are essential to strong leadership.

In order to garner much-needed financial support, presidents must talk about the college in terms of the opportunities it creates for learners while educating the public about the challenges and opportunities colleges face. They must also appropriately frame their requests for help with donors, partners, voters and elected and appointed officials.

Theme 2 — Fundraising professional development for presidents contributes to successful fundraising programs.

The literature indicates that given the historic reliance on public funding and without backgrounds in fundraising or public relations, community college leaders may not be prepared for the increasing need to raise funds for their institutions (Weinrich & Reid, 2003).

Theme 3 — Successful fundraising requires being engaged in fundraising.

Community college presidents often have difficulty finding the time to add new responsibilities to their priority lists. But if fundraising is considered both urgent and important for the community college president, it must be given appropriate focus and effort.

Theme 4 — Nonacademic positions within higher education institutions and positions outside of higher education are becoming the norm.

While the chief academic officer continues to be the most frequently cited immediate prior position for community college presidents, this trend is slowly changing. Interestingly, presidents with backgrounds in
development and other “non-academic positions” are more commonly found in community colleges than in other institutional types (Weisbrod, Ballou, & Asch, 2008).

**IMPLICATIONS**

Studies focusing on leadership competencies for community college chief development officers are vital because of the role chief development officers play in private fundraising. As a result, this study was focused solely on identifying which of the American Association of Community College (2005) leadership competencies were the most important as it relates to the skill set of the chief development officer from the perspective of Midwestern community college presidents, chief academic officers, and chief development officers.

**Chief Development Officers — The Big Picture**

Community colleges are institutions of higher learning that offer an educational gateway to students who are seeking career training leading to immediate employment, transfer education leading to a baccalaureate degree, and courses that fulfill local community needs. These missions require that chief development officers have the broadest understanding of the entire college and the ability to interact with various stakeholders regarding how the college is meeting community needs and is a worthy target for donor investment. Increasing numbers of potential donors are beginning to understand and to give. The future fundraising potential of community colleges is limited only by a community college’s ability to convey the “case for support,” to nurture donor relationships and to channel their support. It should be noted that donors give to organizations (and to people) whom they trust will use their charitable gifts in a way that conforms to their values and interests; such trust is most often based on relationships formed between the leaders of the organization and the donors. Chief development officers must “push themselves to become knowledgeable on topics that extend well beyond their formal training, education, and experience” (Croteau & Smith, 2012, p. 197). Not surprisingly, communication, community college advocacy, and collaboration were ranked highly as leadership competencies by all three groups in this study—presidents, chief academic officers, and chief development officers. Successful fundraising requires collaboration among various constituents and stakeholders and the ability to articulate a clear vision that motivates and inspires donors “in an effort to engage them with the mission, goals, and funding priorities of the institution” (Croteau & Smith, 2012, p. 198).

Those who aspire to become successful community college chief development officers can utilize the findings of this study as a guide to address areas in which to seek professional development related to leadership competencies. A prospective chief development officer can evaluate his/her own personal attributes, abilities, and professional experiences, and compare them to the findings of this study as a self-reflection tool and engage others in assisting with this evaluation as well.

While strong social skills in the realm of collaboration, communication and advocacy are important, having the ability to motivate, inspire, and influence are also significant. Chief development officers are expected to influence relationships on campus and within the external college community. “It is the responsibility of the chief development officer to leverage his or her social skills to engage faculty and other academic professionals with donors in meaningful ways, and vice versa” (Croteau & Smith, 2012, p. 199).

Those responsible for the hiring of chief development officers should also be involved in identifying the desired qualifications of a candidate to be placed on the position announcements. The findings from this research could be utilized as a starting point for discussions pertaining to the desired competencies.

**Presidents — Communicators in Chief**

Presidents and aspiring presidents who want to develop their fundraising “muscle” must be able to communicate effectively across constituent groups both inside and outside the college walls. As one study participant stated, “Presidents have to be good storytellers because of their responsibilities. We serve on various boards representing the college, and give numerous presentations. We have to be very succinct and clear.”

Presidents and would-be presidents who have weak communication skills must pay particular attention to strengthening them through a commitment to continuous learning by seeking professional development opportunities and effective practice. Professional development opportunities could include formal
leadership programs, mentorships and coaching, conferences, and community college leadership doctoral programs. Individuals must recognize that leadership and essential competencies can be learned and refined (Thomas, 2013). It is important for aspiring presidents to polish their communication skills because their ability to communicate effectively can inspire donors to support an aspirational future for the college that the donors cannot yet “see.”

Presidents — Fundraisers in Chief

Today’s community college presidents are increasingly expected to raise private funds as a portion of the college’s overall revenue mix thus making professional development in this area critical to the success of the college’s fundraising program. Aspiring presidents should understand the importance of and sharpen their relationship building skills in order to be successful at attracting and raising funds for their institutions.

As the “living logo” of the college, the president is an essential member of the fundraising team because no other leader in the college can create the vision, establish college-wide priorities or communicate the case for support with as much gravitas and authority as the president. As the primary spokesperson for the institution, the president is expected to articulate how donors’ gifts can improve the college while inspiring internal and external constituents.

Prospective donors at all giving levels must come to know the president as an engaged and vibrant leader and member of the fundraising team. Individuals who have great wealth or who manage resources on behalf of a corporation or foundation often respond best when talking with the president. Being solicited for a gift by the president carries special meaning, as does receiving a personalized thank-you from the president.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

If college completion, seamless education and career systems, stackable credentials or any other stretch goal for community colleges is to be attained, resources beyond currently available public dollars and tuition and fees will be required. As a sector, community colleges need to become much more skilled and aggressive in attracting private philanthropic support. With notable exceptions, community colleges have yet to be the fundraising champions that their missions and aspirations for service to students and the community demand.

Although the research was conducted with those who had insight into the leadership qualities of a successful chief development officer, the value of the research could be enhanced by focusing on the characteristics and competencies of presidents and chief development officers who have achieved success in fundraising.

Another recommendation for future research is a study of community college doctoral leadership programs. How many incorporate formal fundraising curricula and/or courses that reinforce the skill set required for successful fundraising by presidents? How future presidents are trained will have direct implications for how they carry fundraising into practice once they become presidents. Furthermore, if there continues to be a lack of formal fundraising training, there will continue to be a lack of skilled presidential fundraisers. As curricula is developed or updated in doctoral-level programs for aspiring community college leaders, it should incorporate fundraising coursework in order to better prepare highly qualified presidential applicants.

The final recommendation for future research is a study to see if the themes gleaned from the presidents interviewed for this study, hold true to the amount of money they have raised. Fundraising is becoming a more significant component of the president's job responsibilities, and specifically identified characteristics and competencies known to positively affect fundraising success may increase in importance when hiring decisions are made.
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The Gallatin Mountains dominated the scenery out of the picture window of the home on the small ranch in the picturesque Paradise Valley, Montana. Inside, twelve Indiana State University students listened to the ranch owner discuss the frustrations she was facing trying to keep the family business going. The state of Montana had designated Gallatin and Park Counties, north of Yellowstone National Park, as Designated Surveillance Areas. This meant that before she could sell her cattle, she faced additional and costly reporting processes in order to prove her cattle were brucellosis free (Montana Department of Livestock, 2015). The students, in-service teachers from across Indiana that were part of an economics course, were hearing how bison and elk from Yellowstone National Park had brought the disease into the valley.

The students participating in this professional development course were secondary natural and social science teachers from the state of Indiana. During the field experience, these teachers worked with colleagues from both the natural and social science disciplines to gain a broader understanding of how the natural and social systems surrounding Yellowstone National Park interact and the consequences of this interaction on the making of public policy which will govern the future uses of scarce and valuable natural resources.

The students were looking at Yellowstone National Park as a public good and the difficulty surrounding managing the bison and elk herds as complicated due to the fact that market forces were not the leading element in deciding how best to manage those herds (Interagency Bison Management Plan, 2017). Adding to the complication was the students’ need to understand the natural science systems that influenced how bison, elk and cattle interacted in Paradise Valley. Student understanding of concepts related to both social science and natural science systems was paramount to the perspective gathering students needed in order to effectively explore the complicated solutions to messy public choice issues (Graseck, 2009).

This paper describes a professional development class taught by Indiana State University at Yellowstone National Park. The class was designed to provide K-12 life science and social studies teachers with the tools that they needed to teach about the tensions inherent in the formulation and implementation of environmental and public land management issues, particularly in the nation’s popular national parks. The class gave teachers the knowledge base, pedagogy and curriculum materials necessary to enhance their classroom instruction concerning the scientific, government and economic concepts fundamental to issues surrounding the efficient use of certain types of public land. The authors chose Yellowstone National Park (YNP) because the process and solutions put in place by the National Park Service (NPS) demonstrated the interface between education and the use of public lands. It was complex enough to represent many public parks around the nation. It also had a rich and varied history, including the distinction as the first official National Park in the United States (Schullery, 2004).

The class focused on a number of conflicts over public land usage in YNP to illustrate the basic concepts of both environmental systems management and public economics. The main issues were, the
free roaming of YNP bison, many of which carry the disease, brucellosis, off park lands during the winter, the NPS placed restrictions on certain kinds of recreational activity in the park, with a special emphasis on winter use by snowmobiles and snow-coaches, and the reinstitution of gray wolves to the park, along with their endangered species classification.

The students were able to visit with experts and advocates on a number of controversial issues in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, including NPS researchers, local ranchers, small business owners, local economic development specialists and local environmental advocacy groups. The controversies discussed included; the roaming of bison infected with Brucellosis out of the Park and onto livestock grazing land where transmission of the disease is possible, the reintroduction of wolves to the ecosystem after an almost 70 year absence, further endangering livestock grazing outside the park’s boundaries, and the winter use plan for the park, which has pitted environmentalists against local business owners and economic development agencies. Hearing from content experts and advocates on each side of these controversies over public land usage helped the students grasp the various costs and benefits of policy options and to gain valuable experience in identifying unintended secondary impacts of various policy alternatives. In addition, speaking with officials of the NPS who are responsible for making these public policies provided up close and personal experience in both leadership in controversial decision making and an illustration of how difficult and messy public policy making over these complex environmental resource issues really are. The participants heard about the policy making process from the experts and advocates involved. Although witnessing the public meetings and even the discussions held by experts and officials of the NPS would be the most effective pedagogy to enhance understanding of the public decision making process, this was not an option given the schedule dictated by a summer class. The second best option was to have the ability to speak with each of the participants in the process personally and then to experience the environment and the resources that were the subject of the resource use debates and policies.

Standing along a creek bed in the park and witnessing the presence (and absence) of flora and fauna was a far more effective laboratory for learning about the impact of first removing the alpha-predator (wolves) from the ecosystem, and then 70 years later returning them, than the cinderblock walled classroom on the Indiana State University campus. Participants saw the short, stubby aspens growing where Elk could feel safe grazing, and the shade that has returned to the creek beds because the Aspen could grow as the presence of the wolves keep the elk from spending too much time creek side (Dolasia, 2017). Photographs, videos, and descriptions could help, but would seeing the changes, first-hand in the environments, be more effective?

It was this last issue, demonstrated by this question, that combined social and natural science theories and systems in the most interesting and important ways to advance the understanding of complex real-world systems. The National Science Foundation (NSF) had been working for the past twenty five years to bring ecological researchers together with social scientists (National Science Foundation, 2002). NSF’s Long-Term Ecological Research Network has been working on a model to show how social and ecological systems work together to inform more effective environmental public policy (Redman, Grove, and Kuby, 2004). The project described here integrated expertise in biophysical and social science processes, and modeled that integration, recommended by the NSF project, for secondary teachers. Using the natural science and social science platforms for understanding these complex environmental management issues provided teachers with an experience that they were able to take into their classrooms and share with their students.

TO EXPERIENCE THE CONFLICT AT YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Beard and Wilson (2006) found that experiential learning brought several learning theories together for students in ways that require them to actively engage the material. Their research claimed that learning should be personal and connect with what students already know and understand. Learning experiences outside of the classroom, like those experienced in field work, engage many senses, allowing the impact of an experience to have lasting qualities. This project provided participants with the opportunity to explore concepts and abstract ideas within a concrete contextual foundation.
If secondary students are to effectively grapple with understanding complex environmental management issues, they need a foundation that includes the economic and civic concepts necessary to create effective public policy responses. They also require tools to help them organize these multifaceted issues into structures with which they are familiar. According to VanFossen and McGrew (2010), the teacher should provide just enough structure to allow a student to master a task or concept that the student is initially unable to grasp independently. This is very important in helping students learn the complex concept within a given context. This professional development course modeled how teachers could partner with university faculty and field-based experts, as well as advocates, in a meaningful context.

Throughout the United States, questions of public land use are hotly debated. Public lands such as national parks, national forests, grazing and prairie lands are all sites of controversy and conflict. Conflicts over property rights, decision-making authority and processes are common. Developers, farmers, ranchers, hunters, business owners, recreational users, and environmentalists attempt to influence land use. Public land managers, like the National Park Service, must take a variety of perspectives and political advocacy into account when making natural resource management decisions. The models of complex natural systems and complex social systems form the infrastructure for the understanding of the nature of the resources being managed (Conant and McGrew, 2010).

**NATURAL SYSTEMS AT WORK IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

Logan, Macfarlane, and Willcox (2010) defined the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) as an area measuring nearly 73,000 square kilometers next to the Shoshone National Forest, as well as, other national forests and protected areas outside of Yellowstone National Park. The reintroduction of wolves into the GYE after a 70 year absence provided an interesting example for understanding the interactions of complex natural and social systems that public policy in this area demands. It also provided a great example for natural science and social science teachers to use in teaching their own students systems thinking. The P 21 Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2015) defined systems thinking as having the ability to “Analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems” (p. 4). This ability was part of the call by ConnectEd (2012) college and career readiness. Competitions for food, and the interdependency of species in the food web, are important for balance in the ecosystem (Hairston, Smith and Slobodkin, 1960). A group of researchers, led by Yellowstone National Park biologist, Doug Smith documented the impact of wolves on elk behavior in the park, and how any change in elk behavior changed flora (Smith, Peterson, and Houston, 2003) as well as the behavior of other species (Fortin, Beyer, Boyce, Smith, and Duchesne, 2005).

Fundamentally, both naturally occurring environmental systems and man-made social systems are themselves made up of hundreds or thousands of other or subsystems. Both ecosystems and economies are seen as a complex system made up of many interrelated sub-systems, each having millions of interrelated parts. Some parts of the literature, especially in the natural sciences, refer to this as systems that are characteristic of emergence. Emergence refers to systemic behaviors that differ from behaviors that would occur within less complex systems with a lower scale or in isolated sub-systems (Bar-Yam, 2011). The question is how we can understand how these systems work well enough to manage them after some exogenous event occurs such as drought, forest fire, or civil war. For teachers, the question became how to help students comprehend the systemic nature of these systems and then as citizens, how to help them understand the political and natural limits inherent in the social goal of managing these systems.

Wolves, the apex predator in the GYE, were already in decline in the northwestern states by the 1920’s when government predator control programs demanded by the politically strong ranching industry, eliminated wolves from the ecosystem by the late 1920s. With the apex predator absent from the ecosystem the wolves’ normal prey was able, not only to thrive, but more importantly, change their daily behavior. No longer needing to fear the presence of their predators, elk were able to spend much more time in the open areas, especially around river and stream banks, feeding on the plant life in the open fields and riverbanks.
Through the cascade effect (social scientists call these secondary effects), the changes worked their way through the system, moving the system toward a new equilibrium with very different characteristics. This was a system that ecologists considered unnatural and hence inherently less desirable. iv

In 1995, through use of the Endangered Species Act, the gray wolf was reintroduced into the Yellowstone ecosystem. Ecologists noted that during the absence of the wolf, through the process of trophic cascade, the characteristics of the ecosystem changed in many complex ways. Perhaps most easily seen through the following effects felt in the park:

- Elk over browsed creek side willows and cottonwoods which caused greater streamside erosion.
- Birds lost nesting space as young willows and cottonwoods could not get established due to over grazing by elk.
- Streams became wider, shallower, and warmer due to reduced shade, and fish habitat suffered as a result.
- Coyote numbers rose putting greater pressure on small mammal populations.
- Fox, badger, and raptor populations declined.

With the reintroduction of wolves, this trophic cascade flowed in the reverse as elk populations fell and the elk no longer loitered in the open areas and along the rivers and streams.

Although it is undoubtedly true that apex predators can set a cascade in motion, it is just as true that many other factors can as well. A significant number of these other factors, like fires and weather patterns and various combinations of these factors, like the presence of wolves with and without a major fire or wolves with and without a year of unusual rainfall, are quite unpredictable. This means that not only would one need years of data on hundreds of factors; one needs to be able to identify all of the potentially important factors in order to create a model that would reasonably accurately represent the workings of the ecosystem. Tercek, Stottlemyer, and Renki (2010), as well as Egler (1977) claimed that the simple truth was that ecosystems are probably more complex than we can begin to model or even imagine. This is, of course, parallel to the calculation problem within general equilibrium theory in economics.

For teachers, the question is can one teach systems thinking to students to understand the workings of a complex ecosystem without understanding the interrelations completely enough to successfully manage the system. Economists have used the concepts of partial equilibrium analysis and ceteris paribus, along with some attention to the idea of general equilibrium analysis (and its real world difficulty in use) to help students visualize the complexity of the economic system.

Teaching students about issues of public land and ecosystem management requires a basic understanding of the concepts of trophic cascade, and public policy making, within a complex social system such as the United States has constructed. Once that is established, experiential field observations help make the ideas concrete to students.

By observing the resources that are in dispute and talking personally with independent experts as well as advocacy and stakeholder groups, project participants explored the answers to these and other questions. Speaking personally with the individuals whose lives are directly impacted by the way in which the conflicts are resolved, provided the experiences that helped the participants gain a better understanding of the issues involved and allowed them to see how these decisions affected real people’s lives. The understanding generated helped these teachers demonstrate to their own students the importance of knowledgeable participation in the democratic process.
USING SYSTEMS THINKING IN THE CLASSROOM

What does it take to prepare students to become participative citizens in the democratic process? How does one go about issuing the kind of appealing invitation that would capture the attention of a student long enough for that student to dig deep into an issue? Yellowstone National Park provided just such an invitation. The competition over resources has created controversy in and around the park. McGuire (2007) claimed that students, as future citizens, needed the efficacy to help shape public policy. Graseck (2009) argued that students could be given an incentive to consider different perspectives when facing controversy in a classroom. The process of scaffolding content through guided questioning was described by Johnson and Johnson (1998), and expanded upon by Avery, Levi and Simmer (2013). Rich content and a broad range of “powerful ideas from multiple perspectives” (McGuire, 2007, p. 622) combine to help students understand the complexity of an idea.

When teaching about how markets work, economics instructors often introduce simplified models to describe how people make consumption and production decisions. The simplified models describe how consumers and producers react to changing prices as well as shortages and surpluses in the market to guide their decision-making. The models rely on a set of assumptions, most important, the assumption of Ceteris Paribus, or all other things remaining the same. This focuses students’ attention on the relationships between price, quantity supplied, and quantity demanded. It also allows students to see how consumers and producers react to shortages and surpluses in the market place. However, it ignores the dynamic interdependence that dominates markets. Once the students understand how prices distribute scarce goods and services as well as allocate scarce resources that are used to produce those goods and services, instructors weaken the assumptions and begin introducing variables that more accurately describe the market interactions. The model has been helpful in exploring some key relationships before adding complicating factors that make the model more like real markets.

An in-depth level of understanding of both natural and social systems was necessary for the Indiana State University students to fully engage in the issues they studied at YNP. Many of the students brought preconceived ideas about the issues related to bison and brucellosis, wolves, bio-prospecting and winter use. According to Reiser (2004), preconceived ideas of students needed to be challenged in order to fully understand all of the perspectives provided by the stakeholders involved in complex public debates. Davis (2003) described the process of using prompts to assist middle school science students in arranging, scaffolding their understanding to connect the content and multiple perspectives while developing deeper understanding of scientific knowledge. The students from Indiana State University were much older and the content more difficult, but the same processes of building content and multiple perspectives was used to help students better understand the messy competition over public resources facing the stakeholders in and around YNP. Management science informed education about the importance of understanding how complex systems in the natural and social sciences interacted to explain how the world works (Checkland, 1985). So how does a high school or undergraduate student understand enough of the natural world to effectively use social science models to make good decisions as a participative citizen?

SIMPLIFIED MODELS TO TEACH COMPLEX SYSTEMS

Secondary teachers find themselves teaching about complex systems. The science teachers are working with naturally occurring systems, and the social studies teachers are working with man-made systems, but they are both complex and interdependent. Once students recognize the realities of systems thinking, there is much to tie the teaching/learning in the social and natural sciences together. Teachers can draw examples from things that are familiar to students, in order to help them understand the workings of systems that may not be quite so familiar with.

Scientists and societies have been trying to manage these complex natural and social systems from the beginning of recorded history. Sometimes this occurs with great success, but more often the results are not what we hoped for or expected. Generally, when this system’s management fails to achieve the manager's goals, it is due to an incomplete understanding of the interconnections that exist within the system or an unexpected exogenous shock.
There is a tendency for the experts of both natural and social systems to think or even assume that the current state of knowledge in the discipline is adequate for reasoned and controlled intervention in order to achieve better system outcomes. In economics, this means achieving a more efficiently functioning economic system that moves toward an equilibrium characterized by low unemployment and inflation and a reasonably high level of economic growth. Of course we know that economic equilibriums are impossible and even conceptually not stable for even the shortest of times. The concept of market equilibrium is an abstract one that allows us to look at certain parts of the system with some hope of understanding some of the basic relationships and interactions within it. The best we can hope for in economics is to intervene in the system in ways that help it move in the direction that the abstract notion of an instantaneous equilibrium would be.

In ecology or wildlife management, the notion of equilibrium is perhaps even more abstract and not a natural state in any ecosystem. So, for the ecologist this often times means intervening again in a system that has already been modified, usually by man’s attempt to manage the system to make it more desirable in some social sense. The idea of restoration or even of ecological balance is generally to move the system back toward what is believed to have been its state prior to the earlier intervention. In the case of Yellowstone to what the system was like when wolves, the apex predator, were present. To cite another example, in the case of restoration of the Everglades, to a state of water flow that was occurring prior to the draining of the swamps to make the land more valuable for agriculture and development.

Economists have debated for centuries over which economic systems and economic management practices will result in socially desirable outcomes. The debate over proper ecosystem management practices is more recent and has come to the forefront in places like Yellowstone National Park where ecologists have been trying to return the ecosystem to its natural state, largely by the reintroduction of the system's apex predator, the wolf. It was less than 100 years ago that Aldo Leopold published the first textbook in the field of wildlife management (Leopold and Brooks, 1933), and became the nation's first academic chair in game management.

The two basic theories about how ecological and economic systems interrelate after some exogenous force throws the systems out of equilibrium have much in common. The trophic cascade model describes the ecological phenomenon triggered by the addition or renewal of top or apex predators from an ecosystem. It involves interrelated, multi-directional changes in the relative populations of various predator and prey species through a food web, which often results in dramatic changes in ecosystem structure and cycling.

The general equilibrium model in economics attempts to recognize the same kind of complex social systems that are found in a diverse ecosystem. It describes the various supply and demand fundamentals in a social system made up of thousands of interrelated markets. General equilibrium analyzes the mechanisms by which the choices of economic agents are coordinated across all markets. The key to general equilibrium analysis is the need to understand how these diverse markets are interrelated, just as the key to the trophic cascade analysis is the need to understand how the diverse species in an ecosystem are interrelated.

CONCLUSION

Against a backdrop of majestic mountains, a violent geological record and some of the most diverse flora and fauna in existence in the United States, twelve in-service teachers discovered how understanding the importance of the interactions of social and natural systems is when making public policy. Yellowstone National Park as a classroom and invitation gave these students the opportunity to observe the complexity of balancing these policies to reach an efficient public policy solution. Using simplified models to describe complex reality may be an integral part of social science and science instruction, but a system thinking approach is also important in order to give citizens the efficacy to participate in environmental sustainability.
Endnotes


iii For more information, see http://www.yellowstonepark.com/yellowstone-wolves-reintroduction/.

iv For a nice, short video presentation of this idea, see the Youtube video “How wolves change rivers,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q.

v For more information, please see, https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/wolf-restoration.htm.

Resources


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Using News Media Content Analysis As A Teaching Tool In Sociology Of Popular Culture

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Abstract
Content analysis can be an effective means of having students apply what they are learning in the classroom and of retaining and motivating students who might otherwise drop or fail a class. In examining nine semesters of teaching sociology of popular culture, a comparison of withdrawal and failure rates between classes that contained a content analysis of television network evening news and those that did not revealed a significant difference, with far fewer students withdrawing and/or failing in the sections of the course that incorporated the assignment.

Key Words: content analysis, popular culture, news media, student retention, classroom exercises

Introduction
Over the past decade, this researcher has taught courses such as sociology of mass media and sociology of popular culture, and within sections of each, has incorporated a research method that allows students in those courses to collect and analyze data in a non-obtrusive fashion, learn a method that involves both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, and evaluate mass media in terms of their emphasis on entertainment in their news programming. In these classes, students perform a content analysis of television network evening news, viewing five nights’ worth of programming and evaluating it in terms of the amount of time news media spend on forms of entertainment. As a technique of applied learning, this assignment is quite useful as it has proven to improve student retention rates in the aforementioned classes (see discussion below). The inspiration for this assignment stems from a similar assignment used in a political science course taught by Mark J. Peterson at Pittsburg State University, the Media Institute’s analysis of television news (1983), and from the work others have done in developing content analysis as a research method (for a more in-depth discussion of the methodology’s use contemporarily, see Neuendorf 2016; Berg and Lune 2012; Krippendorff and Bock 2008; Wimmer and Dominick 2005; Riffe Lacy and Fico 2005; Krippendorff 2004; Stemler and ERIC 2001).

Content Analysis
Content analysis, as a research method, is a technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff 2004). In the past, content analysis has been portrayed as a simple system that engages in word-frequency counts or, in the case of newspaper content, the inches of space dedicated to a particular issue (Franzosi 2004). The assumption made is that the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concerns. This is an overly simplistic conceptualization of the method, as content analysis contains both qualitative and quantitative applications (Dougherty 2005; Krippendorff 2004; Taylor 2003; Clark and Lang 2002). As one aspect that demonstrates its complexity as a method, content analysis allows one to infer from symbolic data what would be too costly, no longer possible, or too obtrusive by the use of other research techniques (Krippendorff 2004). Additionally, it enables a researcher to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention (Berg and Lune 2012).

In using content analysis, there are three basic applications: 1) to describe the characteristics of messages being analyzed; 2) to make inferences about the sender of the message and about its causes; and 3) to make inferences about the effects of messages on recipients (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias and
DeWaard 2015). For the content analysis assignment, students focus on the first and third applications as they analyze network television news broadcasts.

As a benefit for instructors using content analysis as a teaching tool, it allows research to be performed by students without having to attain IRB or human subjects approval, given that the method is unobtrusive and involves no risk in this particular instance. In the absence of time to devote to teaching students a substantive overview of content analysis as a method (given that the sociology of popular culture is an upper division general education course), an elaborate set of coding instructions allows students to perform the research, analyze the data attained, and derive conclusions based on the questions outlined in the assignment instructions.

**Popular culture as a teaching tool**

Over the years, college instructors have incorporated forms of popular culture as a means of conveying sociological concepts. Some have incorporated cartoons (Scanlan and Fienberg 2000) and comic book material (Snyder 1997) as teaching tools. Film has become quite useful as a medium to convey concepts and issues (see Deets 2009; Finley 2004; King 2000; Valdez and Halley 1999; Tipton and Tiemann 1993). Popular music is a readily accessible medium to use in the classroom or for research purposes. Some have used music to convey sociological concepts (Albers and Bach 2003; Ahlkvist 1999; Walczak and Reuter 1994) and issues of race and gender (Armstrong 2001), while others have used music in film as a means to teach social-psychological concepts (Hoeckner et al 2011) and even content analysis as a methodology (Messinger 2012).

Adam Messinger’s use of *Harry Potter* film music (2012) allowed students to engage in evaluative research, learn to code data, and understand sociological concepts such as socialization and stereotyping. In the sociology of popular culture course, this researcher does something similar, though the emphasis is more on factors such as time and entertainment. With the use of content analysis, the methodology informs students as to the extent of popular culture’s influence on social institutions, in this case specifically mass media, and on individual people as audience. Additionally, in aggregating the data from the students’ analyses from each semester and present the findings to the class, students get to feel that they are part of ongoing research and that their contribution matters.

**The assignment**

For the pop culture content analysis assignment, students are required to record five nights’ worth of television network evening news from the three major television networks (ABC, CBS and NBC). Since 2010, students have been required to analyze five nights’ worth of 24 hour news channels (CNN, MSNBC and FOX News). It is their discretion as to whether they will watch one network or a combination of the three. Students have the option of working in teams for viewing and coding the programs, but each must write up his/her own analysis and findings. For each half hour program, students must code every segment of time as part of one of four categories: 1) real news — information that is pertinent to one’s life, 2) financial/economic news — information about the Dow Jones, stock market activity, job creation/elimination, 3) international news — information about countries other than the U.S., and 4) entertainment — information pertaining to some form of popular culture. The international news category is broken down further into subcategories reflective of categories one, two, and four. Category four, entertainment, is further broken down into the following subcategories: A) Human interest stories — stories that do not impart important information but rather tug at the emotions of the viewer, B) Teasers — repeatedly referring to an upcoming story prior to a commercial break, and then waiting to present the segment at the end of the newscast, C) Beating-a-dead-horse stories — if a story is covered for more than one night, without imparting any new information, it qualifies in this category, D) Trivia — stories on celebrities, musicians, athletes, forms of entertainment (movies, sports) and other diversions, and E) Advertisements — obviously this includes the air-time devoted to commercials (which represents a definite bias towards consumerism and materialism), but it also includes any stories devoted to a new product or service; or to developments within a company (forms of free advertising).
For each news program, students need to label each segment according to one of the above categories and time the duration of the story. (For example, a segment on missing nuclear warheads left at a rest stop in Texas that receives 30 seconds of coverage — this would be Category I). If a story seems to fit into more than one category, the student must decide on which category it fits best, and provide some rationale for placing it in that category as opposed to another. This may be challenging for some stories, given the media’s tendency to fixate on particular stories, and it requires the student to exercise discretion and assess what the news story is actually about.

Students must write up their findings — the amount of time devoted to each category, the types of stories covered in each category — and then analyze the news program. The following are questions their analysis must address: 1) What category makes up the bulk of the time for the news broadcast? 2) What does the content of news programming tell us about our culture? 3) What is emphasized as important? 4) What has value in our culture, according to what is presented on the evening news? 5) What is your assessment of television news as a form of mass media devoted to conveying information to society? 6) Are the results of your analysis possibly skewed by an event?

In addition to the preceding list of questions, a concept or theoretical paradigm discussed in class is included as a prompt for analysis and discussion of the data the students have produced. In the past, such prompts have included Michael Parenti’s discussion of methods of media manipulation (1997) and the myth of the liberal media (1995), Robert McChesney’s discussion of journalism, democracy and social class (2000), and Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s portrayal of the culture industry (1993).

Students must include in their paper the dates of the news program they watched, and the network on which they appeared. They must also include a table that lays out each category, the stories contained within them and their duration. The purpose behind this last requirement is to allow an aggregation of data for all of the students’ analyses (see Table 1).

**Results**

Table 1 conveys the aggregated results of the students’ analyses by year. Seeing the results longitudinally gives students an understanding of the political economy of news production and broadcasting. Many students comment on their refusal to watch television news, and that the content analysis assignment reinforces their beliefs regarding the lack of substantive content on television news programs. Others, taking a less individualistic stance, report that they use the aggregated data to argue with friends and relatives as to the merits of watching television news – their response is to address the social aspects of news media, seeking to inculcate skepticism in their family and friendship networks with regard to the news information being presented by mass media.

Beyond the product of their research, this researcher engages students in an evaluation of the methodology, having them critique content analysis after they turn in their papers. As the method can be difficult for students to learn (Clark and Lang 2002; Hood 2006) students discuss problems with the coding schema that is provided them for their analysis. In their effort to identify stories as being one of the four categories in the coding schema, some have argued a fifth should be created for stories that did not readily fit into the four. Others have asked whether the instructor had exposed them to a form of agenda setting by creating the coding categories for them. The discussions regarding the methodology continue after the graded papers are returned and they are shown the aggregated results of their work. Students point out that five nights’ worth of evening news is not an adequate sample for being able to make any generalizations about television news as a source of information. Without stating it explicitly, students are critiquing the method as employed for the assignment in terms of validity and reliability.

An analysis of grades and student retention data (Table 2) reveals that given the opportunity to perform the content analysis improved student retention for the classes in which the project was assigned. In terms of course grades, the class average for sections with the assignment was the same as those without (79%). The average grade for the content analysis paper was 40/50, closely mirroring the overall class grade average. What was significant was the rate of failure/withdrawal for the classes. In sections in which the content analysis was assigned as a project, the average failure/withdrawal rate was 12.7%. In the sections where it was not incorporated, the failure/withdrawal rate was 22.0%. While it may be argued...
that other factors affected the failure/withdrawal rates in individual sections of the class (e.g., economic conditions forcing students to withdraw, or personal troubles impacting individual student performance), the data indicates that inclusion of the content analysis assignment improved student retention.

Discussion

This assignment allows students to do applied research in the class, and the lower rate of failure/withdrawal from the course sections where it was included indicates it is effective as a teaching tool. As a result of doing this assignment, many students become radicalized, seeking to delve into subjects covered by news media in greater depth by accessing multiple sources of news media, usually external to the U.S., given that U.S. journalism is more focused on entertainment and celebrity than on reporting on subjects of real importance (for example, see McChesney 2004; Alterman 2003; McComas Shanahan and Butler 2001). A common result of undertaking the content analysis research is for students to approach the instructor, sometimes during the subsequent semester or even later, to inform this researcher that members of their families have expressed a genuine interest in the papers they have written. They often indicate their families have not expressed any interest in their academic work prior to presenting them with the research they did for the pop culture class.

Thus, the applied research they perform as content analysis for the sociology of popular culture class provides not only an incentive to perform well and stay in the class, but also serves as an affirmation of their pursuit of higher education, via the feedback they receive from family members and members of their social networks of whom they have exposed the product of their research. For instructors, content analysis provides opportunity to have students perform research, applying concepts they have learned in class, in an unobtrusive manner, and the results of that research become subject of discussion and debate in the classroom.

References

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### Table 1. Content Analysis of Television News

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>9:13</td>
<td>10:21</td>
<td>7:21</td>
<td>6:51^</td>
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<td>2:37</td>
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<td>3:40</td>
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<td>15:46</td>
<td>14:26</td>
<td>16:07</td>
<td>18:23</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

^ Time: minutes and seconds of a 60 minute broadcast (average of CNN, FOX and MSNBC combined)
* Time: minutes and seconds of a 30 minute broadcast (average of NBC, CBS and ABC combined)
# The 2001 data was derived prior to the events in New York City and Washington, D.C. on September 11th.

### Table 2. Course Data from Sociology of Popular Culture

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Semester/year</th>
<th>Avg. score on paper</th>
<th>No. of Withdrawals and failures/total enrolled</th>
<th>Class average grade as %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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**BIO**

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Hitler’s Philosophy of Life

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“…Hugh Trevor-Roper who argued, many years ago, that however repugnant a figure Hitler was in the eyes of decent people, the consistency with which he pursued his objectives merited more serious examination of his philosophy of life than it had hitherto received” (Carr, 1979, p. 112).

Introduction
This article follows the advice of Hugh Trevor-Roper. Since Hitler was not an original thinker it is important to understand his milieu. This article attempts to identify eight factors that influenced his philosophy-of-life. Curiously, many of these factors were fashioned decades before Hitler was born. Many of the ideas were English.

The eight events, ideas, and experiences addressed in this research are remarkably left out of the literature. These items will be called “Foundations” in this paper. This research attempts to bridge that gap in the literature. This article also addresses Hegel’s influence on Hitler’s ideas and philosophy. A review of the literature follows.

Review of Literature
Since Hitler is one of the most enigmatic characters of history --- little understood, confusing, and empty --- we must delve deeper to find his philosophical makeup. One source in the popular press that assists in trying to understand Hitler is a book by Francis Fukuyama. The End of History and the Last Man is a 1992 book by Francis Fukuyama, expanding on his 1989 essay "The End of History?”, published in the international affairs journal, The National Interest. In the book, Fukuyama argues that the advent of Western liberal democracy may signal the endpoint of humanity's sociocultural evolution and the final form of human government.

Fukuyama (1992) posited: “What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (p. 112).

Both time and geopolitics are important when examining Hitler’s philosophy-of-life. Geopolitics is the study of the human condition and how human history is told through the passing of generations. On average, a new generational cycle is completed every 20 years or so. This means that the world we knew two decades ago and the world we will see two decades from now should look very different from the one we're experiencing today. If you're skeptical, consider 2017. Now, subtract 20-25 years and see what picture you end up with. In the late 1990s, the United States was in the midst of an economic boom, and political theorists in a postwar euphoria boldly claimed that we had reached the "end of history" and that liberal, capitalistic democracy had triumphed over dangerous ideological thinking. Russia was still in shambles, and the European Union was convinced that closer integration would invite economic prosperity, positioning the Continent to better compete with America. Meanwhile, Japan was starting to
feel the pain of its first Lost Decade, and China had begun its rapid ascent as the world's economic "miracle."

Now consider the cycle we are in today, one that began with a crisis that shattered the world. The 2008 collapse of the global financial system stripped away the prosperity that bound the European Union together, short-circuited China's low-end manufacturing boom and triggered a prolonged slump. Jobs were lost and disillusionment with the political establishments spread.

Only at this point do we add in the individual. If you skip ahead, as many intuitively do, and try to glean answers from what figures such as Donald Trump, Emmanuel Macron or Rodrigo Duterte say, you risk falling into the deep chasm between intention and reality. But when you organize the world into generational cycles and base your understanding on a firm geopolitical foundation, individuals form but a thin film on what is already a thick body of analysis. The leaders in question are then revealed as products of their time, not aberrations in need of constant psychoanalysis. And the structural forces that brought them to power will be the ones to constrain, shape and bend their actions once in office, limiting the possibilities as to what may actually transpire (Economist, November 12th, 2016).

An examination of the eight foundations that shaped Hitler’s philosophy-of-life and an explanation of Hegel’s Foundation of the State for both fascists and communists follows.

**Foundation #1: Lebensraum**

German philosopher Fichte (1762-1814) called for a great leader to create a Reich by seizing Lebensraum or Living Space---from Germany’s neighbors, especially Russia. Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) in (1897) pioneered ideas that contributed to Lebensraum in Germany.

The idea of Lebensraum was introduced to the German masses during the Great War as the Septemberprogramm. Then, when hunger hit Germany during World War II, the concept gained popularity. It was thought that Russia could feed the hungry masses of Germany. According to Nardo (1999) Hitler felt entitled to the western part of Russia’s land for more living space for Germans. Hitler once proclaimed: “But nature has not reserved this soil for the future possession of any particular nation or race; on the contrary, this soil exists for the people which possess the force to take it” (p. 75).

**Foundation #2: The Autodidact, His Library, and His Manuscripts**

Hitler was a high school dropout. But by 1914, it was possible for the common soldiers to be not only literate but dramatically literary. By the time of the Great War an important trend was ubiquitous – the trend of self-education. The everyman house.

Hitler was an autodidact. He was part of a movement of self-directed learning that was popular before the 20th century. Autodidacticism is not the typical every day learning by people interested in some subject. It is a serious do-it-yourself well-thought-out learning. The autodidact is a “self-teacher.” Autodidacticism is a contemplative, absorptive procession. Some autodidacts spend a great deal of time reviewing the resources of libraries. Like Hitler, Stalin and Mao also received much of their education through independent, unguided reading (Khlevniuk, 2016).

Hitler, a high school dropout, is notorious for having a bias against education during World War II. According to Time Life (1989), he is famous for boldly stating: “I will have no intellectual training. Knowledge is ruin to my young men. A violently active, dominating, brutal youth---that is what I am after” (pg. 102).

**Hitler’s Personal Library**

Hitler was an avid reader. Hitler comments in Mein Kampf that he remembers, when a child, rummaging through his father’s library. Hitler’s acquaintances confirm this appetite for reading.

Hitler once described his time in Landsberg Prison as his “higher education at state expense” where he could get back to reading and learning. One of his fellow inmates at Landsberg Prison recalled that, "Only a single light burned usually late into the night.” It was Hitler reading. (Ryback, 2008).

According to Ryback (2008), Hitler’s library contained more than 16,000 books of which 12,000 survive in archives today. Over 1,200 volumes are in the Rare Book Division of the Library of Congress. Brown University has 80 volumes. Many of the others are in the Linz Archives.
Hitler collected books from several genres, including: *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and *Gulliver’s Travels*, among the greatest works of world literature. He also collected works of William Shakespeare. He owned a tome called *Words of Christ*; and he also owned Henry Ford’s racist book: *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem.* Many of Hitler’s books have marginalia or comments in the margins of the pages of the book. (Ryback, 2008).

**Hitler's Manuscripts**

Hitler wrote three manuscripts: *Mein Kampf volume one* (1925); *Mein Kampf volume two* (1926); and *Zweites Buch*, which was an untitled unpublished book, also known as the “Second Book” (1928). Hitler had a passion for reading, grabbing all the daily newspapers available at the men’s homes where he resided, reading numerous political pamphlets and borrowing many books from the library on German history and mythology. He had a curious but academically untrained mind and examined the complex philosophical works of Nietzsche, Hegel, Fichte, Treitschke and the Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Hitler picked up bits and pieces of philosophy and ideas from them, and would up with a hodgepodge of racist, nationalistic, and anti-Semitic attitudes that over time became a die-hard philosophy, later to be described in his book, *Mein Kampf* (The History Place, 1996).

**Foundation #3: English Social Darwinism**

The idea of Social Darwinism was developed in England. In Herbert Spencer’s *The Social Organism* (1860), Spencer compares society to a living organism. Biological organisms evolve by natural selection and societies evolve through a corresponding process. Malthus, also from England, wrote a popular book in 1798, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. This book argues that an increasing population would outgrow its food supply and would result in the starvation of the weakest members of society.

Malthus anticipated the Social Darwinists by implying that charity could worsen social problems. These ideas interested Darwin’s cousin, Francis Galton. Galton argued that morals needed to change so that heredity was a conscious decision. Society must avoid both the over-breeding of less fit and the under-breeding of the more fit ones.

In 1880, The term, “Social Darwinism” first appeared in Continental Europe. Later, in Germany, Social Darwinism became accepted in bourgeois circles. Also, the world was seen as split into strong and weak. Racial necessities, not Marxist economic determinism was seen as determinant.

According to Bullock (1993), Social Darwinism was the foundation of Hitler’s philosophy. Social Darwinism is the belief that all life was engaged in struggle for existence in which only the fittest survived. This is where Hitler confronted the socialist belief in equality of all races with what Bullock (1993) calls “the aristocratic principle of Nature” or the natural inequality of individuals and races. This idea was picked up by Hitler in professing that Marxism was a doctrine invented by a Jew, Karl Marx, and used by the Jewish leaders of the Social Democratic party to ensnare the masses and turn them against Germany, and the Germanic race (Bullock, 1993).

Hitler’s use of Social Darwinism was harsh: “Man has become great through struggle. Whatever goal man has reached is due to his originality plus his brutality. Bullock (1993) states that Hitler posited: “All life is summed up in three forms: struggle is the father of all things, virtue lies in blood, and leadership is primary and decisive” (pp. 140-141). In *Mein Kampf* (1925) Hitler wrote: “He who wants to live must fight, and he who does not want to fight in this world where eternal struggle is the law of life has no right to exist” (p. 141).

This harsh application of Social Darwinism comes from his days living in Vienna, especially from Vienna’s “gutter press.” One fear the Viennese people had, was that between 1857 and 1910, the Jewish population rose from two percent to more than eight percent of the population (Time Life Editors, 1990). It was well known that Vienna was the most anti-Semitic city in Western Europe (Time Life Editors, 1990). German-speaking Austrians were suspicious of the number of Jews in occupations such as banking, teaching, and journalism. Some Austrian people claimed Jews were purposefully sabotaging German culture. From this a conspiracy theory was formulated that Jews were engaging in a multipronged attack on German values, economy, and racial integrity. By the turn of the century this theory penetrated deep into the population of German-speaking Austria. Organized anti-Semitic groups were forming and anti-Semitism began to be the rallying cry for several political organizations in Vienna.
Foundation #4: Eugenics

According to Nardo (1999), Hitler’s early attempts at eugenics in Germany revolved around promoting the benefits of earlier marriages. The idea of earlier marriages meant that men, if they married earlier, would not turn to prostitutes for sexual desires, and in turn, would avoid diseases such as syphilis. It would also lead to an increase, improvement, and preservation of the species and the race.

Hitler had numerous ideas on keeping the German population pure and strong. In 1933 sterilization programs for both the mentally and physically handicapped came into existence. In 1935 abortion was legalized for the racially inferior. By 1945, over half a million people had been sterilized. Hitler’s ultimate plan was that only ‘racially valuable women should give birth (Dufner, 2003). In the book, The New Order (1989) it states: “The Nazi regime was interested in increasing the population of only healthy Germans. People with defects that were thought to be inheritable were forcibly sterilized” (p. 120).

Hitler called on the medical community to control reproduction. Physicians and eugenicists in the Third Reich were asked to bring all reproduction under government control (Victor, 1998). This goal was never accomplished. It did, however, increase control both publicly and secretly. The German government established screening boards so that every couple could apply for approval of marriage and have children. In 1935 approval became mandatory and the idea was to reduce marriages. The Nazi Party urged Aryans to divorce Jewish and partly Jewish spouses. The courts in Germany recognized Jewishness as grounds for divorce. These policies implemented by Hitler, came from a myth that the master race of pure Germans was really pure Nordic—tall, blonde, and blue-eyed (Victor, 1998).

Vienna

Hitler spent much of his youth in Vienna, Austria; especially his teenage years. During Hitler’s time in Austria (1908-1913) there was strong anti-Semitic sentiment. This would influence Hitler’s view of Jews for the remainder of his life. Much of this anti-Semitic sentiment came from politicians such as Karl Lueger, the Mayor of Vienna, and the Austrian press.

Hitler was strongly influenced by two racist pamphleteers in Vienna, Lanz von Liebenfels and Guido von List. According to Stalcup (2000), the racist Liebenfels once stated in a 1908 pamphlet: “The whole mongrelized breed of Jews and lesser men must be wiped off the face of the earth” (p. 44). According to Victor (1998), Vienna’s other prolific racist pamphleteer of the time, Guido von List during the 1908-1914 era called for: “Destruction of International Jewish conspiracy” (p. 26). List further elaborated and said two things needed to happen: 1.) Establishment of a racially pure state; and 2.) A global war against the international Jews who sought to destroy civilization. (Victor, 2000).

Another influence of anti-Semitism for Hitler was the mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger. Hitler greatly admired Lueger and believed he was the greatest mayor in history! Later in his life, he would try to emulate Lueger’s mannerisms and political strategies. Lueger, for example, was a master at kinetic communication when he spoke. Another example, would be that Lueger remained single, or as he stated, he was married to the Viennese people by being their mayor. It was a known fact that Lueger still consortied with lots of women while being mayor of Vienna. Lueger was an excellent orator and one speech Lueger gave that really stuck with Hitler until later in his life was when Lueger blamed the Jewish-liberal press for putting Germany in “chains” (Stalcup, 2000).

The United States

During the same time period, the idea of eugenics and anti-Semitic feelings were being expressed in Western Europe by the bourgeois class, the ideas also permeated in United States culture as well. Several influential people of 20th century America spoke out in favor of eugenics and/or made public, anti-Semitic remarks. Margaret Sanger (1921) posited: “Eugenics is the most adequate and thorough avenue to the solution of racial, political and social problems.” Henry Ford (1919) once said: “The Jews caused the great war, the Jews caused the outbreak of thieving and robbery all over the country.” Even Teddy Roosevelt (1913) commented: “The USA is a nation which permits unlimited breeding from the worst stocks, physically and morally”

Foundation #5: The Soldier of the Great War & the Shock to Modernity
The Loss of Innocence
When examining World War I, one must first contemplate the possibilities inherent in modernity present during the fin-de-siecle. For example, progress was a paramount vow of the enlightenment. With World War I that promise was broken. An example is that, before the war, the word *machine* was never affixed to the word, *gun*. Increased technology gave increased lethality.

The first Battle of the Marne (September 1914) exacted half million casualties for each side. The original British Army was essentially destroyed. Another example, The Somme was the largest engagement fought since the beginnings of civilization. Out of the 110,000 men that attacked the Germans on July 1, 1916, 60,000 were killed or wounded by the end of the day. Yet another example was the Third Battle of Ypres (1917). This battle cost the British 370,000 casualties (The Twisted Dream, 1990).

However, it was the Somme that ended the illusion of progress and launched the concept of postmodernity. The poem, *MCMXIV*, written by Philip Larkin (1914) announces the loss of an innocence never regained from the Great War:

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“Never before or since,
As changed itself to past
Without a word—the men
Leaving the gardens tidy,
The thousands of marriages
Lasting a little while longer:
Never such innocence again.”
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### Inadequacy of Language

Modernity was not ready for industrialized war—the slaughter by both machine and science. In 1914, language had no words for the Great War because it was utterly indescribable. The horror was beyond belief. Generals almost never went to the front. When generals did see the front they literally could not believe that men were living and fighting in such conditions. The inadequacy of language to convey the reality of trench warfare was a motif of anyone who wrote about the war.
Some words created during World War I:

**Words of the War still used in 2018**

1. Over the top (that idea is over the top)
2. Lousy, crummy (lice)
3. Breakthroughs (science)
4. Bombarded (with requests)
5. Barrage (of questions)
6. Sectors (private/public)
7. Firing line (William F. Buckley)
8. Blown away (“I was blown away by that movie”)
9. Front (weather front)
10. No man’s land (place to stay away from)
11. Basket case (weave baskets as therapy for mental illness)
12. Bought the farm (insurance $10,000 – literally bought a farm for their family)

**Men of Violence**

The Great War became an enduring psychological fixture of the men that had fought it. The war hardened soldiers and they became men of violence. Hitler was one of these men. Hitler was a *Meldeganger* (message runner) during World War I. This assignment was terrifying, dangerous and more often than not, lead to a short life. *Meldegangers* were expected to run through shrapnel and enemy fire while the regular infantry could take cover. Ten *Meldegangers* were sent out in the hope that one would get through with the message. By 1915, Hitler was the only original *Meldeganger* left in his regiment.

In all, Hitler survived fifty battles, in which his own regiment was wiped out over and over---replenished and wiped out again and again. He was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class in 1914 and the Iron Cross First Class in 1918, which was the highest award possible for someone enlisted. Like the other men that survived, he suffered the shock to modernity and became a man of violence.

**Foundation #6: The Judeo-Bolshevik Composite**

Many soldiers, including Hitler, returned from World War I extraordinarily disillusioned with the German government and very suspicious of any eft-wing politicians especially the communists. Bolshevism (Russian Communism) was seen by some Germans as a Jewish conspiracy. During the Russian Civil War, the Whites used a category called: “Judeo-Bolshevik.” In Russia, it was “open season” on anyone that fell into that category. Many of the well-known Bolsheviks were Jews (Marx, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov and Radek). Early on, the Bolsheviks countered accusations of Jewish-Bolshevikism.

One incident occurred when Lenin went to Petrograd in March of 1919 to address striking factory workers. He was booed off the platform, along with Zinoviev, by the workers yelling, “Down with Jews and the commissars.” Three days later (March 16th) the Cheka stormed the factory, arrested 900 and executed 200 workers.
The Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD), the largest communist movement outside of the USSR, was the major threat to the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP). Street battles between members of the KPD and NSDAP were common. NSDAP saw themselves as fighting against Bolshevism and Jewry. Both groups were viewed as internationalist by the nationals (NAZI).

Hitler was an army intelligence agent in 1919 and was ordered to penetrate the DAP. In a report to his CO, Hitler advocated a “rational anti-Semitism.” On September 19, 1919 Hitler was assigned to go to the German Workers Party (GWP) where Eckart was scheduled to speak. Eckart was a no-show, but Hitler was impressed by a book he was given, My Political Awakenings: From the Diary of a German Socialist Worker (Drexler, 2016).

Hitler was given a copy of Anton Drexler’s book, My Political Awakenings, at his first meeting of the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (DAP) in 1919. This book impressed Hitler. At Hitler’s second meeting of the DAP, Drexler introduced Hitler to Dietrich Eckart. Eckart, the Party’s co-founder and father of the party’s belief system, became Hitler’s mentor. Hitler credits Eckart with forging the link between Jews and Bolsheviks. Hitler states that he had only a passing contact with anti-Semitic thought before he met Eckart. He said he was “horrified” by the occasional anti-Semitic remarks he heard at school. The term, “Jew” was not used in his household because Hitler’s father considered it culturally backward. Eckart loathed the Versailles Treaty, and saw it as a stab-in-the-back, according to which the Marxists (SDs) and Jews were to be blamed for Germany’s defeat in the war. Eckart was a major influence in Hitler’s life and the two spent a vast amount of time together discussing art and Jews until Eckart’s death in 1923. Prior to his death, Eckart used his influence to begin the intentional creation of the Hitler Mystique.

Liebenfels, the racist pamphleteer from Vienna, called for “new racial order” of the racially elite. He also suggested that all men are divided into two groups: creative Aryans and Ape-men—most notably the Jews. The lower race was to be slaves to the Aryans according to Liebenfels (Stalcup, 2000).

Hitler met many white Russian refugees who flocked to Munich after the failure of the Russian counterrevolution. These individuals were already anti-Semitic and helped convince Hitler that the Russian Revolution was a revolt of the racial underworld provoked by the Jews in order to destroy Aryan peoples (Nardo, 1999).

Bolshevism (Russian Communism) was seen as a Jewish conspiracy for world rule and on February 27th, 1933, the parliamentary building was set on fire and burned down. Nazis told the public that the Communists did it, which gave him the opportunity to pass the Reichstag Fire Decree and start eliminating the Bolsheviks in Germany.

According to Nardo (1999) Hitler once stated: “The Bolsheviks are blood-stained criminals; the scum of humanity that overtook a great state and slaughtered thousands. The danger to which Russia succumbed is always present for Germany. Bolshevism has not been exorcised” (p. 29)

**Foundation #7:** Vienna 1908 – anti-Semitism

In the late 1800’s the multi-ethnic peoples of Austria-Hungary saw Jews as a negative object of interest. As in Germany, the bourgeoisie in the turn-of-the-century Vienna considered anti-Semitism fashionable. George Schoenerer (b. 1842) was a member of the German-National party. Schoenerer seems to have been the first to politicize anti-Semitism in Austria. The mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger (b. 1844) realized that raising the “Jewish Question” would earn him popularity with the people of Vienna. Lueger used the slogan, “Vienna is German and must remain German” (Economist p. 29, Jan. 6, 2017). Hitler paid him tribute in Mein Kampf.

After Hitler’s mother died in 1908 and he had been rejected by the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, Hitler made his way in Vienna by painting postcards and picking up odd jobs in construction. Accounts from people who knew Hitler said that most of the time between 1908 and 1913, Hitler lived in a substandard way. He usually didn’t have enough to eat, wore shabby clothes and slept in flophouses. In 1910, he moved into a men’s home that provided more security than the parks, flophouses, and homeless shelters he had previously lived in (Stalcup, 2000). These challenging living conditions Hitler endured in Vienna had a major effect on Hitler’s life.
Hitler stated that his political attitudes were formed in Vienna (Nardo, 1999). He admits that being exposed to the socialists, racialists, nationalists, attending numerous meetings of these aforementioned groups, and reading published pamphlets influenced him. He stated that his pride and sense of German nationalism was also developed in Vienna.

Hitler, while in Vienna, was also influenced by several people that would later shape his attitudes toward Jews. Two significant influences were the popular Vienna racist pamphleteers previously mentioned, Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels. Perhaps the greatest influence from Vienna on Hitler was Karl Lueger, the mayor of Vienna. Hitler would later emulate several of Lueger’s mannerisms. For example, Lueger thought it important to maintain his female following. Therefore, Lueger stayed a bachelor and publicly disavowed any private life, claiming that he was too busy because he belonged totally to “my Viennese.” Hitler would later use this idea when he led Germany. After observing the diverse political culture of Vienna, reading the many works of the racist pamphleteers, attending a variety of different political party meetings, and living in a city in Western Europe that was the mecca of hating Jews, it is no surprise that Hitler stated he adopted his anti-Semitic views during his time living in Vienna.

Foundation #8: Berlin and Munich 1919 – anti-Semitism

Many German soldiers, upon their return home to Germany both during and after the Great War, believed they had won the war. Yet, they did not despite earned victories in France and Russia. As they continued to return to Germany they saw many Jewish peoples running successful businesses and increasingly being in positions of influence.

Many citizens and returning soldiers were realizing that many communist and left-wing groups were fighting many right-wing groups all over Germany. The battles taking place in the streets of both Berlin and Munich were becoming increasingly violent. Eventually, the right-wing groups would use the same brutal tactics against the communist left-wing groups. The next two sections provide a brief overview of two particularly bloody battles between the groups.

Berlin (Communist Spartacists Revolution)

In January 1919, the Communists rose up in revolt in Berlin. The German communists wanted a Soviet Republic similar to the Bolsheviks’. The Spartacists were guided by the thoughts and actions of the famous Rosa Luxemburg. Luxemburg had written pamphlets about Lenin and how his leadership was essential. The Communist Spartacist Revolution was eventually beaten brutally. The Freikorps beat back the Spartacists/Communists and Luxemburg was killed after she was arrested.

Munich

In 1919, the Communist Party (CP) led by Eugen Levine took power in Munich. The Communist Party immediately proclaimed communist ideas: creating a Red Army, appropriating cash, food, apartments and giving workers the factories. On April 30th, 1919, the Communist Party executed members of the Thule Society as class enemies. In response to the executions, the Thule organized an uprising: 1.) In May, 9,000 local Munich men and 30,000 Freikorps men from outside Munich entered into vicious street fighting with the Communist Party. 2.) 1,000 Communists were killed in the fighting and 700 were executed by the Freikorps troops (Storming to Power, 1989).

Hegel’s Foundation of the State for Both the Fascist and Communist

The totalitarian states of the early 20th century (fascist and communist) were the offspring of one man’s thought – Hegel’s reality is reason. The State is more authentic than the individual. For Hegel, the State is the carrier of objective reason and is therefore “higher” than the individual. Bullock (1993) writes of Hegel’s State “A single person … is something subordinate … hence, if the state claims life, the individual must surrender it … The rational end of man is life in the state,” (pp. 241-242). The foundation of the new total-state of fascist and communist was this Hegelian mindset.

After Hegel’s death (1831) his philosophy of the state engendered two forms of Hegelians, radical left or “Young” (Linkshegelianer), and right conservative or “Old” (Rechtshegelianer). Well-known members of the Young Hegelians were Ludwig Feuerbach, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx. Clearly, they, via their “era of Action,” developed the beginnings of the Marxist-Leninist state. The Old Hegelians emphasized
the nation state and its institutions. While it is difficult to draw a direct line from the Old Hegelians to the National Socialist, it is clear that the Nazis reflected their interpretations of Hegel’s state.

The final dialectical stage of man’s “objective spirit” is expressed in the Rational State. The development to the Rational State took place over centuries. This “working out” of reason in history is reflected in the “sadness” of a human “slaughter bench.” But the “monstrous sacrifices” of history have brought us to the Rational State. This concept informed the Germans, including the Nazis, of the late 19th century. Hence, the war in Eastern Europe can be seen as a gigantic struggle of the Hegelians.

Conclusion

This research has attempted to explain eight possible factors (foundations) not frequently mentioned in the popular press that shaped Hitler’s philosophy-of-life. Other studies focus on events such as his father being physically abusive, the death of his mother, being rejected by the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts in 1907 and 1908, and his negative interactions with the Communists from both Russia and Germany.

Our research takes a different approach. This research focuses on how Hitler’s philosophy-of-life developed. This paper has included consequential events Hitler endured such as his numerous battles in World War I and how he survived gut-wrenching battle after gut-wrenching battle as a Meldeganger (message runner). Hitler was certainly influenced by the brutality of the Great War, being injured during the war, and what he viewed as Germany’s humiliating terms from the Treaty of Versailles. The Great War made Hitler a “hardened man” due to the things he saw and experienced. Hitler’s experiences of fighting in and living through the Great War is often forgotten in the popular press. It shouldn’t be. It had a significant impact in developing his philosophy.

His time living in poverty in Vienna between 1908 and 1913 and being exposed to the extreme anti-Semitic culture there also helped shape his philosophy. In fact, it has been noted in several sources that Vienna, Austria was the most anti-Semitic city in all of Europe during Hitler’s time of living there. In Austria, the two popular racist and anti-Semitic pamphleteers were Liebenfels and List. Hitler read their pamphlets regularly, and other anti-Semitic pamphlets and newspapers during his time in Vienna. Karl Lueger, the mayor of Vienna also influenced Hitler. Lueger used numerous gestures, mannerisms, and kinetic communication to communicate with the citizens of Vienna. Hitler would later adopt many of the same mannerisms when speaking to the German people. He would also develop his own. The numerous radical political organizations and meetings Hitler attended as an adolescent in Vienna certainly affected his philosophy. He admitted as much in Mein Kampf.

Finally, the fact that Hitler was an autodidactic learner influenced his philosophy of life. Hitler read a wide range of genres and took notes in the margins of these books (marginalia). These notes helped Hitler glean what he wanted from what he read and then apply that knowledge as he saw fit. It is said that Hitler read a book a night and had a library of well over 12,000 books in his personal library. Stalin and Mao were also autodidactic learners, and like Hitler, both were brutal men. Hitler was known for bragging about how he could read an entire book in an evening and take away only what he needed from the book (by making notes in the margins…marginalia) and then disregard the rest. It is our belief that the eight factors (foundations) mentioned in our paper offer possible explanations of this complex man’s philosophy of life.

This research has also offered an explanation of how Hegel’s view of the State explains the clash between the fascists and communists in Europe, specifically in Germany. Hollins (2007) writes: “There are not that many individual madmen in any age, but great collective lunacy does indeed occur because charismatic madness touches and activates the “mad parts” in otherwise quite sane people” (p. 114).

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Abstract

Does teaching necessarily imply the indoctrination of one's students? To answer that conceptual question, it is important to know what is meant by “indoctrination.” This study defined indoctrination as it applied to the classroom, and demonstrated that teaching often involves indoctrination, either through the content of the lessons, hidden messages in textbooks (Sadker, 2017; Ferguson, Brown, & Torres, 2016), statements of the teacher (Journell, 2016), or the intent of the teacher (Håkansson, 2015). While indoctrination is often an unintended side-effect of teaching, pedagogy does not require indoctrination. The fundamental idea behind this study was that teachers could teach without having indoctrinated their students (Copp, 2016). Furthermore, this study demonstrated how the act of indoctrination was contrary to creating life-long, metacognitive learners (Han, 2015; Taylor, 2014). To assist educators in achieving the fundamental goal of teaching their students in as unbiased a manner as possible (Taylor, 2016), this study identified and examined the six categories of indoctrination that can take place in a teacher-led classroom, and explained the research-validated methods for preventing the indoctrination of their students.

Education and Indoctrination in the Social Sciences

“Trump is unfit to be President or Commander-in-Chief.” “Clinton is the most corrupt politician to ever seek the Presidency.” “Put God back in our schools!” “America is more divided today than it was before the Civil War.” With today’s political comments and deep divisions separating the citizens of the United States of America’s two-party system, teaching has become a controversial occupation (Brown, 2017; Kerdeman, 2017; Copp, 2016; Journell, 2016). People on the political left demand a separation of church and state. People on the political right demand the inclusion of Christian religion in our schools. People on all sides of the political spectrum argue for their views to be included in the curriculum. Given the current political climate, concerned educators might ask, “Is it possible to teach without favoring the bias of one side in order to do so without indoctrinating their students?” (Brown, 2017; Kerdeman, 2017; Copp, 2016; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016; Journell, 2016; Håkansson, 2015). Conversely, since the teachings of John Dewey (1897, 1916), educators have been faced with the question, “Does education today require the indoctrination of students?”

Problem Statement

Just as citizens across the United States of America presently seem to be deeply divided on their political and racial perspectives, it can logically be assumed that classrooms are equally divided, since young students often reflect the ideologies of their parents. The significance of this study is that a divided classroom may mean that only half the students are being reached by their teacher in the event that they represent the portion of the class that agrees with the ideologies of their teacher. Where the beliefs or opinions of students diverge from their teacher (Journell, 2016), they may be unwilling to accept even unbiased facts that are presented to them by their teacher (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016).
The ability for educators to be able to recognize and avoid indoctrination could be of benefit in maintaining a civil classroom environment where every student’s voice has a chance to be respected and to foster a more productive learning environment (Han, 2015). Learning to present lectures and to even question learning materials in an unbiased manner (Hansson, 2017; Sadker, 2017) can also foster an enhanced degree of reflectivity on the part of the students, leading to more open-minded and tolerant citizens (Taylor, 2014).

Research Questions

The major research questions that were explored and answered in this study consisted of the following: “Is indoctrination an inherently unavoidable part of teaching?” “How can students be taught to identify infractions of indoctrination?” “What can teachers do to prevent themselves from becoming purposeful or inadvertent deliverers of indoctrination?”

Methodology

To answer the questions of this study, a search of the literature was made to understand the types of statements, whether spoken or written, which could be manipulated to indoctrinate students to a particular opinion or belief (Taylor, 2017; Journell, 2016; Håkansson, 2015). The literature search also included inquiries into hidden curricula (Hansson, 2017), educational problems associated with indoctrination (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016), possibilities of avoiding indoctrination, differences between activism and indoctrination (Kerdeman, 2017; Brown, 2017), identification of statements that can be construed as being meant to indoctrinate (Taylor, 2017; Journell, 2016; Håkansson, 2015), pedagogical significance of open-minded teaching (Taylor, 2014), and findings that showed it is theoretically possible to educate students in an indoctrination-free environment (Copp, 2016; Han, 2015; Taylor, 2014). Excluding any peer-reviewed studies that were published more than five years ago, a total of seventeen recently published papers were found that informed this study and led to the findings and discussions that have been provided herein. Research that informed the body of this study was derived from a well-regarded philosophy of education which describes the four types of statements that could indicate an attempt at indoctrination, and the two types of statements that should cause no concern (Pratte, 1992).

Definition of Indoctrination

To understand the meaning of “indoctrination,” as it applies to a classroom, one need only look for a locus of inference. “Indoctrination” is typically used in reference to political, economic, or religious beliefs and ideologies that are extraneously inserted into particular portions of a curriculum. Rarely does it make sense to talk about indoctrination in the multiplication tables or the chemical compound of sodium. Therefore, this study focuses on the content and practices involved in indoctrination as it relates to education and the practice of teaching and especially in the social sciences.

Put simply, indoctrination involves the teaching of disputatious (equivocal, non-evidential) statements as being true (Pratte, 1992). Such statements can be categorized into six categories: 1) Imperative or command statements; 2) Analytical statements; 3) Preference or attitude statements; 4) Value or obligation statements and judgments; 5) Empirical statements; and 6) Metaphysical statements (Taylor, 2017; Journell, 2016; Håkansson, 2015). To determine the content of indoctrination, one needs to first determine which type of the aforementioned six statements was made. Accomplishing that step is important since the first two categories of statements do not constitute a potential infringement of indoctrination, while the remaining four categories could represent that an act of indoctrination has occurred (Pratte, 1992). An expanded explanation of these six categories of statements follows:

Two Non-Indoctrination Categories of Statements

1) Imperative or Command Statements

Such statements as “shut the door now” or, “please close the window” are examples of command statements. While one can disagree, or disobey commands there is no logic in disputing the statement.
Verification is unimportant except if the door, for example, was not open. Teaching with the use of imperative or command statements does not involve indoctrination.

2) Analytical Statements

Analytical statements are true by definition, and denial - claiming the opposite - is absurd. “Red is a color.” “2 x 2 = 4.” “I was born in...” are all analytical statements. There is no logic to dispute this type of statement. Analytical statements can be verified by appeals to the laws of language, math or logic. However, what is true analytically is not always true empirically. For example, 1 + 1 = 2, however, 1 drop of water + 1 drop of water = 1 (bigger) drop of water, not 2 drops of water. Teaching analytical statements does not involve indoctrination.

Four Potential Categories of Indoctrination Statements

3) Preference or Attitude Statements

These types of statements express something that is desired, preferred, or valued by the speaker. However, students recognize that the something that is preferred is desired or liked simply because the speaker likes it. Something that is preferred lacks any established criteria for the preference and that which is valued is simply a naked expression. “I love history,” “I hate chemistry,” and “I think America is the greatest country in the world” could all be preference statements. Like imperatives, there is no logic in disputing these statements. Likewise, verification is unimportant. The statements simply depend on whether the speaker is telling the truth or not. Teaching while using preference or attitude statements does not involve indoctrination. However, teaching a preference statement as if it were an empirical statement may involve indoctrination.

4) Value or Obligation Statements and Judgments

This type of statement expresses something that is desirable, preferable, valuable, or something that one morally should or should not do. There is value in disputing these types of statements, which can be disputed by either disputing the criteria used to make the statement or judgment, or accepting the criteria and claiming that it does not apply in this case. Obligation statements are verified partly on empirical grounds and partly on the criteria of value. For example, the statements, “You should do your homework” and “You should work hard to get good grades” could be verified partly on empirical grounds and partly on the criteria of value. Judgments are verified on appeals to criteria relevant to the activity.

If criteria are not established, then it is not a judgment but merely a preference. For example, when a teacher assigns a grade to a paper, a teacher must base the grade on some established criteria. If not, then the teacher is merely expressing a preference that a student cannot dispute, which is why grades should be value statements rather than preferences. It must also be clear that an explanation is not a justification. One can explain his or her position, however, unless there is an appeal to relevant criteria, then the position is merely a preference.

To see if a statement is a value statement, one can first ask, “What is the criteria or the principle involved?” Then, if one agrees with the criteria they may ask, “Does it apply in this case?” If there is a lack of criteria, then the statement becomes a preference statement. Value statements must be justified. Verification is based on the criteria of value. Teaching value or obligation statements may involve indoctrination. Teaching value or obligation statements as true without establishing criteria, or empirical grounds, may involve indoctrination.

5) Empirical Statements

This type of statement is factual; the world makes it true or false, and it is based on publicly agreed upon criteria. There is logic to dispute this type of statement. Empirical statements require evidence to verify (and empirical statements may ultimately be found to be false). The argument should start with a request to support the statement with empirical evidence. If no evidence is presented, then the statement should not be accepted. It may in fact be true or false, but you cannot argue for or against an empirical statement without evidence. If no evidence is available, then the statement may simply be a preference statement. Teaching empirical statements may involve indoctrination. If an educator teaches false empirical statements as true, the teacher may be committing an act of indoctrination.
Metaphysical Statements

Metaphysical statements inform about supernatural things and there is no truth or falsity attached to them. These types of statements may appear to be empirical statements but they lack publicly agreed upon criteria. There is no logic to dispute this type of statement. To be clear about this type of a statement, one can often use the “principle of falsification.” That is, when someone states something in the informative mode, one could ask, “What, if anything, will disprove that statement?”

With a metaphysical statement, among intelligent people who have considered the issue, one cannot achieve general agreement as to the sort of evidence that would count for or against the supposition. As an example, scientific creationism is a non-scientific theory informing people about a supernatural topic (Price, 2017; Divakaran, 2015; Martin, 2015; Clark, 2014; Kopplin, 2014). Therefore, statements on that topic are metaphysical statements, and there is no logic to dispute that type of statement. Therefore, wherever metaphysical statements are taught as truth, it may involve evidence of indoctrination. To categorize any of the six categories of statements, check to see how a statement can be verified (proven true or false). If publicly agreed upon criteria or principles cannot be established, then it makes no sense to dispute the statement, which means that teaching the statement as true may represent an act of indoctrination.

Discussion

According to Pratte (1992), besides the six categories of statements that any teacher can make to their students, there are six signs that a teacher may have been purposely engaged in the process of indoctrination (Carbone, 1994). Those six signs include any or all of the indoctrination methods listed here: 1) Using drilling to instill unquestioning acceptance of a belief or belief system; 2) Resorting to emotional appeals; 3) Manipulating students through the use of rhetorical devices; 4) Suppressing opposing ideas or obscuring evidence that is relevant to the topic; 5) Using propaganda techniques; or 6) Ignoring logic and reason by purposely excluding the exercise of the student's intellect.

Morality of Indoctrination

This study has limited its examination of indoctrination study to schooling and education. In this respect, it is the opinion of the researchers of this study that indoctrination in all classrooms, and social science classrooms in particular, is wrong and contrary to the precepts of healthy pedagogical principles. One of the educational purposes of teaching is to help students develop cognitive perspective (metacognition) and rationality in order that they might better be able to think for themselves. Since indoctrination involves uncritical thinking and irrationality, it could be considered as anti-education and therefore the opposite of what pedagogy seeks to achieve. Teaching statements that are of a disputatious nature but are presented as truths, as well as teaching certain ideologies as truths, can be classified as forms of indoctrination.

Education Without Indoctrination in the Social Sciences

To teach without indoctrinating students (Taylor, 2017; Journell, 2016; Håkansson, 2015), one could embrace the following goals:

- Avoid teaching value judgments, non-scientific theories, metaphysical statements, or false statements as facts.
- Train students in reflective methods that lead to critical-thinking (Han, 2015; Taylor, 2014).
- Be skeptical of statements presented as “facts” without empirical evidence, and encourage students to recognize and be skeptical of such statements in teaching materials (Sadker, 2017; Han, 2015).
- Check classroom materials for accuracy and encourage students to fact-check materials for contradictions (Sadker, 2017).
- Encourage students to fact-check the statements of the teacher for both accuracy and bias (Han, 2015).
- School Boards could assure that educational content is based on the best available scholarship and is free of political pressures and agendas.
• Teachers could be trained to become more aware that many statements and positions are value judgments and therefore require justification.
• Teachers could be trained to recognize and categorize all six types of statements and avoid teaching that involves indoctrinating students in either the task or achievement sense.
• Avoid teaching suspected empirical statements that are false as being true, regardless if they are written in textbooks (Hansson, 2017; Sadker, 2017; Ferguson, Brown, & Torres, 2016).
• Avoid teaching metaphysical statements as true, or teaching preference or value statements as true without establishing criteria or acceptable evidence.
• Avoid implanting or establishing in the student a fixed or closed mind with regard to a belief, or set of beliefs of a disputatious nature, despite otherwise compelling evidence to the contrary (Taylor, 2014).
• Require that appropriate evidence be given to support empirical statements, no matter how legitimate the source seems to appear.
• Insist that metaphysical statements be discussed as non-empirical statements.
• Teachers should be cognizant that bias can be embedded in textbooks (Hansson, 2017; Sadker, 2017; Ferguson, Brown, & Torres, 2016), and make efforts to counteract any such bias by creating open debate forums with students (Han, 2015).
• Self-police teacher statements to require that they include some sort of logical justification.

The Possibility of Teaching Without Indoctrination

In this study, the researchers have demonstrated that teaching may involve varying degrees of indoctrination, either by purposeful design, inadvertently, or both, but that pedagogy does not inherently require indoctrination to take place (Copp, 2016). By following the guidelines presented in this study, it has been shown that all subjects can be presented in an enlightened classroom, even religion, politics (Kerdeman, 2017; Brown, 2017) and scientific creationism (Price, 2017; Divakaran, 2015; Martin, 2015; Clark, 2014; Kopplin, 2014), when the teacher assists their students in keeping an open mind (Han, 2015; Taylor, 2014) and teaches them to be aware of the differences between opinions (Journell, 2016), suppositions, and empirical facts.

References


Teaching Prospective Counselors and Educators Through Interdisciplinary Project Based Learning

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Abstract
The case study presented discusses how an interdisciplinary, cross-gender and racially diverse team of mental health care professionals and teachers employed an innovative project-based learning intervention with a family. This original manuscript provides a working model for training prospective teachers and counselors and is an example of how individuals can work together to accomplish goals needed to insure mental health, education and important life skills.

Introduction
Interdisciplinary practice is often lauded as essential in training and clinical practice; (Hrovat, Thompson and Thaxon, 2012) however, actual clinical models where mental health counselors, clinical psychologists, and educators, merge to forge a continuum of care for a family in distress were not readily available for evaluation.

As the youngest member of helping profession, mental health counselors have been challenged to advance and protect an identity which is taken from many of the antecedent professions (Gladding, 2013). While identity and professional boundary protection are necessary for practical purposes, it is apparent that the needs of people in society far outnumber mental health counselors or any other health care professional’s ability to singularly resolve the need(s). Interdisciplinary teams meld competing yet, complementary skill sets for comprehensive healthcare provision (Hrovat et. al., 2012). Thus, the benefits of interdisciplinary teams are obvious. Combined case conceptualization, collaborated treatment goal setting, shared intervention implementation and blended rationale for course changes or termination are a mere series of examples of the interdisciplinary benefit for students, family and care providers.

The following case study is a model that can be used to train educators and counselors to implement interdisciplinary practice into their professional training. A multidisciplinary team including a psychologist, counselor and educator began case conceptualization by meeting to discuss the family. The course instructors for this practicum introduced the family as “clients”, but also introduced them as individuals. Applying the principle of “triage” or prioritized need(s), their objective was to get consensus regarding the family’s objectives. They collaborated on the treatment goals based on the diagnostic impression formed in the case conceptualization, and the prioritized needs. Also they collectively determined which tasks fell into each other’s domain. Next, came the initiation of the scheduled interventions. Tasks were prioritized, based on capability of the interdisciplinary team members and need(s) of the family. The project based learning intervention was agreed upon by the team as a vehicle to provide service both for the family’s educational needs and mental health needs.

For definition purposes, project-based learning refers to students designing, planning, and carrying out an extended project that produces a publicly-exhibited output such as a product, publication, or presentation (Patton, 2012, p.13). (Vega, 2015) explained project-based learning as; a process where students learn while immersed in finding solutions to real-world problems. Project-based learning entails:

- Students learning knowledge to tackle realistic problems as they would be solved in the real world.
- Students having control over his or her learning.
Teachers serving as coaches and facilitators of inquiry and reflection and
Students (usually, but not always) working in pairs or groups (Vega, 2015, p.2).

In this project, the family members worked together to gain knowledge and implement project-based learning through a gardening and landscaping project. Sustained inquiry and reflection occurred throughout the process, thus providing the opportunities for family members to learn important skills of cooperation, work ethic and problem-solving in the context of developing life skills. Counselors provided on-going support to family members during this project to help support meeting their mental health needs.

The Family

The family chosen for this case study was a local, mother-headed, African-American family living within six (6) blocks North of the university campus. The family’s religious and faith identity was that of Jehovah Witness. The mother, single, age 37 years, had been given a series of diagnoses of anxiety and bi-polar disorder, learning disability and post-traumatic stress disorder. The oldest male, 18 years old, was diagnosed with learning disabilities and attention-deficit disorder. The second male, 15 years old, was diagnosed with depression, impulse-control disorder, as well as learning disabilities. The third son, 12 years old, also was diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder and learning disabilities. The last child, an 11 year old female, was diagnosed with oppositional-defiant disorder. These children received resource assistance in elementary, middle school, high school and college settings. The family members all, take some form of medication and have mental health counseling and therapy in their healthcare regime.

The case study was used as a model to teach prospective counselors and teachers to work as members of a multi-disciplinary team to better serve the client or family. They were taught to participate and contribute to discussions that impact the well-being of themselves and their family while drawing on the prospective values and expertise of each profession.

Method

Because of the disabilities and mental health challenges, the family had little or no experience with the world of work. The counselor, psychologist and teacher felt that gardening and landscaping projects could not only reinforce the religious tenets the family had come to rely on, but also to teach the core values of responsibility and work ethic while producing a product essential for health sustenance. It was collaboratively determined by the team and family members that finding congruence and compatibility between faith principles of the Jehovah Witness and the school and mental health systems were important. As a result, it was determined that this principle would be primary in setting goals for the project. Family members explained how God's creation of the earth was designed as a resource for man's sustenance and eternal home; thus, requiring mankind to care for and respect it as an essential resource.

Contractual Meeting:

The first part of the plan required introducing the family to the reality of contractual agreements. This presentation was a designed teaching and learning process. Introducing family members to each component of the contractual agreement was an attempt to insure clarity and limit ambiguity. The contract included information about the nature of the jobs, pay, safety and general conduct inherent in working in the landscaping business. Additionally, a focused discussion around the topic of liability and responsibility required undivided attention for clear explanation. Because all the working family members were minors and characterized as "vulnerable populations", explaining the pledge of no-harm or exploitation was critically urgent. Candid and stern discussions around safety, equipment and tools was the next specific and targeted emphasis. Hourly pay, bonuses and behavior warranting deductions and pay, and job termination were also discussed, but allowance was made for each family member to ask questions or make statements about money, pay and bonuses.

The meeting ended with an explanation and encouragement that each family worker would begin the process of saving a small portion of each pay. Great effort was made to insure everyone understood that saving was not an edict imposed upon them; however, it was strongly suggested, encouraged and would be monitored. Each member signed the contract. Because the contractual agreements were entered into collaboratively, that would be the theme of the working relationship at the start of each new day. Each day, the counselor/foreman would remind the family members that they volunteered of their own volition.
and could withdraw their voluntary assent to work and stay home—they were not obligated to work; however, they received no compensation when they did not work. Counselors and teachers worked collaboratively to insure each daily project was completed according to the specifications of the contractual agreement, and the mental health needs were addressed during the project implementation.

Pre-work and Work-day Requirements:

The daily job always began with the counselor/foreman, teacher, and all the family work crew agreeing to work to complete the task. Regardless of whether the job was landscape design, installation or maintenance, all work-related meetings followed the same procedures: Each worker was given a job or series of jobs based on his or her individual capability. For example, someone was assigned to the task of record-keeping, another was assigned to tool-count and another was assigned to clock/job management.

As each of the family members’ assigned task was explained, it was emphasized that his/her salary was designed to encourage cooperation between and among each other, and was interdependently linked to one another. First, one worker was responsible for the daily record book. The daily record book contained information about the site: date, time, site name, workers present and job tasks. The documentation had to be accurately recorded daily in the record book. It was explained that if the record book was incomplete, incorrect or not recorded, workers could not be paid, because their day’s pay was determined by accurate records. Second, another worker was responsible for insuring that all tools and equipment taken to the job site were returned after the job was completed. This person had to count all tools and equipment before the job started and walk the grounds at the end of the workday to insure no tools or equipment was left behind. When tools or equipment was lost or left behind, the whole work team had their paychecks docked. The worker responsible for time/job management insured that the daily or job task was completed and completed within the allotted time frame determined at the beginning of the day. Just as with the 2 previous tasks, the time/clock manager had to insure break time was not extended to the point of jeopardizing job completion. If the job was not completed because time had been wasted, everyone was subjected to being docked in pay. They worked to hold each other accountable, especially when any one of them could see or observe how an error or lack of attention to detail would cost their salary to be reduced.

Also, as a safety factors, each worker was given a set of gloves to wear while working. In the event one worker forgot or misplaced gloves, the worker had options. S/he could purchase a new pair of gloves for $1.00, or s/he could choose not to work. For safety reasons, no one was permitted to work without gloves. All the aforementioned detail was provided to provide a glimpse of how the contractual agreement and actual work of work applied to this project-based learning process.

The Job Site:

The counselor/foreman and teacher explained the overall job, timeframe and outcome prior to starting work. The counselor/foreman then assigned all specific tasks. Before each day, but more importantly after the work day, the teacher taught the principles of horticulture, the principles of safety, principles of nutrition and hydration, ethic of work, principles of citizenship, principles of fiancés and (but not limited to) principles of gratitude (saying thank you and sending thank you cards to customers). The counselor addressed work-related mental health issues that were observed in the course of a work day and specific job, such as inability to negotiate or compromise when a disagreement arose, inability to stay focused and complete the job, inability or failure to follow directions and accept feedback.

A Look at a Specific Job:

Landscape design and installation is the process of planning the proper plant material for the space allotted and to the customer’s request. For a design and installation job, the family work crew was required to consider a multitude of factors. Questions to consider included: What tools were needed to complete this job? How much time is estimated to job completion? Where was the sun, and where would it be for the entire day in relationship to the plants? Does the site have the measurement requirements for the plant material according to planting label? Were the customer’s questions answered and addressed? As practice in landscape design and installation, they were given a collection of horticultural seed, flower, fruit and vegetable catalogs. Next, they were given a small piece of cardboard and asked to cut the cardboard in the shape of the space for design and installation. Next, they were asked to find a
complimentary or contrasting color scheme and design the plant material/plan based on the customer's wishes from the catalog. Next, they were asked to consider all elements of color, size, sun location, site location, price and customer's wishes. Next, we would purchase plant material and align it in the spot of installation for preview before groundbreaking. They had to read plant labels to insure compatibility and accuracy of planting instructions. After all above steps taken, the installation process began and was concluded within the allotted time frame. Thus, was an example of a specific horticultural design and installation project-based learning job.

Regardless of the nature of the job, the final aspect was always evaluation and payment in order to determine if the project and individual and family needs and goals were met. Every workday ended with the counselor and teacher explaining whether the pre-established goals were met. Each worker was given verbal feedback based solely on his or her individual performance. When individual performances did not meet the goal/objective, the family member was told specifically what needed to improve. There were times when an unmet goal/objective also meant a deduction in pay and conversely, an exceeded goal/objective by an individual worker could also mean commendation and/or a bonus in pay. The counselor/foreman and teacher kept written records and would end the day and start the following day reiterating the goal/objectives from the previous workday and those expected of the current workday. The psychologist and counselor also focused their attention on the individual and family needs and objectives. They focused on how each family member’s therapeutic needs could be met as a result of work on the horticultural project. Re-evaluation of each member and the family group by the interdisciplinary team insured improvement and growth in the identified areas which included:

- Their punctuality and preparedness,
- Their ability to follow the written and spoken directions,
- Their adherence to a defined schedule,
- Their ability to work safely,
- The ability to take constructive feedback,
- The ability to work together,
- The ability to save a portion of their earnings.

Regardless of the response(s), the counselor/foreman and psychologist always discussed the purpose of the feedback. The purpose of the feedback always had designated outcomes which might be

- to correct an error,
- to keep workers safe,
- to encourage them to learn not to repeat a mistake,
- to encourage workers to work to their potential,
- to insure a worker would not lose pay unnecessarily.

**Interdependence:**

There were jobs and tasks that had to be accomplish alone; however, the overall goal was to show the family that the interdisciplinary team valued them individually and as a family unit. Even when one member could not work, there was always some gesture aimed at remembering the missing family members and their responsibilities were assumed by other workers.

**The ability to save a portion of their income:**

This activity was key. Although initially uncertain, the family, except one member began saving major portions of their earnings. The mother was also instrumental in helping them in this endeavor by maintaining personal banks and savings records at home. The oldest son established a savings account at a local bank.

**Conclusion**

The project not only improved family members’ work ethic, but also their communication skills, and ability to work together to accomplish a common goal. Additionally, work tasks served to enhance their mental health needs, such as: staying focused, completing tasks, learning to cooperate rather than respond in a defiant manner, and to consider the outcome of one’s actions before responding negatively. Data reflected that each member was able to accomplish these goals 80% of the time.
This project will serve as a model to train prospective teachers and counselors in using a multidisciplinary model in a project learning activity. Whether providing services to clients in a school-related setting or a community-related setting, this model teaches prospective teachers and counselors how to serve as a member of a team in a school counseling/community venue. Modeling how to employ project-based learning principles as educational and therapeutic tools is invaluable for school and community counselors as well as school psychologists, teachers and other cross-discipline professionals.

Considering religious tenants that guided this family was an integral part of the model and it’s implementation. Great care was taken to consider the special days of worship, religious customs and ritual celebrations. It was the overarching goal of the team to allow space for open conversation about how the work of the project, and acceptance of each other would be implemented.

Prospective counselors, psychologists and educators need not fear the challenges of diversity in the sense of age, gender and ethnicity. Allowing personal introspection, the ability to see similarities and differences as places to begin discussion and most importantly, wanting to bring clinical and professional goodwill to people in our care, allows for interdisciplinary collaboration. In this project, respect for the human capacity of people and their diversity did not impact the ability of those involved to affect needed change. Individual family members not only met their therapeutic goals but learned important life skills through this project based gardening activities.

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Dystopian Young Adult Fiction: A Comparison of Divergent and The Handmaid’s Tale

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This paper will examine the topic of dystopian fiction as currently popularized for the young adult market. Attention will focus initially on the genre and its recent evolution including the creation of movies and their resultant impact on the life cycle of the specific literary works. Attention will then be directed to the adoption of these types of novels for academic purposes and that cycle of utilization. We shall compare the young adult novel Divergent by Veronica Roth to The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood. Such an analysis will contextualize important similarities and differences in these dystopic novels that have exploded in sales due to their transitioning into popular contemporary film and TV series formats.

Dystopia is defined by Merriam-Webster as:

1. An imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives
2. Anti-utopia

Dystopia, on August 28, 2017 was in the top 10% of lookups and was the 356th most popular word on Merriam-Webster.com. Why this surge of popularity and who or what is driving it? The word dystopia, per Merriam-Webster (2017) came into usage in the 1950’s. What are/were the conditions that have lead up to this movement?

There are some that will posit that following the end of World War II through the present that the world has been beset by constant war or violent political strife; the generations of writers producing young adult fiction have never lived in a world without violent struggle albeit if only on the network news show which now enter the bedrooms in many homes in America.

The list below displays recently released young adult dystopian novels that have become movies that have renewed interest in reading these versions of Dystopia that seemed too extreme to ever be taken seriously as they were introduced in decades following World War II, a period marked by a growing middle class and U.S. global hegemony. But false promises of the market based on a neo-liberal political agenda have seen the turn of the century with almost two decades of secular stagnation and the rise of populist sentiments and the rise of nationalism, a doctrine of exclusion and marginalization of the needs of the other people who are not citizens of the United States. This list, by order of publication date, displays the popular dystopic novels that have marked renewed growth in the books’ sales as a result of being transitioned to either a major motion picture, or have been made into a Television (TV) or weekly internet/TV season with multiple episodes:

- The Handmaid’s Tale (1985) by Margaret Atwood born November 18, 1939;
These authors, including Lois Lowry who was born during the evolving political threats that would lead to World War II, have been educated and lived through the latter half of the 20th century with its consistent political upheavals and war. Although, some will argue that war and violence have always existed perhaps it is the media and television that have created a world where we are easily able to access world news or put more directly the flip of a dial or push of a button places graphic images of violence in our living room or now even our children’s bedrooms (Kirtley, 2011). Patricia Kirtley, (2011, p. 120) goes on to state “…modern youngsters have never experienced a world free from war.”

In a media/image world where violence and death are the norm do we create young readers/movies goers who can dispense with the here and now and buy into scenarios of a post-apocalyptic world? A look at the popularity of the television series Revolution set in a United States with no electrical power and the consequent breakdown of the federal/state governmental system was very well received during its two-season run. Revolution debuted in the United States on September 17, 2012, enjoying an average of 9.8 million viewers for its first three episodes, (Pennington, 2012). One might argue that with its first season NBC airtime of 10pm that not many children/juveniles were watching but for the second season it was aired at 8pm, which is prime evening television time. The fact that this type of show moved to the 8pm time slot argues that U.S. viewing families were becoming accustomed to dystopian story lines.

According to April Spisak, (2012, p. 55) there are four major elements of a good young adult dystopian novel: a clearly detailed setting, characters who have legitimate roles, characters who are shaped by their society, and a conclusion that flows from the conflicts in that society. Gander (2012) says, “Dystopian authors are skilled artists who appeal to a wide range of readers. Young and old alike have strong feelings for these novels.” The emotional appeal of the characters makes these novels and movies appealing across gender lines.

Following this argument, the previously mentioned list of young adult novels all went on to become movies or streaming TV series on internet subscription platforms such as Hulu and Netflix.

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book:</th>
<th>Book Sales Volume:</th>
<th>Box Office Sales:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Giver</td>
<td>12 million copies</td>
<td>43,991,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger Games</td>
<td>17.5 million copies</td>
<td>408,010,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catching Fire</td>
<td>10 million copies</td>
<td>424,668,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Handmaid’s Tale (Hulu TV series)</td>
<td>22 million views *</td>
<td>Optioned for TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divergent</td>
<td>2.6 million copies</td>
<td>150,947,895</td>
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* Views are number of streams from May 28 to June 3, 2017

The Handmaid’s Tale has been at the top of the charts for book sales in 2017 at amazon for 11 weeks straight. The movie deal profits illustrate that from an author’s perspective the writing of a dystopian novel that is optioned for a movie is clearly very profitable, and this is of course in addition to the book sales revenues and other licensing options (Robehmed, 2014).

With the release of these blockbuster movies and the renewed cycle of book sales the issue becomes: should these types of modern novels become part of the school curriculum? Should
teachers allow students to include this genre as part of the educational process? There is of course a backlash against some of the above listed novels: challenges range from too absurd to too violent, to the old standard that these new books are not classic works and therefore they should not be utilized in the classroom. Do these charges have merit? The answer lies in pinpointing the reason for the soaring growth in the popularity of this young adult fiction genre. This paper will compare two of the titans in young adult dystopic fiction—*The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and *Divergent* (2011). This comparison will hopefully reveal the universal appeal of this genre, and serve to illuminate that similar anxieties and worries about the trajectory of the future are expressed through widely different social arrangements and technological channels in dealing with the common thread of evolving possibilities and eventual outcomes. These are ultimately prophetic visions of what will ultimately be the “norm” if we do not annihilate each other in a world with finite resources that is not meeting the basic human needs of an expanding population. Who gets excluded, what’s the new means of social exclusion—will racism, sexism (traditional biases), and war be the main exclusionary means, or has society’s means of social control and rationing moved to a different cultural criterion projected from new social and technological trends in our current social setting?

Each of these dystopian novels is set in a future setting where the society highlighted is seemingly distinct from our modern world. Often the setting is occurring after some world changing cataclysmic event. Social roles are seemingly very different from those the modern reader is accustomed to experiencing. This paper examines some distinct differences in young adult dystopian fiction which distinguish it from the dystopian literature written before World War II. Dystopian fiction written before WWII often centers around a male main character. The dystopic fiction embraced by teens and young adults nowadays is much more likely to have a strong-willed heroine. Whether the more prominent placement of a young woman’s story, or as an entire narrative, viewed through a young women’s eyes there is a conscious effort to use this interest in young adult dystopian fiction as a means to consider the status of women in the future and how that relates to women’s issues today. Margaret Atwood’s response (Atwood, 2017) to the question of whether *The Handmaid’s Tale* is a feminist novel, is this:

If you mean an ideological tract in which all women are angels and/or so victimized they are incapable of moral choice, no. If you mean a novel in which women are human beings — with all the variety of character and behavior that implies — and are also interesting and important, and what happens to them is crucial to the theme, structure and plot of the book, then yes. In that sense, many books are “feminist. Because women are interesting and important in real life. They are not an afterthought of nature, they are not secondary players in human destiny, and every society has always known that. Without women capable of giving birth, human populations would die out. That is why the mass rape and murder of women, girls and children has long been a feature of genocidal wars, and of other campaigns meant to subdue and exploit a population. Kill their babies and replace their babies with yours, as cats do; make women have babies they can’t afford to raise, or babies you will then remove from them for your own purposes, steal babies — it’s been a widespread, age-old motif. The control of women and babies has been a feature of every repressive regime on the planet. (p. 2).
The above quote provides insight into the raw appeal of dystopian fiction: The American power structure can be toppled and the locus of political power can shift rapidly. Is the U.S. emphasis on high incarceration rates and high levels of military spending leading to a time when the police and military are no longer content to serve the interests of multi-national corporations that are global in scope? The declaration of Marshal Law and the political alignment of the New Right, the Religious Right and the military, sets up the quick transition of political power to a more authoritarian form of governing by a theocracy—led by a group of conservative Christian Men. Shifts in the political and social structure toward more authoritarian forms of social organization, are often accompanied by worsening economic conditions. For most Americans, could such a usurping of power defy the status quo? Could it happen in America? New legal and social forms develop which normalize inhumane treatment and alienate significant segments of humans. From the outset of these stories the reader is naturally curious as to what life could be like in a world where the wicked problems of today gradually build to erode many of the progressive reforms of the previous century.

One such metric of societal progress concerns the status of women in each author’s vision of the future world. *Divergent* and *The Handmaid’s Tale* both make a conscious effort to project significant changes in gender roles in the new society. In *Divergent* the reader is perhaps relieved to see that the arc of history that began with the 1st wave of feminism (focused on legal issues of property ownership and universal suffrage) has been expanded to the point where males and females are given equal consideration as it relates to one’s occupation or station in life. In *Divergent* the choice of which faction to join does not revolve around differences in living circumstances owing to one’s sex. By contrast, *The Handmaid’s Tale* projects a future world which incorporates the continued gradual erosion of the rights that women had fought hard to acquire in the workplace and at the ballot box.

Another difference involves the distinction between speculative fiction and science fiction. While both novels portray strong women that are main characters in the story line, the actual placement of women in the social hierarchy could be due to very different views of how technology will shape society. A science fiction such as *Divergent* depicts a society possessing technical skills that are well beyond the realm of the present scientific knowledge. Science fiction may posit scientific advancements that go well beyond our current capabilities. It is in this setting that women and men seem to be on an equal footing with regard to chances for being initiated into one of the factions in *Divergent*. There is no mention of discrimination on the basis of sex or race within the various factions as portrayed in *Divergent*. However, in this portrayal of a post-apocalyptic society, young adults are tested and must pass an initiation to gain access and life of subsistence provided through membership in one of five factions. So co-membership is based on personality and value traits as revealed by uniform testing standards.

Unfortunately, those who are not chosen to belong in one of the factions are condemned to a life of poverty as a factionless person living on the streets. Access to life’s necessities is predicated on tests measuring aptitude and personality traits. Those who are chosen are better than average when assessed, sorted and ranked at possessing the personality characteristics deemed desirable for membership in a particular faction.

In this society, the individual disappears and re-emerges as where one lives, who one works with, the types of jobs one may hold, who one may marry, how one dresses and behaves are all determined by faction membership. All of one’s adult life is governed by faction membership. Beatrice however during her testing discovers that she is “Divergent” and this is to be hidden from everyone. This is a condition that she knows nothing about except that as Tris in Dauntless...
she must share this fact with no one, ever. As Sauter (2014, p. 10) says “She doesn't really fit anywhere. This makes her dangerous to her rigidly compartmentalized social order, and that is why her divergence remains her closely guarded secret, as she joins the faction called Dauntless-the protectors of the city, known for their bravery, their warrior skills and their militaristic sense of honor and duty.”

During the early days as an initiate, Tris learns how hard it will be to keep this secret. Her friend previously raised in Candor can tell Tris is hiding something when reference is made to the dog scenario in their testing process. Although it is forbidden to discuss the testing for personality characteristic that guided each initiate prior to their choosing, the new transfers do bring the topic up in conversation. Additionally when Tris’s mother visits at the end of the first phase of the initiation process, she also guesses that Tris is divergent and warns her of how dangerous this situation is, especially in Dauntless.

In Dauntless, as the protectors of the society, courage is extremely important and members try to conquer their fears. One of the ways of doing so is experiencing the testing scenarios and solving the problems by overcoming their fears. Tris, as a divergent, has the capacity to control the scenarios and defeat them but this power reveals her divergence. She must find another way to solve the scenarios or control what she thinks about so no one understands her power. She learns from Tori that in Dauntless persons discovered to be divergent suddenly disappear because they challenge the status quo of their faction and society.

Tris begins to develop an affinity for Four that she does not initially understand. He in turn is drawn to her and helps her, coaching her to success in her initiation process. This affinity may be a result of their both having been from Abnegation, a fact that Tris will not discover until after she and Four have begun a romantic relationship. But this may explain his initial help of her in addition to the fact that she was the first jumper, a fact that he and all of Dauntless admired. But as the smallest of all the initiates, Tris will have to learn physical combat skills and conning to survive the ranking process. Additionally, as only ten initiates can become members, each initiate begins to hone the traits and alliances that will guarantee a spot in the top ten. The first initiate that was lost was a Dauntless born girl that fell to the ground jumping from the train. The second, the boy who transferred from Amity, who said “I’d rather be factionless than dead” (Roth, 2011, p. 54). While Tris thought in response to his statement: I would rather be dead than empty, like the factionless. Tris will begin to question how she ever lived in Abnegation, was it all a lie. She faults herself for not having the constant selflessness that is a value of the members of Abnegation. Her evolving behavior in Dauntless makes her question all of her previous life. Thoughts of her father’s judgments of her result in her feeling guilty and like she always had to try too hard to be unselfish. This theme will continue through out the novel with Tris evaluating her behavior and decisions against her father’s teaching of the Abnegation values. She begins to question the violence within Dauntless that she equates with Eric, one of the leaders who takes pleasure in challenging the initiates to the point of cruelty.

Tris chafes against the constant need to prove her loyalty to Dauntless by curtailing any conversation or contact with members of other factions. She notices things such as the locks on the other side of the fences, although one of the Dauntless jobs is to stand guard duty inside of the fence lines. She wonders why or against what the city is fenced and guarded. No one can answer but it is one of the Dauntless jobs to protect the city perimeters. In the history of the factions there is no answer to these questions but she seems to be the only initiate who even thinks to wonder why. Everyone else in the society seems to be bound by the rules of their factions and unified in their alligence to their faction leaders. Tris wonders how Eric, at
eighteen, can be one of the Dauntless leaders and how Four can refuse to accept leadership positions within Dauntless in favor of his job monitoring the city’s computer security systems.

While *Divergent* and the *Handmaid’s Tale* both feature teen and young adult female protagonists, their depiction of gender roles provides a stark contrast. *Divergent* portrays a society which places men and women in an environment with close ties to their faction, with no perceived differences in social status between the sexes. On the other hand, the *Handmaid’s Tale* projects a future in which women cannot own property and have little chance of finding a job when hiring preference is given to hiring men only. The *Handmaid’s Tale* projects forward a more believable future which tracks the current gap separating the market value placed on men and women in the workforce. It is hard to imagine that if things are generally getting worse in a dystopia, that there are more opportunities for women in positions of power and influence, and no mention of sexism.

When we meet Offred, the narrator of *The Handmaid’s Tale* she’s a citizen slave of the Republic of Gilead (the former United States governed under a regime of authoritarian Christian men). She’s been confined to an unfamiliar bedroom wearing clothes that are not her own, trying to hold on to what little remains of her former self. The men in Gilead have retained their names and identities, even earning fancy titles like Commander, while the women have been renamed and repositioned according to their new social class: Wives, Handmaids, Marthas, Un-Women. Offred is a Handmaid, which is a polite term for concubine or host human—her sole purpose is to churn out babies for the Commanders and their supposedly barren wives who make up the upper echelons of society.

The origin of the Republic of Gilead is not entirely clear, mostly because all information on it comes from the accounts of Offred, who has limited knowledge or can be seen as an unreliable narrator. It would seem that Gilead originally began as various far-right religious extremist groups that believed that America needed to be 'saved' from sin and corruption. these coalesced into a single conspiracy which referred to itself as "the Sons of Jacob." Eventually, the Sons of Jacob devised and executed an elaborate coup d'etat against the United States government. They assassinated the sitting President and members Congress, blaming it on Islamist terrorists, and established martial law. In quick succession, the United States Constitution was suspended, online bank accounts were frozen, and all employed women were fired from their jobs. Offred recalls that the entire coup happened so fast that the widespread emotion among the general population was bewilderment as the troops systematically cleared women out of places of employment. There were a few protest marches at first, but the government immediately responded with blunt, naked aggression, deploying soldiers who shot to kill and not to disperse. After the first protests were quashed with little tolerance, the population was too terrified to mount any further reaction. The new government quickly began hunting down anyone they perceived as being "unGodly" or a threat. This included political activists, members of other religious groups and gender minorities, and intellectuals.

Hulu’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* has been acclaimed for its focus on relevant political issues, such as women’s rights, the spread of fascism, and the dangers of religious extremism. But what makes the series so popular is its singular focus on demonstrating the danger in the creeping normalization of a hostile ideology. From *The Hunger Games* to *Harry Potter* and back to *War of the Worlds*, we constantly imagine tyranny as something that is inflicted on White people. Many people have argued that *The Handmaid’s Tale* is particularly timely in 2017. Some political observers assert that the current presidency isn’t just predicated on sexism, it’s built around demonization of Mexicans, Muslims, Black people, and the generalized specter of non-White immigrants. Trump’s policies have
traction precisely because they’re seen as primarily affecting *those people*, over there. Maybe watching The Handmaid’s Tale will give them a feeling of what it is like to be a homeless refugee (robbed of their human rights), or some other marginalized group. The story of the Handmaid’s Tale is narrated from the perspective of the victim. Only the victim is not an American slave of African descent, or a Jew in Nazi Germany. This victim is closer to home – a person who had the White middle class life style as an invisible entitlement of White privilege. This story is told by someone who used to be “like us.” Now the marginalized group includes all White women who had lost everything they had. And, its shows how the oppression is not possible without an incentive system aimed to separate and divide the loyalties of women. In many scenes we observe women depriving other women of sight and freedom of movement. A united and well organized resistance to the new form of oppression could only succeed if the Wives, the Handmaids and the Marthas are united in their opposition to the rituals that subject Handmaids to state-sanctioned rape.

The series demonstrates the everyday pre-theocracy interactions that erode women’s rights and dignity, from Offred and her friend Moira being demeaned as sluts to a person judging their skin-baring outfits while they’re exercising. These interactions build to more substantial measures: women’s bank accounts are frozen, they’re fired from their jobs, and those who are still able to bear children are rounded up and pressed into service as Handmaids. The hulu TV version of Handmaid’s Tale quotes Aunt Lydia, a member of a class responsible for the Handmaids’ indoctrination. Aunt Lydia comments on the ceremony directly: "I know this must feel very strange," she tells her trainees, "but ordinary is just what you're used to. This may not seem ordinary to you right now. But after a time, it will." (Hulu, Episode 2)

Her prediction is repeated in the show’s sixth episode, “A Woman's Place,” as Handmaids are cleaning a wall where the state left the corpses of executed prisoners. A Handmaid known as Ofwarren thinks the wall looks strange without the bodies: “I guess you get used to things being one way,” she observes, as blood washes off the concrete. Later, when Offred confronts a Mexican diplomat hoping to establish trade relations with Gilead, she lays out their situation: Handmaids have been imprisoned and raped, and are being reduced to a tradable commodity. The representative simply responds that her hometown hasn’t had a birth in six years.

In both *Divergent* and *The Handmaid’s Tale* the major protagonists of the story are young teen or adult women seeking an identity and confronting a world in which one cannot help wondering how things have gone so wrong. The warning in both stories is that “normal” is never really a fixed state. The goalposts for what is socially acceptable or politically expedient are continually moved, and it is up to observers to keep providing reminders that they’ve shifted. Atwood had visited East Germany when it was under Soviet dominance. She witnessed how rapidly political structures can change. *The Handmaid’s Tale* was published in 1986 to mixed reviews. While the events foretold in The Handmaid’s Tale were associated with real historical events in other countries, that kind of thing could not happen in the United States. American hegemony and American exceptionalism seemed sure to insulate the U.S. from a fate resembling either of the two Dystopias being compared.

That was in 1986, immediately following the rise of Reagan which reversed many of the gains that women had fought to acquire. With the Hulu television series streaming episodes of *Handmaid’s Tale*, there has been a marked explosion in the sales of the book. The account that Atwood gives of a vastly changed social order is more believable given the increased political and economic polarization of the past few decades inside the United States, where a self-
proclaimed outsider could go from never holding a public office to garnering enough support to win the electoral college tally for the Presidency.

How can things go so wrong? A genocidal, patriarchal government where the brutal treatment of women is normalized, first as a return to traditional religious values, and later, as a dire necessity for the health of the human race and the planet. These dramatic changes come about in small increments. Hardliners push their views on society, taking advantage of the fear the populace feels about the changing world around them. More surprising is the inhumane treatment of women by other women. Convenience, self-indulgence, and efficacy replace the moral imperative of equal treatment.

All men and women have a right to control their bodies, to be free from rape and violent assault. Interestingly, we are witness to a stoning of a handmaid at the hand of other handmaids. The Handmaid’s Tale depicts daily hangings at a hanging wall, which displays the lifeless bodies of those who have violated the strict moral code and are made to pay with their lives. These acts of extreme inhumanity are not possible without the support of wives whose actions are rewarded by their elevated social status, and the promise of acquiring a new child. The ascendance of a militarized and technologically advanced domestic police force is apparent throughout and a state of Marshal Law is imposed to give full license for police to murder or even pluck out the eye of those who get out of line. All of these atrocities are likely to be witnessed and even thought to be a normal part of everyday experience in Gilead.

Who would have thought that the big divide between the political parties over women’s reproductive rights and Reagan’s success in stopping the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) would translate into a movement that is based on some of the same principles, or “family values” laid out when Reagan fought for the passage of the Family Protection Act. Yet, the history of the Pilgrims, the Quakers and the Mormons in America, as well as the rise of the theocratic state in Iran, should give us pause to think—what if a new religious right were to gain ascendancy here in America? Should we be prepared for a promised utopia that involves sacrificing our collective humanity, for the sake of security?

It is sad that anyone would feel threatened by 24 simple words in the U.S. Constitution stating: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Atwood has acknowledged that part of her motivation in writing The Handmaid’s Tale was to express her own dissatisfaction with the political forces and the disinformation campaign that was being mobilized to block the passage of the ERA (Atwood, 2017). The Republic of Gilead bears an eerie resemblance to elements of the legislation that Reagan proposed, but could not get enough votes to pass.

Atwood’s Republic of Gidean resembles the extension of policies initiated when Reagan welcomed the New Right, headed by ultra-conservatives from The Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and the Free Congress Foundation. They put forth their agenda in the form of the so-called Family Protection Act, introduced in 1981.

Reagan’s Family Protection Act would have dismantled equal education laws, banned “intermingling of the sexes in any sport or other school-related activities,” required that marriage and motherhood be taught as career choices for girls (but not, of course, marriage and fatherhood for boys) and banned legal aid for women seeking a divorce. The act never passed. (These ideas were seen as out of the mainstream back then. But the seeds were sown, and in 2017 Atwood’s imagined Republic of Gilead seems more plausible.
Atwood in an interview for the New York Review of Books noted that she was not talking about things that were not possible today—that is science fiction. Atwood insists that the actions taken are speculative fiction because all of the projected events have already been recorded in history—what happens in other places and contexts historically, could happen here. This is the true magnetism of young adult dystopic fiction. The normalization of amoral acts is justified as an expedient solution to a radically changed environment (social engineering is justified, or technology creates unforeseen dangers, sometimes war or environmental degradation is responsible for societal decline).

In one scene, Offred is allowed to eat a cookie, which is a food choice that she no longer can take for granted. Such extras are only a luxury normally reserved for the upper echelons of society. Even when the Wives try to be nice, their actions call attention to their position of dominance and privilege, within an authoritarian regime. The women are pitted against one another, unable to develop a social bond that would enable women to create a unified effort to restore the political and economic status of women in society. Atwood writes the *Handmaid’s Tale* during the Reagan Administration, and there are some interesting parallels between the assault on women’s rights in the Reagan era and Atwood’s cautionary tale.

Patricia Kirtley says, “The conscious actions of the characters in these novels encourage young readers to examine and overcome some of the problems that adults have created” (Kirtley, 2011, p. 123). The construct of Atwood’s Republic of Gidean is partly written as a reaction to the assault on women’s rights which was launched by President Reagan. Indeed, what if The Family Protection Act (1981) had passed and this emboldens the New Right and the Religious Right to coalesce and form a new association with Washington D.C. and the many Christian churches that dot small-towns and rural America, vote for a candidate who claims to be an outsider, who reinforces and repeats the conviction (held by far-right religious extremist groups) that America needed to be 'saved' from sin and corruption. To repeat a slogan from a political candidate in Octavier Butler’s dystopian novel (The Parable of the Sower, 1993) they could band together united by the slogan “make America great again.” Could such a series of events occur in the United States? Today such a populist, nationalistic sentiment has gained some ground. Viewed as a satirical commentary on where America is headed, the *Handmaid’s Tale* could not be more timely.
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Gamification as One Approach to Student-Centered Education

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Introduction
Motivating and engaging students in learning has always been a pursuit of educators of all levels. Of many efforts in this direction, gamification has drawn attention from educators in recent years (Deterding, 2012). Gamification can be defined as the use of game design elements such as competition, freedom to fail, leaderboards, badges, level systems, and rewards in non-game contexts (Deterding, et. al., 2011), or in contexts that originally had no link to game-related elements (Erenli, 2013). It may or may not involve the use of real games as activities in teaching (EDUCAUSE, 2011). Therefore, gamification is a development beyond game-based learning (Cheong, Filippou, and Cheong, 2014).

Educators and researchers have laid emphases on various aspects of gamification. For example, Erenli (2013) recommended scenarios such as scavenger hunts as an effective and easy-to-implement pedagogical method for activities in a course. Boskic and Hu (2015) used a storyline to gamify an online course on adult education, in which students role play reporters and readers of a fictitious magazine. Previous research has also attempted more ambitious gamification at the level of the entire course. For example, Cózar-Gutiérrez and Sáez-López (2016) used MinecraftEdu as an immersive learning environment for initial teacher training in the social science. In another example, Kingsley and Grabner-Hagen (2015) implemented their quest-based science learning on a paid platform named 3D GameLab, which they believed to have simplified the teacher management of quests and tracking student progress.

While building a full-scale game often requires the design and construction of a holistic, systematic environment, successful gamification may involve no more than the employment of a few feedback or reward elements (EDUCAUSE, 2011). In essence, what educators and researchers value with gamification is the potential that games or game elements bring to the classroom experience, e.g. the opportunities of exploration, creativity, problem solving, embracing failure, reflection, celebrating epic wins, and fostering voluntary, social-cognitive learning (EDUCAUSE, 2011; Miller, 2017). And therefore there have been educators that only apply the gamification principles to course design and do not necessarily include games at all. For example, Professor Cliff Lampe from the University of Michigan (UM), before UM completed their official gamified system, gamified his large undergraduate seminar classes with emphases given to the principles of freedom of choice, team-based learning, and rapid feedback (Mak, 2013).

To implement gamification does frequently involve a lot of preparation and even extra expenses on technologies and therefore there is the tendency to design complex systems to make instructors’ life simpler. Aside from the commercially available systems such as 3D GameLab (as in Kingsley and Grabner-Hagen, 2015) or more immersion-based MinecraftEdu (as in Cózar-Gutiérrez and Sáez-López, 2016), some higher education institutions are developing their own gamification system that may be used across the campus. For example, concurrent with Professor Lampe’s teaching experiments, the University of Michigan have been developing their own gamification-featured learning management system (LMS), the GradeCraft. In this study the researchers report a pilot course design partially following UM’s Gameful Pedagogy framework but without using their GradeCraft system.
It is the researchers’ intention to demonstrate that it is possible to implement gamification principles without resorting to specially-designed gamification systems by making use of the technologies available. As a teacher education program, it is our mission to demonstrate to the future teachers what we expect in them as is specified in the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Teachers: facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity; design and develop digital age learning experiences and assessments; model digital age work and learning. In the Instructional Technology course, in which this pilot project was carried out, one philosophy we always strive to convey to the prospective teachers is to be creative with what they have, and never to complain about the shortage or backwardness of technologies.

**Course Design under the Gameful Pedagogy Framework**

Game elements can be classified on various levels of abstraction. Badges and leader boards are examples of concrete elements while time constraints and styles of games can be considered abstract examples (Cheong, Filippou, and Cheong, 2014). In this pilot project, the researchers considered some concrete elements such as the badges, but mainly adopted some of the abstract principles that are best represented in the Gameful Pedagogy framework by UM’s GradeCraft (http://gamefulpedagogy.com/). Out of this framework, the researchers selected the following principles to implement:

1. Provide students the room of self-determination including, but not restricted to, choices of tasks, choices of time to complete, and the freedom to fail.
2. Provide instant feedback.
3. Provide grading transparency.
4. Provide rewards or badges for sub-module excellence to keep students engaged.

Next we report the major practices in the course design that were ‘translated’ from the above principles and how they were implemented with the technologies available without incurring additional costs to the program or the students.

**Democracy through syllabus discussion.** The instructor surveyed what students wanted to learn, and discussed why some topics needed to be covered. The students also weighed in on other issues such as what weights should be assigned to various modules in the overall grade. This democratic process was to engage students in the metacognitive thinking of course design and for the class to reach consensus on how to proceed. Different from a typical semester in which the syllabus is ready by the first class, this syllabus wasn’t until the second class.

**Providing choices.** In two of the required modules, reading discussion presentations and technology integration demonstrations, students were allowed to select a minimum number of the topics and have the freedom of deciding when to present within a range of 2-13 weeks depending on the topics. Technically, a wiki page was created in the Blackboard course site on which students signed up on a first-come-first-approved basis for the topic and time they planned to present. While a certain reading could not be repeated in the module of reading discussion, a technology used in one student’s technology integration demonstration could be repeated by another for the reason that different people might apply a technology in different ways for their specific content areas of teaching. Despite choices, however, there were restrictions to the sequence of some topics in certain time spans to avoid procrastination and also ensure the logic across and between modules be followed. Technically this ‘unlocking’ behavior is enforced by means of the ‘adaptive release’ function in Blackboard. Providing choices and opportunities to weigh in the learning process are actual instantiations of theories of autonomy and self-determination (Deci, et. al., 1994). As educators, it is a paramount obligation and task to design and frame experiences that protect learners’ room of self-determination and maintain their intrinsic motivation to achieve.

**Peer review.** Peer review is an important strategy following the social cognitive learning theories (e.g. Bandura, 1986). In addition, whereas frequency and intensity of feedback is important in gaming (Kapp, 2012), peer review helps maintain this need for feedback while reducing the burden on the shoulders of the instructor.

For all major modules or projects that happened in the classroom, including the evaluation of participation, students were engaged in peer reviews. The students entered the peer review processes through links (integrated in Blackboard) to Survey Monkeys. Before the review of each type of work, the
instructor and the students first discussed and reached agreement on rubrics to use for the peer review. In response to students’ hope to avoid simple ranking (a reflection of the leader board in gaming), the instructor managed to make use of the Matrix/Rating Scale question template in Survey Monkey in a way to avoid going to the premium version. Technically, all students were listed under an only question in the survey about an individual project to be peer-reviewed. A ‘comment’ text box was added to allow qualitative feedback in the peer-review process. The ‘collector’ in the survey was also set up in a way to allow the same survey to be taken multiple times by the same student due to the fact that not all students choose to present on the same topic on the same day. After class each student’s qualitative feedback received in SurveyMonkey was copy-pasted into the feedback text frame in each student’s gradebook in Blackboard.

Multiple submissions. Having the freedom to fail actually provides game players with more opportunities to go through the cycles of self-regulation: forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Zimmerman, 2009). Specifically, students were allowed to submit the teaching statement twice with the only precondition that the first attempt should meet minimal quality requirement. The instructor provided feedback for each student in Blackboard, but also highlighted the strengths of some other students openly in class to achieve the potential of socio-cognitive learning theories. Technically, the Blackboard grade center was set to accept the higher grade of the two.

Bonuses and badges. To encourage excellence, bonus points may be assigned to extra work beyond the minimum requirement within the list of choices, and even to extra curriculum activities that might be considered pertinent to the learning objectives in this class. Badges may be granted to students for their excellence in certain aspects of the whole course. For example, a badge of Engagement may be granted to students with full-attendance and top participation peer-review ratings. Another example, students who have won a first place in video and audio integration in teaching might win a badge certifying their competence in educational integration of multimedia. Technically, this is realized by means of the Achievement tool in Blackboard and a badge is triggered by the satisfactory scores for the related item in the grade center.

Deselection of ‘running total’. In the Blackboard grade center, the setting of ‘calculate as running total’ was deselected to create a hunger in students for higher grades like higher points in gaming; it’s better to see points being accumulated than lost. This consideration, as well as the use of bonuses and badges, satisfies a human need to achieve (Atkinson, 1964; Maslow, 1987).

In this study the researchers report how gamification may be considered an effective approach based on the analysis of students’ perception of the gamification practices in our teaching.

Methods

The research study was conducted at a Mid-Western private university characteristic of small class sizes. Small class sizes may have advantages in class management and individual attention; therefore our experiences and lessons may not be directly applicable to colleges typical of large classes. However, the researchers believe what is learned from our action research in a class of 7 sophomore-to-senior undergraduate students may still shed lights on the community of educators interested in innovative approaches to student-centered teaching.

To answer the research question, i.e. how students perceived the gamification design of the course, two sources of data were analyzed. The major source of data is the two surveys specifically designed to elicit the students’ responses. One survey was around the mid-term examination time and the other at the semester end. The mid-term survey also served the purpose of informing the instructor of any adjustment needed to improve the learning experience in second half of the semester. In both surveys, the students responded to 5-point Likert scales ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree.’ The minor source of data is the students’ weekly reflection journals. These data existed naturally, not as a result of the research design. The minor source is used to supplement the major source with some qualitative details.

Findings and Discussion

[See Table 1]

Table 1 demonstrated a simplified version of the original surveys as well as the means of students’ responses. The researchers find it necessary to explain that there are no quantitative data available for
individual students, as both surveys were administered anonymously through SurveyMonkey. In addition, the research question does not call for the need of data at the individual level. Another point that needs to be clarified about Table 1 is that the original module titles for the survey questions have been removed for the convenience of organizing the table in this report. But in general, all questions numerated with the same first-level sequential number belong to the same module. For example, Q1.1 and Q1.3 belong to the same module, i.e. Democracy.

**Module 1. Regarding democracy.** The students did perceive to have benefited from such democracy (Q1.1 and Q1.3). In addition, their perception on these two aspects seemed deeper as the semester went from the midterm to the final (4.57 to 4.71, and 4.43 to 4.57, respectively). This may suggest that they started to have keener perception of their positive experiences as the course went along. Meanwhile, the students seemed to disagree to any excuses that might be used for reducing democracy (Q1.4 and Q1.5). One student clearly indicated in his/her comment, ‘Yes, I liked the structure and democracy of this class and I think it helped me learn more.’

On the other hand, the above responses do not mean that the students would simply desire more democracy. As their responses to Q1.2 indicate, their agreement to more democracy decreased from 3.33 at the midterm to 2.71 at the final, which suggests far less agreement than they typically expressed to other survey questions. This leads us to the interpretation that our students want to be empowered and take some control of their learning processes, and meanwhile that they do not intend to go to any extreme, either, by asking limitless democracy.

**Module 2. Regarding choices, flexibility, and opportunity to resubmit.** The students were generally satisfied with the availability of assignment topics for them to choose from and the flexibility in scheduling the time to complete or present (Qs 2.1-2.4). Students’ reflection entries lend us clues why they like the choices. About the reading topics, one student wrote, ‘I also believe there are many different reading topics, therefore allowing us to pick the ones that interest us. I really like this type of learning.’ Similarly, about the technology topics, another student wrote, ‘I believe that this gives us the opportunity to pick types of technology that we will use in our classroom. I know the ones I have picked thus far will definitely be used within my classroom.’ These citations suggest not only that the availability of choices in this course facilitated self-determination and agency (Deci, et. al., 1994) but also that the students were engaged in learning pertinent to their own content areas to teach, which reflects the requirements of the Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge framework in the field of teacher education in technology integration (Koehler and Mishra, 2009). Some educators may be concerned about the possibility of narrowness of learning if students only select certain topics but avoid some others. The researchers argue that this concern is reasonable but can be greatly relieved by the existence of diversity in the context of all students having choices. Students learn from peers. On top of this, the instructor can work on this diversity and should have the ability to integrate all topics under the central objectives of the course.

The two research surveys revealed that the students would want resubmission on more assignments (Q2.4). The researchers believe this is not a simple indication that the students want to be less disciplined. One student commented, ‘Yes, I think re-submission is a good idea. I think it really helps students learn more.’ More specifically, one student noted in her reflection journal about the resubmission of teaching statement, ‘I know that I will always want to provide my students with detailed feedback and also provide them with the option to talk to me or dispute any of my comments, like you did during this class period. I think this is a big part of the learning process.’ Therefore, the secret, or the key, for resubmissions to be meaningful is for the instructor or the peers to provide feedback and for the students to improve upon it. Next we move on to Module 4 directly since Module 3 questions in the surveys are not directly related to the research question.

**Module 4. Regarding peer reviews and instructor participation.** Obviously the students liked the peer review process (Q4.1) and found peers’ comments to be helpful (Q4.2). The change from the midterm survey to the final survey suggests students’ increasing preference for peer reviews after having had good experience with it throughout the semester. One student commented, ‘it is nice to know what your
peers think.’ Another elaborated, ‘it is good to know what areas you did great on and what areas need a little improvement.’

The students’ responses to other survey questions in this module speak to a concern shared by many educators that peer reviews may not go as deep as desired by the instructors. On the question of whether or not peers’ comments should contain more constructive critiques than praises (Q4.3), the students’ agreement level increased from 3.29 to 3.86. This increase might be a result of the instructor’s requirement for real constructive critique after midterm survey, which might have made peer review more helpful. The level of ‘agreement’ at 3.86, however, is still low. The students did make arguments for praises to be valid. As one argues in comments, ‘I have seen change, but I believe that the students should put whatever they want. If they feel there is a critique necessary to put, then that is fine to do so. If they want to just put praises, then that is a great confidence booster for their classmates.’ The quality of peer reviews will be discussed in a separate paper. Here the researchers suggest that peer reviews should still be considered of quality if the praises are praises justified with evidences.

The students’ responses to Q4.4 and Q4.5 released information that may make most instructors uncomfortable. They did not seem to quite welcome the instructor’s participation in grading in the peer review process (Q4.4) although they might like to hear comments from the instructor. One student commented, ‘I think just a comment (from the instructor) would be nice. But the grading system (without the instructor) is fine!’ In particular students disliked the idea of the instructor’s grading to carry more weight (Q4.5). One student emphasized with all upper-case letter, ‘ALL EQUAL.’ This discomfort, however, is what we educators should digest in terms of our role in pursuing student-centered teaching and learning.

**Module 5. Regarding some other game features.** In general, the students perceived the existence of some gaming features (Q5.4) and acknowledged the playfulness attempted by the instructor in the course design (Q5.5). On the specific example of the badges, the students liked the idea and looked forward to reaping such achievements (Q5.1). Our interpretation from the increase of agreement on Q5.1 from the midterm to the final survey is that the students were beginning to be eager to know the fruit of their effort after a whole semester of work.

The students’ desire to compete remained low from the midterm to the final (Q5.3) although the students seemed to welcome more gamification, as is shown in the decrease from 3.71 to 3.57 on the prompt of ‘no need to do more’ (Q5.6). An anecdotal note from the instructor about the early-stage democratic discussion of how to implement peer reviews also indicates that the students did not like to compete in ways of ranking but instead preferred simple rating and qualitative comments. Therefore, although the students seemed to still like achievements such as badges and bonuses (Q5.2), they did not like to compete against classmates (Dominguez, et. al, 2013). Speaking in closer relationship to real gaming, the researchers suggest that the player-kill kind of competition is not applicable to gamification in higher education. The college students may still like to learn in fun but not through competition. Perhaps as one student commented against competition in responding to Q5.3, ‘I believe that it is perfect right now, we are learning a lot from each other and that’s the way it should remain.’

A last survey item related to the research question is students’ perception of setting the Blackboard total score calculation to ‘NOT calculating as a running total’ (Q5.7). The students’ responses indicate that this setting did achieve its psychological purpose for a more authentic sense of accumulation towards the final goal. While motivating, ‘sometimes (it’s) nerve wracking,’ as one student commented. But the pressure seemed to be within the range of the students’ psychological competence to deal with it. That same student added, ‘but not too bad.’ Another student acknowledged both aspects of it, ‘Yes (it makes me nervous) But the final grade always makes me happy ... if it’s good!’

**Module 6. Regarding the instructor’s feedback.** Finally, the researchers would like to briefly discuss the students’ responses to some of the survey questions that are not directly related to the research question. For example, Q6.2 was to elicit the students’ perception of the instructor’s questions and comments following each presentation. It seems that students gained deeper perceptions of their learning from such instructor’s questioning and comments. On the one hand, the instructor partially fulfilled his traditional obligation of teaching; on the other hand, such questioning and comments, together with peer
reviews, constituted the whole feedback system on which the students depended to ‘game’ the process of learning. In contrast, the students disagree to the statement that the instructor should teach more rather than questioning and commenting (Q6.3). This brings us more confidence that the gamification design in this course has achieved its purpose as one approach to student-centered teaching. One student reflected, ‘Overall, I really enjoyed this semester... You made this class about us and gave us a firsthand experience through each lesson to prepare us for the future.’

Conclusion

Based on our analyses of data from three sources including two surveys, peer reviews, and the students’ reflection journals, the researchers suggest that modeling gamification principles in higher education classrooms holds potential to the implementation of student-centered teaching. In particular, the project reported in this study implemented some major gamification principles without resorting to complex gamified systems. The practices of providing choices and flexibility in topics and scheduling, making peer reviews a means of providing feedback and social cognitive learning, and providing basic gaming components such as achievement badges were well perceived and received by the students. Meanwhile, gamification does not necessarily mean more competition. College student may still be interested in learning in fun but not through the player-kill type of competition.

Our gamification experiment has also refreshed us of some long-lasting concerns in student-centered teaching. For example, to what extent would an instructor feel comfortable conceding his power and authority to students? When is the appropriate time for the instructor to provide feedback to students, and in what form? How to make sure peer reviews maintain high quality? These are all questions deserving careful consideration for those who plan to introduce gamification into their course design.

The researchers suggest attention to some limitations in this study. Our gamified class was small-sized. Therefore our experiences here may not be directly useful to those larger classes. In addition, although gamification does not necessarily mean games, real games should remain options when possible as some students in this study hoped for.

References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Midterm</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>The instructor has demonstrated democracy.</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>I think there should be more democracy in designing and implementing the course.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>I have benefited from the democracy</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Democracy is not necessary because it’s the instructor’s responsibility to teach well.</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Democracy is not necessary because I haven’t benefited much. I can achieve the same learning results with or without democracy.</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Enough topics of technology to choose from.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Enough choices in reading topics.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The flexibility in scheduling is appropriate.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>More assignments should be considered for resubmission opportunities.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>I like the peer review processes.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Peers’ comments are helpful.</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Peers’ comments should contain constructive critiques than praises.</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>The instructor should participate in the review.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>The instructor’s review score should carry more weight.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>I like the idea of badges and look forward to receiving one or more.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>I like the instructor’s practice of providing bonus for the top 1 or 2 students.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>The competition level in this course should be raised.</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>I feel the course has taken on some gaming features.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>There is a sense of playfulness in this course.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>The gamification is enough. No need to do more.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>NOT calculating as a running total makes me nervous because it seems to increase so slowly.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>The instructor’s questions and comments are helpful and should be continued.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The instructor should teach more rather than questioning and commenting.</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1. The questions in this table are concise versions of the original. 2. Only the questions discussed in this paper are included. (Q3.1 and Q3.2 are excluded for irrelevance to this research.) 3. The survey results are weighted averages calculated by SurveyMonkey.
Consumerism in the People’s Republic of China

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Introduction

Consumer protection is formed by changes in behavior, the passage of laws, and the development of consumer organizations. Understanding the rise and change of historical consumer movements is vital to understanding the country’s current consumer interests and rights protection movement. This paper will explain the evolution of the consumer interests and rights protection movement in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). It will analyze China’s consumerism in five distinct periods: the period before the People’s Republic of China (before 1949), centrally-planned command economy (1950-1978), open policy and economic reform (1978-1993), better organized consumer rights and interests protection movement (1993 through 2000), and the current consumer movement—continuing progress with challenges (after 2000). This paper will specifically address the ways in which the people, government, and laws have worked jointly to promote the rapid development of the consumer movement. Finally, an examination of the challenges to the current consumer movement will take place.

Key words: People’s Republic of China, consumerism, economic development, supply, demand, boycott, consumer interests and rights.

Period before the Establishment of the People’s Republic of China (before 1949)

Prior to 1900, China experienced three types of societies: primitive society (2600 BCE to 2100 BCE), slave society (2100 BCE to 476 BCE), and feudal society (475 BCE to 1840 CE). The feudal period led to a long span of low economic productivity. Within feudal society, there were policies of promoting agriculture and restraining commerce in an effort to enrich the state. This economy provided limited consumer protections (Rong, 2008).

Ancient Chinese emperors believed the country to be completely self-sufficient. Therefore, foreign trade was not considered to be an economically important activity. Western nations, however, wanted sustained trade with China. Europe was looking for ways to increase its access to Chinese products that were in high demand. The following four incidents happened before the foundation the PRC (1949), but had significant influence on China’s economy and consumerism then and today (Lu, 2010).

The Silk Road

The Silk Road or Silk Route were trade routes connecting Europe and the Mediterranean with the Asian world. Chinese goods were in high demand in Europe and Asia. The trade routes allowed the European market access to high-demand Chinese products such as silk, tea, porcelain, and other luxury goods. The Silk Road was the collective name for several ancient international trade routes linking China with Asian and European countries. It started in 206 BCE and lasted for more than 1,600 years, spanning several Chinese dynasties (Zhao, 2014).

Two Opium Wars

In an attempt to alter a trade imbalance with China, the British began smuggling large amounts of opium into China. Many Chinese people quickly became addicted to Opium. Britain began to reap huge
profits and broke China’s long-term advantages in foreign trade. Two hundred years of China’s trade surplus ended and a deficit economy followed (Shi, 2012).

The Chinese government and civilian population attempted to take a stand against the opium invasion through boycotts of opium. However, these actions were not successful in curbing the supply of opium into the country. Thus, there was an increased call for military action against foreign oppression (Zhang & Liu, 2007).

Between 1839 and 1860 there were two Opium Wars. These wars were marked by conflicts between the forces of Western countries and the Qing dynasty. In both wars, the foreign invaders were victorious. They gained both land and concessions. The people of China felt demoralized. However, these actions did lead to a rising of the people’s resolve. Resisting opium as an economic means of struggle against foreign aggression became a central theme in the consciousness of the people. This rise in consciousness resulted in a further boycott of British goods (Zhang & Liu, 2007).

May Fourth Movement

On May 4, 1919, workers and students took part in national protests against the government’s agreement to the Treaty of Versailles that allowed Japan to receive control over Chinese territories. Thus, there was a further surge in the national movement and further calls to boycott Japanese goods and promote domestic products. This May Fourth Movement is commemorated every year as Youth’s Day (Wu, 2013).

Boycotts & Domestic Production Movement

Throughout the early 20th century, anti-Japanese sentiment grew. The boycott movement gained an even stronger foothold against Japanese goods and products. Japanese goods were referred to as “hated goods” (Wu, 2012). From 1946 to 1947 the United States (U.S.) began an active policy of product dumping. The U.S. was selling its product in China at a price that was lower than the cost of production. The Chinese people responded with an anti-dumping movement to defend their domestic industries (Zhang, 1987). In response China launched campaigns to increase development and use of domestic products (Wu, 2012).

The consumer movement before the establishment of the PRC was characterized by the boycotting of foreign goods and the use of domestic products. The boycott movement was a way to fight against foreign economic aggression and eliminate unequal trade relationships. The boycott movement was an important part of the move against imperialist expansion. It was also a major expression of national patriotism. (Dong, 2011).

Centrally Planned Command Economy (1950-1978)

The PRC was established on October 1, 1949. In an attempt to recover from the trauma of war and difficulties with national finances, the new government developed a centrally-planned economic model, which identified social and economic development initiatives in the country every five years and is referred to as the five-year plan. The first five-year plan (1953–57) was based on the Soviet Union’s model where the government’s central plan replaced the market economy, which resulted in low productivity and limited varieties of products (Hu, Yan & Lv, 2010).

The second five-year plan (1958-1978), was designed with a focus on creating a centrally-controlled economy. This plan also identified means of production and control. These controls offered little consumption choice to the Chinese people. During this time, there were limited resources available to the consumer and goods were rationed. For instance, a grain-rationing system was imposed by the government. Families were given coupons that allowed them to buy a limited quantity of grain at a fixed price (Hu, Yan & Lv, 2010).

The government also implemented a series of measures to increase food production and stabilize food prices. One such measure was a quota system used to help regulate the food supply and limit the demand. This five-year plan model continued with strict central planning by the government with little feedback from the people, and the problems of the central planning system became obvious (Hu, Yan & Lv, 2010).


In 1978, China started a series of economic reforms. These included opening the country to foreign investment and encouraging small business development. Reform measures were put into effect to
increase industrial productivity. These reforms were successful. The country could produce a rich supply of goods that were previously restricted. However, there were no systems in place to evaluate product quality and safety. Thus, inferior products were made by cutting corners to increase profits. Due to the lack of consumer protection laws, consumers had no formal recourse to protect themselves. This lack of consumer protection led to dissatisfaction among Chinese consumers. With increasing complaints from consumers and no national consumer protections, some local authorities began to respond to the need for safeguards. Local consumer associations emerged in Xinle, Guangzhou, and Haerbin in 1983 (Yao, 2008).

In 1984, the China Consumers Association (CCA) was established. This was the first national consumer protection organization aimed at protecting the rights and interests of consumers, which was a landmark for modern consumer protection (Sun, 2010). However, the CCA had limitations. It was not widely known in the country for the first few years, and its effect was very limited. When consumers encountered unsatisfactory situations, the CCA might fail to provide effective protections to consumers. Therefore, the people began expressing their frustration through extreme behaviors. In 1987, for example, more than 5,000 pairs of poor quality shoes from Wenzhou were burned by consumers in the downtown of Hangzhou. There was a call for all Wenzhou shoes in the whole country to be burned. In response, many shops posted signs letting consumers know that Wenzhou shoes were not sold in their stores. The shoe burning brought attention to the need for consumer protection and reinvigorated the consumer movement nationwide (Lu, 2008).

On September 13, 1987, the CCA expanded its strength as a consumer protection group by joining the International Organization of Consumers Unions (IOCU). The IOCU is an independent, non-profit organization without any political affiliations. The IOCU provides protection to consumers around the world (Sun, 2010).

By the end of 1990, 25 provincial consumer associations and 1,900 regional and municipal consumer associations were established under the CCA. The CCA and local consumer associations jointly handled consumer lawsuits to fight against violations of consumer interests and rights. They also offered consumer education to the public. Thus, the CCA and local agents were well accepted and supported by the people (Liang, 1991).

March 15, 1991 marked the first National Consumer Rights Day. Annually, this day is celebrated and is known as 3.15 in China. Since 1991, China Central Television (CCTV) used this event to expose the worst company practices in China and bring attention to issues of consumer protection and awareness to the public (Henanfood Network, 2013).


During the early 1990s, low-quality products flooded the market. Fraudulent business practices were common. Knowing and buying fake products had become a topic of debate in many academic circles (Jinghua Times, 2014).

Despite protection efforts by the CCA, there was no statutory foundation for consumer protections until 1993 when the Consumer Rights and Interests Protection Law became the legal basis for the protection of rights and interests of the consumer (Feng & Lin, 2014). For the first time, issues of fraud were directly addressed. The Consumers Rights and Interests Protection Law is a landmark in the history of Chinese consumer rights protection. Consumer rights and protection had legal support for the first time. In the next few years, supplementary rules and regulations to the consumer rights and protection law were continually introduced and improved (Yao, 2008).

The CCA and CCTV carried out yearly activities with special topics since 1997. Every topic was based on consumer rights and interests of specific concern that year. These topics covered a wide range of issues including product safety, privacy rights protection, unfair business practices, fraud, and consumer and business interactions. The CCA and CCTV used these consumer themes to address issues and significantly strengthen protections. Thus, systematic changes occurred. The three most outstanding progresses were: increased media involvement in the consumer movement, the emerging of new consumer rights leaders, and the development of further consumer self-protections (Peng, 1999; Yang, 2009).
First, the CCTV, along with all provincial and municipal television and radio stations, dedicated time to explore market fraud, product defects, and consumer protection warnings. The increased use of television and radio allowed for larger segments of Chinese society to be educated and informed about consumer issues and rights protections (Yang, 2009).

Second, some of the new consumer interests and rights protection advocates became media celebrities or leaders. These celebrities led the movement through vocal endorsements and opinions. Other community leaders developed celebrity status due to their passion for consumer interests and rights protection. These celebrities had legal, media, political, and economic knowledge. They could clearly express the needs of the movement and advocate for further reform (Peng, 1999).

Finally, there was a surge in consumer self-protection behaviors. There existed a correlation between media coverages and increases in consumer self-protection. The more the media showed the consumer ways to protect their own interests, the more the consumer was willing to act. When there was more media education, for instance, there were more consumer lawsuits filed. This increase in consumer self-protection was a bridge to further success in the consumer movement (Peng, 1999).

**Current Consumer Movement---Continuing Progress with Challenges (after 2000)**

After 2000, there was the development of significant safeguards for consumer interests and rights protection. The “12315” administrative law enforcement system was established which created a formal complaint reporting network. The "12315" was a telephone network for the whole country. It became a famous consumer interests and rights protection symbol (Yao, 2008).

The protection of consumer interests and rights protection continued to evolve and develop. Further safeguards were established and extended to real estate business, medical advertising, management, finance, and online consumption. A series of laws and regulations were introduced. These laws regulated drugs, cosmetics, health, imports, exports, product quality, sanitation, trademarks, and advertisement (Feng & Lin, 2014).

China’s first Consumer Rights Law was revised in 2014. The new Consumer Rights Law attempted to bring the law up to date. The revisions were designed so that legal standards were in line with modern business practices. Thus, the administrative, social, and judicial protection framework for consumer interests and rights protection was fully formed (Zhang, 2015).

Currently, there are more than 3,000 consumer associations across the country. More than 26,000 branches were established in rural areas. These organizations handle consumer complaints, negotiate with companies on behalf of consumers, and help consumers to recoup their losses. These groups also engage in legal advocacy. They also attempt to provide input in the formulation of laws and policies. They advocate for the improved status of consumers, help consumers achieve healthy consumptions of goods, raise consumer consciousness, and carry out oversight of qualities of commodities and services. These groups pay attention to commodity inspection and government standards to strengthen international cooperation in consumer interests and rights protection (Wang, 2010).

Despite these active consumer interests and rights protection groups, there remain challenges of consumer protection. The five primary challenges to the current consumer movement are the following.

First, consumers lack a sufficient understanding of the protections available to them. Phoenix Network (2015) completed a survey of consumer attitudes of the Chinese people. The results showed that 18% of respondents did not use consumer protection laws. Twelve percent of people did not report problems to the “12315” consumer complaints hotlines when they encountered infringement. Twenty-five percent of respondents did not know the “12315” complaints telephone number. That means that there are still many consumers who are not aware of their rights or how to seek protection when their rights have been violated. However, most consumers did not think they were responsible for rights protection. Most consumers felt consumer protection should be provided by the government. These people believed more should be done by the government through legislation and law enforcement (Lin, 2012).

Second, consumer protection is not being utilized by all consumers equally. According to data from the court in Yuexiu District, Guangzhou, 712 lawsuits were filed during the first two weeks after the new consumer protection law was implemented in 2014. About 95% of those lawsuits were from professionals, only five percent of the lawsuits were from non-professionals. According to Xinhua
Network (2015), data in Nanjing demonstrated similar demographic trends. It showed the lack of consumer interests and rights protection awareness by most Chinese consumers. Historically, the consumer movement was galvanized by the people. Active participation and a desire for self-protection sustained the movement. The government responded to the will of the people. The government did not meet the people’s needs until the masses were vocal and organized. Weak awareness of interests and rights protection by all consumers remains a current challenge of the modern consumer movement (Lin, 2012).

Third, technological advances also challenge consumer interests and rights protection. With the rapid development of internet technology, the scale of China’s online transactions continues to grow. Along with this rapid growth, the number of internet service problems has also increased. Problems, such as fraud, lack of online consumer protection, lack of consumer privacy, lack of transaction security, and problems with product refunds or consumer services need to be addressed both technically and morally (Liu & Qin, 2016).

Fourth, challenges in consumer financial rights protection also exist. Internet banking has created an increase in consumer financial disputes. Financial consumer interests and rights protection and risk prevention are facing more and more challenges. Consumers are engaging in internet banking without sufficient financial knowledge or the ability to identify risk. Also, there is a lack of financial policies, laws, and regulations about internet financial products and services. Challenges remain regarding how regulatory agencies can develop policies to promote regulatory efficiency and consumer protection (Jiao, 2014).

Finally, consumer policies do not reflect the move towards China’s engagement in a global economic system. The move towards an increased international exchange of goods and services has generated many international consumer issues, such as rights protection on imported products. With the high flow of goods and services internationally, regulation and development of international quality standards must also be addressed. Also, price differentials between domestic and international commodity must be explored. Environmental pollution, food and drug safety, energy depletion, and education are all factors that need to be examined. These factors are challenges to the evolution of the consumer interests and rights protection initiatives in the imminent future (Xu, 2014).

Conclusion
China has a long consumer movement history. In the years before the foundation of the PRC, the consumer movement was characterized by boycotting foreign goods and advocating domestic goods. This populist movement was a way for the Chinese people to exert power over foreign aggression.

The reform and economic development of the 1970s was the catalyst for the consumer protection movement. The development of production that relies on market supply and demand created an increase in household income. This increase in income significantly influenced the country’s increase in consumerism. However, the low quality, bad service, and other defects from the supply side constantly harmed the interests of the consumer. Also, there was an increased awareness that opening the country’s market without quality standards would discourage foreign investment. All these factors prompted the development of consumer protection organizations and legislations. The movement was supported by an awareness of the people, support of the government, and the development of statutory law. The people, government, and law worked jointly to promote the rapid development of China’s consumer movement.

The consumer movement was later characterized by developing safeguards. By seeking social help and legal protection, consumers in China were provided with their first consumer protections. These protections advanced the Chinese consumer movement. This was the first step towards the development of a statutory foundation for the movement.

Rapid technological development and economic globalization are new challenges to China’s consumer movement. Current consumer protection legislation lags behind technologic and economic developments. Current policy and legal reforms are insufficient to address these growing trends. Education regarding consumer interests and rights protection is insufficient. Education of the populous is critically important. The Chinese consumers are called upon to exert their rights. They can no longer defer to the government for rights protection. Solutions must come from ordinary citizens who will take responsibility for the further advancement of the consumer protection movement.
References


