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Switch Training for Alternative Access to iPads for students with Disabilities in the Social Science Classroom.

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Building a Battery Interrupter to aid in Switch Training

Battery Interrupters can be used to adapt most devices, toys, or radios that have an on/off switch to work with a capability switch. Educational uses of battery interrupters include making toys and electronic devices, such as iPads, switch-capable. Simply insert the battery interrupter between the positive end of the battery and make most items switch activated.
Battery Interrupters

This is a great option if you have a favorite toy or vocational-related device that needs to be adapted. These interrupters generally don't work with devices that are squeezed or use remote control to activate them. Gently slide the disk between the battery and the metal bump on the compartment. Sometimes it is easiest to slide the battery interrupter disk and the battery in at the same time.
Step One: Select Your Tools

Select your tools:
Some of the tools we used are a soldering iron, wire, wire splitter, solder and a metal conductor

Step Two:

For this project, we used aluminum sheeting and electrical tape as an insulator
Step Three:

Using the wire splitter, split the wire

Step Four:

Now that you have split the wire, strip about ¼ to ½ inch from the insulation
Step Five:

Solder one side of the stripped wire to one side of the metal strip.
Make sure the metal sides and the wires themselves don’t make contact.

Step Six:

Solder the other side of the wire to the other side of the metal strip.
Step Seven:

Bend the metal interrupter so that it will fit in the battery compartment, but not stick out too much.

Step Eight:

Wire your connector plug so that the switch can be connected to the battery interrupter
Step Nine:

Wire your plug so that the male connector of the switch interface fits into the female plug of the battery interruptor.

Step Ten:

Insert the interruptor between the “+” lead of the battery and the device.
Step Eleven:

Pressing the switch will activate the device we used with the battery interrupter
Action Research:
An Essential Experience for Masters Candidates in Education

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The current climate in public education is one of challenge as teachers work diligently to support students in their charge. Many of the problems teachers face in guiding students to become successful are not or minimumly addressed in the standards documents, such as issues faced by children of poverty. For many years, it has been suggested that districts follow best practices as supported by research however, the research findings don’t always align with the realities of pedagogical practice. The lack of conduit between research and practice in education can be attributed to the following:

- Teachers not finding research persuasive or authoritative
- Research is not relevant to their practice and doesn’t reflect the questions facing them.
- Research results are not presented in a fashion that is easily acceptable or understandable to practitioners. This is not to suggest a negative perception of teachers, but research has a language that must be learned and translated for understanding to occur. (Kennedy, 1997).

These features can cause a disconnect for practitioners who can view research results not being connected to their reality of actual practice (Hallinan, 1996). If the goal to improve schools remains the focus, a change in our educational change practices is a fundamental need (Clarke, 2012).

Many schools face the challenge of improving student achievement and an untapped resource for finding potential improvement solutions is to empower teachers to conduct action research, using their findings to help solve problems within a particular school and improve student learning and impact teacher effectiveness (Mills & Gay, 2016). Research conducted by participants, those who work in the situation and know the school/district, can create a clear connection between a problem faced within the environment, research driven decision-making, and the desired outcome. These AR projects are actionable, provide new ideas in response to a need, reflexive, the candidate or self is viewed as in instrument of change and is significant having meaning and relevance to the situation (Huang, 2010). When teachers engage in inquiry/action research they become invested in the process to find answers to their own questions. It has relevance and empowers them as they are doing the research and testing their own assumptions about teaching and learning (Mills, 2014).

This paper will share how one university is equipping Masters candidates to conduct action research (AR) to inform practice and improve learning in their classrooms. Candidate reflections on the AR process are documented as evidence of the participant’s view of the research process and its role in changing them as teachers.

**Literature Review**

**Action Research**

Action research has been in practice since the time of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) when observation was valued as an important component of learning and how our actions can reflect our belief system. Continuing with the importance of observation Galileo (1564-1642 A.D.), Rousseau (1592-1670), and Montessori (1870-1952) all
spoke of using careful, naturalistic observation to document reality and inform decisions (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001). With AR being a historical method of learning and informing decisions, it is important to share the elements of AR. Glanz (1998) identified the following steps as the stages of the AR research process:

- Identifying a focus through reflection on teaching practices, individual students or curriculum used
- Collecting data
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Developing a plan based on findings, reflections and modifying actions

When this action research process formally finds its way into schools, it brings a systematic method of exploration conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors and other stakeholders within a learning environment to gather and gain insight, develop more effective teaching practices, and create positive change (Mills & Gay, 2016). Teachers conducting action research are looking for solutions to problems they face in their classroom and school and often times use elements of action research within their regular planning and teaching practices. AR in this informal way occurs when a teacher thinks about a lesson they taught, reflects on what worked and didn’t, and makes changes or revisions to their teaching based on student reaction and learning. The difference between this natural teacher thinking process and action research process is the AR process has deliberate pre-research planning, documenting reflection on the problem or concern, review of the what is currently known about the topic (literature review), systematic gathering of data (methodology), analyzing results and reporting findings (Mills, 2014). When AR is used formally in a school setting it asks teachers to incorporate reflective practice into their daily routine to examine their own teaching to improve or enhance what they are currently doing in their classrooms. This process is actionable, the work provides new ideas that guide action in relationship to a identified concern (Huang, 2010). It is through AR that teachers can review what is happening in their classrooms, consider their teaching practices, actions, and interactions with students, confirm and confront current teaching methods, and move toward change (Mills, 2014).

One benefit for teachers conducting AR is that it allows change to occur for the teacher-researcher and guides how he/she can alter their pedagogical practices to improve instruction and student performance based on knowledge gained through this process. This empowers the teacher-researcher as a change agent and makes them producers of knowledge and not just consumers. The producers of knowledge role is important particularly to adult learners as it focuses on situations that allow adults to a) self-direct their own learning; b) engage in solving real world problems; c) apply new learning to real world applications (Knowles, 1984).

For teachers to embark on self-directed learning and connecting to real world problems, they must use a systematic reflection as a guide to gain a better understanding of the classroom or teaching situation to improve instruction and support student achievement.
This reflection process guides teachers in developing their own theory based on their own personal and professional experiences and use this theory as a guide to inform teaching practices (Cornett, 1990; Girod & Pardales, 2001).

The use of the AR process brings relevance to the research, often missed in other applications of educational research where the problems being addressed may not fit the needs of the teacher. If the goal is to find effective pedagogical change in K-12 classrooms, professional development programs that empower teachers to find problems in their setting, needs they may have in their classrooms, use the process of inquiry to seek solutions and share their findings then AR could be the ticket (Clarke, 2012). It is when teachers analyze their own practice with the goal of improving their own teaching, employing the inquiry process, focusing on problems and questions that teacher see as valuable and become teacher-researchers and agents of change (Girod & Pardales, 2001).

Inquiry and Change

In order for teachers to be agents of change in their classrooms and schools, they must conduct mindful reflection and use this reflection to make changes to what and how they teach with the goal of improving student performance. But reflection by itself will not produce change. It is when reflection on a situation combined with the inquiry or AR process that a teacher can become the constructor of knowledge and makers of change (Kiss & Townsend, 2012).

It is becoming more common practice for teachers to participate in professional development programs that allow them to earn additional certifications or advanced degrees. Oftentimes within these programs include a research methodology component with action research as a key method, allowing teachers to inquire into issues of significance within their school setting (Girod & Pardales, 2002). Just teaching research methodology doesn’t guarantee teachers will apply this knowledge to study an concern within their classroom (Hahs-Vaughn & Yanowitz, 2009). Many times only a small number ever apply the research methodology knowledge to a problem they face by themselves. It is critical to have a system of support to guide and enable teachers to engage in the research process (2009). In order to support and empower teachers in the research process, one university created a capstone course at the conclusion of the gifted education masters degree programs. It is through this course that candidates complete an all phases of the AR research process, including sharing findings and reflecting on the experience.

Participants

All candidates pursuing a Masters in curriculum and instruction or gifted education at a university in the southern United States must complete an action research project as partial fulfillment of their degree requirements, thus the sample was purposive and convenience. Since 2007, there have been ninety-two candidates go through this AR process and complete their masters degrees. The candidates’ capstone experiences were supported by a two-semester course having candidates complete the
preparation/proposal process, including Institutional Review Board approval, followed by conducting their study and reporting their findings.

**Process**

At the initial stages of the AR/Capstone process, candidates were asked to consider a problem or concern they face in their classrooms, allowing them to determine the focus of their project. It is at this time they became problem finders, seekers of information, with a desire for the results, and creating a deep connection between theory and practice. During the initial stages of the AR process, candidates were required to choose their focus area. The selection process for their AR focus started within one of the initial courses in their program where candidates start a list of problems/concerns and this list continued to grow throughout their program culminating with this final project topic decision in the Capstone course. Within the planning stages of a candidate’s AR project, they were guided through a discovery process of finding and narrowing their focus area by considering

- Why is this of interest?
- What is the question?
- What do I really want to know?
- What do others know?
- What do I expect to find?

This initial problem finding process was followed by candidate decisions to determine their question to answer, data collection techniques, analysis process, how they will interpret their own data, and develop future plans based on their findings (Dana, 2013; Fraekel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015; Mills & Gay, 2016).

Candidates developed a foundation of understanding of their topic through a review of the literature to help inform the research question development. The research question development process, based on the literature, was guided for candidates by using question cubes. These one-inch blocks contain question stems to help develop focused and meaningful questions. The cubes contained the following on each face of a cube:

- **Cube 1** – who, what, when, which/how, why, & where
- **Cube 2** – can, will, might, is, did, could/should/would

Candidates rolled the cubes repeatedly to create potential questions to obtain a greater focus for their study. From this list of potential questions, candidates selected a question(s) for the study. Once the question is identified, the data collection and analysis processes are linked to the research goal of the project.

**Methodology**

All candidates in the Capstone course complete an AR project, using their identified focus and following the AR research process. After they complete their study, each candidate is required to reflect on their experiences during their program, not just the capstone experience. Ninety-two candidates have completed the Capstone process over the past eight years. Candidate reflections were analyzed using open coding, comparing...
and contrasting data to formulate conceptual labels and identify common elements candidates found meaningful in their development as a teacher. All reflections were reviewed and careful analysis was conducted to identify any patterns, trends, themes within these reflections (Checkland & Holwell, 1998). While candidates spoke of different elements that were meaningful, the common feature in these reflections was the important learning they gained as result of conducting their research project.

**Student Reflections on the AR Experience**

The Capstone experience suggests a transformation for these candidates has occurred at a variety of levels and has impacted many schools over the past eight years. The statements shared within the following reflections illustrate in the candidates own words the transformation they themselves identified and how this impacted them as teachers. Here are some former Masters candidate reflections on the action research/capstone process and the effect this experience had on them as a professional educator.

...My capstone project focused on identifying conditions most conducive to visual arts talent development and examining how stakeholders perceived these conditions. Through the use of survey data confirmation of my suspicions occurred that the majority of the school community shares the positive perceptions of the conditions necessary for talent development. The capstone experiences taught me that research is worthwhile and hard data can be compelling evidence.......Based on the positive experience with the capstone project, I would certainly be willing to conduct additional research in the future.

Candidate 1

...I enjoyed analyzing test scores to find trends in the data. I thought it was interesting to identify strengths and weaknesses in students and teachers. It helps to see the big picture, not stay focused on day to day instruction. With the support of research, I will be more comfortable delivering instructional ideas to my fellow teachers.

Candidate 2

In looking at my capstone topic, I would love to delve further into teacher professional development in using art across the curriculum.

Candidate 3

My capstone focused on adding nonfiction print journalism to a unit why reading fiction as an anchor text.....in my discussion with colleagues in the Masters program about their action research, it is evident that their research impacted students, parents, and teachers across the board as well. I have learned that as educators, we must continue to question our current teaching strategies and school
practices, always searching for ways to improve and keep up with the quickly changing world in which we live.

Candidate 4

In this last semester I found I enjoy doing research…I learned a lot from my students’ daily work and their journal entries and I am excited to further this research with my eighth graders next year…I am interested to see if my future research could possibly become a new strategy to use in the math classrooms throughout the school.

Candidate 5

My capstone project allowed me to fully research inquiry-based learning and how it impacts student learning. I was able to analyze data to gain insight of how inquiry-based learning works in the classroom setting. These experiences helped me as a teacher by giving me the confidence to know that the way I’ve always taught my classes do show growth in science inquiry skills.

Candidate 6

Outcomes

While some candidates reported the capstone/action research process as challenging and sometimes even difficult, they also shared they have changed or been transformed in how they will conduct their problem solving in the classroom. Some candidates stated they will review literature before making a teaching decision, others shared they will work to identify more manageable areas to explore – not expecting to change everything at once, and still others were “bitten by the bug” for research and plan to pursue a terminal degree as a result of this experience. This capstone AR process took a significant amount of time but the results were more than just a final paper. As a result these candidates were empowered and transformed through this research process (Levin & Merritt, 2006). Their transformation was stimulated during the AR process where candidates had

Choice
Systematic Data Collection and reflection
Collaborative/Facilitator Support
Discomfort through the AR process
Inquiry leads to deeper understanding and improved practice (2006).

Discussion

Four themes emerged from candidate reflections on the capstone process. First, candidates expressed a greater comfort with the idea of conducting research to inform practice to the point they identified areas they would like to research in the future. Second, candidates indicated they were empowered to share information with others as teacher leaders. Third, candidates expressed satisfaction with finding answers to their own questions. Finally, candidates shared a need to review the literature before making change to instructional practices. As a whole, these reflective responses concerning the
capstone experience indicated the empowering role the capstone/action research project had on these candidates through the opportunity to develop ownership in a research topic and conduct a project that was personally relevant to them (Honigsfeld, Connolly, Kelly, 2013). The element of reflection is essential to make change in practice and it is only when this happens that we begin to see transformation in understanding and practice to occur.

Follow up reports with candidates indicated that these projects and the results have had an impact on candidates themselves as well as their schools with areas of improved student learning, changed teacher colleagues' instructional practices, as well as professional development decisions made by administration. These include administrators using the AR findings to develop school policy or practices to create an acceleration plan in order to address students who are ready to move up a grade or increase the complexity level of work. Another administrative change that was reported was the use of bombarding first grade students with weekly vocabulary through the daily one-on-one use flash cards, looping the word list on the monitors, and frequent conversations about the these words in other settings and content areas. Based on the reading vocabulary test results of this candidate’s class, the administrator suggested other teachers at her grade level implement these practices.

This AR/Capstone process allowed individual interests and efforts to be connected allowing meaning to develop within the educational system in which it is employed (Dewey, 2010). When these capstone candidates aquired new understandings about teaching student behaviors, or learning process based on the reflections and the AR process, they took on the role of problem solvers. They engaged in the process of producing and accessing knowledge, built on their own learning and experiences which lead to creating their own meaning (Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004). It is through action that legitimate understanding is possible, making the connection between theory and practice as theory without practice is only speculation (Huang, 2010). In closing, as one candidate shared, “I have learned it is not always worth the effort in following the latest educational trend. The most important thing is to understand your students and yourself; implementing things that work for them and your classroom”.

References
University Researchers and Public Schools: Opportunities and Constraints

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The relationships between schools and independent researchers are dynamic and complex. Professionals in schools need the knowledge that good research generates in order to assure that they are optimizing their ability to meet the expectations of political leaders and the public. Researchers need access to public schools in order to conduct that good research.

Despite the clear desirability for cooperative arrangements, there are evident points of divergence, even built-in conflicts between university researchers and schools. As Kuriloff, Andrus, and Ravitch (2011) noted, “There are myriad practical, theoretical, and ethical difficulties that can arise when conducting participatory research across two types of institutions.” * Public schools and universities are different cultures. They have different power structures and their professionals operate within different reward & penalty systems. Thus the researcher and the school administrator and school personnel often view the research from quite different perspectives. The administrator holds the keys and can encourage or prevent the research effort citing their responsibilities to their teachers, students, and staff and to parents. Researchers site their mandate from society to advance our knowledge of learning and the role of schooling.

The presentation began with a personal retrospective – an examination of four proposed research efforts between university researchers and a specific school district. Following a general discussion of opportunities and constraints, The researchers will present a brief case study of four research efforts and attempt to explain their accomplishments and failures.

**Opportunities**

The incentives for conducting research in public schools are, of course, varied. These include the researcher’s inherent curiosity; a deep desire to know seems to reside in all university researchers. Public schools offer a rich array of opportunities to independent researchers. They constitute living laboratories of learning in which the researcher might examine teacher-student dynamics; study and conduct experimentation with curricula and pedagogical techniques; explore the implications of school reforms; test educational leadership styles; and critique a host of learning theories. They offer arenas for gaining insights into the next generation of diverse students. Moreover, they may provide opportunities to test one’s research skills and professional knowledge. There is enough there to whet the researcher’s appetite regardless of one’s professional curiosities.

A second incentive is the desire to solve “live” problems. Many young faculty, filled with a sense that they have important and useful research and analytical skills, find schools to be an inviting venue. Schools are alluring in part because they are alive with seemingly intractable problems, often discussed both in public media and in professional journals. (Agosta, Graetz, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2004)

In addition to professional curiosity and the desire to contribute to solving vexing problems, the university researcher is native to a culture that places strong incentives in that direction. Research is usually a prerequisite to job security and is an important part or the reward system. Promotion, tenure and merit pay are principle incentives to university faculty. Additionally, the sense of pride and accomplishment that seems to follow a researcher’s success is an important part of university environment. (Beaumont,1998).
Public schools provide the potential for satisfying all these incentives. They can open doors to classrooms, teachers, students, statistical information about students and personnel, and to the curriculum. In some cases, they can also provide access to students’ families and communities. The allure of this arena to a large array of university researchers is obvious. But the independent investigator often faces challenges that can threaten, even abort the effort before it has begun (Beaumont, 1998).

The gain or opportunity for the schools is the potential of improvements in the area studied. Also, opportunity exists for the administrators to demonstrate their desire for participation in building our shared educational knowledge. Surely, this is can be a political bonus so to speak (Jonson-Reid, Kontrak, & Mueller, 2001). School-based researchers offer an additional professional educator in the schools or classrooms or working individually with a student(s). This can be beneficial.

The following is a brief summary of cases based on a university researcher who has conducted studies in a single public school district in Texas. There were four efforts to conduct research. Three of these involved a single researcher, one involved a team of university faculty. The researchers offer these to illustrate both constraints and opportunities for researchers and to shed insights into factors that have been associated with success and failure. The researchers will conclude by citing published accounts of constraints and opportunities that other researchers have experienced in recent American history.

Case #1. The researcher sought to build on sociolinguistic research that demonstrated systematic breakdowns in behavioral norms between students of certain ethnic communities and schools. The researcher sought to investigate verbal and nonverbal miscues between teachers and students in one of the district’s secondary schools.

The researcher made an appointment with the superintendent of schools. The researcher waited in his office but was not admitted to his office. The researcher tried to reschedule the appointment but the secretary said she’d have to get back with me and failed to do so.

The researcher called and tried to reschedule several times. Eventually an assistant superintendent came to the researcher’s and told the researcher a study would not be possible.

Result: Failure resulted due to denial of access to the students and classroom.

Key factor. A possible explanation was the political atmosphere since the district was under a court desegregation order. The researcher suggested that such a study might enhance the district’s credibility with the court. That argument was rejected as was the entire research venture.

Case #2. The proposed study was a statistical and qualitative analysis examining the possibility of bias in the assessment of Hispanic elementary school students. This was an analysis of a commercially circulated behavioral assessment scale.

The study required direct observations and use of the behavioral scale in three elementary schools over a four month period. The research relied on access at the school level rather than district-wide level.

Results: The study resulted in a successful doctoral dissertation and publication in the peer reviewed journal Behavior Disorders.

Key Factors: The principal at one of the schools was a former student of the
researcher, the principal of the other two was a long-time professional associate who had collaborated with the university in its student teacher program.

Case #3: This case involved the study of student disengagement in an alternative secondary school. A team of three university faculty members interviewed 5 teachers, the principal, 12 students and 7 parents.

Result: The findings were presented to NSSA Conference, and published Carlson, Martinez & Lasater 2013) In addition, a report was delivered to the superintendent of schools without response.

Key Factors: An assistant superintendent of schools who has worked with the University and was a friend of one of the team members facilitated the effort.

Case #4: This case was an investigation of pedagogical practices for English Language Learners developing academic language. It included analysis of the role of grammar instruction.

The researcher is working with the district’s new Director of Bilingual/ESL Programs. The Director is adopting a new district-wide program and seeks evidence of its effectiveness.

Results: The research is still on-going.

Key Factors: The newness of both the Director and the program may have created a “friendly” environment for research. The above assistant superintendent who had supported earlier research facilitated contact between the researcher and the Director.

Lessons learned:
1. The researcher in these cases is seeking permission and must recognize the asymmetry in authority. In Case #1, The researchers have the clearest indication that researchers must understand the power that administrators have over the researcher. In this case, the superintendent simply denied access and thereby prevented the study from taking place. It is tempting to interpret this response but the researchers must admit it is impossible to reliably interpret motives in such cases. Moreover, there can be a range of explanations, some of which are practical in nature. For example a researcher, potentially, represents an intrusion and may interrupt significant, planned activities. There may also be ethical concerns such as access to confidential information, and of course, the reality of political considerations should be tossed into the possibilities.

Restrictions:

WHETHER
Public school administrators are central factors. They can deny access to the researcher (Case #1).

WHEN
Administrators control when the research will be conducted. In Cases #2, 3, and 4, the researchers were allowed access but with controls. Some restrictions were based on school schedules, the availability of research subjects such as students and teachers, and testing. However, access is rarely completely open. There may be negotiation between administrators and the researcher and these may involve teachers. Yet ultimately the school administrator decides when the study will be conducted.
WHERE & WITH WHOM

The researcher must fit the investigation into the scope of the administration’s priorities. In Cases # 3, 4, and 5 accesses to certain subjects was determined, ultimately, by the school administrators. The importance of WHEN, WHERE & WITH WHOM: The threat of selection bias.

In Case #2, the effort to find whether there was bias in the assessment instrument depended on the specific population of Hispanic students the researcher used in the study. If the students were not representative of the Hispanic student population, the researchers face the possibility of selection bias. In Case #3, if the at-risk students and the teachers were not representative, the researchers have another threat of selection bias. The principals selected the students and the teachers to participate.

In Case #4, the Bilingual/ESL Director has, to date, not denied access to any classrooms or other sites that are important to the study. One could speculate that the teachers are not convinced that they should participate. As Dixon (2001) claimed, “…teachers do not believe that research leads to improved educational practices…”

2. Institutional snags.

This type of research normally requires both formal and informal relationships. Formal arrangements such as contracts and other Agreements require approvals within the participating institutions. These include human subjects review committees in universities and legal consultation. They can take time and threaten time-sensitive research.

3. Researcher bias. This included the real possibility of being co-opted.

The researcher wants and, in many cases, needs to complete the study. In some cases, the researcher also wants to assure that the door is open to future research. This creates a vulnerability that can shape the gathering and interpretation of data. The longer the relationships between researcher and school personnel and the more sanguine the interpersonal connections the more likely that subtle or even significant bias may develop.

Factors that promote the research.

In Cases #2, 3, and 4, prior relationships between researchers and key administrators allowed access. These were professional relationships that developed over time. However there were also informal connections. One of the researchers in Case #3 had taught school with the principal of the school and superintendent and had long-term social engagements with both.

The researchers realize that these are just a few thoughts on the research and will be sharing more on the topic in future articles which are in progress.
References
De-Centralizing the Curriculum:
Integrating the African Dimension in French Studies

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In the field of foreign languages, we teach students to communicate orally and in writing in the target language and develop their interpretive skills through listening comprehension and reading. All of these facets are equally important and form the basis of students' interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills. But the underlying fabric that holds these skills together and makes them meaningful is cultural context and intercultural competency: the ability to communicate between cultures, an open attitude and understanding of cultural differences and similarities and the ability to function effectively in "culture-specific" matrices. An intercultural language learning approach is based on the premise that language, culture, and learning are interrelated. It is an approach that focuses on the development of students' sensitivity to different cultures and their impact on communication, the acquisition of skills to analyze and interpret other values, beliefs, and behaviors, and the ability to come back and look at one's own language and culture through a different prism. This article aims first to demonstrate how language, the French language in our case, can be the point of entry into the diverse cultures that make up the French-speaking world. In addition, using an intercultural teaching approach will allow students to move to a position where multiple points of view are recognized and respected.

De-Centralizing the Curriculum

Most French language programs begin with the “center,” stressing language, images, and perspectives of a constructed textbook “Frenchness.” Anyone who has travelled to France knows that France today does not always correspond to the image of France in school textbooks. One encounters a variety of different faces and cultures and the idea of pure “Frenchness” is put into question. France is a multicultural society very much like the U.S. France is multicultural in terms of the origins of the continental French people themselves: some are of Celtic origin, of Germanic culture, of Ligurian or Italian influences, just to name a few. It is also multicultural in terms of the strong presence of people from other European countries such as Spain and Portugal due to immigration. All who set foot on French soil will also be surprised (or not) about the multitude of peoples of African descent settled from former colonial territories. In addition, the French-speaking world extends far beyond the “Hexagone” due essentially to migrations (forced or voluntary) and conquest. Exposing French language students of all levels to this world enables them to delve into the intricacies of French society on French soil, but also evaluate French influences outside of France and experience cultural resistance and “métissages” (creolization) of peoples and cultures as a result of contact. The presentation of African units in the French language classroom will be given as an illustration of cultural de-centralization: a stress on the world outside France.

Principles of Intercultural Language Teaching

Intercultural language teaching as outlined by language and cultural theorists:

- involves the fusion of language, culture, and learning into a single educational approach (Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999; 2000);
- develops students’ understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to an additional language and culture (Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999; 2000);
• helps learners move to a “third place,” which is an “intercultural position” between these languages and cultures where multiple points of view are recognized, mediated, and accepted (Liddicoat, Pappademtre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003).

How can these principles be applied when introducing African units in the French language classroom?

African Practices and Cultural Comparisons

An introduction to French-speaking West Africa can easily be accomplished through an integrated unit that includes language (French and African languages), geography, music, film, and popular cultural expressions. In a unit entitled “French-Speaking West Africa” that spreads over multiple weeks, students first discuss geographical and cultural features of West Africa through a question-answer session. Working in groups, students bring to the table any prior knowledge they may have on the subject. The class then comes together to propose answers and obtain clarifications and details from the instructor on some of the main features of the region. The next topic involves greetings and first contacts. At this time, an introduction or a review of the different greetings in French is given pointing to the use of appropriate register (formal/informal) and body language. In the context of French-speaking West Africa, students are made aware of the multilingual context of the regions. In addition to French, Africans use a multitude of African languages for daily interactions and within families. A short greeting exchange from Senegal is provided as an example, taught and performed in Wolof, the most widespread language spoken in Senegal. Cultural insights are given as to the significance of long greetings (typical of a “life-in-community” outlook as interlocutors are asked and give news about their families) and the importance of knowing one another’s last name, “sant”, and shouting it out periodically during the exchange. Greetings become, in addition, an occasion to discuss with students the importance and meaning of names in Francophone Africa. In West Africa, your name establishes your identity and your place in the world. In the case of greetings in Wolof for example, the mention of your last name is a way of acknowledging your existence, but it is also a way of acknowledging and paying respect to your whole family line. Entry into the African world through greeting exchanges highlights on a simple level many aspects of the region:

• multilingualism
• French-speaking West Africa as a crossroads of many cultural and religious influences (traditional African values, Islam, and Christianity)
• Africans having a strong concern for family and community
• Africans demonstrating respect for the Other (as shown in greeting exchanges).

An intercultural language teaching approach will move beyond the level of “observation” to further prompt students to think critically about culture. In particular, students look for the visible and invisible cultural features contained in language; they compare and contrast practices of the target language’s culture with those of their home
Questions sur les Salutations

1. Que lest le rôle du français à votre avis dans un pays francophone comme le Sénégal? du Wolof? (What is the role of French and Wolof in a Francophone country such as Senegal?)

2. Quelles différences voyez-vous entre les salutations en français et celles en Wolof? (What differences can you see between traditional greetings in French and those in Wolof? Include linguistic and paralinguistic elements)

3. Où voyez-vous l’influence de l’islam dans le quotidien? (Where do you see the influence of Islam in everyday life?)

4. Comment est reflétée la vie communautaire africaine? (How is “life-in-community reflected in the exchange?)

5. Où voyez-vous l’importance et l’influence de la tradition orale? (Where do you see the importance and influence of the oral tradition?)

6. Quand vous comparez ces salutations avec certaines pratiques dans votre communauté, quelles similarités/ou différences remarquez-vous? Avez-vous un certain “rituel” ou des “codes” familiers lorsque vous vous saluez? Lesquels? (Compare salutations with those in your communities. Do you have any “rituals” or “codes” when greeting? Explain).

When greeting, the Senegalese will often transfer African cultural practices in the exchange when addressing a fellow African. Examples include: adding questions about the family and also interjecting the interlocutor’s last name when it is not a common practice in French culture. Just as Peter Vakunta (2011) spoke of the “indigenization of the French language” by Francophone African writers in their novels, African speakers who use French often find themselves negotiating linguistic and cultural spaces in an attempt to bend the French language to the specificities of indigenous cultures (Vakunta, 2011) when the context calls for it. This process often manifests itself through code-switching and language mixing to imbue the French language with African speech mannerisms and thought patterns. An example of such “linguistic and cultural resistance” to French is studied in a lesson about a popular Senegalese comic strip entitled Goorgoorlu. Goorgoorlu was created by T.T. Fons, pen name of Senegalese caricature artist Alphonse Mendy. T.T. Fons describes himself as a “political artist” and has published over 20 albums which center around the character of Goorgoorlu. The term “goorgoorlu” stems from the Wolof language and is composed from the word: “goor”, meaning “man.” The term “goorgoorlu” is commonly used in everyday speech and refers to someone’s resourcefulness and “know how.” In T.T. Fons’ albums, the main character tackles family, economic, and societal issues with humor. Through excerpts, students are able to see firsthand the use of both French and Wolof in the dialogues. In addition, students are able to analyze aspects of everyday life in Senegal: modernity
and new attitudes clashing with many traditional practices still anchored in society. Examples include men and women’s changing roles in family and society, fossilized patriarchal attitudes that die hard, and economic hardship in the region. Before plunging into the comic strip, pre-reading activities will help build students’ curiosity about the text, tap into their prior knowledge, and practice strategies such as predicting and constructing meaning. Analyzing the cover of Goorgoorlu gives numerous cues as to the general theme of the strip.

Pre-Reading Analysis Sheet
(Translated from the original in French)

As you look at the cover, answer the following questions:

- Who is the author?
- Describe the characters that you see on the cover. Are they French? What is their origin?
- What preoccupations does the man seem to have?
- What seem to be the woman’s preoccupations? Describe her attitude.
- Translate the title: “Pour la Dépense Quotidienne.”
- What will be, in your opinion, some of the main themes treated in the comic strip?

Advanced organizers such as the KWL chart can also help students visualize what they know (K), want to know (W), and learned from reading the strip. The use of comic books to learn about the African world highlights authentic language and culture in a fun and engaging way. T.T. Fons’ comic books contain social commentary, human types/stereotypes (a welcome discussion for students), and idiosyncrasies.

Integration of African Art

The integration of art in the foreign language classroom has many benefits. It not only provides a springboard for communication, it also has the power to touch students’ affective domain, making language connect with emotions and feelings. Finally, when students delve into the lives of artists and discuss their works, it allows for an examination of the values and themes of the target culture as well as self-examination of one’s own values and biases. African art is often viewed as “primitive” and “exotic” art. In most students’ imagination, it is comprised mostly of masks and traditional crafts with artists unknown as if Africa were frozen in time. On the contrary, African art in its many forms continues to show strong individual artistic intent, progress, and integration into mainstream artistic movements around the world. The works of Senegalese artist Souleymane Ly can lead to enriching conversations about modern art in Francophone West Africa. Souleymane Ly’s inspiration comes from everyday life in Senegal. He describes his art as “wanting to inspire an African Renaissance.” As an “artiste engagé” (politically engaged artist), some of his themes include the deterioration and disorder of urban life in Africa, a return to more humane traditional African values and wisdom in order to move forward, and Africa in the global world. Ly’s painting of Kocce Barma Fall introduces students to one of the most prominent African thinkers of the 15th to mid-16th century and a piece of pre-colonial West African history. He lived at a time when there were independent West African kingdoms such as the Kingdom of Cayor a split from the
larger Wolof Empire which deteriorated in the 15th century. Senegalese oral history has kept Kocce Barma alive and his influence is so widespread that proverbs are commonly introduced by saying “Kocce Barma disait” (Kocce Barma said). He is typically depicted with 4 clumps of hair which represented 4 secret truths only known by him and his wife. Some of Kocce Barma’s teachings included strong denunciation of the excesses of royal power and the need to respect elders. He also touched upon more controversial topics such as family and gender relations:

- Aime la femme, mais n’aie jamais confiance.  
  (Love your wife, but never trust her)
- Le roi n’est jamais un parent.  
  (The King is never a relative)
- L’enfant adoptif n’est jamais un vrai fils.  
  (The stepson is not a true son)
- Il est bon d’avoir un vieillard dans un village.  
  (It is good to have an elder in the village)

In addition to historic background and an introduction to a central African character who is still remembered and celebrated today, Ly’s painting stands as an example of modern African visual art: an art that is tradition inspired, but also open to current global artistic movements, local and global issues.

The integration of the French-speaking world in French language and cultural studies has leaned toward a homogenization of peoples and cultures under the practical concept “francophonie.” Teaching French-speaking Africa by highlighting its practices and literatures, and pointing to the uniqueness of its cultural forms contributes to a pedagogy that promotes pluralism and respect for the Other. The different uses of French as well as the blending of various cultural influences in these regions make up for a rich exploration of the process of “métissage:” a cultural metamorphosis with superimposed cultural identities at work. An intercultural teaching approach is the best strategy for comparisons and reflections on culture and identity construction and will contribute in developing more understanding and tolerant individuals.
References


Cultural Change and Transferring Traditional and
Scientific Agricultural Knowledge
Between Parents and Children in Ghana

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Abstract

More than 60% of Ghanaians engage in subsistence agriculture. Ghana’s government and Ghanaian parents, in harmony with the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (2000), have committed to educating this generation of children through junior high school in order to expand career choices. But could improved agriculture be a career of the future? In school, children learn scientific agricultural methods, which could improve their parents’ farming practices, but the children do not share this knowledge with their parents. On the other hand, parents are steeped in traditional knowledge and wisdom about local practices that, if respected and valued, could enrich their children’s education. In 2014 and 2015 Ohio State ATI’s Ghana study abroad tours, travelers implemented a pilot project of facilitating agriculture technology transfer between a group of farmers and their children. With the aid of local extension workers, a group of children successfully taught their parents scientific knowledge and their parents in turn taught traditional knowledge and practices.

Introduction

Struggling to meet international security pressures like “drug cartels, weapons proliferation, shipping piracy, climate change, and spillover effect of terrorism and militancy from neighboring countries,” Ghana’s government sometimes relegates internal development to the backburner (Adusei, 2012). Curbing maternal and infant mortality, malnutrition, HIV, malaria, tuberculosis, contaminated water, and environmental degradation have received some attention; but improvements seem slow. Further, youth issues, such as drug abuse and juvenile delinquency, identified in 1995 by the United Nation’s World Programme of Action for Youth, cannot wait as they undermine the current and future dreams of Ghanaian citizens (Bennell, 2007). In the face of myriad needs and inadequate resources, Ghana’s government seeks the help of national and international partners to coordinate and direct interventions that would lead to sustainable development.

Focusing on women farmers who produce food for family consumption could help remediate some of these problems. These mothers would also use any cash they earn to further their children’s success. As the backbone of rural society, these women typically have limited access to land, little cash to pay for improved farm inputs, and rarely benefit from the expertise of extension agents whose information could improve their harvests (Kristof and WuDunn, 2009).

Education, particularly girls’ education, has received a consistent focus resulting in near parity of girls and boys in primary school. Unfortunately, most Ghanaians argue that “public education in Ghana has failed to meet expectations in terms of its coverage, quality, equitableness and economic utility (Ministry of Education, 2013). No one argues against education as a main driver of change, but what kind of education and how to deliver it remains open to discussion.

With decreased funding for contraception and two in five Ghanaians under age 15, the growing youth population has brought about a 25% youth unemployment rate (Amankrah, n.d.; Sateh, 2012). This number is far lower than the continent-wide youth unemployment at nearly 60%, but nearly 50% of youth in Ghanaian cities are unemployed (Sateh, 2012). Pressure to provide appropriate education that leads to jobs is mounting (Nyarko, 2013). Previous
structural adjustment programs required by the World Bank resulted in ever-fewer government jobs. Decreased availability of viable land swelled urban areas as rural youth migrated.

The agricultural production sector still provides employment for around 60% of Ghana’s population. However, cash earnings remain low at $200-$400 per worker condemning at least 30% of Ghanaians to living on less that $2 a day (Bennell, 2007). Moreover, Ghanaian farmers are not growing enough food to feed the population. Expanding the agricultural sector could generate jobs.

In response to youth unemployment and food security needs, Ghana’s government established the Youth in Agriculture Programme (YIAP) “to increase employment opportunities and incomes, encourage entrepreneurship, and upscale food production” (Domfeh, 2012). YIAP urges youth to reject the idea that farming is “dirty work” and instead “take up farming, cash cropping, e.g. mangos, to generate income and create wealth” (Bennell 2007; Ghanaian Chronicle, 2010). In addition, national newspapers highlight successful young farmers to inspire. Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru, a farmer-entrepreneur living in Lagos, Nigeria, provides livestock to fast food venues and restaurants. In a 2012 article, she urged West African youth “to begin to look at the brighter side and then appreciate agriculture for what it is – a wealth-creating platform. This is one sector that singly is capable of creating total employment across its value chain” (Dumfeh, 2012). Newly opened universities like the Evangelical Presbyterian University College (EPUC) in Ho have inaugurated agricultural marketing courses. Time will tell if the message will encourage the next generation to enter the agriculture production chain.

Ghana’s government needs to invest more heavily in the food chain from production to preservation to marketing. Two types of programs, building youth capacity in business, finance and life skills and generating opportunities in land and markets, would promote youth rights and develop youth institutions (Bennell, 2007). With an additional focus on women’s land rights and access to loans and agriculture extension assistance, the government would see improvements food security and reduced unemployment.

**Traditional Knowledge (TK)**

A key consideration to bear in mind in promoting development is the rights of indigenous people. With rapid development, the exploitation of local people through pressures on land, including “land-grabbing,” by agribusiness and mining companies is increasingly problematic (IUCN, 2014; Rights and Resources, 2012). The traditional way of life, land tenure, native customs, age-old solutions for living in harmony with the land, and patterns of mediation and decision-making (IUCN, 2014). In contrast, studies have shown that justice for indigenous people is the “most effective way of reducing deforestation” and combating climate change (Rights and Resources, 2012).

In 1980 a cross-discipline group of researchers and other interested people met to discuss how “to develop international and local capability to anticipate, plan and manage the consequences of development to enhance the quality of life for all” and established the International Association for Impact Assessment. The IAIA has since become the leading global network on best practice in social and
environmental impact assessment for “informed decision making regarding policies, programs, plans and projects” and urges the use of “traditional knowledge (TK) to complement scientific knowledge (SK)” and to preserve indigenous cultures. Six principles underpin IAIA’s mission and message in relation to indigenous people: equality and respect, uniqueness, rights to natural resources, sovereignty and independence, cultural heritage and intellectual property rights, and free prior informed consent (IAIA, 2015; Rights and Resources, 2012). The IAIA’s work helped to shape the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People in impact assessment of the social and environmental effects to guide the development of ethical and sustainable development projects.

Some examples of TK that have shown positive scientific effects include the use leaves and seeds from the neem tree as a natural insecticide. Ghanaians store maize in barn built over fire burners. They use tobacco solutions to control mange, lice and mites and feed boiled guava and palm leaves to control diarrhea. They plant corn with ash for added fertility.

**Scientific Knowledge (SK)**

The Green Revolution (1930-1970), a technology transfer initiative spurred on by the agriculture genetics research of Nazareno Strampelli and aimed at developing countries, saved more than a billion people from starvation. When William Gaud, United States Agency for International Development director, assessed the program in 1968, he touted the development of improved seeds created by crossing local strains to yield “the hardiest, most adaptable, most nutritious” varieties. Through encouraging investments in “fertilizer, pesticides, farm-to-market roads, and irrigation” as well, the wheat harvests in Turkey tripled, a million and a half new acres opened to production in Pakistan and India, the Philippines enjoyed record rice harvests, and Mexican wheat harvests quadrupled (Gaud, 1968). With the support of foundations like the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, western SK promoted unrestrained SK. Unfortunately, the environment suffered (Gaud, 1968)

When Europeans encountered the west Africans in the 1500s, the culture was not “traditional” in the sense that Africa boasted powerful urban cultures, great skills in metalworking, hydrology, music and art, agricultural skills particularly in rice production, and a rich spiritual diversity that the western world had yet to see (Thompson, 1983). Moreover, the knowledge that slaves brought to the New World advanced the creation of new musical forms such as the shout, spirituals, blues, and jazz, but also inaugurated a new rice cultivation that fed the colonies and Europe too (Carney, 2002).

Well-meaning but inappropriate SK brought changes in climate patterns as well as new challenges. For example, monoculture is not suited to all regions. Windstorms carry about precious topsoil from denuded land as evidenced by the American Dust Bowl (Claxton, 2012). Cash cropping deprives local farmers of traditional land tenure rights leading to unemployment and introduces seeds that are not suited to local environments requiring expensive inputs like fertilizers and irrigation (Singh, n.d.).

**Comparing Traditional Knowledge And Scientific Knowledge**
International non-governmental organizations, like the United Nations and World Bank, have come lately to value TK for protecting the rights of indigenous people and saving the earth from sometimes reckless development practices. These groups have established guidelines for specific ways of incorporating local traditional thought and customs in development planning. The new understanding depends on the belief that in parallel to SK, that offers reductionist, discipline-specific analysis and decision-making, TK emphasizes a holistic approach to cultural and ecological sustainability. (See Table 1)

**Objectives**

To address these issues on a local level, the Ohio State ATI Ghana Study Abroad teams (May 2014, May 2015) developed a pilot project to match farming parents with their junior high aged children for a year-long set of workshops. The goal was to encourage mutual exchange of TK and SK. The Ohio State ATI team worked in consultation with Mr. Senyo Dzoagbe, Agricultural Marketing and Economics professor, EPUC, Mr. Wilfred Agbegoe, Aquaculture, Animal Husbandry, and Post-Harvest Storage professor, EPUC, Mr. Dickson Asase, extension agent and community development officer for the Evangelical Presbyterian Development and Relief Agency, Ho, and local farmers we had come to know through other joint projects over the past decade. This extended team assessed the current state of parent-child interactions and tested the effect of improving agriculture outputs through improving intergeneration communication. The team formed five objectives.

Objectives:

1. Children and students learn the value of TK leading to respect of cultural differences.
2. Parents learn the value of SK coupled with their TK.
3. Intergenerational exchange preserves and enhances family strength and resilience.
4. Intergenerational exchange leads to improved understanding by parents and children of the benefits of agriculture as a career.
5. Students explain the role of global summits and international conventions, such as 1992 Earth Summit (Rio 1992), Agenda 21, Rio +20, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, in setting global benchmarks and promoting sustainable development agendas.

**Procedures**

Intergenerational research on agricultural technology transfer between parents and children is not available. Nevertheless, it is likely that the transfer of information happens informally to some degree. Like many forms of education, technology transfer is both formal and informal. In Ghana, the government requires that all junior high school-enrolled children study general agriculture. Living at home, most students, particularly girls, help their mothers on the farm with planting, weeding, and harvesting before leaving for school in the morning and on weekends. However, because of traditional family relationships, these children are not included in farm planning.
Extension agent Asase identified and invited nine parents and their 13 children to commit to a year of study and exchange. Parents and children each completed a pre-test of their knowledge. At the end of the year, the group completed a matching post-test. Similarly, a group of six parents and their children of similar backgrounds in a neighboring town, Takla, agreed to serve as a control group. They also completed the pre- and post-tests and provided their annual income for the year.

The team developed additional steps for the protocol:

1. **Assess the current levels of exchanges** concerning agriculture between parent-child teams through individual pre- and post-tests as well as a focus group format.
2. **Facilitate technology transfer** through extension workshops and services in the field and through purchasing educational materials for the parent-child teams.
3. **Measure agricultural output** and income for test and control groups.
4. **Develop improvements to the process** through discussion with multiple partners.
5. **Disseminate** what the team learned through articles and presentations at national conferences, such as the NSSA New Orleans 2015.
6. Lastly, **assess and measure the understanding** of Ohio State ATI students for TK and family communication. This step will be reported on in a separate paper.

**Assessing Current Exchanges**

Since the literature concerning intergenerational technological transfers seems to be lacking, we set a baseline. First, pre-tests and post-tests documented the level of knowledge of children and parents (See Tables 2,3).

Second, in a focus group format, we met the parents and children and asked:

1. Children, what have your parents told you about farming?
2. Children, what have you observed that influences your attitude towards farming?
3. Parents, what have your children told you about their agriculture classes?
4. Parents, what do your children say about farming as a career?

**Facilitate technology transfer**

In the months leading up to the major season, March to August depending on rainfall, the local team members hosted eight workshops for the parent-child teams exploring TK and SK methods related to planting techniques, farm records, marketing, non-traditional cropping (specifically mushroom and tree cropping), preservation and storage, and family communication. In February as land preparation began, Asase was available to visit Kpenoe parent-child teams to offer extension services in the field. These visits occurred once a month and by request and continued through harvest in August and September to provide comprehensive services from land preparation to planting, weed control,
harvesting and storage, and marketing advice. Ohio State ATI students participated in the opening workshops in April 2014 and hosted the capstone workshop in May 2015 to assess results. In May 2016 the team will meet to discuss the dissemination of what we have learned to other farmers in Kpenoe, Takla, and neighboring communities.

**Measure agricultural output**

In addition to calculating and recording of their costs, parent-child teams calculated their agricultural output as they harvested and recorded sales and losses. We expected that the test group of parent-child teams would have:

1. An increase in output and income of at least ten percent (10%) as compared to the farm output and income of the control group.
2. At least 10% less post-harvest loss.

**Seek improvements to the educational process**

The key point of this investigation was to determine whether parent-child teams developed agricultural knowledge, skills, and business sense so that parents increased their incomes and children increased their understanding and interest in agriculture. The expectation that if children saw agriculture from a business model perspective and decided they could earn a good living from it, even create wealth rather than only feed a family, they might be more likely to choose agricultural occupations.

Also, we expected that children would demonstrate a greater knowledge of their parents’ work, and parents would have a greater knowledge of scientific agricultural techniques.

Through pre-tests and post-tests we measured and compared:

1. Children’s knowledge of indigenous farming methods.
2. Parents’ knowledge of modern agricultural techniques, scientific theories, rationale and practices.
3. Children’s interest in farming and farm-related occupations.
4. Agricultural yields through farm recordkeeping.

The team looked at its model from multiple perspectives (triangulation) to build on what various groups learned. At the conclusion of the year, parents, children, community organizers, local leaders, government officials, and academics helped to evaluate the project to ascertain successes and failures in order to develop sustainable interventions. This process is ongoing.

**Disseminate Findings**

At the capstone workshop in late May 2015, the team compiled information for dissemination. We expect to host another workshop in May 2016 at a town demonstration site for interactive technology transfer, problem solving, and human development for the farmers, children and students. Finally, this information will be compiled in a report and communicated to the parents and children. The team will also send a copy of the report to the Ghana Agricultural Division national office.

**Assess and Measure Ohio State ATI Students**
The team will continue to assess and measure the effect on Ohio State ATI students’ understanding of and appreciation and respect for TK and local communities.

Workshop Sampling

The inaugurating workshop had 100% participation. Children and parents met with workshop leaders and Ohio State ATI students to discuss the background behind the project, project goals and objectives, the content of workshops that would follow, and asked for group input. We discussed prior informed consent, and families worked together to sign the necessary forms. The event was full of humor and joking, very joyous.

In the pre-test, children knew what their parents were planting. They didn’t know TK planting method pest preventions or TK storage methods. One child plans to be a veterinarian and all the others expect to raise crops even though they will have another fulltime job. None of the parents kept records of their farming output, but one said she realized “that I have success.” Three said they had a profit of $25 or more for the year, one said $25 or less, and the rest said they had no way of knowing. Eight of the nine said that their families consume one-half of their output. The ninth said one-third. Three use no protection when applying chemicals, one covers her nose, and one uses no chemicals. The others did not answer. All raise some goats or poultry. Everyone takes their extra produce to the Ho market about 5 km away. Farmers said they wanted their children to go to school so that they wouldn’t have to farm for a living. One volunteered that farming has too many problems; and another said, “I suffer too much in farming.”

Workshop 1 Vegetable Production

With all participating, the parents taught TK: how to read the signs of coming weevil infestations, how okro matures, and how to preserve by sun drying and store okro. Children taught SK: the value of planting in lines, specifically the ease of replanting, replacing a seed that doesn’t germinate, of applying fertilizer and other agrochemicals, and of weeding.

Workshop 2 Animal Husbandry Development

Extension workers discussed the benefits of raising stock animals, goats, sheep and chickens, such as improved nutritional and medical health for family members, increased and secure income, availability of farm yard manure, and a profitable past time activity with low inputs and low labor intensity. The group discussed the choice between exotic and local breed. The exotic grow fast, but are more susceptible to diseases and pests. The local are meatier, prolific, resistant to diseases and pests, and eat local grasses. All agreed that the introduction of a few exotic males could improve their herds and that farmers should control inbreeding for healthier offspring. Agents cautioned the group from using human drugs for livestock, especially antibiotics that destroy the essential microorganisms in the animals’ stomachs.

Children taught SK: the physical structure of the animals (goats have 4-chambered stomachs) which led into the 5 essential nutrients they need, the importance of vaccinations against prevalent diseases such as *peste de petits ruminants* (PPR) in sheep and goats and Newcastle’s disease in chickens, and
identification and treatment of diseases. Parents taught TK: organic controls of some diseases and pests and identified local shrubs and grasses that farmers gather to feed their livestock. Parents explained that some exotic leaves like *leucaena* and *gliricidia* can cause infertility and over-fatten the animals.

**Workshop 3 Family Action Plans and Effects of Agrochemicals**

Each family was allotted USD30 (GHC120, 2 hens cost GHC10) for improvements of their choice and met with Asase to develop a Family Action Plan (See Table 4). The entire group discussed the choices families had made. Children described the negative health affects of human exposure to agrochemicals, such as cold or cough, breathlessness, dizziness, stomach ulcer, lung infection, slow poisoning, skin cancer, and eye infection leading to blindness. The group considered precautionary measures (boots, gloves, cap, eye shield, nose muffler, coveralls) to prevent these outcomes. Parents described common diseases and pests in their fields and prescribed TK measures of neem, wood ash, and mahogany bark application. The group also discussed improper uses of chemicals that local agrochemical suppliers promote such as spraying on harvested maize and pulses (lentils and beans) for storage. Also agents recommended that parents ask their children for help in proper mixing of chemicals if they are unable to read the labels.

Some parents did not realize that without male cocks hens could not lay eggs. Agents and children explained the male’s role in determining breed of poultry and other livestock. Parents were happy that the workshops offered a common platform for interaction with their children. Children described how the workshops improved their academic progress, increased their TK, helped them earn money in backyard poultry production, and encouraged them to assist their parents on the farm.

Overall, farmers experienced many problems, like theft of chickens and lack of cooperation from others who could help them in reaching their goals. But in each case the farmer persisted and adapted. At the end of the year, all of the farmers agreed that they were more productive after attending the workshops.

**Results**

In the capstone workshop, farmers met with Ohio State ATI students to discuss the results of their year of exchange. Students provided food for the celebration. The farmers arranged a venue and ordered a large festive banner. Each parent and child had an opportunity to express what she or he learned. One parent said she had a 100% crop production increase, while another complained that someone had stolen her chickens. One mother boasted that her son walked to see their field of corn every day for 70 days. A farmer granted that cultivating the weeds was much easier because she had planted in rows. One learned recordkeeping, and another asked for help building a chicken coop. One son learned to call the vet rather than to give his goat human medicine, which would kill good bacteria in the goat’s stomach. Another son acquired knowledge of safety protection he should use when spraying agrochemicals. All the families reported at least a 30% increase in productivity due to their newly found knowledge. Of the 13 children in the project, one 13-year-old boy plans to major
in farming in senior high school. We will need to further assess post-harvest loss in the year ahead.

Every member of the group related that the most important workshop was the one on family communication. In fact, the group asked for a second workshop because it had impressed them. They learned to talk about important subjects and interact in more positive ways. They also hoped that the improved communication would continue into the future.

In conclusion, through the Ohio State ATI Parent-Child Agriculture Technology Transfer Workshops in Kpenoe, parents and children reported life-changing interactions, which yielded increased production and new family roles. On their part, Ohio State ATI students reported developing awareness as a global citizen, resilience, efficacy, concern for others, and interdependence.

Further investigation should include following up with the workshop attendees in one year to determine if there have been additional issues. Ohio State-ATI members should present their findings to other area towns and make the workshops available to other groups to observe whether the results prove consistent.

References


Families, Students, Teachers at the Ohio State-ATI Kpenoe Agriculture Technology Transfers Graduation Workshop
### Table 1: Comparison of Indigenous (Traditional) and Formal (Scientific) Education
*(Nakashima, n.d., 17-18)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Education</th>
<th>Indigenous Education</th>
<th>Formal Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Sacred and secular together; includes the spiritual</td>
<td>Secular only; often excludes the spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holistic and integrated – based on a whole systems view of knowledge</td>
<td>Analytical or reductionist – based on sub-sets of the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stored orally and in cultural practices</td>
<td>Stored in books and computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Powerful predictability in local areas (ecological validity)</td>
<td>Powerful predictability in natural principles (rational validity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less valued in distant areas</td>
<td>Weak in local use of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Long-term wisdom</td>
<td>Short term recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural and ecological sustainability</td>
<td>Economic sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical; for use in everyday life</td>
<td>Abstract; to pass examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration of critical thinking and cultural values in decision making</td>
<td>Use of logical and critical thinking in making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods of Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
<td>Lengthy period of acquisition</td>
<td>Rapid acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning through experience</td>
<td>Learning by formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching through example, modelling, ritual and storytelling</td>
<td>Teaching through abstract concepts and didactic methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tested in practical life situations</td>
<td>Tested artificially in examinations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Children’ Pre-test/Post-test of TK/SK related to Agriculture Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN’S QUESTIONNAIRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please answer each question:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. On the diagram, draw the crops and cropping system your parent uses. Under “legend,” describe what each of your symbols mean, e.g. “000= cowpeas, XXX=maize”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ acre   Legend:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why does planting corn with cassava control stem borers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What organic corn storage methods control pests?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What would you tell your parent about the benefits of scientific agriculture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you plan a career in agriculture? If yes, in what area?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3: Pre-test/Post-test of TK/SK Agricultural Methods**

PARENTS’ QUESTIONNAIRE
Please answer each question for your last planting season.
1. How many acres do you farm?
2. What are you growing?
3. What system of record keeping do you use?
4. What was the amount of profit or loss you sustained? (Choose one)
   a. Profit of GHC 100 or less  
   b. Profit of GHC 101 or more  
   c. Loss of GHC 100 or less  
   d. Loss of GHC 101 or more  
   e. I don’t know  
   f. I have no record  
5. What percentage of your harvest yield did your family consume?
6. How do you protect yourself when applying pesticides and herbicides? (Or write/say, “I don’t use pesticides.”)
7. Which of these non-traditional animal products are you currently raising? (Circle all that apply.)
   a. Bees  
   b. Mushrooms  
   c. Snails  
   d. Grasscutters  
   e. Rabbits  
   f. Citrus trees  
   g. Mango trees  
   h. Teak trees  
8. What methods of post-harvest storage do you currently use?
9. How do you currently market your agricultural products?
10. What could you tell children like your child about the benefits and challenges of farming?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>Family Action Plan</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F and I/E</td>
<td>Local poultry crossbreeding</td>
<td>Could not construct a pen because one son took wood for his own use,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only pair with</td>
<td>1 exotic male, 10 local hens</td>
<td>birds slept in trees, didn’t get vaccinations, and died. Promised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father involved, 2</td>
<td>Disease, pest control</td>
<td>to construct a pen and restart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 and L</td>
<td>Local poultry crossbreeding</td>
<td>Thieves stole birds. Planted extra cowpeas in lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One son</td>
<td>1 exotic male, 10 local hens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disease, pest control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C and C</td>
<td>Local poultry crossbreeding</td>
<td>Could not start anything. Will start soon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One son</td>
<td>1 exotic male, 10 local hens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disease, pest control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2 and A</td>
<td>Mixed cropping, maize/cowpeas</td>
<td>Cultivated one acre of cowpeas in lines. No maize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One daughter</td>
<td>Pest control, post-harvest loss prevention through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V and M</td>
<td>Local poultry crossbreeding</td>
<td>Oldest son is a carpenter and agreed to build a chicken pen but didn’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One daughter</td>
<td>1 exotic male, 10 local hens</td>
<td>Planted leafy vegetables instead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disease, pest control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cowpea/spinach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pest control, post-harvest loss prevention through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E and A</td>
<td>Maize/okro</td>
<td>Planted maize and okro in lines and leafy greens. (She plants these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One daughter</td>
<td>Pest control, post-harvest loss prevention through</td>
<td>in square raised beds.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3 and A/E</td>
<td>Maize/cowpeas</td>
<td>Planted maize in lines but field flooded. Planted also cowpeas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 sons</td>
<td>Pest control, post-harvest loss prevention through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and G</td>
<td>Okro/cowpeas</td>
<td>Due to a family dispute, farmer left town. Her son was not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One son</td>
<td>Pest control, post-harvest loss prevention through</td>
<td>for the meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M and E/J</td>
<td>Maize/spinach</td>
<td>Planted 1 acre of maize intercropped with cowpeas. Planted leafy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two daughters</td>
<td>Pest control, post-harvest loss prevention through</td>
<td>greens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessing Discussion in the Classroom: 
Using a Student-Centered Perspective

Lisa Hickman i,ii
Grand Valley State University
Abstract

Scholars have suggested the value of class discussions for US college students, especially when they are guided and structured. Research suggests that discussions can allow for higher-order thinking in students. Much less is known, however, about the student-centered perspective of discussion. Do students feel they have learned course material through their participation in discussion? Do students feel discussion is a useful way to learn course material? This study explores two research questions: first, are students learning course materials by participating in class discussion? And second, do students find the discussions taking place in class useful (or not)? A Family Sociology class at Midwest University in the United States participated in two class discussions used for analysis in the current study. Data from student surveys and exam scores from discussion material were used in this analysis. Findings indicate that students do learn in significantly different ways from discussion in comparison to learning material through lecture. Survey results indicate an overall positive student view of discussions, particularly large group discussion. Results find that students perceive discussion as a valuable use of time. However, while students are largely positive about small group discussion, one type of discussion, not all students feel this way. Knowledge of the student view of discussions is particularly important because discussion is a form of active learning that calls on student engagement for success. Despite this, scholars identify that lecture remains the dominant teaching technique in US colleges and universities.

In academia, professors have a multitude of teaching tools and techniques available for them to implement in the classroom. While teaching style is highly dependent upon each individual, some may be more effective than others when instructors wish to engage students in active learning while in the classroom. Discussion is one tool that allows students to play an active role in the learning process (Howard, 2015). Gullette (1992) notes a number of benefits to using discussion in the classroom, including students taking a more active approach to learning when discussion is used and that students may pay more attention during class.

Discussion can also provide students with a positive learning environment (Yamane, 2006). Discussion can increase student learning because it allows students to engage with the information which leads to a better understanding of the material (Hollander, 2002). “Discussions force students to search for their own answers, give students practice in expressing their own ideas, increase their appreciation for complexity and diversity, and develop their listening, cognitive, and critical skills” (Hollander, 2002: 318).
While students may recognize that discussion is important (Nunn, 1996), to what extent students feel they are learning from discussion or find it a valuable teaching technique is still at question. The current study investigates student perceptions (i.e., the student-centered perspective) of class discussion for a Family Sociology course at a Midwest University in the United States. Using survey data from two class discussions and exam data related to these topics, results indicate that student perception of both large and small class discussion is predominantly positive and that students learned information from discussion differently than from lecture. Prior to discussing this study I first start with a review of discussion techniques and student-centered research on discussion.

Techniques for Discussion in the Classroom

Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Goldsmid, 1981) suggests that careful planning and posing of questions to students can elicit thoughtful comments and consideration from these same students. One of the keys to a successful discussion is establishing clear objectives for the discussion first, and then planning and implementing discussion around these identified objectives (Lovell-Troy, 1989).

Depending upon the type of discussion implemented in the class (as examples, dyads of students, smaller group discussions of 3-6 students, larger group discussions of the entire class either driven by students or the instructor), as well as questions posed at an appropriate level and consideration given to the level of thinking of the students, an instructor may feel at the end of a 10 minute discussion or an entire class period of discussion that students have engaged in a technique that has helped them to effectively learn the course material. For example, Crone (2001) tells us that small group discussion can increase comprehension and analytical skills in students. And McBroom and Reed (1994) found readings and class discussion during each class session improved student achievement over classes employing lectures and testing in each session.

Student engagement is particularly important for successful discussion and learning to occur. Yamane (2006) found that classroom discussion is focused and meaningful when instructors first assign “Course Preparation Assignments” (CPAs) for students to complete prior to the discussion. In other words, ensuring that the students are engaging with the reading allows them to come to class ready to discuss.

Nystrand (as cited in VanDeWeghe, 2005) identifies that dialogic instruction is most important, wherein students and teachers use discussion to help to better understand course materials and ideas. High value is placed on the opportunity for learning that discussion provides. Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (citing Nystrand,1997, identified the following features of dialogic instruction as leading to increased student success:

1) Use of authentic questions to explore understanding rather than test knowledge students may already know or have;  
2) More time for open discussion in the classroom; and  
3) Teachers building off of comments to help students link ideas together (2003: 690).
Henning, Nielsen, Henning and Schultz (2008) also identify several ways to open up dialog in the classroom. These techniques use discussions to respond to a problem, respond to an observation, respond to a narrative, or reflect on classroom activities. **Responding to a problem** involves discussions where students are asked to comment, respond, and engage in a discussion focused on a particular problem relevant to the course material. **Responding to an observation** includes discussions based on sparking student thought after observing an idea (for example, a picture, a video or a painting). These two types of frameworks for discussion allow students to participate without necessarily having a large base of knowledge. **Responding to a narrative** allows students to engage in dialogue after reading narratives (anything from literary works to current events). **Reflecting on classroom activities** allows students to engage in class discussion after they have been provided with a knowledge base stemming from classroom information. Information is given to the students throughout the class, and may be new to them. In discussion they are given the opportunity to apply this information, thus bringing about greater understanding of what the information is and how to use it. This type of discussion may require the most investment from students. These strategies, and others, allow for discussions to be productive, on task and meaningful. But what do students think about discussion?

**Discussion and Students**

Preparing, by putting together a framework and a strategy for a discussion, will ensure from a teacher perspective that student learning can take place. But what is the student-centered perspective on this type of learning? Do students feel they have learned the course material through their participation in discussion? Do they feel the discussion was a useful way to learn the material? A majority of the research seems to focus on the instructor perspective. But because discussion is a form of active learning (Howard, 2015; Goldsmid, 1981), the student perspective should have more representation in the research. After all, “Discussions depend on students as well as teachers; without student listening, thinking, and speaking, there would be no discussion” (Hollander, 2002: 318).

Student assessment of their learning experiences (or any type of student-centered perspective on the topic of discussion) is absent from much of the literature, excluding a few works. Wattiaux and Crump (2006) studied student perception of classes wherein discussion was the primary technique used to convey information. Although this study was specific to an upper level course on nutrition that was primarily based in discussion, these scholars found that undergraduate students identified they learned more when discussions were focused on student questions and answers (2006: 343). Students also identified a slight preference for discussion over lecture as a teaching technique.

Lake (2001), however, found that students feel they learn less in a discussion environment than a lecture environment, even though analysis found they had actually learned more. Lake’s study, however, was limited to physical therapy students, to small group discussion, and to a specific set of comparison groups, some of which were limited to only one or two teaching techniques (lecture and
small group discussion)\textsuperscript{iv}, as opposed to courses with a variety of techniques employed. It is possible that classes with a diverse student body or those employing a variety of teaching techniques may elicit different responses.

Yamane's (2006) work indicates that more students identify that they have been involved in negative, rather than positive, experiences with discussion in the classroom. These negative experiences affect overall perspectives of discussion. Poor discussions primarily have to do with whether or not the discussions were guided or structured, and in these situations students may not see the point of discussion. Yamane (2006) also reports that guided discussions tend to not fall prey to these negative student feelings.

In sum, there seem to be some conflicting results; first between students regarding their perceptions of discussion and second, between students and instructors on the value of class discussion. As a result, questions remain about whether or not students perceive discussions to be useful (particularly if they are structured), as well as whether or not students can learn material from the discussion experience. These student-centered questions are the emphasis of this study.

Research Questions

The focus of the current study is on the student perspective (student-centered perspective) on discussion in the college classroom, with an interest in understanding if students are learning material from discussion, and if students find value in participating in class discussions. As a result, there are two main research questions. First, are students learning course materials by participating in class discussion? Determining whether or not student learning is occurring through the use of class discussion provides multiple benefits. If learning does occur, this could be seen as support for established literature indicating the value of discussion in the classroom. It may also help to establish discussion as a viable way for students to learn information while in the classroom.

Secondly, and most important, this study aims to learn the student perspective on discussion (a student-centered approach): do students find the discussions taking place in class useful (or not)? While this is highly subjective (how would a student define “useful”? How much “learning” must be measured in order to consider discussion a “success”?)), measurable assessments can be employed to gauge if students find value in this particular way of learning.

Data and Methods

Data collection on discussion took place in a Family Sociology class at Midwest University in the United States during one semester. At this particular university, the Family Sociology course is an option for the General Education requirement.\textsuperscript{v} As a result, the course brings in a variety of students with diverse backgrounds and experiences seeking to complete a General Education requirement. All students in the course are sophomores or above, and there are a variety of majors and minors with a various backgrounds and experiences. There are very few sociology majors in the course: in this particular section there were only a handful of students out of the 30 enrolled that were sociology majors.\textsuperscript{vi}
This course employs a variety of teaching techniques throughout the semester, including discussion, which is the focus of this study. Discussion was evaluated at two points for this study: once near the beginning of the semester and once at the end of the semester. Discussion did occur throughout the semester as part of the regular class activities, however on these two days for which data was collected the entire class period was devoted to discussion. The two topics for discussion used in this evaluation and assessment include Gender and the US family experience (beginning of the semester discussion topic) and Family Policy in the US (end of the semester discussion topic).

These discussions each took place during a 50 minute course period. Students came to class having read the same body of information (ensured through a short writing exercise). During the discussion day classes, both large group (approximately 20 minutes) and small group discussion (around 10-15 minutes) occurred, followed by a large group wrap up (around 10-15 minutes) and then an evaluation by students (5 minutes).

Discussion for each day was based on a set of objectives related to the topic that were presented to the students at the beginning of each class. The discussions started as instructor guided, with questions posed to students about definitions and concepts, and then moved to extension and application of concepts and ideas. Questions were posed to students that required them to think about the topics, link ideas together, and come up with examples, explanations, and critical assessments of the issues being discussed. Students then moved into small groups where they were given a set of discussion questions that they were to contemplate and address. All students shared information from their small group on at least one of the discussion questions once back in the larger group (for example, for the family policy discussion, one of the small group questions had students come up with lists of positives and negatives of a country having a unified family policy and for a country having non-unified family policies; students then wrote their lists on the board for discussion). The large group wrap-up afterwards pulled ideas from the small group discussions together and then also linked them to the large group discussion, the readings, and the broader topic. Students were encouraged to make these links on their own, and the instructor played a supporting role that gave guidance when needed. The instructor also presented concluding thoughts to help bring the conversation full circle and back to the objectives (which had been met in the discussions throughout the course period). At the end, students completed the anonymous survey.

Data is collected two ways for analyses in this project- surveys and exam questions. Surveys were conducted at the end of class on the discussion days. These surveys included questions on both the small and large group discussions that had taken place that day, as well as students’ overall perceptions of the class discussions. Questions on the survey ranged from topics such as the usefulness of hearing other student’s questions and responses in the large group discussion, about staying on task during small group work and which type of discussion was most beneficial to the student's learning process.
Questions on the survey were presented to students in three forms: Likert scales, multiple choice, and open ended. Likert scale questions about student perceptions of small and large group discussions allowed students identify whether they Strongly Agreed, Agreed, were Neutral, Disagreed, or Strongly Disagreed with statements about the large and small group discussions. Categories for the Likert Scale questions are collapsed into three categories here (Strongly Disagree/Disagree, Neutral, Strongly Agree/Agree). Two multiple choice questions on the survey allowed students to identify what aspects of the discussion on that day (Hearing other students ideas; Working with the information rather than just being provided the information; Hearing the professor link ideas from students to the course information; Other, please provide addition information; Nothing) as well as what type of discussion that day (Small group; Large group; Both small and large group; Neither types of discussion) was most beneficial to their own learning process.

Finally, students were given the opportunity to expand on their responses to these two multiple choice questions with follow-up open ended questions to allow for clarification (an opportunity to explain or provide additional information on their responses). The sample size used in the study for the exam analyses is N=29 for the gender and family discussion and N=28 for the family policy discussion. Twenty-nine students out of the thirty registered for the course were present for the gender and family discussion and twenty-eight completed the survey afterwards. Twenty-eight students out of the thirty registered for the course were present for the family policy discussion, and twenty-four completed the survey afterwards.

Test questions from course exams are also assessed. Responses are separated from student names in this project so that individuals and their answers cannot be linked. Exam questions on both topics were in both multiple choice and short answer form. Multiple choice questions analyzed simple and complex learning: for example, a multiple choice question that asks students to identify the correct definition of a term related to either gender and family or family policy is an illustration of simple knowledge because it primarily involves routine memorization. However, multiple choice questions that ask students to apply a concept or identify a concept being used are illustrations of more complex levels of thinking and processing. Short answer questions allowed for the same range of learning to be demonstrated. For example, listing information only requires recall, but providing an explanation of how concepts are relevant to the topic (for example, how social construction is relevant to a discussion on gender and the family experience) calls on student’s abilities to apply complex ideas and critical thinking. Surveys completed after discussions were anonymous, but attendance was taken in class on these days. Students not present on discussion days could not learn from discussion nor complete the surveys, therefore, their exams were not included in the analyses.

Students in a different section of this course that learned these same two topics through lecture instead of discussion are used as a comparison group. For both topics (individually analyzed), exam material is combined to calculate a score (percentage correct) for students; in other words, the percent of the gender
and family material a student got correct on the exam was calculated. In addition, the percent of the family policy material each a student got correct was also calculated. Percentages were calculated for those who participated in discussion and those who learned the material through lecture. These percentages are used to assess if students learn the same through discussion and lecture (H₀). The alternative hypothesis (Hₐ) is that there is a difference between students learning the materials in discussion and those learning the material in lecture. xii

**Analytic Strategy**

This study collects descriptive data assessing student perceptions of discussion and knowledge after participating in discussion. In order to assess the first research question, *are students learning course materials by participating in class discussion*, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine if the two independent samples of students learned the same from discussion and lecture (those who learned the material through discussion and those who learned the material in the other course section through lecture). This conservative test is useful given that the percentage, or student scores on the material, being used essentially ranks the student scores from highest to lowest. In addition, this nonparametric test is useful here as all of the assumptions of t-test are not met by the current data. xiii This type of analysis has been used by other scholars (for example, Lake, 2001) as a way to determine if students exposed to different teaching techniques have differing rank scores on tests.

In order to assess student perceptions in the second research question, *do students find the discussions taking place in class useful (or not)?*, descriptive statistics (frequencies) are provided for survey responses for the Likert scale and multiple choice questions. Students were asked a series of questions about both the large group discussion, small group discussion, and discussion overall that day. These survey questions attempt to capture the student perception about the value of discussion in the context of our classroom and this particular discussion experience. xiv Open ended questions in the surveys were also qualitatively analyzed and used in the current paper when they help to fill in understanding about how students perceive class discussion.

Collecting data from different sources (exam questions and surveys) provides more depth of information on this particular topic. It allows for multiple ways to assess questions about discussion. Using two data from two points in time also allows for an assessment of consistency/ inconsistency in data as well as a better depth of understanding of the issue of discussion. It also helps us to consider with greater confidence whether or not the understanding of materials is tied to discussion or just a particular topic.

**Results**

*Exam results.* In reference to whether or not students learned from class discussion (first research question), student performance on test questions demonstrates that learning did occur. In comparison to student performance on exams when lecture was used instead of discussion for the topic of gender and family as well as family policy, Mann-Whitney U test results indicate that exam scores for students learning the material through discussion seem to be significantly higher - a rejection of the null hypothesis (gender and family: U=
564.000, p<.05, one-tailed; family policy: U= 166.000, p<.001). Results indicate that students in discussion learned more than those in lecture, as there is significant difference between rank scores earned in discussion and lecture. A higher rank indicates more correct answers and more student knowledge demonstrated. By examining the mean ranks, students participating in discussion show higher mean scores for both topics (gender and family discussion mean rank score= 37.97, gender and family lecture mean rank score=20.43; family policy discussion mean rank score= 34.64, family policy lecture mean rank score= 24.70). Overall, students do appear to have learned more from discussions in comparison to students who learned the same material through lecture.

Survey results

Large group discussions. Tables 1-8 present results from the student surveys conducted after each class discussion, with tables 1-4 specifically evaluating large group discussions. Overall, students responded favorably to large group discussion for both discussion topics during the semester. The majority of students in this course Strongly Agree or Agree that large group discussion is a useful way to learn and use class time. Students may learn from talking about and exploring or from listening to others questions about the topic. Results in Table 1 show that the majority of students that participated in the large group discussions found them to be useful (100% Strongly Agree/Agree for the gender and family discussion and 91.6% of students Strongly Agree/Agree for the family policy discussion). (See Table 1)

Additionally, the majority of students identified that discussing the material in the large group helped with their understanding of the relationship between gender and the family experience as well as family policy (Table 2). Almost 93% of students Strongly Agree or Agree that discussing the gender and family material provided them with a deeper level of understanding, while nearly 96% of students felt the same way about the family policy discussion. (See Table 2)

Students also predominantly felt that listening to other student’s questions about the material as well as hearing the instructor link student questions and course material together in the large group helped them to better understand the topics being discussed (Tables 3 and 4). Eighty-nine percent of students Agreed or Strongly Agreed that listening to the questions that other students posed and the responses they gave in class increased their level of understanding of the topic, gender and family. Close to ninety-two percent of students responded the same way for the topic of family policy. Additionally, approximately 96% of respondents in the discussion on gender and family, and 100% of the respondents in the discussion on family policy Agreed or Strongly Agreed that listening to the professor link student questions and responses to course material was helpful. (See Tables 3 and 4)

This may be because, rather than having the information shared with them in a unilateral format, there was engagement- if a student didn’t understand, they could ask questions. Or if they weren’t sure of an answer, they could hear others ideas or hear the professor help bridge ideas together. This may lead them to
come up with answers of their own or at least gain ideas about what could be an answer to a question.

Small group discussion.

Tables 5 and 6 evaluated small group discussion. Although the majority of students responded favorably to both small and large group discussion, there does seem to be more preference for large group discussion, based on these descriptive statistics. While the majority of students felt their small group stayed on task, as seen in Table 5 (89.3% for gender and family discussion, 91.6% for family policy discussion), some students felt their group strayed from the topics of discussion. Almost eleven percent (10.7%) of students were neutral in their perspective on time on task for the gender and family discussion, and 8.4% responded that they either disagreed or were neutral in their perspective for time on task for the family policy discussion. One student comment may offer insight into why small groups are slightly less favored: “Small groups (mine in particular) tend to turn into free discussion.”xv (See Table 5)

Table 6 shows that, while more students Strongly Agreed or Agreed that the small group discussions for both topics helped them with understanding and application, there were a few students that Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed, and students that were Neutral in their assessment. About eight percent of students Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed that their small group discussion on family policy helped them to understand how to apply relevant concepts and information. Another 21% were neutral in their opinion. Two students (7.1%) were neutral in opinion in response to this question as it related to the gender and family small group discussion.(See Table 6)

This may stem from one of two situations: issues of training on how to have productive small group discussions and issues of staying on task. Even though explanation was given about the small groups and tasks for each day, it is possible that students were still unsure how to proceed with small group discussion. Because discussion is not a mainstay in college classrooms, it is possible that some students in this class may not have previously participated in these types of discussions and the explanation may not have been sufficient. Another possibility is that in smaller environments that are not monitored by an instructor, conversation may stray from topic, as evidenced by the student comment above. This, however, may vary throughout the classroom (some may have small groups that stay on task and some may not) and so some of this variation may be picked up in the question. In other words, the ability of small groups to stay on task or not may be what is represented in the level of agreement/disagreement in the following tables.

It is possible for some students that, rather than one discussion type (small or large) being more beneficial than the other, it is the combination of both discussion types that helps those students to learn. As seen in Table 7, even though more students felt that large group discussion was beneficial to their learning process (50% for the gender and family discussion, 66.7% for the family policy discussion), many identified that the implementation of both small and large group discussion contributed to their learning (46.4% for the gender and family discussion, 33.3% for the family policy discussion). This question may be
tapping into a difference in learning styles, or more specifically, the environments within which students can learn best (Dunn, Honigsfeld, Doolan, Bostrom, Russo, Schiering, Suh, and Tenedero, 2009). Some students may feel the style they learn best in is the large group discussion environment, while others may feel that the large and small group discussions together bring them to a higher level of understanding. (See Table 7)

Or perhaps it is a reflection of different comfort levels for students. For example, while a student may hesitate to participate in large group discussion, they may be more likely to engage in small group discussion. They may, therefore, gain more from the small group discussion (3.6% of response for the gender and family discussion found the small group to be most beneficial to their learning process). Hollander (2002) notes that shy students may feel more comfortable expressing and discussing their ideas in the small group environment.

Other students may prefer to have the instructor guiding the discussion because to them it guarantees the “correct” knowledge is being transmitted- even though many instructors would disagree with this perspective. One student in particular demonstrated this idea on their gender and family survey by writing in the open ended comments section for this topic, “Sometimes it gets confusing when too many ‘incorrect’ ideas are thrown around.” This response is particularly interesting as all comments that students made were connected back to the discussion and became part of the larger understanding of the topic. However, this was not the perception of this particular student. Another student wrote in the open ended comments section for the gender and family discussion that large group discussion “went into things in more detail.” A different student on the same survey wrote that “small group discussion is good but sometimes less focused than large group discussion.” These particular students may favor large group discussion. Those who felt that the mix of the two provided the most beneficial learning environment may see that each challenges them in differing ways, and therefore increases their overall learning. Open ended comments on this topic for both small and large group discussion as being most beneficial included, “Both helped,” and “It’s nice to learn details of your peers and their stories, but its [sic] also good to get insight of others in a larger setting.”

In other words, what Dunn and Dunn call “sociological preferences” (preference to learn alone, in pairs, with peers, through an instructor, etc.), may be shaping responses to this question (as cited in Dunn et al, 2009).xvi Different preferences may be reflected in the responses from students. Importantly, none of the students indicated they would have been better off if these discussions had not occurred. Additionally, students identified several features of the discussions to be most beneficial to their learning process. Many students for both the gender and family discussion and the family policy discussion identified that working with the material rather than just being provided the material (discussion versus lecture) was what was most beneficial for their learning.xvii (See Table 8)

**Discussion and Conclusions**

The results from the current study show that students not only learned from their participation in large and small group discussions as compared to students
learning the same materials from lecture, but they overall had favorable perceptions of class discussions. Students predominantly felt large group discussion was a valuable use of class time. Students overall felt that aspects of the large group discussion contributed to their understanding of both discussion topics, at least descriptively. Additionally, while a few students did not have a positive perception of small group discussions, overall the majority of students had positive views of small group discussion and aspects of small group discussion- such as time in focused discussion with peers and helpfulness of small groups in application and understanding of relevant concepts to each topic. Students who felt less positive about small group may be possibly explained by their preferences in learning environments or by how on task their small groups were for the discussions.

Discussion was only one of several techniques used in the class during this semester, which may provide some understanding for why these results do not align with studies that found negative student perceptions where the course was predominantly discussion-based (for example, Wattiaux and Crump, 2006). These may not be comparable because students were learning under other techniques at different points in time in the class analyzed for the current project which may provide more techniques for comparison in their learning experience. Future research should consider how students evaluate particular teaching techniques in environments where a mixed-technique approach is used.

Even considering this, past findings still could be relevant to some of the findings here on small group discussions. Some of the negative perceptions of small groups identified in the literature may be supported from the current study as a very small number of students here evaluated small groups negatively and students overall seemed to prefer large group discussion, or the combination of both small group and large group discussion. Future research should explore the combination of discussion techniques and perhaps a comparison between large and small group discussion. Even though the majority of students responded favorably to small groups in the current study, small group discussions need further exploration, analysis, and understanding.

Finally, there were limitations with data collection here that must be acknowledged. Only descriptive data and nonparametric hypothesis tests are presented here. In-depth data collection that would allow for rich analysis and a deeper understanding of the student perspective is needed. Additionally, in the future, scholars may consider a comparison to classes where material is learned in discussion instead of lecture or through other/additional teaching techniques (or perhaps analyze a variety of different techniques to assess which ones students learn the material the best and in most depth). Additionally, the current study is not generalizable or representative. Positive responses to the surveys here could instead be the result of selectivity or because students felt positively toward the discussion or topics in class on these days. Work should seek to replicate this study and expand upon this analysis to determine if these results were an artifact of the class environment, or if diverse classes such as these consistently reflect the perspective uncovered in the current study.
Discussion that is structured or guided, in order to provide positive experiences and ensure student learning, needs objectives, planning, and preparation (Howard, 2015). Future research should investigate the topic of how instructors run discussions and how this affects student perception of this technique. The current findings will help open the door for these future studies.

One of the most important contributions of this study is the use of a student-centered perspective in the analysis. Using a student-centered perspective in research is an under-utilized strategy. Gathering more information using the student perspective will provide greater understanding of how best to improve student learning. The current study indicates that further investigation into this topic of discussion from the student perspective is not only needed, but warranted.

Students in the current study overall responded favorably to class discussion and it is possible that students at large feel the same way. So why do so few instructors implement discussions in their college classrooms? Lecture still dominates as the primary mode used to convey information to college students today (Yamane, 2006). There are several possible explanations as to this current reality. For example, while some fields may feel they lend themselves better to discussion in the classroom, others may feel that material does not translate well in discussion. Particular fields (or instructors in particular fields) may be hesitant to employ this technique.

Hesitancy could also stem from past experiences. We have all been part of discussions that have not been run well. Yamane (2006) indicates that there may be resistance on the part of instructors and students to engage in discussion in the classroom because so many have participated in discussions that were not conducted well. If an instructor does not believe discussion will work in their classroom, or is not convinced that the same amount of information can be transmitted to students (or transmitted accurately) as can be transmitted through lecture or another technique, then they may not use discussion. Students themselves, perhaps due to experiences in other classrooms, may or less open to discussion in a class and instructors may simply be responding to the mood or dynamic of their class. Or students that have had bad discussion experiences may not be open to this technique again.

There are many possibilities as to why discussions are not occurring, but emphasis should be placed on fostering this technique in classes and environments conducive to such learning. Well-prepared discussions that are structured and guided can avoid some of these concerns and bring students to a higher level of thinking and communicating (Howard, 2015). Perhaps not all classes, students, or topics are receptive or even appropriate for discussion. But in the current environment of active learning, where many students may be looking for such a challenge, instructors of all fields should be encouraged to explore discussion as a technique for use in their classrooms.
References


Table 1. *Large Group Discussion today was a Valuable Use of Class Time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender and Family Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>28 (100%)</td>
<td>22 (91.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>24</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. *Discussing the Material Provided Me with a Deeper Level of Understanding on this Topic (Large Group Discussion)*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Gender and Family Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>26 (92.9%)</td>
<td>23 (95.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2 (7.1%)</td>
<td>1 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>24</td>
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</table>

Table 3. *Listening to Other Student’s Questions and Responses increased My Understanding of this Topic (Large Group Discussion)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender and Family Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>25 (89.3%)</td>
<td>22 (91.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3 (10.7%)</td>
<td>2 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. **Listening to the Professor Link Other Student’s Questions and Responses to the Course Information Increased My Understanding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender and Family Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>27 (96.4%)</td>
<td>24 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1 (3.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. **During Small Group Discussion, Students Spent Time in Focused Conversation with Peers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender and Family Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>25 (89.3%)</td>
<td>22 (91.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3 (10.7%)</td>
<td>1 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. **Processing Information through Small Group Discussion Helped Me to Understand how to Apply Relevant Concepts and Information to this Topic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender and Family Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>26 (92.9%)</td>
<td>17 (70.8%)</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2 (7.1%)</td>
<td>5 (20.8%)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
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<td>2 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 7. Which of the following do You Feel was Most Beneficial to your Learning Process Today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Discussion</td>
<td>1 (3.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large group discussion</td>
<td>14 (50%)</td>
<td>16 (66.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both small and large group discussion</td>
<td>13 (46.4%)</td>
<td>8 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Which of the following do You Feel was Most Beneficial to your Learning Process Today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender and Family Discussion</th>
<th>Family Policy Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing other student’s ideas</td>
<td>6 (16.7%)</td>
<td>4 (12.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the information rather than just being provided the information</td>
<td>12 (33.3%)</td>
<td>14 (45.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing the professor link ideas from students to the course information</td>
<td>18 (50%)</td>
<td>13 (41.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes

i Lisa Hickman, Grand Valley State University, Department of Sociology, 2172 AuSable Hall, Allendale MI, 49401, hickmanl@gvsu.edu

ii This project was completed with support from the Liberal Education Academy, a program of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center.

iii As demonstrated in examinations.

iv Lake’s (2001) study had 3 groups: a lecture-based course, a course where a portion of the time was in lecture and the rest of the time was spent in small group discussion, and a course where a portion of the time was in lecture and the rest of the time was spent in small group discussion but where students had been informed of the rationale for using an active learning approach in the class.

v Midwest University requires that all students take General Education courses. The goal is for students to gain a broad general education by taking these courses at the university in addition to courses required for their major. General Education courses provide students with additional opportunities to think critically, analyze, write, and process information, all in a Liberal Arts framework.

vi Having just a few Sociology majors in the class is very common. The course is not a major requirement but instead an elective. In addition, because so many sections of this course are offered every semester, Sociology students may take it at any time (if at all) and therefore may be spread thin in these courses.

vii It is important to note that discussion was only one of several techniques students were exposed to in this course.

viii For all other days where discussion occurred, the entire class period was not devoted to discussion as it was on these two days discussed for this study. Instead, on other days it was used in concert with other teaching techniques.

ix A “CPA”, or course preparation assignment, as Yamane (2006) suggests.

x Two additional open ended questions were asked in an attempt to gauge depth of learning. These two open-ended questions asked students “What is one thing about [topic] that you learned by participating in discussion (either small or large) today?” and “In consideration of discussion (of content and materials) that took place today, what is one thing about [topic] that you still have questions on or is unclear to you?” These were used to identify themes related to the complexity of information understood and not understood. These results are not discussed in the current paper.

xi Exam questions on the same material were pulled and used for students that learned the material through lecture to provide comparisons. Percent correct scores were calculated for these students and used in the comparison and analyses. Thirty students were in the lecture course and completed exams that were used in analysis.

xii It should be noted that students are not isolated, and learning may have occurred outside of class discussions or lecture- for example, through study groups. Although it is possible that discussion may be one of the main explanations for demonstrated knowledge, readers should still act with caution in interpreting results.
These assumptions, such as a normal distribution, are not all met by the data in this analysis. As a result, this nonparametric test is a better measure of the research questions being analyzed here. Additionally, “we can trust the order of the rankings” here for student scores (a higher percentage indicates more correct answers and more student knowledge demonstrated). However, “with ratings we cannot trust that the data is from an interval scale.” (Hinton, Brownlow, McMurray and Cozens, 2004:124). This indicates a non-parametric test such as the Mann-Whitney is better suited for the analyses being conducted here.

Students were also given the opportunity to provide additional information or explanation for particular multiple choice questions. Very few students added comments for these questions, but for the ones who did, these responses are included in the results section as they seem to provide a level of understanding for particular results.

This was the only comment provided by any student for the family policy survey referencing explanations for responses about the small group discussion.

Dunn and Dunn identify several dimensions that comprise the environment in which students learn best, which come together into what they call the Learning-Style Model. The other dimensions, aside from the sociological, include environment, emotional, physiological and psychological (as cited in Dunn, Honigsfeld, Doolan, Bostrom, Russo, Schiering, Suh, and Tenedero, 2009).

Table 8 counts all responses in total, even if a student selected more than one option. As a result there are more responses than students.

Although I did use test scores from both a class where material was learned through discussion and a class where the material was learned through lecture, this is not a true “exposure-treatment” approach. An analysis employing an exposure-treatment assessment could be fruitful for this area of investigation.

It should be noted that this response could be a reflection of student interest in the topic, as the student provided a comment for explanation: “Not my cup of tea.”
The Admiral, the Mayor, and the General: The Battle of New Orleans, 1862

William M. Kirtley
Central Texas College

Patricia M. Kirtley
Independent Scholar
Introduction

General Robert E. Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox courthouse on 6 April 1865 thus ending the Civil War. The war of words continues one hundred and fifty years later. The Library of Congress holds over 70,000 volumes on every aspect of the Civil War (“The Present Past,” p. 25). This paper adds a nuanced and in-depth analysis of the 1862 Battle of New Orleans to this formidable amount of literature using letters, personal correspondence, and newspapers of the times.

This paper, first examines the personalities and relationships of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, Mayor John T. Monroe, and General Benjamin Franklin Butler. Then it chronicles the Admiral’s brilliant campaign; his use of Commander David Porter’s mortar ships to reduce Confederate defenses, the brave dash of Farragut’s ships through a gauntlet of fire, and the unexpected arrival of his warships at the docks of New Orleans. Lastly, this paper describes the reaction of Monroe to his surprising situation and Butler’s civil and military programs to pacify New Orleans.

The mayor and many of the people of the Crescent City challenged the legitimacy of the federal government. Officers of the United States military considered their action rebellious, an “organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government” (Department of the Army, 2007, p. 1-1). Butler implemented programs to suppress this insurrection, established institutions loyal to the Union, and prepared the way for Louisiana to re-enter the Union. His initiatives involved political, economic, military, and civil actions. It is ironic that one of the most reviled generals in the history of the United States originated many of the concepts of modern insurgency warfare. The thesis of this paper is that Butler’s ideas form the bedrock of modern counter-insurgency doctrine, regardless of history’s verdict on this complex man.

Background to the Battle

The First Battle of Bull Run on 21 July 1861 clearly indicated that a single armed conflict would not end the war. General Winfield Scott, ill and unable to command U.S. forces, outlined a long-range strategy, the Anaconda plan, in a letter to George Brinton McClellan, General in Chief of the Union Army. Scott called on the U.S. Navy to blockade the major ports of the South thus preventing the Confederacy from selling cotton to England in exchange for arms, ammunition, medicine, and warships. Scott argued that such naval action, followed by an expedition to control the Mississippi River, would strangle the Confederate economy and achieve victory, with less bloodshed than conventional land warfare (Scott Correspondence, 1861, p. 1).

Seizure of New Orleans was integral to the Anaconda plan. The Crescent City was the third largest port in the United States and with 140,000 inhabitants was the most populous city in the Confederacy. Thirty-three steamship lines served the Queen of the Mississippi, generating over 500 million dollars in trade a year (Hearn, 1995, p. 41). In an article, “The Importance of the Capture of New Orleans: A British View of the Situation,” The London Morning Herald (1862, May 4) enthused “New Orleans is the commercial metropolis of the South and West. It is the emporium of the vast tracts traversed by the Mississippi and all the tributaries of the most mighty of rivers” (p. 1).

New Orleans led the United States in the slave trade from Africa until Constitutional provisions outlawed this nefarious business in 1808. After that date, New Orleans auction houses formed the hub of the domestic slave trade. The bankers and merchants of New Orleans facilitated a cotton economy based on the yoke of slavery. These
aristocrats took the lead in advocating secession and contributed many of their sons to the Confederate cause (Hickman, 2015, p. 1).

According to Sociologist Elizabeth Fussell of Brown University (2007), in her article “Constructing Race: A population history of New Orleans” in the Journal of American History, New Orleans experienced four population characteristics that impinged upon the battle for New Orleans. First, white American citizens numbered 44.9% of the city’s population. The elite and the poor working classes belonging to this group formed the core of support for the Confederates. Second, the city experienced 366 per cent growth from 1830 to 1860 (p. 846). Foreign nationals from Ireland, Germany, and Sicily sought work in the city. They formed 39.8% of the total population. (p. 846). Third, the number of African Americans in the city declined after the end of the slave trade. Slaves residing in the city (8.3%) worked mainly as household help. Free Blacks (7%) engaged in a variety of skilled occupations (p. 846). Some even owned slaves and formed their own regiment in the state militia. Fourth, during and after the War, slaves on nearby plantations sought freedom and economic opportunity in the city. As a result, the number of Blacks in New Orleans increased by 25% from 1860 to 1870 (p. 846).

Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip, located seventy miles downriver, guarded New Orleans. Commodore David Dixon Porter, a brilliant, self-absorbed, naval officer, conceived the idea of using 13-inch mortars mounted on ships, scows, and barges. He planned on hiding these vessels behind brush and intervening terrain. The high parabolic trajectories of the mortars could reach targets shielded by substantial earthworks and pulverize the two garrisons into submission. He presented the idea to Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy. Welles and Porter visited the White House that evening and rousted President Lincoln from his bed. Lincoln, clad in his nightshirt, gave his support to the plan (Hickman, 2015, p. 1).

The next day Welles, Porter, and Lincoln visited McClellan. The General-in-Chief warmed to the idea of mortars, but warned that he could not spare any troops, except perhaps those under command of a pesky political general adept at lobbying in Washington – Butler. McClellan loathed Butler and thought that the scheme was an excellent way to dispose of him. Author and Civil War historian Chester G. Hearn (1997) in his book, When the Devil Came Down to Dixie, related that McClellan mistakenly believed that Butler’s credentials as a Democrat would endear him to the populace of New Orleans (p. 42).

Welles asked Porter to help him select the commanding officer of a joint Navy-Army task force. After considering all 33 officers on the Captain’s list, they decided on Porter’s adopted brother, Farragut. Welles asked Porter to interview his brother, even though Porter was the junior officer. Brotherly affection overcame the awkwardness of the situation (Hearn, 1997 p. 43). Porter tendered and Farragut accepted command of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron with the title of Flag officer. The Admiral stipulated that Porter command the mortar boats and accepted Butler as commander of the Army forces. Lincoln authorized a naval expedition on 12 November 1861 with the objective of capturing New Orleans and implementing the Anaconda plan (Porter, 1889, p. 175).

The Admiral

Farragut, self-possessed and imperturbable, possessed the experience of a lifetime at sea in peace and war. His father was a merchant Captain from the island of Minorca and served as a Navy Captain during the American Revolution. As a five-year old,
Farragut journeyed down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. When he was very young, his mother died of yellow fever. His father put him out for adoption with another navy family, that of David Porter. Farragut received a commission as Midshipman in the United States Navy at the age of nine. The British wounded him in action during the War of 1812 and he served with distinction in the Mexican War of 1846 (David Glasgow Farragut, 2015, p. 1).

The Admiral sailed his forty-three-ship fleet from Hampton Roads, Virginia on 20 January 1862. A shortage of manpower led him to recruit African American sailors who served with distinction in fully integrated crews (Reidy, 2001, p. 1). Several of his ships grounded on the shoals at the entrance to the mouth of the Mississippi River. However, the Admiral soon arrayed his forces against the two Confederate masonry forts that blocked his way to New Orleans. The battle commenced on 18 April 1862. Farragut succinctly described it, “I attacked Fort St. Phillip and Fort Jackson with my little fleet, and Commander Porter gallantly bombarded them” (as cited by Porter, 1889, p. 190).

Porter, in his *Naval History of the Civil War* (1898) enumerated the opposing forces. The U.S. Navy commanded 167 guns on wooden vessels, while the Confederate fixed defenses and naval forces contained 177 guns. He cited the consensus among naval warfare experts that one gun on land was the equal of three guns on a ship. Porter (1889) pointed out the fact that the Southerners planned to enhance the effectiveness of their cannon fire by blocking the river with an iron chain and floating blazing rafts into the Union ships (p. 179).

Porter led the mortar boat division, a non-descript collection of ships, boats, and scows outfitted with twenty-one 13-inch naval mortars that fired 200 lb. explosive shells. He ordered U.S. Costal Service surveyors to paddle small boats into the waters adjacent to the forts the night before the attack. They measured distances and azimuths to these fortifications. They left marking buoys in an area shielded by a bend in the river concealed by brush and trees from observation. Once the mortar boats maneuvered into position, their gunners had the exact co-ordinates of the Confederate positions. Union sailors camouflaged the masts of their vessels to blend in with the foliage. From their lofty perches, they called in adjustments that resulted in devastatingly accurate high-angle fire (Porter, 1889, p. 178).

Porter’s gunners fired mortar shells at the rate of one every 10 minutes for three days. The Confederate forces did not have the training to withstand this intense barrage. Historian John D. Winters (1963), author of *The Civil War in Louisiana*, accused the Confederates of making “a sorry showing” in their defense of the two forts (p. 94). He listed as causes of their defeat: the absence of co-operation, cowardice, lack of preparation, and “the murderous fire of the federal gunboats” (p. 95). Farragut, observed, “such a fire the world has never seen” (cited by Porter, 1889, p. 190).

At 2 a.m. on April 24, 1862, thirteen of the Admiral’s ships raced by Fort Jackson and Fort St. Phillip. Butler included a congratulatory letter to Farragut in his *Private and Official Correspondence*. Butler (1917) stated, “He had never witnessed a more gallant exploit” and characterized the maneuver as “bold, daring, brilliant and successful” (p. 420). But privately he wrote to his wife Sarah, that Farragut’s “race for glory” was “unmilitary” (p. 422). The remainder of the fleet, under Porter’s command, unloaded Butler’s soldiers in preparation for attacks on both forts. However, after another intense barrage, the garrison at Fort Jackson mutinied and deserted. Unable to continue the
battle, the Confederates hoisted the white flag of surrender. According to Porter (1889), he sent a steamer to bring Butler and his troops to occupy the forts after marines and sailors took control of them (p. 187).

Butler’s version of events differed from Porter’s. According to the General, the Confederates surrendered to one of his patrols. Porter delayed providing ships to ferry the General to the defeated forts so that Porter himself could gain the honor of receiving the surrender. In addition, The General diminished the effects of Porter’s mortar fire. Butler (1917) wrote that the two forts remained “substantially as defensible as before the bombardment (p. 428). Lastly, Butler charged that Porter once again deliberately delayed providing ships, this time to transport soldiers to occupy New Orleans.

The Mayor

James T. Monroe arrived in New Orleans from Missouri at the age of twenty with only a few dollars in his pocket. He found ready work as a longshoreman on the docks. His fellow workers elected him union representative, then city council person, and finally the 16th mayor of New Orleans. He was a Mason and member of the Pickwick Club, an old-line social club that sponsored a Mardi Gras float and parade. Monroe, a resolute and tenacious man, was a popular mayor, with a penchant for socializing with the aristocrats of New Orleans and, at the same time, representing the interests of workingmen (Monroe, 2015, “Administration,” p. 1).

The capture of New Orleans shocked the world, lifted the spirits of the North, and left the people of New Orleans bewildered and defiant. A few months before they celebrated Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) with masquerade balls and colorful parades; now their city was vulnerable and in chaos. Since the level of the river was higher than the streets, the formidable guns of Farragut’s war ships could destroy any single target and possessed the capability of flooding the entire city by breaching its protective levees.

Porter described the events of Saturday, April 25, 1862. Farragut gave Theodorus Bailey, Captain of the first ship to run the blockade, the honor of delivering the Admiral’s letter demanding surrender and removal of all state and Confederate flags to John T. Monroe, Mayor of New Orleans. Flags were, and still are, important symbols of power and legitimacy. Farragut understood that the banners flying on what he considered federal property, the Customs House and the New Orleans Mint, were potent symbols of sovereignty.

Lt. George H. Perkins accompanied Captain Bailey. The two Union officers stepped onto the docks and demanded to see the mayor, whereupon, the crowd “erupted in outrage” (Porter, 1889, p. 235). Author George W. Cable described the scene. “Two U.S. Navy officers walked through the crowd, unguarded and alone. They looked straight ahead, neither frowning nor flinching, while the mob screamed in their ears, shook cocked pistols in their faces, cursed and crowded and gnashed upon them” (cited in Gooley, 2014, p. 1).

Pierre Soulé, a former U.S. Senator and envoy to Spain, served as an intermediary between Monroe and Farragut. Reportedly, Soulé used his influence to guarantee the safety of Bailey and Perkins. The mayor received the two officers and sent a reply on Sunday, 26 April 1862. Monroe stated:

I am no military man, and possess no authority beyond that of executing the municipal laws of the city of New Orleans. It would be presumptuous in me to attempt to lead an army in the field, if I had
one in my command, and I know still less how to surrender an
undefended place, held as this at the mercy of your gunships and
mouths of your mortars. To surrender such a place were an idle and
unmeaning ceremony. This city is yours by the power of brutal force
and not by any choice or consent of its inhabitants (Porter, 1889, p.
195).

As for the offending Louisiana and Confederate flags, the Mayor insisted he could
find no man to haul them down. He reiterated his position that only Confederate General
Mansfield Lovell could surrender the city and Lovell was unavailable. Monroe crafted his
response based on advice from Soulé and Jefferson Davis (Monroe, Telegram to Davis,
1862). Lovell, with over 2,800 Confederate troops, remained hidden in the city (Lonn,
1940, p. 115). The mayor’s letters constituted a delaying action to give these soldiers
time to escape. Lovell offered to stay and fight, but the Mayor advised him that it was
impossible to defend the city, given Farragut’s commanding position and tremendous
firepower.

On the same day, Sunday, 26 April, Captain Henry W. Morris ordered U.S. Marines
from the Pocahontas to enter New Orleans, and remove the offending flags from the
Federal Mint and raise the stars and stripes. After the marines returned to their ship,
members of an unruly mob, including a gambler named William Bruce Mumford, tore
down the Union flag (Hearn, 1997, p. 70). Gunners on the Pocahontas fired on the mob
and a flying piece of brick injured Mumford. With cheers from local onlookers, Mumford
carried the Union flag to the Mayor at city hall. Enraged onlookers tore at the flag as he
walked, reducing it to a rag. Captain Charles Bell sent marines back into the city, loaded
his guns with grape shot and explosives, and raised the United States flag again (Roehl,

The Admiral wrote the mayor once again ordering him to remove all state and
Confederate flags on government buildings. The mayor repeated his assertion that
Lovell had departed and that as a civilian authority he could not surrender. He insisted
that no one in the city would dare strike the flag of Louisiana. He promised to try to
enforce the peace, a pledge he failed to honor (cited by Porter, 1889, p. 197).

The Mayor replied immediately in writing. He claimed that Captain Bailey had
mentioned nothing about flags in their initial meeting. Furthermore, if Farragut wished to
murder innocent women and children on a “question of etiquette,” it would constitute a
heinous war crime the world would never forget (Porter, 1889, p. 197). The Admiral
replied to the Mayor “As my duties call me away, I request you send further replies to
any vessel present” (as cited in Porter, 1889, p. 197). As historian Chester G. Hearn
(1997) explained, “(Farragut) could now turn loose of the tiger’s tail, since the keeper of
the zoo (Butler) had arrived” (p. 72).

On Wednesday 29 April 1862, The Admiral ordered 250 marines from the Hartford to
remove the Louisiana State flag from the New Orleans City Hall. This accomplished, he
moved the bulk of his fleet upriver to attack fortifications north of the city in preparation
for the campaign against Vicksburg. He left with sadness because he never had a
chance to visit his relatives in New Orleans. The only force for law and order from
Farragut’s arrival on April 25 until Butler’s troops occupied the city on May 1 were
soldiers of the Native Guard, a black militia, and the European Brigade composed of
foreign nationals. On May 2, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward blithely
announced that the Union had “recovered” New Orleans and that the U.S. Postal Service had resumed deliveries (Appleton’s, 1862, p. 1).

The General

Farragut faced an aroused populace and an obstinate mayor who openly challenged his threat to use force, Monroe firmly believed that “as a civil magistrate he could maintain his allegiance to the Confederate government and ignore the invader” (Hearn, 1997, p. 68). Farragut realized that he could not compel allegiance, force a civilian authority to surrender, or breach the levees and destroy the city. He left that problem for General Benjamin Franklin Butler to solve.

Background

Butler was born in Deerfield, New Hampshire. Shortly after his birth, Butler’s father died of yellow fever while working in the Caribbean. His mother moved to Lowell Massachusetts, a cotton mill town, where she eked out a living running a boarding house for women workers. As a boy, Butler was always a serious student. He attended Exeter Academy and Lowell High School. He failed to win an appointment to West Point, a great disappointment. He excelled in debate at Colby College. After graduation, he read law with a Lowell attorney and gained admission to the bar. Butler advocated change through legal action. Butler represented the workers in their fight for the ten-hour day. He earned a reputation as a friend of labor and represented Lowell as a Democrat in the state legislature. He also took cases from mill owners and developed a busy and lucrative practice (Benjamin Franklin Butler Facts, 2004, p. 1).

Butler’s fight for respectability in the tough hardscrabble mill town of Lowell influenced his world-view. He despised the Boston Brahmins who used their influence to ensure that their sons got appointments to West Point. He sympathized with the hard working Irish women who lived in his mother’s boarding house and represented their interests as an attorney and legislator.

An article in Harper’s Weekly, (1861, June 1) described Butler’s acerbic personality, “as an advocate he is distinguished by the energy with which he devotes himself to his client, and by the strong, playful, and somewhat vehement language hurled against opposing counsel” (Major General Butler, p. 1). He married Sarah Hildreth, an actress, and had four children. Butler carried on a lively correspondence with his wife during the few times the war separated them, asking her to “kiss the children for me” (Butler, 1917, p. 625). He was loyal to Sarah who always saw the best in her husband. In a letter to a friend, she discussed her husband’s dim prospects of receiving reinforcements in New Orleans. She noted, “I believe he can do more with small means than any other man” (Butler, 1917, p. 438).

Butler began his military career as a private in the Lowell militia, a predominantly Irish-American regiment. He rose in rank until its members voted him their leader with the rank of Brigadier General. His regiment volunteered for the Civil War and moved to protect Washington D.C. On his own initiative, Butler ordered his troops to occupy Annapolis, home of the U.S. Naval Academy, and Baltimore, an important seaport. The Northern press lionized Butler for preserving these cities and the state of Maryland for the Union (Benjamin Franklin Butler Facts, 2004, p. 1).

Early Days in New Orleans

Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, ordered Butler to hold New Orleans, control Louisiana, and support the campaign against Vicksburg. To accomplish this mission, he
had a force of 2,500 men to control a population of approximately 140,000. In all of Louisiana, he commanded 15,000 troops, not nearly enough to defend the state or the city from Confederate troops (Hearn, 1997, p. 81). The War Department told him not to expect reinforcements, and, despite Butler’s pleas, remained true to their word. This, despite the fact, that the South possessed the capability and commitment to retake the city from the hated Yankees.

Butler established the tone of his occupation on his first day, 2 May 1862. He commandeered the St. Charles Hotel as his headquarters and requested a meeting with the mayor. When Monroe refused, Butler sent several of his officers to persuade Monroe that if he wished to remain a free man, he should visit the general. Monroe and Pierre Soulé arrived at the hotel accompanied by an angry mob. Members of the unruly assemblage loudly demanded that Butler make an appearance. After Monroe unsuccessfully tried to quiet the crowd, Butler went to the window and asked, “Who calls me? I am here” (as cited in Hearn, 1997, p. 84). At that point, a U.S. Marine battery of six mobile artillery pieces (Napoleons) formed up in front of the hotel and trained their weapons on the unruly throng. The protesters quickly dispersed.

When Butler confronted the crowd, he spotted a man wearing a boutonniere made from a piece of a U.S. Flag. Butler’s soldiers identified the man as Mumford, the man who tore the flag down at the U.S. Mint. Butler soldiers apprehended him. A military tribunal convicted Mumford of high crimes and misdemeanors. The charge against him noted that he was “a sporting man much accustomed to drink” and on June 7, 1862, Butler ordered Mumford hanged at the U.S. Mint, the spot where he committed his crime (Butler, 1917, p. 283).

The meeting continued that afternoon in the parlor of the hotel. Monroe, Soulé, Butler, three members of his staff, and Sarah Butler, sat down to a light dinner and commenced the discussion. Butler issued General Order No. 1, an edict that announced the continuation of martial law declared by Confederate General Lovell. Butler also outlawed the flying of any flag save the Stars and Stripes, restricted newspapers from reporting military movements, licensed businesses and required them to stay open, forbade assemblages of persons by day or by night, and required all enemies of the United States to turn in their arms.

The Mayor persisted in his argument that as a civilian authority he had no standing before a military governor. For three hours, he disputed every provision of Butler’s order, As Hearn (1997) put it, submitting to “nothing less than what the conqueror was able to extract from the conquered” (p. 96). Monroe made little effort to conceal his hatred of Butler. The General, in return, remarked that he disliked “hardheaded men” like Monroe (as cited in Hearn, 1997, p. 89). Butler began his eight-month rule of New Orleans in a conciliatory frame of mind, but intransigence such as Monroe’s and the defiant actions of the citizenry soon hardened his approach.

Monroe continued to elicit Butler’s unfavorable attention. Butler related in his correspondence, that the Mayor fomented a plot to gather volunteers, commandeer a Union vessel, and join Confederate forces. One hundred men volunteered, but the leaders of the plot called it off because they did not think they had enough men to overpower the sailors on a Union vessel (Butler, 1917, p. 499).

Next, the Mayor and Common Council invited the French fleet to visit New Orleans. The invitation mentioned historic ties with France to whom “New Orleans owes its
foundation and early prosperity” (Butler, 1917, p. 496). The invitation almost begged the French to capture the city, an easy task since Farragut moved his fleet northward to besiege Vicksburg. Butler decisively responded that the invitation was an insult and that he alone, had the power to invite foreign naval vessels to New Orleans. He ordered the council to rescind the invitation and they complied (Butler, 1917, p. 497).

Butler discovered evidence that the mayor used $20,000 of city funds to help paroled Confederates escape. In addition, Butler’s soldiers apprehended a group of six parolees who planned on overpowering Union soldiers and escaping. Butler (1917) related that the conspirators called themselves the “Monroe Guard” (p. 499). When Butler asked the mayor for an explanation, Monroe asserted that his only crime was to give an escaping Confederate soldier $25 out of his own pocket. Butler (1917) replied he was tired of being played like a “weathercock” and ordered Monroe’s incarceration in prison at Fort Jackson (p. 499). A few months later, Monroe’s wife asked Butler to release him to visit to his dying son. Butler agreed on the condition that Monroe take an oath of allegiance to the United States, but Monroe refused (Hearn, 1997, p. 132).

At first, Butler listened to Soulé and accepted the former Senator’s suggestion that he station most of the Union troops, especially Black soldiers, on the outskirts of the city. As relationships soured, Butler realized Soulé’s loyalties still lay with the Confederacy. Butler arrested him and sent him to a military prison in New York. He listed two charges against Soulé in a letter to the Secretary of War: first, Soulé was the leader of a secret society, the Southern Independence Society, whose members swore allegiance to the Confederacy, second, he was the author of the “insolent letters” sent under Monroe’s name to Farragut (Butler, 1917, p. 432).

Reinforcing the Principles of Counter-Insurgency

A modern attorney, pastor, and lecturer at the Citadel, Rudolph C. Barnes noted in The Rule of Law and Civil Affairs in the Battle for Legitimacy (2008) that in counter-insurgency operations “success is not defined by winning military victory but by winning the battle for the public support needed for effective governance” (p. 4). The purpose of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of the political, economic, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions taken by Butler to establish effective governance under the aegis of the United States.

Butler’s actions in New Orleans fall within the purview of Counter-Insurgency (COIN) as outlined in FM 3-24 (2006), an Army field manual written, for the most part, by General David Petraeus, who defined an insurgency as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region” (Department of the Army, 2007, p. 2-1). This most certainly is an accurate description of the problems Butler faced.

Both generals believed that the best way to combat an insurgency was to balance the measured use of force with non-military programs. They saw that success lay in eliminating unrest and meeting the populace’s needs. Petraeus outlined several areas of concern: security from civil unrest and crime, provision for basic economic needs, stipulation for essential services, sustainment of social and cultural institutions, and contributions to quality of life (Department of the Army, 2007, 2-6). The following ten actions show that Butler clearly understood what are today called principles of counter-insurgency.
First, he showed concern for the poor contributing $1000 from his own funds to buy food for hungry people. He fed over 1900 destitute families with beef and flour abandoned by the Confederates. He raised $300,000 for the poor by taxing cotton brokers. When that money ran out, he reinstated the tax. The secessionist Governor of Louisiana, Thomas Overton Moore, ordered the people to have no economic dealings with the occupying forces. Butler remarked that, had the people of New Orleans followed the governor’s injunctions, they would have starved (Hearn, 1997, p. 93).

Second, he suppressed the newspaper that published Governor Moore’s directive and several other newspapers, but over all, was fairly lenient with the press (Hearn, 1997, p. 100).

Third, although the General sent three Protestant ministers to jail, in general, he showed forbearance toward the city’s religious leaders and institutions. The leaders of the city’s churches declared a day of penance and closed the churches at the behest of the Confederate government. Butler ordered them to stay open and pray for peace. He placed a particularly obstinate Catholic priest under house arrest. Butler was generally tolerant towards Catholics, who had always voted for him in Lowell. In fact, he supported a Catholic orphanage in New Orleans with his own money and was unstinting in his praise of nuns who cared for the poor (Hearn, 1997, p. 100).

Fourth, Butler understood the need of reviving the economy of New Orleans. His forces controlled access to food and supplies. No one could enter or leave the city without a pass. The General issued passes to steamboat captains and ensured them the protection of the federal fleet. His actions restarted commerce on the Mississippi and brought down the price of food (Butler, 1917, p. 515).

Fifth, Butler provided essential civil services for the people of New Orleans. The Mayor hired workers to clean the streets, but they did little to remove the piles of fetid rubbish. On 9 May 1862, Butler wrote the Mayor to “call attention to the sanitary condition of your streets,” he continued, “Resolutions and inaction will not do” (Butler, 1917, p. 456) He reminded the Mayor that there were plenty of starving men whom the city could and should employ cleaning up the streets. When the mayor did not respond, Butler hired the unemployed workers to clean up the city.

Sixth, Butler hired locals to work on the docks and keep supplies flowing to the Union Army. He put people to work expanding the city sewer system and setting up pumps to keep the city dry. Terry Jones (2012), a professor at the University of Louisiana in a New York Times article “The Beast in the Big Easy,” credited Butler’s sanitation efforts with preventing an expected yellow fever epidemic (p. 1).

Seventh, Butler paid for his social programs by taxing the richest citizens of New Orleans. The "Robin Hood" aspects of his programs provided a broad base of political support, an extensive informal intelligence and counter-espionage organization, and provided law and order. When he discovered that Southern sympathizers diverted some of the food to feed Confederate forces, he set up a commission with the power to apprehend and punish smugglers.

Eighth, Butler carried out the counter-insurgency aim of performing civilian police functions. It is usually better if the civil government continues to run the day-to-day operations of the city. If adequate civilian capacity is unable or unwilling, military forces must secure the peace. When the Mayor refused to carry out his duties, Butler replaced him with a military officer who assumed the administrative functions of city government.
The members of the New Orleans police force, except for eleven individuals, resigned rather than swear an oath of allegiance to the United States. Butler fired them and hired 500 replacements. He authorized military officers to act as judges. One month after the arrival of Union soldiers, New Orleans enjoyed the benefits of possibly the most honest police force in the history of the city.

Ninth, the General maintained that escaped slaves were property of parties at war with the United States and that, since they were contraband, he could not legally return them to their masters. Butler followed this legal principle when Joseph Davis, the brother of Jefferson Davis, petitioned Butler to return his runaway slaves. Butler hired contrabands to build ships, repair levees, clear drainage ditches, and construct fortifications (Jones, 2012, p. 1).

Tenth, Butler gave dignity and a sense of worth to Free Blacks and runaway slaves by enlisting them in the Union Army. Free black soldiers joined the Louisiana State Militia before the war. They sought prestige, fraternity, and a way to hold their place in the hierarchy of the unique multi-racial, and cultural society of New Orleans. James G. Hollandsworth (1995), a history professor at the University of Southern Mississippi, noted in The Louisiana Native Guards that The Native Guard consisted of 31 black officers and 731 black enlisted men (p. 1). The Native Guard remained to keep the peace when Confederate soldiers under General Lovell retreated from the city. It is not entirely clear whether Butler asked the Native Guards to join the Union Army or they came to him with the request to join. It is certain that Butler was in desperate need of manpower and this African-American unit provided a solution.

The narrow defeat of Confederate forces at Baton Rouge and the understanding that New Orleans was their next objective indicated that Butler needed black soldiers to shore up his seriously undermanned army. Butler understood that the notion of black soldiers challenged several assumptions about race. Confederate General Howell Cobb observed, “If slaves make good soldiers our whole theory of slavery is wrong” (as cited in Hollandsworth, 1995, p. 65). Many people in the North and the South believed Blacks were suited only for manual labor and unsuited for soldiery and former slaves might turn their bayonets on their former masters.

Butler recruited 3,122 free blacks and escaped slaves into three regiments of infantry, the First, Second, and Third Louisiana Native Guards, the Corps D’Afrique. At first, the Union Army used Black soldiers primarily for digging ditches and building fortifications; but as the war progressed they distinguished themselves in battle. Several Black officers credited their military experience as helping them succeed in later life. P. S. Pinchback, a Captain in the Guards, became Governor of Louisiana.

**Violating the Principles of Counter Insurgency**

Butler correctly believed that the key to control the city lay in divorcing the elite from the lower class. However, by attacking the rich so viscerally he earned their eternal enmity, a cardinal violation of the principles of counter-insurgency warfare. The following programs, however well intentioned, had negative consequences for pacification of New Orleans.

Butler recruited African Americans out of principle and necessity. The racism of many in New Orleans led to an ugly riot. The streetcar companies reserved the first car that reached a stop for whites. When Black Union soldiers sought to board the first car, mayhem ensued. The recruitment of Blacks so outraged Jefferson Davis, Presidency of
the Confederacy, that on 23 December 1862 he publicly called for the execution of both Butler and African-American Union soldiers (Civil War Daily Gazette, p. 1).

Butler believed that the wealthy bankers and cotton traders of New Orleans made millions of dollars exploiting the work of slaves. He argued that the upper classes supported treason as a means of protecting their entrenched interests. Upon the advent of war, these aristocrats financed the Confederacy. He loathed the crème de la crème of New Orleans and sought to destroy them. Butler (1917) lashed out at them in General Order No. 25 (pp. 47-48):

They have betrayed their country. They have been false to every trust. They have shown themselves incapable of defending the state they seized upon, although they have forced every poor man’s child into their service as soldiers for that purpose, while they made their sons and nephews officers. They will not feed those whom they are starving.

The General outlined a plan to change the social structure of New Orleans by isolating the privileged class. In General Order No. 25 dated 9 May 1862. Butler (1917) blamed the uncaring elite for the starvation and destitution among the working class of the city. “This hunger does not pinch the wealthy and the influential, the leaders of the rebellion who have gotten up this war and are now endeavoring to prosecute it without regard to the starving poor” (p. 457). Butler noted that the nabobs of New Orleans burned eleven thousand bales of cotton and property worth millions to keep these assets out of the hands of the Union Army. These wasted resources were worth more than enough to feed the deserving poor.

Butler required members of the upper classes to take an oath of allegiance or lose the right to practice their professions. If they declined, he issued them a certificate that declared them enemies of the United States, and, as such, they forfeited their property. Butler sentenced members of the elite to prison. He sent three of the town’s leading ministers to Lafayette prison in New York for refusing to include mention of the President of the United States in their weekly blessings.

Governor Moore of Louisiana responded with an argument often made by Southerners who insisted that wage slavery was worse than chattel slavery.

General Butler’s attempt to excite the poor against the more wealthy is characteristic of the man, and is as mean as it is contemptible. He springs from a race that has ever been purse-proud when fortune favored them and idolatrous worshipers of the almighty dollar. He comes from a section of the country that has done more than any other to degrade and cheapen and reduce the laboring man to the condition of a slave (as cited by Butler, 1917, p. 459).

Butler attracted unfavorable national and international publicity when he ordered his soldiers to treat any lady who insulted them as a woman of the town plying her avocation, i.e. a prostitute. Upper class women of that period enjoyed a certain status. When the women of New Orleans exceeded the bounds of the role expected of them, the General felt that it was only logical that his forces should treat them as lower class women. Monroe sent a letter to Butler asserting that he wanted to vindicate the virtuous women of the City. Butler (1917) replied that his order did not apply to “virtuous women,” and the Mayor apologized (p. 498). In any event, the women of New Orleans
occasionally resorted to dumping dishwater from the balconies of buildings on unsuspecting Union solders who passed underneath.

Banks lost millions on deposits when Butler declared that people could not use Confederate currency for payment of debt. The General included bankers, in his order that those who wished to do business in New Orleans must swear allegiance to the United States. Judah P. Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State, expressed dismay when his brother, Solomon, took the oath. Bankers continued to funnel Confederate deposits of gold and silver to Europe through the 18 foreign consuls in New Orleans. Butler confiscated $800,000 deposited in the office of the Dutch consul who protested that he did not know how it got there (Hearn, 1997, p. 156).

Similar incidents occurred when Butler seized specie held by the Belgian, Spanish, and French consuls. The foreign ministers of these countries complained vocally and vehemently to William H. Seward, the U.S. Secretary of State. Seward sent two of his emissaries to New Orleans to investigate their complaints. His representatives recommended that Butler return the funds. After doing so, Butler discovered corroborating evidence that the Confederates used these funds to purchase arms in foreign countries. President Lincoln sympathized with Butler’s attempts to seize these assets, but was more concerned about alienating European powers that might recognize the Confederacy (Hearn, 1997, p. 156).

Butler’s economic incentives provided opportunities for greed, graft, and misunderstanding. Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, sent a warm and meandering letter to Butler warning him that someone had charged him with using his military office for personal gain. Butler stockpiled coal aboard his ship on the voyage down the coast to New Orleans. When the Navy ships ran out of coal he sold it to them. Another accusation stemmed from the fact that Butler ordered U.S. Navy ships to carry sugar owned by his brother, Andrew Jackson Butler, as ballast on the trip back to the North. Butler (1917) was clear in his correspondence that the government had the first option on purchasing the sugar (p. 534).

Chase sent two treasury agents to investigate. They reported that while they suspected Butler’s brother, of profiting at the government’s expense, they could not “discover any good proof that Butler had improperly done, or permitted anything for his own personal advantage. “ He is such a smart man, that it would be in any case difficult to discover what he wished to conceal” (as cited in Hearn, 1997, p. 191). The treasury agents did uncover an incident that besmirched the General’s reputation. They seized a schooner smuggling salt across Lake Pontchartrain. Butler ordered the vessel released because he had issued a pass to its Captain. The salt ended up in rebel hands and charges ensued that Butler was trading with the enemy.

Butler knew that the Union embargo had damaged trade through the port of New Orleans. The value of goods passing through New Orleans declined from $500 million to $52 million during the period 1860 to 1862 (Hearn, 1995, p. 41). The General used his extensive commercial contacts to revive commerce in the city, exporting 17,000 bales of cotton to the New England mills and re-establishing international trade. Charges of corruption swirled around Butler’s economic programs, but no one ever proved them. He was a smart lawyer and a shrewd businessman.

President Lincoln signed the second Confiscation Act of 1862, which allowed Union soldiers to seize the property and possessions of Confederate civil and military officers
upon detection. In the incident in which Butler acquired the nickname “spoons,” he issued a pass for a lady to leave the city and join her husband in Confederate-held territory. Union soldiers found silver spoons hidden in her carriage and confiscated them as contraband. The lady claimed that they were not her spoons, that they belonged to a French citizen, and demanded them back. The spoons were lost in bureaucratic red tape, but Southerners claimed the spoons ended up on Butler’s table, hence the derogatory appellation, “Spoons Butler” (Hearn, 1997, pp. 222-223).

Butler made anti-Semitic statements during his efforts to prevent the financial institutions of New Orleans from transferring funds to the Confederacy. While searching the Bank of Solomon Benjamin, his soldiers found a box containing U.S. currency in a hole in the wall. The initials of Judah P. Benjamin, Solomon’s brother and the Secretary of State of the Confederacy, appeared on the top of the box (Butler, 1917, p. 489). Butler charged that Jews in the banking business conspired to prevent Union officers from confiscating Confederate funds (Hearn, 1997, p. 163). A Jewish newspaper quoted Butler as saying that he would "suck the blood of every Jew, and …will detain every Jew as long as he can" (cited by Regenstein, 2007, p. 1).

Myer Isaacs, editor of the Jewish Messenger, questioned Butler’s use of language in identifying five individuals apprehended while they were trying to run the blockade as Jewish, rather than listing their nationality. Isaacs informed Butler that Jewish was a religion, not a nationality, citing himself as an example. He gently reminded Butler that Jews practiced a number of different professions, not just banking. Issacs corrected Butler’s misconception that several members of the Confederate cabinet were Jewish. In an exchange of letters, Butler continued to demonstrate his prejudice by explaining that he came from a small town in Massachusetts and had never met a Jew who was not a banker, admitted his misconceptions, and asked that Isaacs continue to inform him on the subject (Isaacs Correspondence, 1864, p. 1).

**Conclusion**

A society based on unequal distribution of wealth, slavery, and racism, resisted change for many years. Even had Butler, avoided antagonizing the elite, contained his brother’s avarice, used diplomacy with foreign bankers and consuls, and avoided the anti-Semitism of his day, nothing would have changed. Confederate sympathizers in New Orleans would have regarded any Union General as a vile and evil man. In the midst of wartime propaganda it is all too easy to forget that Butler accomplished his mission. He maintained Union control of New Orleans and Louisiana.

Butler was one of the most volatile and contradictory personalities of the Civil War. He was infamous in New Orleans for confrontational proclamations and assailed for corruption. If these things were his only capabilities, he could never have held the city, or prevented Confederate forces from re-capturing it. Confederate officials and sympathizers created the false impression that Union forces held New Orleans by brute military force and terror. They portrayed Butler as a corrupt money hungry totalitarian dictator. An article on History.net succinctly stated the problem of evaluating Butler’s contributions for posterity. Butler’s “genius for antagonizing powerful adversaries, not only domestically but abroad" countered his “administrative genius" (Maj. General Butler, 2015, History-net).

The expected rebel counteroffensive came on August 5, 1862 in the form of a naval and army assault on Baton Rouge, led by Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge. After a hard
fought battle, Union forces drove Confederate forces out of the city. The significant aspect of the battle was that it did not result in a popular uprising, nor widespread support for Confederate forces in Louisiana. Rebel forces failed to mount a sustained campaign to retake New Orleans. Historians attribute this to victory on the battlefield and Butler’s consensus building, political manipulation, and broad based political support. Lincoln replaced Butler in December 1862, not because of his performance, but for political reasons. On 14 December 1862, Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks took command of the Department of the Gulf. Butler did not learn of his dismissal until after Banks’ arrival.

Conquerors throughout history faced the difficult task of controlling a city whose people would not submit. The Romans could not conquer what the Bible called “a stiff-necked people,” so they destroyed Jerusalem. The U.S. Army and Iraqi government forces captured, occupied, and lost Fallujah, Iraq to Islamic militants. The battle of New Orleans points out another way, counter-insurgency, i.e., pacification through the measured use of force, as well as, political, economic, and social programs.

Butler’s arbitrariness, financial dealings, interference with foreign consuls, and blatant anti-Semitism tarnished his reputation. His abrasive style provoked Southerners who gave him the lasting sobriquet, “Beast Butler.” Merchants sold chamber pots with his likeness at the bottom. Cartoonists portrayed him with the body of a fly. Yet, Butler’s administration benefited New Orleans. Farragut best summed up Butler’s eight months as military governor of New Orleans, "They may say what they please about General Butler, but he was the right man in the right place in New Orleans" (as cited in Hearn, 1997, p. 4). He kept the city both orderly and healthy. His programs saved New Orleans for the Union, hastened the end or the war, and established the paradigm for the tactics of modern counter-insurgency warfare.

References


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The Effectiveness of Virginity Pledges:
The Demographic Debate Pledges?

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West Texas A&M University
There has been a significant increase in the acceptance of premarital sexual intercourse in the last several decades (Wilke and Saad, 2013). The Guttmacher Institute reported that although American teens are waiting longer to have sex than they did in the recent past, they are more accepting of having sex before marriage (Guttmacher Institute, 2014).

Christopher and Sprecher (2000), in their decade review, state that over the past three decades there has been a significant increase in the percentages of people who believe that premarital sex is "not wrong at all," and a decrease in the number of people who believe that it is "always wrong." This trend can be interpreted as a shift toward "moral neutrality" concerning sexual intercourse before marriage (Christopher and Sprecher, 2000). In other words, there is a shift in our cultural sexual scripts. The technological advancements of more effective birth control methods, changing gender roles that permit females to be sexual, and delayed age at marriage have played a major role in the rise of premarital sex for adolescents and young adults (Bruckner and Bearman, 2005; Commonwealth, 2001). However, there are many who still oppose sex until marriage (Guttmacher Institute, 2014).

Although the rates of teenage pregnancy have declined since the early 1990s, it seems that conservatives and liberals both criticize adolescent sexual behavior and defend the social institution of marriage (Macionis, 2005). Liberals stress safe-sex and protection for adolescents. Conservatives appear more likely to argue for the restoration of traditional gender roles and a sexually moral society (Williams and Thompson, 2013). One movement toward a more moral society is the "virginity pledge." The "virginity pledge" first originated with the Southern Baptist Church in 1993. This movement provides adolescents the opportunity to make a pledge to remain a virgin until marriage and it seeks to reduce sexual behaviors that can lead to pregnancy and sexual transmitted diseases (Bersamin, Walker, Fisher, Waiters, and Grube, 2005). Bearman and Bruckner (2001) estimate that 23% of females and 16% of females on the United States have taken a virginity pledge. The international campaign called, True Love Waits, has encouraged over 3 million adolescents to publicly pledge to remain celibate until marriage (CQ Researcher, 2004).

The purpose of this study was to determine what effect, if any, age, race and ethnicity, family structure, and religion have on adolescent sexual behavior, which is defined here as sexual intercourse, and the likelihood of taking a virginity pledge. A review of the literature on adolescent sexual behavior and virginity pledging, in relation to these variables, is discussed.

**Literature Review**

**Factors Affecting Sexual Behavior**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004) reported that in 2003, approximately 46.7% of high school students had had a sexual experience. Their study reported that African males (74%) and females (61%) were most likely to have "ever had sexual intercourse," followed by Hispanic males (57%) and females (46%), and white females (43%) and males (41%). The same racial pattern existed for adolescents who "are currently sexually active." Fifty-four percent of African American males and 44% of African American females are
currently sexually active. Hispanic males (39%) and females (36%) are followed by white females (33%) and males (29%) who are currently sexually active. African American males and females are most likely to have had sexual intercourse and currently be sexually active when compared to Hispanics and whites (Rostosky, Regnerus, and Wright, 2003).

In addition to racial and ethnic differences, adolescent demographic and social factors such as being older (Lamb, Ketterlinus, Elster, and Nitz, 1992; Newcomer and Baldwin, 1992; Rostosky, Regnerus, and Wright, 2003; Terry and Manlove, 2004), living in a one-parent family (Hogan and Kitagawa, 1985; Lock and Vincent, 1995; Rostosky, Regnerus, and Wright, 2003; Young, Jensen, and Olsen, 1991) and low religiosity (Benda and Corwyn, 1997; Dryfoos, 1990; DuRant and Sanders, 1989; Hardy and Raffaelli, 2003; Koch, 1998; Rostosky, Regnerus, and Wright, 2003; Santos-Fontova, 1984; Thornton and Cambum, 1989; Woodroof, 1985) have also been linked to having had sexual intercourse.

Factors Affecting Virginity Pledging

A review of the literature indicates that there are not a lot of studies dealing with adolescents who "pledge to remain a virgin" (Dicks, 2005; Strong, DeVault, and Cohen, 2005). One that deals with virginity pledging that was conducted by Northern Kentucky University concluded that 61% of students who made virginity pledges broke them (Christian Century, 2003). Even popular culture literature has reported that 88% of United States teens have premarital sex after taking virginity pledging (Time, 2004). On the other hand, a TIME/MTV survey, conducted online during September 10-12, 2002, using 1,061 adolescents, indicated that 37% think that virginity pledges are effective to prevent teens from having sex until marriage (Morse, Bacon, and Pitluk, 2002).

The majority of research in the area of adolescent virginity indicates that adolescents from one-parent homes are less likely to take a virginity pledge when compared to children from two parent homes (Manlove, Ryan, and Franzetta, 2003; Morse, Bacon, and Pitluk, 2002; Raine, Jenkins, Aarons, Woodward, Fairfaz, El-Khorazaty, and Herman, 1999; Schuster, Bell, and Kanouse, 1996).

In the area of race and ethnicity, research has indicated that white adolescents are more likely to take a virginity pledge, followed by Latinos, and African Americans (Kowaleski-Jones and Mott, 1998; Miller and Hoffman, 1995; Schuster, Bell, and Kanouse, 1996).

Lower levels of religiosity were also associated with a lower likelihood of taking a virginity pledge (Bersamin, Walker, Waiters, Fisher, and Grube, 2005; Woody, Russel, D'Souza, and Woody, 2000). Santos-Fontova (1984) found that higher levels of religiosity were directly related to remaining a virgin among Hispanics.

As expected, much of the literature states that younger adolescents are more likely to be virgins while older adolescents are more likely to have taken a virginity pledge (Bersamin, Walker, Waiters, Fisher, and Grube, 2004; Population Today, 2001; Raine, Jenkins, Aarons, Woodward, Fairfaz, El-Khorazaty, and Herman, 1999; Watts, 1999).

A study conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004) reported that in 2003, more than 50% of male high school adolescents
reported that they were virgins. Further, Bearman and Bruckner (2001) concluded that adolescents who took a virginity pledge to abstain from intercourse until marriage "are much less likely" to have sexual intercourse when compared to adolescents who did not take the pledge. "The delay effect is substantial and almost impossible to erase. Taking a pledge delays intercourse for a long time" (Bearman and Bruckner, 2001). Further, attitudes toward sexual behavior are shown to be deeply embedded in group norms (Miller and Moore, 1990; Wilcox, Rostosky, Randall, and Wright, 2001).

**Theoretical Perspectives**

Adolescent sexual behavior can be viewed from the structural-functional perspective. This means that sexual behavior can be viewed in the context of societal norms which regulates sexuality so that it can serve the societal purpose or function of responsible reproduction. It helps to view sexual behavior as a structure, with the function of reproducing (Popenoe, 1996). The biosocial perspective is evolutionary in nature. It suggests that humans' evolutionary biology affects a large portion of human behavior and many family-related behaviors (Wallace and Wolfe, 1999), such as transmitting their genes to the next generation. However, there is vast cross-cultural and historical variation in the meaning of sexual behavior and the bargaining about sex, or lack of, that takes place between individuals. Two ways of looking at the sexual relations (or lack of) are the social-exchange perspective and the interactionist perspective.

The social-exchange perspective focuses on the idea that a female's sexuality and related fertility are resources that can be exchanged for benefits such as economic support, status in society, and protection. Lawrance and Byers (1995) have suggested for the interpersonal exchange model of sexual behavior. This models views sexual behavior as depending on the rewards and costs of a sexual relationship, as well as what the comparison level is. The comparison level is what the adolescent expects out of the relationship. Another factor is the alternative comparison level. For example, what other alternative options are available, such as remaining a virgin, and how good the options are compared to the present circumstance or present relationship. Lawrance and Byers (1995) also discuss the fact that expectations will most likely include equality to some degree.

The interactionist perspective focuses on the interpersonal negotiation of relationships within the framework of sexual scripts. For example, adolescents have sex drives that are determined by a biological imperative toward reproduction. However, why adolescents are sexual (sexually active) or choose to remain a virgin is most often influenced and shaped by cultural learning, with meaning transmitted in a cultural setting (Fracher and Kimmel, 1992).

The way adolescents think and feel about sexual behavior is related to the messages they receive about sex from the major agents of socialization including family, peers, mass media, religion, and education. Cultural messages give adolescents perceived legitimate reasons for having sex or choosing to remain a virgin (Lamanna, and Riedman, 2006; Wilder and Watt, 2002).

The interactionist perspective also suggests that adolescent males and females are influenced by sexual scripts that they learn from society. Adolescents then
negotiate the specifics of their sexual encounter including choosing to remain a virgin (Stein, 1989).

Adolescents learn to assign meaning to their sexual activity or assign meaning to their choice to remain a virgin. Sex and virginity have different cultural meaning and each plays a different, yet specific role, in different social settings. In the United States messages about sex have changed over time (Bruckner and Bearman, 2005). For example, in early American patriarchal sex was the norm. In the early 1900s, expressive sexuality began to emerge. In the 1960s the dominant cultural message of the sexual revolution was that sex was for pleasure. In the twenty-first century the dominant sexual norm is the face of risk and using caution.

Data
The data came from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to Adult (Add Health) Survey. Add Health is a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of teenagers who were in grades 7 – 12 during the academic year (UNC Carolina Population Center, 2014). The adolescent cohort has been followed into adulthood with four in-depth interviews conducted at home. The data used a combination of the adolescents’ social, economic, psychological well-being, community well-being, as well as the family, neighborhood, community, and school environment of the adolescent (UNC Carolina Population Center, 2014). Add Health provides data on friendships, peer groups and romantic relationships of the adolescent. Add Health was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health and published by the UNC Carolina Population Center (UNC Carolina Population Center, 2014).

Results
There were a total of 5,982 adolescents included in the study. Thirteen percent (n = 778) reported taking a pledge to remain a virgin until marriage. Forty percent (n = 2,392) reported that they had already had sex. Younger adolescents were more likely than older adolescents to have taken a pledge of virginity. Older adolescents were more likely than younger adolescents to have had sex.

Table1 indicates which variables were used in the analysis. Significant differences were found on all racial and ethnic groups (Chi-Square = 1.72, p = <.05) for those who reported taking a pledge to remain a virgin compared to those who did not. Fifty-five percent of Whites, 22% of African Americans, 10.9 % of Asians, 7.1% of Hispanics, and 4.3% of Native Americans have taken a pledge to remain a virgin until marriage. Significant differences were found on all racial and ethnic groups (Chi-Square = 11.72, p = <.05) for those who reported having sex and those who did not. Of those reported having sex, 53.3% were White, 28.1% were African American, 9% were Asian, 5.2% were Hispanic, and 4.4% were Native American. (See Table 1)

There were no significant differences for adolescents who had sex compared with those who had not had sex when examining family structures. Fifty-eight percent of adolescents who lived in intact families reported having sex. Thirty-four percent in one-parent families and 11.4% of those living in blended families also reported having sex. There were significant differences on all family structures for those adolescents who had taken a pledge to remain a virgin (Chi-Square = 8.39, p = <.05). Fifty-four percent of those adolescents in intact families had pledged to
remain a virgin compared to 31.6% in one-parent families and only 14.1% of those living in blended families.

Logistic regression was conducted to determine which independent variables (age, family status, race and ethnicity, and religion) are predictors of pledging to remain a virgin. Data screening led to the elimination of three outliers. One independent variable, family status, was recoded into the categories of 1) one-parent families and, 2) blended and intact families in order to compare one-parent and two parent families. Regression results indicated the overall model fit of the predictors was questionable (-2 Log Likelihood = 4110.5) but was statistical reliable in distinguishing whether or not someone pledges to remain a virgin (Chi-Square = 291.81, \( p < .05 \)). The model correctly classified 84.9% of the cases.

Regression coefficients are presented in Table 2. Wald statistics indicated that age, family status (one-parent family) and race and ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, and White) and religion significantly predict whether someone takes a pledge to remain a virgin. However, odds ratios for these variables indicated little change in the likelihood of taking a virginity pledge. The \( R^2 \) explains approximately 9.6% of the total variance in the model. (See Table 2)

Family status was a significant predictor in the model predicting taking a virginity pledge. Adolescents in one-parent families were more likely to take a pledge of virginity when compared to adolescents in blended and intact families. Family status or structure was also the strongest predictor of adolescent virginity pledge in the model as one-parent families increasing the likelihood of a virginity pledge. Race and ethnicity was also a significant predictor in this model. Specifically, adolescents who are African American, Hispanic and White are significant predictors of taking a virginity pledge while being Asian and Native American are not. Age was also a significant predictor of taking a virginity pledge. Younger children were more likely to take a pledge when compared to older children. Religion was also a significant predictor in the virginity pledge model. However the odds ratio for religion indicated little change in the likelihood of taking a virginity pledge.

Another analysis of logistic regression was conducted to find out which independent variables (age, family status, race and ethnicity, and religion) were predictors of whether or not adolescents had sex. Preliminary screening led to the deletion of four outliers from subsequent analyses. Family status was also recoded for this analysis into the categories of 1) one-parent families and, 2) blended and intact families in order to compare one-parent and two parent families. Regression results indicate the overall model of three predictors age, race and ethnicity (African American and Hispanic), and religion was statistically reliable in distinguishing between adolescents who had sex or not (-2Log Likelihood = 6223.49; Chi-Square = 24.48, \( p = <.01 \)). The model correctly classified only 60.2% of the cases. Regression coefficients are presented in Table 3. Wald statistics indicated that age, race and ethnicity (African American and Hispanic), and religion significantly predict whether or not adolescents have sex. However, the odds ratios for the three independent variables indicated little change in the likelihood of adolescent sexual behavior. The \( R^2 \) explains approximately 18.2% of the total variance in the model. (See Table 3)
It is interesting that family status (one-parent and two-parent families) was not a significant predictor in the having had sex model considering the fact that the literature suggests that children from one-parent families are more likely to engage in sexual behavior and at a younger age. Age was a significant predictor. Older children were more likely than younger children to have had sex. Religion was also a significant predictor in having had sex. Adolescents who are religion are less likely to have had sex. Although denomination was not a variable included in this study, it would be interesting to see if there were denominational differences in this model For example, fundamentalist denominations compared to non-fundamentalist denominations. The last independent variable that was included in this model was race and ethnicity. Both African Americans and Hispanics were significant predictors in the model. In fact, Hispanics are the strongest predictor in the model of having had sex. These findings are consistent with a recent study (Thomas, 2013).

**Discussion**

The documented (Dailard, 2003) decline in sexual activity appears to have come before the "abstinence only" and "virginity pledge" days. Schemo (2000) has noted that while adolescents may be avoiding sexual intercourse, many are participating in oral sex. Some adolescents appear to be confused about what sexual "abstinence" is (Schemo, 2000). For example, many adolescents think that "sex" is sexual intercourse while simultaneously not even considering any oral contact to be "sex" (Schemo, 2000). Several studies indicate that adolescents who would describe themselves as "virgins" had participated in oral sex (Bruckner and Bearman, 2005; Dailard, 2003; Denizet-Lewis, 2004; Prinstein, Meade, and Cohen, 2003; Schuster, Bell, and Kanouse, 1996).

Some people even say that an abstinence pledge leads to virginity. An abstinence coalition stated that, "the Add Health study now places scientific research soundly on the side of the abstinence message" (Koch, 1998) because the study raises serious questions about programs in sex-education that teach both contraception and abstinence.

However, when Robert W. Blum, one of the authors of the Add Health survey, heard about the coalition’s letter, he sent out a clarification of the coalition’s "erroneous" interpretation of their findings. Blum has written, "They have ... imputed causality where there is no causality. You cannot look at the data and say that an abstinence pledge leads to virginity. This is not a random population of kids in America who make abstinence pledges. There’s a religious and ethnic skew to it. The abstinence pledge is just one piece of a constellation of factors we see in kids who are less likely to have intercourse (Koch, 1998).

**References**


### Table 1: Measures of Variables Used In Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Selected Descriptors of Variables</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Church attendance, the importance of religion, frequency of prayer, attendance at youth groups.</td>
<td>4 (alpha = .74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family structure</td>
<td>Type of household where child lives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Race or ethnicity of child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Current age of child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginity Pledge</td>
<td>Self-reported if has taken a pledge to remain a virgin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Self-reported if ever had sex</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Logistic Regression of Predictors of Pledging to Remain a Virgin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.087</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>14.761</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.917</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>4.555</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.324</td>
<td>.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended/Intact</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>-.444</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>4.910</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.641</td>
<td>.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-.154</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td>0.390</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.857</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-.812</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>14.622</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>-.283</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>1.492</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>-.664</td>
<td>.335</td>
<td>3.3880</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.517</td>
<td>.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>-.212</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>208.897</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2Log Likelihood Model Chi-square 4110.5
(df = 9) Rate of Correct Classification R2 = 0.096

*p = .001 **p = .05
Table 3: Logistic Regression of Predictors of Having Had Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>446.51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.483</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>1.307</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.128</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended/Intact</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>2.731</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.119</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>-.381</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>5.188</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-.319</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>2.336</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>7.005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.585</td>
<td>.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>-.319</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>2.336</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>-.347</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>1.835</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.707</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>122.742</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.109</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2Log Likelihood Model Chi-square: $6223.49$ (df = 9) Rate of Correct Classification $R^2 = 0.182$ $60.2\%$

*p = .001 **p = .01 ***p = .05
The Power of Teamwork:
From Classroom Interaction to Real World Application

Phillip Norrell
Shelley Holden
University of South Alabama
Introduction: Team Based Learning at the University of South Alabama

The University of South Alabama (USA) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). In 2012 as a component of the Universities reaccreditation process a five year Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) was developed to improve student preparation in the classroom, classroom learning, and the retention of classroom material for use beyond graduation. After an evaluation phase collaborative learning and critical thinking were chosen as the two main project goals for improvement. Desired student outcome were as follows:

- **Project Outcome 1:** Students will achieve higher mastery levels of course content and real world application of the content.
- **Project Outcome 2:** Students will develop higher levels of critical thinking skills as defined by Bloom (1956).
- **Project Outcome 3:** Students will develop higher levels of collaborative skills.
- **Project Outcome 4:** Students will have higher levels of engagement,
- **Project Outcome 5:** Students will increase persistence in STEM courses.

After a review of collaborative teaching and learning best practices and literature, an instructional strategy called Team-Based Learning (TBL) was selected to facilitate the achievement of the project goals. Team-Based Learning, a form of collaborative learning, utilizes a specific sequence of individual work, group work, and immediate feedback to create a motivational framework in which students are accountable to the instructor and other members of the team for coming to class prepared and contributing to discussion (Michaelsen & Sweet, 2008).

The decision was made to focus on the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) based on data contained in the listings of USA’s top 25 most difficult courses as determined by a lack of student success. There is a substantial body of research (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Kalaian & Kasim, 2009; Prince, 2004; Project Kaleidoscope, 2012; Springer, Stanne, & Donovan, 1999) indicating that when compared with lecture-based instruction, all forms of small-group learning methods including Team-Based Learning have a positive impact on student achievement, attitude, and persistence in STEM courses. The implementation team referred to as TEAM USA initiated efforts to recruit faculty from the STEM disciplines. However, the recruitment was not restricted to STEM disciplines. All interested faculty were encouraged to participate regardless of subject concentration. The authors of this paper, Dr. Phillip Norrell (Exercise Science) and Dr. Shelley Holden (Health Education) chose to undertake the training and to become part of the project. Dr. Larry Michaelsen, one of the original developers of Team Based Learning and viewed as a central figure in its worldwide dissemination, was selected as a consultant to conduct workshops to train faculty in this instructional method. Research methods to assess the effectiveness of Team-Based Learning were planned and are currently ongoing. First year results were encouraging and are described later in this document.

**Principles of Team Based Learning**

Team-Based Learning was developed by Larry Michaelsen in the 1990’s and grounded in constructivist educational theory (Hrynchak & Barry, 2012). It is an example of a flipped classroom approach where the content is learned by independent
study and the application occurs in the classroom (Moffet, 2014). According to 
Michaelsen, Davidson, and Major (2014), six fundamental principles guide every aspect 
of designing and facilitating a TBL course: (1) Plan backwards and execute forwards, 
(2) use mutually reinforcing activities in a specific sequence, (3) use a majority of class 
time for higher-level thinking application activities, (4) use activities and assignments so 
that they both promote learning and build team relationships, (5) provide frequent and 
immediate feedback on individual and team performance, and (6) employ a 
grading/reward system that promotes both individual and team accountability for doing 
high quality work. In traditional lecture-based courses, teachers typically begin planning 
a course by identifying what content they need to “cover.” In contrast, the design of a 
TBL course requires instructors to use “backward design” to get real clarity on what 
meeting the requirements of their course means by the answering of four questions.

1) “What do I want my students to be able to do with the material in 
this unit?” This question guides the development of behavioral 
(not just knowledge) objectives.

2) “How can I assess whether or not students can do what I want 
them to be able to do?” This question guides the design of 
activities that require students to do something that is as close as 
possible to the desired behavioral outcomes specified in question 
1 above.

3) “What will students need to know in order to do what I want them 
to do?” This question guides the selection of the content that 
students will be expected to master prior to the first class meeting 
of the unit.

4) “How can I assess whether students are ready to engage in the 
activities in which they will demonstrate their abilities to do what I 
want them to be able to do?” This question guides the 
assessment of students’ pre-class preparation.

Michaelsen, Davidson, and Major (2014) further assert that TBL is an instructional 
strategy, not just a teaching technique. It is a set of learning activities, in a particular 
sequence, not just an individual activity that can be plugged into a course taught in 
more of a traditional lectured based manner. The whole course is restructured by 
dividing it up into five to seven units. Within each of these topical units, the teacher then 
sets up a three-phase sequence: preparation, application, and immediate feedback. In 
the preparation phase students ready themselves which can include reading 
assignment, reviewing Power Points, and/or viewing videos. Then when they come to 
class they engage in the Readiness Assurance Process (RAP) to ensure students are 
ready for the next phase of the sequence, which is when they learn how to apply or use 
the content. In the RAP students take a relatively short multiple choice test individually 
and then in their teams. This incentivizes students to do the assignment and gives them 
some immediate feedback as to the correct answers. The teacher further facilitates this 
process by giving “corrective instruction” or clarification regarding difficulty students 
might have with the material. Preparation is followed by application in which the students in their teams over several class sessions use the content to answer 
questions, solve problems, create explanations, make predictions, or do whatever it is 
that constitutes “using” the content for this particular subject. Team-Based Learning is
not about covering content. From a student standpoint, the overall “feel” of the class
must be that the class is about learning to do something as opposed to learning some
facts so they can pass a test. These application team assignments largely determine
the effectiveness of the learning groups. Assignments requiring a high level of group
interaction promote both learning and team development. In most cases, team
assignments will generate a high level of interaction if they require teams to use course
concepts to make decisions that involve set of complex issues and enable teams to
report their decisions in simple form preferably simultaneously reported decisions on
application-focused assignments. This further provides teams with immediate
feedback. Providing immediate feedback on the level of students’ understanding is one
key to holding individuals and teams accountable for doing high quality work.

However, for many students providing immediate feedback is not sufficient source of
motivation to ensure that they will do the work needed to master and apply course
concepts. For many students, another key is using a reward system linking students’
grades to each of the activities that is essential for their own learning, and for the
success of their team. Thus, an effective grading system for TBL must meet two
criteria. One criterion is that the grading system must include three components: (1)
individual performance, (2) team performance, and (3) a peer assessment of the
individual member’s contribution to their team to eliminate the “free rider” complaint
often expressed by students asked to perform group work. The other is that each of the
three components must “count” enough so students care about their scores
(Michaelson, Knight, & Fink, 2002).

**Implementing TBL**

TBL implementation consists of four steps. Step 1 is to explain the use of TBL to
students. Step 2 is to strategically structure teams in a way that will maximize learning
and development for each and every team. Step 3 consists of using two items
necessary for designing a typical TBL class session (the readiness assessment process
and the design of application exercises). Step 4 is the use of peer evaluations (Saldivar,
2013).

Because TBL is so fundamentally different from traditional courses, it is important for
students to understand both how the class will be conducted and the rational for this
approach to learning (Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink, 2004). Teachers experienced in TBL
have also reported (Saldivar, 2013) that students often describe their previous
experiences with group work in negative terms (I will do all the work but the others will
get the same credit). This requires incorporating TBL in the syllabus and explaining the
method thoroughly in the beginning to get a better “buy-in” by students. Particularly
important is explaining how the peer evaluation process makes students accountable to
each other on the teams. This can be reinforced by using videos which can be obtained
on the TBL Listserv (www.teambasedlearning.org) featuring students who discuss their
experience in a TBL class. USA has produced its own film (www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZgtacf1+3Ac) utilizing a professor experienced in TBL
demonstrating the method and that also includes interviews with her students. At USA
some professors have brought students in who have had favorable experiences with
TBL to share these with students taking a TBL class for the first time.

Related to Step 2, Michaelsen, Davidson, and Major (2014) based on their
experience and citations from others suggest that in TBL, the team formation and
management processes are particularly critical for two reasons. One reason is because
the primary objective is developing students’ higher-level thinking and problem-solving
skills, students will be faced with a number of highly challenging assignments. Thus,
the groups need to be fairly large (5-7 members), and intellectual assets and liabilities in
the class should be evenly allocated across groups in a class. The other reason is that
in TBL, groups must develop into effective self-managed teams. As a result, the team
formation and management process in TBL has two important dimensions. First, the
groups must be formed in a way minimizing potential disruptions from cohesive
subgroups (for example fraternities/sororities or athletic teams). Second, the
membership of the groups must remain stable over a long enough period for the team-
development process to fully develop. Therefore, structuring teams is the responsibility
of the instructor and students should stay in the same group for the entirety of the
semester (Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink, 2002). Students should not be allowed to form
their own teams. Self-selected teams result in more homogenous groups with unequal
distributions of member resources and less divergent thinking (Saldivar, 2013).

In forming TBL groups as previously discussed, two factors must be taken into
consideration when forming the groups are the assets and liabilities of the students, and
the potential for the emergence of sub-groups. As a result, the starting point in the
group formation process is gathering information about the specific student assets and
student liabilities that could potentially impact student performance in the class and the
potential for the emergence of subgroups or cliques (Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink, 2002).
For example, Saldivar (2013) gathers information from her institution’s student
information system, including cumulative grade point average (as a proxy measure of
academic ability), age, race/ethnicity, gender, classification (freshman to senior), full-
time or part-time course load, and town or borough of residence. Subsequently on the
first day of class she assigns a student self-evaluation concerning personal information
such as their self-esteem, self-discipline, motivation, and individual circumstances. She
then attempts to arrange groups that are balanced yet diverse not only related to
student assets and liabilities, but also demographics, circumstances, and experiences.
She explains to students that they cannot select their team just as the will be unable to
select co-workers, clients, or citizens they will interact with in a professional capacity.
Similarly, Dr. Norrell hands out a survey the first day of class, which queries students as
to their classification, age, gender, ethnicity, GPA, level of interest and past experience
with the subject matter, professional aspirations, involvement with sororities/fraternities,
and athletic teams. He then attempts to formulate balanced and diverse teams based
on this data.

As has been previously described the primary learning objective in TBL is to go
beyond simply dispensing content and focus on ensuring students have the opportunity
to practice using course concepts to solve problems. Although some time is spent on
ensuring students master the course content, the vast majority of class time is used for
team assignments that focus on using course content to solve problems students are
likely to face when they have to apply course material in real life.

Michaelsen, Davidson, and Major (2014) describe a typical TBL course as
organized into 5-7 major units, each of which begins with a pre-class individual
assignment (i.e. readings, Power Points, videos) that is designed to familiarize students
with the key concepts from the unit. For example, Dr. Norrell assigns readings from the
textbook and provides voiced over unit summary Power Point presentations, videos, and study guides. The first in-class activity for each unit is a Readiness Assurance Process (RAP), which consists of a short individual Readiness Assurance Test (iRAT) usually consisting of ten to twenty-five multiple choice questions over the key ideas from the pre-class assignment. Following the completion of the iRAT, students re-take the same Readiness Assurance Test as a team (rRAT) by coming to consensus on their answers. The use of the IF-At “scratch-off” answer sheet (www.epsteineducation.com/home/about) is highly recommended. This type of answer sheet enables students to receive both real-time feedback on each of their decisions and partial credit for partial knowledge. After reviewing their tRAT scores, if the team feels they can make valid arguments for an answer on which they failed to receive full credit, they then have the opportunity to write evidence-based appeals. The final step in the RAP is an instructor clarification review (usually very short and very specific) through which the instructor corrects any misperceptions of the material that may still remain, as indicated by team test performance and the appeals.

The final stage in the TBL instructional activity sequence for each unit of instruction is both the most important and the most challenging aspect of implementing TBL. It involves having groups use the concepts to solve some sort of a problem so that students have the opportunity to enrich their understanding of the concepts as they try to apply them. This gets back to the principle of “backward course design” in which the construction of these problems require some reverse engineering, emphasizing what you want the student to be able to do with the information acquired in the course over what you want the student to learn from the course.

Michaelsen, Davidson, and Major (2014) emphasize that two important elements in the application assignments are they must foster accountability and promote give-and-take discussion first within and then between teams. They must follow the concept of the “4S’s:

1. Assignments should always be designed around a problem that is Significant to the student
2. all students in the class should be working on the Same problem
3. students should be required to make a Specific choice
4. groups should Simultaneously support their choice

Saldivar (2013) summarizes the justification for the first three of the 4S’s as follows:

“The first S, a significant problem, is paramount: students must feel their course content is relevant and useful. Assignments that are perceived as busywork will likely result in students dedicating the minimum amount of effort required to score a satisfactory grade. The second S, a same problem is required because the efficacy of group assignments rests on whether the assignment promotes discussion both with a group and then between groups. Using the same problem allows for a common frame of reference that is the basis for meaningful discussions to occur among the teams in the class. The third S, a specific choice, is based on cognitive research that shows students must be challenged and directed to engage in higher-level thinking” (pg.153).
Michaelsen, Davidson, and Major (2014) emphasize that the fourth S, the opportunity for students to simultaneously report their choices, provides everyone with immediate feedback on how their choices compare to those from other teams and, most important, highlights difference among the set of choices. A second reason for simultaneous reporting is the team choice is clearly visible to the rest of the class, requiring teams to be accountable for, explain, and defend their position. By contrast, when teams report sequentially, the initial report sets a standard influencing all subsequent reporting, a phenomenon identified in social psychology as “answer drift”, or the tendency of later responding groups to adjust their answers to accommodate the emerging majority view, even if that majority’s response is wrong.

The fourth and final step necessary to implement TBL is the student-to-student peer evaluation. Saldivar (2013) suggests formative peer evaluations should be done periodically throughout the semester, at least twice (at midterm and end of term) and that this is absolutely necessary to enforce accountability for student preparation and interdependence between team members. She further elaborates on the process maintaining instructors should allocate a certain amount of points to each student and then have students distribute their points to their teammates with instructions on forced differentiation (meaning that students are not allowed to give each teammate the same amount of points). Here, instructors facilitate the process by providing students with prompts (in the form of key questions) and room for both numerical points and narratives. Michaelson’s (2002) prompts address individual preparation, contribution, respect for others’ ideas, and flexibility. Dr. Norrell further attempts to simulate a real world job evaluation by asking students to rate one another as to whether each member of their team should receive a merit raise, a cost of living raise, be placed on probation, or be discharged. The written rationales are then shared with the student being evaluated. Instructors should consider moderated anonymity and include their own feedback on student performance. Formative peer feedback should be done several times throughout the semester to allow students to correct inappropriate behaviors: these periodical evaluations should then inform the summative and final peer evaluation (which is confidential between student and the instructor). The final peer evaluation should make up at least 10% of a student’s final grade.

**Why Team-Based Learning**

Schleicher Deputy Director for Education and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Secretary-General has noted that jobs with routine cognitive skills such as memorizing and carrying out of simple procedures are disappearing and that the jobs of the 21rst Century will require non-routine cognitive skill involving the ability to think critically and creatively. Consequently, student outcomes in the 21rst Century need to focus on the acquisition of critical thinking skills. Over a decade ago Bligh (1998) observed that the prevailing teaching method in higher education emphasizing lecture is problematic because research consistently shows that critical thinking skills cannot be taught through lecture, since this instruction method places students in a passive role which does not require actual practice in solving problems and applying principles to new scenarios. Alternatively, dialectic teaching is the practice of logical discussion used when determining the truth of a theory or opinion (Michaelsen, Parmelee, McMahon, & Levine, 2008). TBL is a form of dialectic teaching grounded in constructivist educational
theory (Hrynchak & Baty, 2012). It is an example of a flipped classroom approach where the content is learned by independent study and the application occurs in the classroom (Moffett, 2014).

In today’s context, organizations are increasingly requiring employees to work in teams and to have good interpersonal skills, to process complex information, and to value individual differences (Baldwin, Bedell, & Johnson, 1997). TBL would appear to address these issues with its emphasis on diverse teams that are properly managed, individual and group preparedness and accountability, application of key course content, peer evaluations, and team development and interpersonal communication skills (Saldivar, 2013).

Since Michaelsen’s development of TBL there has been considerable research on the efficacy of this method. Haidet, Kubitz, and McCormack (2014) conducted a literature review of 40 articles published since 1996 representing a current “state of the art” for studies that describe the implementation of minimal or no modification from the methods described by Michaelsen and the TBL community. They concluded that there was “early evidence of positive educational outcomes in terms of knowledge acquisition, participation and engagement, and team performance.” However their review also revealed that “TBL challenges both learners and teachers to adopt a new paradigm of education, and some find this challenge difficult.”

In general, when knowledge acquisition was examined, most articles described improvements for students who experienced TBL, often with comparison of students at the low and high ends of the class, as defined by other academic measures. Whereas all students tended to benefit from TBL, students at the low end of the class usually benefitted the most. Team performance was consistently observed to be positively impacted, both through better performance of teams as compared to individuals on course exams and through improved communication and awareness within teams.

Most of the articles that examined learner participation or attendance did so through either direct comparison to or teacher recollection of attendance during lecture-based teaching, and these comparisons consistently suggested that learners demonstrated greater participation in TBL-based classrooms. Data on learner perceptions and attitudes toward teamwork suggested greater self-efficacy and higher interest. This was tempered by some studies finding lower student enjoyment or satisfaction. Measurements of learner impressions of pedagogical effectiveness and attitudes toward teamwork demonstrated both positive and negative perceptions. In the two studies that tracked learner performance in actual work environments, both suggest that learners were able successfully to transfer TBL classroom learning to improve their job performance. Finally, the studies that examined faculty suggested teachers encountered an initial increase in their workload as they learned the method and prepared course materials and a relatively steep learning curve as they gained experience using the method. In their discussion the researchers hypothesized that the reason some students and teacher struggle with the method, and view it as less enjoyable, less effective, and less efficient than lecture-based methods is team-based learning asks both teaches and learners to believe that practice with concepts rather than memorization of or telling about them in messy, uncertain application exercises is the key to actually being able to use such concepts in real life. Teachers who try TBL but do not actually adopt this practice-based paradigm risk lapsing into didacticism.
during the session, shutting down learners’ creativity, openness, and critical thinking. Learners who experience TBL but do not adopt the paradigm tend to feel cheated out of hearing more facts; thus, they feel they have gained less knowledge. To the extent that these assertions are true, the potential benefits of TBL (and many other active-learning strategies) will be tempered as both teachers and learners struggle with adapting to the method. The researchers called for more research at a higher level of rigor that goes beyond “Does it work?” query to providing evidence and stimulating conversations that will help the method to continue to evolve.

Research since 2013 includes a study by Frame et al., (2015) that addresses the effect of the order of experience with TBL compared to lecture. They found that students who experienced TBL in the fall and went back to traditional format in the spring reported improved perceptions of teams and preferred TBL format over traditional format more than students who experienced a traditional format followed by TBL. Students at both universities agreed the TBL format assists with critical-thinking, problem-solving, and examination preparation. Students also agreed that teams should consist of individuals with different personalities and learning styles.

Persky, Henry, and Campbell (2015) sought to determine the impact of personality traits on learning, particularly if introverted students were adversely impacted by a TBL environment. To date, extroversion has not been shown to be a strong influence on academic performance, but there is little data specific to cooperative learning environments. This study did not find a notable difference between introverts and extroverts in course performance. While introverts tended to rate the team experience lower, the association was weak. The researchers suggested in their discussion that one reason introverts may not be impacted negatively is that, in a true cooperative learning environment, there is time for individual focus and reflection prior to engaging in conversation, a situation which may favors introverted personalities.

To assess the effectiveness of TBL at the University of South Alabama, data comparison has been made on the classroom level, and project-wide comparisons of critical thinking, engagement, and skill in collaboration has been undertaken. Students from the TBL pilot classes were compared to randomly selected groups of students on the ETS Proficiency Profile, course engagement, and their self-reported (and/or peer reported) ratings of their ability to work in teams. Another project-wide aspect of the QEP concerns course withdrawal, student satisfaction based on course evaluations, and student grades. Along with analyzing outcomes, the project examined the fidelity of instructors to the TBL approach using as a guide the framework developed by Century, Rudnick, and Freeman (2010). The framework talks about the structurally critical components (Does the instructor know how to organize a TBL lesson, and is he or she aware of what belongs in it?), and instructionally critical components (Does the instructor use the pedagogical strategies that are part of TBL in class? Are the students engaged?). The TBL scorecard was used along with self-reported questionnaire for professors and students and a protocol for observing professors using the TBL materials and consultants.

First year data analysis suggested the goals of the project were being met. Major findings included: 82% of SLO Critical Thinking Mastery Targets were met. Higher post-test scores were achieved with statistically significant differences in evaluating, analyzing, creating, and collaboration constructs as compared to pre-test scores.
Higher percentile scores for students enrolled in Team USA courses as compared to students who were not, and a statistically significant difference constructs found on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (Induction, Deduction, Analysis, Inference, Evaluation, Interpretation, and Explanation). There were 50% fewer students withdrawals form Team USA courses, and a statistically significant difference in withdrawals as compared to non-Team USA courses. Students earned significantly higher grades for Team USA courses, with more A’s and B’s, and fewer D’s and F’s in TBL courses as compared to non-Team USA courses.

References


Team-Based Learning at USA_2. (2013). Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZgtacf1+3Ac](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZgtacf1+3Ac).


Looking at the Whole Picture:
A Word Might Not be What it Appears at First Glance

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Today's teachers are faced with a problem much greater than that of their own teachers. While classrooms have most likely always had some children with limited English it has reached a new peak during the twenty first century. In the mid to late 1800's, there were children of immigrants from European countries, Native American children as well as others in the schools. Those children struggled but since a higher education was not as much in demand as today, many became farmers, store keepers and laborers. At that time period, many people were just doing the best they could to survive and feed their families. The majority of the people would most likely have been rated as successful for their life period. As time goes on, education has become more in demand and is becoming more important each day. Today a person must have an education if he or she is going to be able to work at almost any legal job. (Khisty, 1995, 2001; Khisty & Chval 2002)

Students from the elementary grades to the university levels often have difficulties with state tests. It is believed that much of problem lies in the lack of vocabulary. In this work, the authors are going to try to point out some of the many factors today which make it imperative that students learn several types of vocabulary. Some of the types but not limited to are: 1) formal, 2) professional, 3) content, 4) multi uses for the words, and 5) even informal or regional.

Vocabulary is one of the greatest challenges facing the classroom teacher. As education has become more and more important it has seen many changes. Teachers might have as many as ten or twelve different languages in a single class. Vocabulary is not a new challenge or even something different. It is one which teachers have tried through the years to provide techniques to benefit their students. All too often, teachers are almost programed to only teach computations skills in the early grades and vocabulary skills are to be left in the language arts part of the school day. Mathematics classroom are often thought to be very far down the difficulty list but in reality it is near the top.

Teachers must have a great command of language in order to be able to guide his/her students to have knowledge or power of words to be successful in today's society and world. Vocabulary is part of communication and is everywhere. Students are faced with vocabulary or communication (the hearing and the seeing of words) not only hour after hour in the classroom but every waking hour of their day. As simple as going to purchase a can of green beans, one must use word power. True that can might have a picture to aid you but you just have a small amount of the information concerning those green beans.

When students are not able to connect the dots between the written or spoken word and its meaning things begin to happen. This occurs everywhere but is especially noticed in the classroom. Discipline problems begin to occur when the student is only hearing a lot of sounds which have no meaning or seeing letters on a page which also has no meaning. After a while, the student's thoughts will drift to place in which he/she can have meaning. Another thing which might appear is that the student is very unhappy. The teacher might understand the reason but can quickly tell the student is very unhappy or even have pretend illnesses. The pretend illnesses are very real to the student who is sub-consciously trying to avoid a place where there are so many unknowns.
While teachers look at students as individuals and try to teach each student. It is a different story on state and standardized tests. State and standardized tests are ‘said’ to be bias-free but who is doing the evaluating.

Mathematics tests are very complex as it is much more than just doing computations. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) states repeatedly that language is one of the most important factors for students in order to be able to do problem solving.

Researchers have found for a number of years that there exists a ‘Language of Mathematics’ and it exists separate to the everyday conversational language. Words are complex and often have multi meanings. Words do not always translate one word for a single meaning. Such as in Spanish, the word cuarto can mean a quarter or it could mean a room and this just dependent on the context it is being used. (Cuevas, 1984, Khisty, 1999, Moschohkvich, 2000, 2002) In mathematics a bug is often something had is creating a problem thus keeping one from arriving at the desired answer. But a bug might be a critter like this or it might be something you say when you are ill.

Another word which in math is so very different in other contexts is table. It might be a picnic table, a game ball table, or even a function table:

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These are just a few examples which create confusion in the math classroom. Another concern or factor to add more depth to this problem is that many times the students are very immature in their language studies to be able to use any context clues.

Cueva in 1984, created this model to help us see the complexity of the language and mathematics. This is still a very good example today.
By analyzing a question on the released state test for mathematics we can quickly see the need students have for a better understanding of the language. Often there may be as many as eight to ten unfamiliar or confusing words in a simple two sentence problem. With that large number of words, it is not wonder that the students are not able to master the problems. The sample question below is from the Texas STAAR released third grade for 2014.
**Explanation:** Children should understand that there are a total of 42 feathers in the box. Sophia wants to divide the feathers into 7 boxes but each box must have the same number of feathers. So we are dividing 42 into 7 which is a total of 6 feathers per box. Thus the correct answer is A. Answers B and D would not work because we are adding/subtracting 42 feathers by 7 giving us a different number of feathers. C would not work because we are multiplying the number of feathers by 7 giving us 294 feathers. Our goal is to put 42 feathers in 7 boxes which gives us a total of 6 feathers in each box. Answer A shows 42 divided by 7.
These tests or activities are written in English but many students live in a household where nonstandard English is spoken or the home language is very limited due to the little if any education on the part of the parents. Another situation might even be that there is another language spoken in the home. Still another situation is it is multi languages or a blend of several languages.

When looking at the problems with some of the testing we will compare when there is only a single language and when there is a second one.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>First or only language</th>
<th>Second language</th>
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<td>Age, testing level and language are approximately the same and easy to put into a specific order.</td>
<td>Age, testing level and language are not same level. One cannot put all eight years old in one group. Student A has had one year of English, while student B has had three years and student C has had one week. It is very evident that their command of the language is not even near the same ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is able to speak with easy as he/she is not being required to translate in his/her mind when speaking</td>
<td>The students' speaking requires much more thought. Many times he/she has to translate in his/her mind to the native language to be sure he/she is conveying the desired thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students understands and able to use more than one meaning for a word</td>
<td>The student usually is only able to use first definition of word or specific context. He/She does not have the expertise of second, third and even fourth meanings of words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student understands humor in words</td>
<td>The student does not understand humor in words.</td>
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</table>


The above writings are just a very tiny glance into the concerns and issues facing students today as they begin their academic career. The path is not an easy one but if they do not have the power of words, each of the student’s journey will be much more difficult. The researchers have many more hours of research and study which will be share in future papers.

References


“Climate Change” or “Changing Climate”?  
Part One of a Series

Lem Londos Railsback,  
Mary Esther Armistead,  
Independent Scholars
This presentation is the first of a series on the enormous challenge facing us and our children and our grandchildren and generations beyond. This series has to do with our abused planet and how we have already significantly damaged it. The aim of the series is twofold: (1) to acquaint our audience with up-to-date, vetted information on the crisis and (2) to suggest ways in which our audience, as committed individuals and as members of effective groups can operate to combat meaningfully the crisis.

**Our Immediate Purpose**

Our purpose today is to seriously assist you in making a serious determination. We intend to provide you with relevant information on the question of whether we have, as most of our scientists claim, a serious, perhaps even debilitating “climate change” at hand facing our planet, or a simple, predictable, non-serious “changing of our climate.” A very select, possibly intertwined few, including several United States congresspersons and multimillionaires and certain major corporations claim that the “changes” that are occurring are simply the regular variations of weather that our planet goes through every so often in cycles. After helping us review the ramifications of our particular investigations into the actions and words of those United States congresspersons and multimillionaires and certain major corporations, you should be better equipped to answer the major question of this discussion today. That major question will be “Are all of those congresspersons, multimillionaires, and certain major corporations really that damn stupid or that damn ignorant or might there be a monetary motivation prompting their assertions?” If it turns out that those congresspersons, multimillionaires, and certain corporations are absolutely, most assuredly that stupid or that ignorant, then our republic is in genuine, serious, undeniable jeopardy! If it turns out that those congresspersons, multimillionaires, and certain corporations are mouthing their mouthings in order to gain some sort of sorted monetary gain, then our republic is in genuine, serious, undeniable jeopardy! In short, while the scientific proofs remain compelling, the cracked nuts stay cracked and loud. You, today, can be your own judge in determining the validity of the reality of either “climate change” or “changing climate. You may also be able to determine whether or not raw, unredeemable stupidity, runaway ignoring of scientific proof—i.e., “ignorance,” massive flows of cash, or any combination of these enters into any motivation for disbelief.

**Signs of the Apocalypse?**

- How many of you have heard or read about our planet’s “climate change?"
- How many of you believe that the “climate change” is true?
- How many of you have heard or read about the melting of the Arctic ice cap and the dying off of the polar bears?
- How many of you believe that the Arctic ice cap really is melting and that polar bears are losing their natural homes?
- How many of you have heard or read the media reports about the villagers in Alaska whose homes were inundated with the rising waters from the melting Arctic cap?
- How many of you believe the media reports about the villagers in Alaska whose homes were inundated with the rising waters from the melting Arctic cap?
- How many of you have heard or read about the severe droughts that are plaguing California and other western states?
- How many of you believe that the media reports are true about the severe droughts that are plaguing California and other western states?
How many of you have heard or read the media reports on the many, many nearly-out-of-control fires in the drought-stricken western states?
How many of you believe the media reports that you have heard on the many, many nearly-out-of-control fires in the drought-stricken western states?
How many of you have heard or read the media reports about the rise in skin cancer and other intense-sunshine-induced illnesses over the last decade or so?
How many of you believe the media reports about the rise in skin cancer and other intense-sunshine-induced illnesses over the last decade or so?
How many of you have heard about or read about our ionosphere that is from thirty-seven to six hundred, twenty miles above and completely around our planet?
How many of you believe that our planet is surrounded by our ionosphere, a layer of atmosphere that has been ionized by the sun’s radiation and that ionized layer prevents too much sunshine from hitting the surface of our planet?
How many of you have heard or read the media reports of a hole that has formed in our ionosphere?
How many of you believe the media reports of a hole that has formed in our ionosphere?
How many of you have heard or read the media reports of severely increased incidents of intense-sunshine-induced illnesses in northwestern Europe and the northeastern United States?
How many of you believe the media reports of severely increased incidents of intense-sunshine-induced illnesses in northwestern Europe and the northeastern United States?

A Quick Consideration of Mediated Scientific Information Versus Traditional Belief
The March 2015 issue of the National Geographic magazine listed itself as “he Age of Disbelief: Skepticism About Science is on the Rise, and Polarization is the Order of the Day. What’s Causing Reasonable People to Doubt Reason?”1 The issue’s front cover listed the following “disbeliefs.”

Climate change does not exist.
Evolution never happened.
The moon landing was fake.
Vaccinations can lead to autism.
Genetically modified food is evil.

As you can surmise, to fully consider each and all of these notions would take us a great deal of time. To consider fully just one of these questions would take a considerable bite out of our time. As a consequence of the complexity of each of these questions and in light of the enormous time and space that would be devoured in full consideration of any or all of the questions, we will deal with only one in this paper. In other words, because our space herein is limited, we will take for consideration only one of the issues for examination: we will select only the question of “climate change.”

As many of you probably noticed, not everyone in our audience—nor in our respective neighborhoods back home—are fully aware of our current common crisis of climate change. Nor are we aware of all of the implications that may “spill out” from that crisis, if it is, indeed, real.
A Long, Long History of Warnings

Many scientific efforts toward understanding our climate and physical environment have been mobilized. In 1896, Svante Arrhenius’s “On the Influence of Carbonic Acid in the Air upon the Temperature of the Ground” calculated the number of degrees Celsius in change of the earth’s temperature might occur if certain amounts of carbonic acid were released by volcanoes and other sources. In 1938, G.S. Callendar investigated “The Artificial Production of Carbon Dioxide and Its Influence on Temperature.” Dozens of additional articles followed through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. And, of course, the “leaders” of the United States were aware of at least some of the studies. As far back as 1965, data had already been collected and analyzed to form a specific conclusion, as President Lyndon Baines Johnson explained, “This generation has altered the composition of the atmosphere on a global scale through…a steady increase in carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels.” Even so, no continuing massive legislative effort has ever been launched to fix the problem of climate change.

NAY—sayers

Although 10,883 scientific studies have agreed that climate change caused by human activity is true, still no major legislative effort toward alleviating that problem has been initiated or is even in the planning stage. (Amazingly, Senator John McCain, co-author with Senator Joe Lieberman of the Climate Stewardship Acts of 2003, 2005, and 2007, has been, by 2010, “retreating fast from support for his own bill and insisting that he had never backed capping carbon emissions ‘at a certain level.’” Even worse than the absence of any major effort to alleviate the warming climate, national leaders like Marco Rubio of Florida, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, Roger Wiker of Mississippi, Bob Pittenger of North Carolina, and others speak out against the notion of climate change caused by human activity. In point of fact, over fifty-six per cent of congressional Republicans deny that climate change is caused by human activity. With fifty-four senators and two hundred, forty-seven representatives, that fifty-six per cent amounts to one hundred, sixty-eight nay-sayers. If the cause of all of this nay-saying were simple stupidity, then there must be a whole lot of stupid American citizens in those one hundred, sixty-eight districts. Amazingly, those Republican nay-sayers command a lot of clout, and they represent about one-third of the United State! Albert Einstein once asserted that “Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I’m not sure about the universe,” and this new staggering number of stupid American citizens seems to bear out the validity of Einstein’s observation. However, such a large number of stupid American citizens violates the regular multivariate statistical percentage of genetically stupid children born usually to American citizens. Consequently, the notion that raw stupidity accounts for climate change denying by so many Americans must, by multivariate statistical analysis, be discarded. One alternative to the stupefying notion of so many stupid Americans is just plain and simple old-fashioned ignorance. The term “ignorance” derives from “an ignoring of the proof: hence, “to ignore” is “to be ignorant.” And, of course, in a perfect society, in a perfect world, the ignorance person may review the evidence and, on the basis of that newly found knowledge, determine that the evidence is true and, therefore, should dictate a different behavior of belief more attuned to the evidence. But, of course, the ignorant do no always recant in the face of new evidence. For example, as one of Lem’s friends who had visited the creationist
museum in Kentucky explained, a man-sized replica of Adam, a female-sized replica of Eve and an over-sized replica of the Snake are presented in The Garden to illustrate the Genesis story. Lem’s friend also saw a dinosaur close to the Beginning display with a leather saddle on its back. With reflection, the educated American citizen can conclude that if humans existed alongside the dinosaurs, then we would have just worked our way out of the ooze and, upon reaching land, scampered around always under the protection of the low-lying leaves of short plants so that the dinosaurs could not see us. It is difficult to believe, in the face of so many, many, many scientific studies and university lectures and secondary school textbooks to believe in the co-existence of humans with dinosaurs. And to believe that someone way, way back there already knew how to work leather well enough to build a saddle and to believe that a single fierce dinosaur would have permitted a human to harness the dinosaur with a saddle for riding is beyond the pell. Finally, to believe that a human, still scrambling under the low leaves to stay out of sight, would have been skillful enough and brave enough to crawl up the fierce dinosaur’s neck to place and attach the saddle is really stretching the imagination. And yet, an estimated “1.9 million people had visited the museum” by August 2013."10 Many creationists apparently believe that to simply read the Christian bible and to pray will yield all of the knowledge and understanding necessary to live the good life. However, they probably do not understand that Paul was a Jew born into a well-to-do Jewish family in Tarsu in the southeast part of modern Turkey. Initially, he “had a Jewish education, a Jewish way of life and abided by the Law of Moses. But he was brought up outside of his homeland and was also at home in Greek culture, fluent in Greek, and possessed great understanding of the Greek and Roman cultural traditions.”11 Enjoying Roman citizenship, expert in Greek language and literature, master of writing in Greek, and travelling all around the Mediterranean, Paul wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the Christian bible. As a highly literate writer in Greek, he used the burning bush as the traditional Greek literary metaphor for an “insight” and the apple as the traditional Greek literary metaphor for “knowledge.” However, a creationist who is unaware of Paul’s proficiency in the Greek language and his use of that language’s standard metaphors would likely believe that a bush really spontaneously burst out into great blazes as Paul walked by. The same creationist would also believe that eating an apple would lead to Adam and Eve’s exile from The Garden. Consequently, the creationist’s ignorance/ignoring of genuine historical records and accounts would produce the creationist’s literal reading of his/her/its bible. And, of course, even if the creationist were provided with multiple records and accounts of actual history, the creationist would probably retain her/his/its literal interpretation. Such ignoring, such ignorance is, therefore, self-inflicted. It is neither stupidity at work nor the regular ignorance at work; rather, it is a self-inflicted avoidance!

The Problem Persists
In spite of 10,993 scientific studies in agreement, “LESS THAN HALF of all Americans believe the Earth is warming because humans are burning fossil fuels.”12 And all those nay-sayers are not content to simply deny the phenomenon of climate change. According to Oreskes,

In recent decades, of course, the Republicans have lurched rightward on many topics, and they now regularly attack scientific
findings that threaten their political platforms. In the 1980’s, they generally questioned evidence of acid rain, in the 1990’s, they went after ozone science, and in this century, they have launched fierce attacks not just on climate science but, in the most personal fashion imaginable, on climate scientists.\textsuperscript{13}

One of the top climate scientists who have been viciously attacked is Ben Santer. What the deniers have committed toward him is, at least, unsavory, undeserved, and dishonest. Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway describe the indecent attacks on Ben.

He’s one of the world’s most distinguished scientists—the recipient of a 1998 MacArthur “genius” award and numerous prizes and distinctions from his employer—the U.S. Department of Energy—because he has done more than just about anyone to prove the human causes of global warming. Ever since his graduate work in the mid-1980’s, he has been trying to understand how the Earth’s climate works, and whether we can say for sure that human activities are changing it. He has shown that the answer to that question is yes.

Santer is an atmospheric scientist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory’s Model Diagnosis and Intercomparison Project, an enormous international project to store the results of climate models from around the globe, distribute them to other researchers, and compare the models both with real-world data and with each other. Over the past twenty years, he and his colleagues have shown that our planet is warming—and in just the way you would expect if greenhouse gases were the cause.\textsuperscript{14}

As Oreskes and Conway carefully explain, our atmosphere has two “layers,” and the “line” between those two layers is changing. As they describe the layers, the troposphere is the blanket closest to the Earth’s surface, and it is warmer. The top layer is the stratosphere which is thinner and colder that the troposphere.

In fact, because the boundary between these two atmospheric layers is in part defined by temperature, that boundary is now moving upward. In other words, the whole structure of our atmosphere is changing. The results are impossible to explain if the Sun were the culprit. It shows that the changes we are seeing in our climate are not natural.\textsuperscript{15}

Even as Santer defended his work and that of his associates, the deniers continued their attack. Even when Brittany Greenquist reported that “As Many As 690 Species Went Extinct This Week,”\textsuperscript{16} the deniers continued their deluge of opposition. Even after President Obama had declared that climate change was the most serious challenge facing America and even after Pope Francis had issued his Encyclica on the reality of
climate change and the responsibility of all citizens of the world to pitch in to do whatever they could to change the situation, the deniers continued their deluge of opposition.

The predicted loss very soon of the polar bear from the melting of the Arctic glaciers, the changed temperature of the ocean water from the melting glaciers of Greenland, the massive reduction of woodlands of the Southwest of the United States into “weeds and shrubs” by 2100, A.D.,¹⁷ the prediction by Martin De Bourmont and Dayton Martindale in their “Coming of Age in the Age of Extinction”¹⁸ of the various results—including but not limited to the prompting of massive pre-traumatic stress disorder throughout the population, and many other warnings have registered no apparent effect on the loud and shrill denying and debunking of the climate change crisis. Similarly, the recent droughts and massive fires in the western states, the scarcity of water in California, the loss of over sixty million acres of pine trees in the west from New Mexico to British Columbia,¹⁹ the rising of the ocean into Alaskan settlements, the increased frequency and ferocity of tornados and floods and hurricanes and the unusually hot days across the country have no effect on the deniers’ mood or vicious actions. After all, according to Seamus McGraw, “More Americans believe in angels than in climate change!”²⁰ Besides, the COP21 (“Conference of Parties) with representatives from nearly two hundred countries attempting to address the calamity of manmade climate change will meet in Paris this year, but this group has been meeting “for over two decades.”²¹ Nonetheless, the U.S. Naval Station Norfolk, headquarters of the Atlantic Fleet, prepares to build much higher piers than their earlier thirteen that are immersed in sea water at high tide; however, in none of the requests to congress for funding of the new piers is the phrase “climate change” used. The writers of the funding requests very carefully insure that the phrase is never used; after all, if the phrase “climate change” were to appear in the proposals, so many of the congressional deniers (Remember the “fifty-six per cent” of congressional Republicans or one hundred, sixty-eight members?) would immediately condemn and deny the requests. Such denying in the face of the fact that “Climate change is the defining issue of our age. It’s this simple: if we fail to shrink fossil fuel emissions, our planet as we know it will not survive!”²² is simply amazing. “Why, oh why, then?” we can ask “How in the world did we get to this point as a country known as the “land of the free and the home of the brave?

Besides Stupidity, Ignorance, and Self-Inflicted Ignorance,
What Might Be Another Motivation for the Denial By So Many “Leaders” of the Phenomenon of “Climate Change?”

Earlier in this presentation, we indicated that—contrary to nearly eleven thousand scientific studies reporting that climate change is real and is happening even this very minute, a very large number of American citizens were/are denying that climate change is occurring. Also earlier in this presentation, we questioned briefly whether just plain genetic stupidity could account for all of the denying. With multivariate statistics, we assuredly ruled out genetic stupidity as the cause: we asserted that there just could not be that many genetically stupid American citizens—or, at least, we hoped not. Then, we considered ignorance—that is, the ign-or-ing of proven fact. And we asserted, or, rather, we hoped that there just could not be that many Americans who were genuinely
ignorant. Finally, we considered what we termed as the self-inflicted igno-rance of American citizens cocooned in their childhood/familial beliefs. In our considerations, we decided that there probably is a statistically significant body of current genuinely stupid citizens in our country today. We also concluded from the evidence that there must be a monumentally gigantic number of ignorant citizens in our country. And we surmised that there must be a large body of citizens who are victims of self-inflicted ignorance. But with the massive, massive, massive body of climate change deniers, some of whom are not genetically stupid and others who are not totally ignorant and others who are not totally cocooned in their childhood beliefs and others who may actually possess mixtures of two or more of the maladies, what might be the root of so much denying across the entire country? As scientists, as scholars, as commonsensical adults, as adults who possess sound practical judgment independent of specialized knowledge or training, we decided to search for possible causes besides stupidity, ignorance, and self-inflicted ignorance. And—BOY!!!—did we find it.

The Root of All Evil, or, At Least, the Love of It

In his “down home” vein, Jim Hightower, the former Texas Commissioner of Agriculture and now the editor of The Hightower LOWDOWN sums up the many veins/tributaries that flow into the denying cause/giant river. He briefly and succinctly summarizes the various historical contributors.

Consider just a few of these changes that have skewed America’s balancer of power and wealth almost totally in their favor, largely by throttling the dreams and democratic possibilities of the majority of people—i.e., the poor and the endangered middle class:

- Citizens United
- NAFTA/CAFTA
- Voter suppression laws
- Perpetual war
- Tattered safety net
- Too Big To Fail
- Too Big To Jail
- Broken windows policing
- Legalized tax dodging
- Crumbling infrastructure
- Corporatized higher ed
- Debtor’s prisons
- Payday loan schemes
- Stop and frisk
- Privatization
- Police militarization
- Ban on unions
- The Patriot Act
- Jobless recovery
- Surveillance society
- Poverty wages
- Jailing minority youth
- Deregulation
- Mandatory arbitration
- Exorbitant student loan rates
- The attack on reproductive rights

Hightower’s remarkable insights and understandings provide a broad, society-wide “picture” of the numerous contributors to the current state of life for most American citizens today.

As we searched more widely and more deeply, we found even more startling and alarming information on why the denying of climate change is/was so pervasive. In point of fact, we found that certain individuals known in certain quarters as “scientists” actually “sell,” more or less, their skills and reputations in order to question, to deny, to
debunk, to pettifog, to lead astray, to mislead, to actually provide special concoctions favorable to their employers/payers/sponsors/bosses, and, even, to viciously attack the genuine scientists whose warnings about climate change number nearly eleven thousand. Some of these alleged “scientists” stay in the dark while others grab the public spotlight at every opportunity. The number of these “scientists” is so great, and their interlocking directorates and similar connections are so numerous that it will take our “‘CLIMATE CHANGE’ or ‘CHANGING CLIMATE?’ PART TWO OF A SERIES” to unmask them. Until then, please take Lem’s thoughtful opinion, voiced many times to many individuals, to heart. Lem proposes that:

If the police are going to arrest a nineteen-years-old unmarried female who walks down the street for money so that she can take milk home to her newly born child, then perhaps the police should also arrest the special “scientists,” both the unknown and the known, and the congressional crowd for effectively performing practically the same service as the nineteen-years-old female. At least, she is exerting a considerable expenditure of energy. In contrast, the others sit in their air-conditioned offices, eat and drink at leisure at special private meeting sites and do little expenditure of energy except to extend the taking/whoring hand frequently.

After all, for certain “scientists” to actually “sell,” more or less, their skills and reputations in order to question, to deny, to debunk, to pettifog, to lead astray, to mislead, to actually provide special concoctions favorable to their bosses, sponsors, payers, and employers and, even, to viciously attack the genuine scientists whose warnings about climate change—THE BIGGEST PUBLIC ISSUE OF OUR TIME—is, in a sense, the same type of activity as the walking of the street to get money. To keep an informed perspective, one can remember that the walking the street for money by the nineteen-years-female may lead both her and her child into harm’s way. The walking the street by the money-taking “scientists” may very well hurt us all and within a short time.

In his Storms of My Grandchildren, James Hansen summed up the current American situation on climate change quite well.

I believe the biggest problem to solving global warming is the role of money in politics, the undue sway of special interests...Policy decisions are being deliberated every day by those without full knowledge of the science, and then with intentional misinformation spawned by special interests.24

After using Hansen’s paragraph to initiate his Chapter 18 in 50 popular beliefs that people think are true, Guy P. Harrison addresses the climate change challenge. He warns that

Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and Glenn Beck are not climate science experts—or even close—so it makes no sense that they
should be trusted as leading minds on this issue by millions of Americans...It’s even worse to rely on professional rabble rousers of radio and TV for the final word on important scientific matters. Have no doubts, their primary concern is advertising revenue, certainly not scientific accuracy or even the state of our planet. They succeed through controversy, mistrust, and division. They are not scientists. They do not do science. They do not know science. Scientists know science.25

Harrison’s volume addresses several enormously important issues; however, since climate change remains as the primary focus of this statement, then only his warnings relating to climate change are offered here.

Our Just Deserts

In a very comprehensive, inclusive, scientific, and startling volume, Elizabeth Kolbert predicts and describe The Sixth Extinction.26 With great detail, she reviews the derivation of certain creatures—e.g., amphibians, mastodons, ammonites, and corals—and their respective methods of/for survival through gigantic environmental changes. Some of their respective methods worked for some species; for others, their respective methods did not. Her large body of examinations and conclusions lead her to predict the coming sixth extinction--ours. And our extinction will occur as a result of our own actions—e.g., the warming of our atmosphere from our burning fossil fuels. In her view, that extinction has already begun. In the expansively considered conclusion of Lem, the senior author of this statement, that sixth extinction will be richly deserved by all of us. After all, we have let a few genetically deficient citizens, several herds of ignorant citizens—Can you just imagine, one hundred, sixty-eight members of congress and all of the citizens living within their respective districts? And they are not the only ones; they just represent one of the political parties.—and a large portion of the general population with self-inflicted ignorance, along with scores and scores of soliciting pseudo-scientists to determine the destiny of all of us in regard to climate change. In other words, as a society, WE PROBABLY DESERVE THE COMING EXTINCTION!!! BUT OUR CHILDREN DON'T! OUR GRANDCHILDREN DON'T!! AND THE FOLLOWING GENERATIONS DON'T!!!

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Beyond History: Incorporating Hispanic Literature in the United States into Cultural Classroom

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Abstract

In recent decades, the teaching of culture has assumed an increasingly important role in the foreign language classroom although language instructors may not agree unanimously as to how much culture should be integrated into a language curriculum and how to teach it. In conjunction with other language associations around the nation, the standards task force of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has identified five goal areas that encompass the diverse purposes of foreign language acquisition. ACTFL advocates that the United States must educate students to be linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. For this purpose, ACTFL has set forth standards which re-affirm that, through the study of other languages, students can gain knowledge and understanding of the cultures of the target language. Further, the ACTFL emphasizes that students cannot truly master a language until they have mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs.

The National Center for Cultural Competence defines culture as an “integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting and roles, relations and expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations” (Goode, Sockalingam, Brown, & Jones, 2000). Thus, culture is a broad concept that is inherently tied to many of the linguistic concepts taught in second language classes (Peterson & Coltrane 2003). In the language classroom, the teaching of culture can be twofold: 1. teaching students to recognize and/or interpret major geographical features, historical events, holidays, popular culture, and aesthetic components of the target culture; 2. teaching students to interpret active everyday cultural patterns such as greetings, eating, shopping, and to act appropriately in everyday situations, includes communication styles, verbal and non-verbal language symbols, cultural norms, behavior patterns, etc. Language teachers have to make decisions between cultural materials which can range from supplying students with identifiable cognitive facts about a culture to bringing about changes in their desire or ability to value people who think, dress, or act differently from themselves, and thus, an appreciation for differences. No matter what cultural materials selected, culture should be presented in conjunction with related thematic units and/or closely related vocabulary and grammar content, and can be easily integrated in reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities.

In the early years, literacy learning was a major focus of instruction, and literature often served as the primary vehicle for that instruction (Isom 1997). By selecting appropriate literary texts rich in cultural details, instructors not only offer an opportunity to extend children’s general cultural knowledge as they become more literate, but also allow them to appreciate the uniqueness of different groups since these texts are unique to a particular culture and portray a culture’s customs, characteristics, and values. Further, instructors can help achieve cultural understanding by exposing students to the study and enjoyment of literature and honor students of a cultural group by sharing books about their culture in the classroom. Cultural readings also offer a meaningful entry into the study of content topics, especially geography, history and the other social studies, and provide excellent opportunities for students to develop critical thinking.
through analyzing themes, values and beliefs, as well as for evaluating the authenticity of the setting, conflicts, and characterization (Norton, 1995). By using reading and writing activities to analyze, classify, apply, and evaluate literature themes and concepts, students can develop and expand their critical thinking abilities.

In recent decades, the Hispanic population in the United States has shown a dramatic increase as a result of climbing birth rates and increased immigration. As cultural study becomes a part of the regular language arts program in the United States, the program can be strengthened by infusing Hispanic literature to enhance children’s self-esteem, help develop pride in their own heritage, and increase their knowledge of and respect for other cultural heritages. Two good examples of children’s books in the category of cultural studies are *The Moon Was at a Fiesta* (Gollub, 1994) and *The Most Beautiful Place in the World* (Cameron, 1996). The first book is a fantasy tale rich with cultural symbolism that depicts inhabitants in a small town in rural Mexico and examines the concept of the traditional “fiesta”. The second book is a touching story about a young boy, Juan, who lives with his grandmother in the mountains of Guatemala. Juan shines shoes to make a living while his grandmother sells *arroz con leche* (rice with milk) in a market. The story describes the native foods and customs of Guatemala, and incorporates culturally specific vocabulary, syntax, and dialect. The book encourages children to be courageous and stand up for their rights. In addition to providing a morale boost, both stories are fun to read and rich in cultural images.

Since literature is considered to be one of the major aesthetic components of cultural studies, it is necessary to include this element in the curriculum. One can learn about culture through the ways individual writers mark significant life events related to birth, marriage, death, values, and individual and communal thoughts and experiences. Overall, books reflecting Hispanic culture often have a common theme emphasizing the importance of the family and its provision of security, care, and support. While the father is often portrayed as the authority figure in the family, strong resourceful women are also featured. Although ethnic and cultural diversity and uniqueness figure among main characteristics of the Hispanic world, recurrent themes in Hispanic literature can still be traced as authors often discuss family histories and issues, laude extended family support, examine the role of religion, mark significant life events, and examine the connections across political borders among other topics.

In recent decades, the presence of Hispanics/Latinos has become more visible on the American public scene. In popular culture, mass-media, politics, sports, arts, and other spectrums, Hispanics/Latinos have achieved essential roles. Through the reading of Hispanic immigration experience one can learn the socio-historical development of the Latino community within the United States as well as the pursuit of their identity within the cultural and geographic borders of a multicultural nation. The theme of immigrating to America makes for an interesting pathway for discussing and researching Hispanics’ experiences. Literary activities connected to these themes might include the use of text sets that show some of the political and economic reasons why people come to the United States. Three appealing stories about immigrants from Cuba are *How Many Days to America? A Thanksgiving Story* (Bunting, 1992), which is about a family’s journey by boat to Miami in order to escape political oppression, and *Children of Flight Pedro Pan* (Acierno, 1994), a story with a similar theme, except that all travelers are children on a Miami-bound flight. While *How Many Days to America*
reflects eagerness and expectation of freedom from the perspective of a little girl, *Children of Flight Pedro Pan* explores the experiences of a brother and sister during their first year in Miami after boarding the flight Pedro Pan (Peter Pan). Although the title implies the children's dream of living in the United States – the wonderland, nevertheless, circumstances force them to undergo the emotional trials of being in a new land without the comforts of their parents and their familiar culture. *Lupita Mañana* (Beatty, 1992) is about a 13-year-old girl and her brother, Salvador, who flee from their Mexican home after the death of their father in order to find work to support their family. They immigrate illegally to California. The novel reflects conflicts of several natures: 1) Conflict between a typical rural Mexican family and their deplorable living circumstances, 2) Conflict between Lupita’s desire to stay in Mexico and being forced to leave for a new and unknown environment, 3) Conflict between illegal immigrants such as Lupita and Salvador and those who help them to immigrate illegally into the United States and exploit them, 4) Conflict between the illegal immigrants and their challenges in adjusting to a new culture, language, discrimination, and the process of acculturization. The book offers a great variety of discussion topics ranging from cultural, socioeconomic, political, and linguistic perspectives to immigration policies.

In contrast to the illegal immigration issue, given the institutional relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico, Dorros’s *Abuela* (1991) presents a different perspective of the immigration story and illustrates the joy of a New York City child whose grandmother emigrated from Puerto Rico many years earlier. The grandmother uses many Spanish words in her conversation with her granddaughter as they enjoy an imaginary flight throughout New York City. Born in New York, literary award winner of Puerto Rican descent, Nicholasa Mohr, depicts her life in the Bronx growing up in a household of six older brothers, and being part of a family who still held old-fashioned Puerto Rican concepts about male and female roles. Many of the characters in Nicolasa Mohr’s books, such as in *Nilda* (1973), *Felita* (1979), and *Going Home* (1989), are children of Puerto Rican heritage who have to face unrelenting prejudice and gender inequality, learn about their cultural heritage, and ultimately find peace within themselves. Each of these books builds positive self-esteem and provides some insight into the Hispanic experience. From different sociopolitical circumstances, these stories offer substantial knowledge and understanding about immigration and the process of assimilating into a new country.

As follow up classroom activities, students can be encouraged to design research questions or explore subtopics. For a research report on immigrants, students can answer questions such as: How many immigrants enter the United States each year and from where do they come? What are the major immigration ports to the United States? How have immigration laws changed during the 20th century? What is your family’s immigration history? Why is it important for people to be able to immigrate to other countries? What do immigrants have to face in the new country? etc. As students engage in conversation and argue about characters’ actions, they share about thoughts and feelings the book stimulates while at the same time discover literature’s potential to illuminate life lessons (Roser & Martinez, 1995).

As one of the fastest growing predominant youth groups in the U.S., many Hispanic youths have now been attending colleges and enrolling in Spanish classes of different subject matters to seek improvement of their language proficiency and to acquire a
more in-depth understanding of their heritage culture. To satisfy the growing demand of
this student population, in addition to regular language skill build-up classes such as
grammar and composition, a great variety of culture courses, to name a few, Latino/Latin American Culture, Spanish Culture, Language and Culture of Hispanics in
the U.S., Hispanic Literature in the U.S., Afro-Hispanic Culture, etc., are being offered
on college campuses nationwide. Like their Latino counterparts, many non-heritage
students enroll in Spanish classes to seek improvement in their Spanish language
proficiency and to expose themselves to the Hispanic cultures. By selecting appropriate
literary texts rich in cultural implications, instructors can provide students with an
opportunity to make critical evaluations across historical events and geographical
borders. Through using interdisciplinary tools, students can approach the complexities
of the Latino identity by answering questions such as: How far back does the historical
presence of Latinos stretch in the United States? How did they become part of the
American nation? Students’ reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities ought to
reflect their ability to analyze and evaluate information, make sound decisions,
cooperatively solve problems, and understand how to regulate their own thinking
processes.

Another important theme for Hispanic cultural examination is the recent prevalence
of the Latina literature in the United States. Hispanic literature in the United States has
substantial and significant roots that reach beyond the U.S. borders. The history of the
Latina literature traces back to the liberalism and romanticism that emerged in the 19th
Century which provided the grounds for the flourishing of "feminine writing" to the point
that, women clearly were the protagonists of the literary landscape. Such predominance
started to dissipate as the century advanced, and the feminine presence in the literary
canon became more and more sporadic. In the Spanish speaking world women’s voices
were first heard in works by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Mexico, 1651-1695), Alfonsina
Storni (Argentina, 1892-1938), and Rosario Castellanos (Mexico, 1925-1974) among
others, as they discussed through different course of time the struggle of Hispanic
women to occupy a literary space from where to undermine the patriarchal construction
of a female identity. These women writers successfully launched their own subjectivity,
expressed their own desires, denounced the violence women were subjected to, and
ultimately searched for the terms of their own identity. As Sor Juana launched the first
voice in the seventeenth century against gender inequality by accusing the male
counterpart of leading women to misconduct, Alfonsina Storni revealed her discontent
and disdain towards men in her protestant verses in “Tú me quieres blanca” and
“Hombre pequeñito”, and Rosario Castellano presented the portrait of a contemporary
Hispanic female: confused, rebellious, and resigned in “Kindsey Report”.

As the first generation to cross directly between two cultures, Latina writers can
describe firsthand the experience of being at the intersection of two worlds. After odds
and struggles, Latina literature finally received national recognition in the 1990s, a
decade which was considered the boom of Latina prose fiction just as the 1960s were
for the Latin American novel. Schools and colleges across the United States have
begun to adopt some of those works as required reading. Latina writers can serve as
models for the younger generations because they have succeeded in being recognized
as artists and as women. Cherrie Moraga edited in 1981, the first anthology of female
writers of color in This Bridge Called Me Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color,
giving a voice to minority female writers in the United States. Often, Latina writers depict their own coming-of-age experiences as female adolescences growing up and struggling to cope with the societal and traditional cultural expectations as females and as members of a minority group. One of the best examples of this category is House on Mango Street (1984) in which Sandra Cisneros deals with the early years of a Mexican-American girl in a Chicano/Latino neighborhood in 1960s Chicago, while Julia Alvarez chronicles a Dominican family’s exile in the United States in How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent (1991). Denise Chávez portrays the lives of families through the eyes of a female adolescent in New Mexico in The Last of the Menu Girls (1986) and explores the trials and tribulations of Chicano culture and gender through a waitress’s perspective in Face of an Angel (1994). While Cristina García depicts a family exile after the Cuban Revolution in Dreaming in Cuba (1992), Rosario Ferré presents the history and society of Puerto Rico in The House on the Lagoon (1995). Judith Ortiz Coffer records a female adolescent’s coming-to-age experience in New Jersey and on the island in the 1960s in Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood (1989), and provides further insight into U.S.-Puerto Rican relations through family migration in The Line of the Sun (1990) while Esmeralda Santiago offers another perspective on the Puerto Rican diaspora in When I was Puerto Rican (1993). In the West coast, Helena María Viramontes’ The Moths and Other Stories (1985) represents the urban community of East Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s through female experiences and her novel Under the Feet of Jesus (1995) captures the survival of a migrant family working in the orchards of California. As the Latina writers strive to create their own voice in a patriarchal and multicultural society, Cherie Moraga addresses the effects of losing one’s culture in U.S. society in The Last Generation (1993).

Additional examples rich in portraying the Hispanic culture which constitute small segments of the whole cultural picture can be found by reading selections from lists of award winning books. Three such awards include the Américas Award, the Pura Belpré Award, and the Tomás Rivera Children’s Book Award. An additional resource for young readers is the Mexican American Children’s Book Award. Each award was established in the 1990s because of the limited number of published books in the United States that reflected the Hispanic culture. Each award has a particular focus. The Américas Award reaches beyond the borders of the United States to include the Caribbean and other areas. The Pura Belpré celebrates an author and an illustrator, and includes honor books. The Tomás Rivera Children’s Book Award is focused on the Mexican Forum on Public Policy. The books are generally written in English but some are available in a bilingual edition or in Spanish.

In conclusion, educators can honor students of a cultural group by sharing books about their culture in the classroom. Such books also help those not of the culture to learn more about others. Instructors can help achieve cultural understanding by exposing students to the study and enjoyment of literature. Literary infusion should be connected and integrated to students’ reading, writing, listening, and speaking endeavors to enhance their ability to analyze and evaluate information, make sound decisions, cooperatively solve problems, and understand how to regulate their own thinking processes.
Notes
1. *National Standards in Foreign Language Education*, a collaboration project of ACTFL, AATF, AATG, AATI, AATSP, ACL/APA, ACTR, CLASS/CLTA, & NCSTJ/ATJ.
2. See Standards 2.1 and 2.2 of Culture in the Five Cs of Foreign Language Education set forth by ACTFL: Communications, Communities, Cultures, Comparisons & Connections.
3. Virginia Shen in “Bridging the Cultural Gap in the Foreign Language Teaching” (2014), the National Social Science Association Proceedings. National Technology and Social Science Conference, Vol. 55#2, 254-265 discussed the role of culture in foreign language classroom and how students can develop cultural competency through authentic materials and study broad experience.

References


The HyFlex Course Design:
A Case Study on Adult and Career Education Courses

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Abstract

This case study describes the implementation of the HyjFlex model in Adult and Career Education courses. Hyflex learning incorporates blended learning characteristics with a more flexible framework. With this model students chose to participate face-to-face, online, or both. In addition, the author presents key findings and lessons learned from implementing the HyFlex model.

Introduction

For public universities, such as Valdosta State University (VSU), which has a mission to expand its programmatic outreach by developing and offering programs by distance learning and at off campus locations throughout the region, the goal of increasing access is especially significant. As a leader in both traditional and non-traditional instruction, the Department of Adult and Career Education (ACED) at Valdosta State University offers its degree programs in a variety of formats including on-campus, hybrid, online, and at various locations, including the Kings Bay Nuclear Submarine Base and Moody Air Force Base.

The undergraduate programs in ACED are designed to give program completers the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions to prepare them for success as certified career-technical educators, adult educators or as industry practitioners or trainers in their professional fields. The department's graduate programs build upon this foundation and are designed to further enhance program completers' success as a leader in education or in the private sector. A primary focus of all programs is to provide program completers with relevant, practical coursework that encourages life-long learning and the utilization of technology.

VSU continues to face the challenges of serving more students with stable or declining budgets. To address these challenges, the author of this paper was encouraged to find an effective and flexible delivery model to provide students with more convenient access to quality learning experiences than is possible with traditional on campus offerings alone. Shrinking budgets, growing enrollments, and a Valdosta State University-wide initiative to increase the rate of student graduation have prompted the Adult and Career Education (ACED) Department to develop a comprehensive strategy around the delivery of HyFlex courses.

Beatty (2006) defines the HyFlex design as a hybrid model, combining online and face-to-face teaching and learning activities, and flexible, providing students the choice to attend face-to-face instruction. In a HyFlex course, each student can make the choice of participation mode independently. The instructor provides lecture content, structure, and activities to meet the goals of the syllabus. This must be done in such a way as to give “equivalency,” so that students can experience the course content and complete the course requirements in comparable ways whether attending online, face-to-face, or in some combination of the two (Beatty, 2010).

Brown (2012) found that:

A key benefit for the university is that it can serve both onsite and online students without maintaining a self-contained online degree program. Students engage in generative activities that reinforce learning and contribute to reduced attrition and fewer repeated courses. Maximizing the use of limited resources, the HyFlex model has gained wide
acceptance among faculty and students and is seen as achieving the best of both in-class and online instruction (p. 23).

This study is an analysis of outcomes in nine courses that were taught by the author using the HyFlex Model format.

**Literature Review**

Researchers of education have constantly explored the impact of learning environments in relation to learning outcomes. For example, the U.S. Department of Education (2010) found students who took all or part of their course online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction. According to Khan (2007), flexible learning is an innovative approach for delivering well-designed, learner centered, and interactive learning environments to anyone, anyplace, anytime by utilizing the attributes and resources of the Internet and digital technologies” (p. 1). This conceptualization of blended course delivery is exemplified in what Khan calls flexible learning and is illustrated in the HyFlex Model in which course design considers both present and distance students.

Casey and Wilson (2005) revealed that designing for good quality, efficient and economic flexible learning depends on the experience, expertise and resources your faculty has at hand. The faculty also needs an acceptance that there has to be upfront investment in terms of time and resources to make it work.

Blankson, Godwyll & Nur-Awaleh (2014) suggested that when given the opportunity to choose the best blend, students would select activities based on flexibility, convenience, and learning style and needs. As such, when well developed, the Hyflex model can ensure choice, a more active approach to learning, and a high level of course satisfaction. As seen in the 2011 ECAR National Study of Students and IT, students prefer and say they learn more in classes with online components. More students prefer a blended learning environment of seminars and other smaller classes with some online components.

A study by Hodge, Tucker, and Williams (2004) that investigated student perceptions of online, traditional and blended delivery methods found that those students who had access to online course materials and classroom instruction were more motivated by the instructor than those who received only one form of delivery. HyFlex is an innovative approach to blended learning that has proven to be effective in increasing student satisfaction, engagement, and access (Beatty, 2007).

**Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions: Why did the instructor choose to implement the HyFlex model? Did students perceive that they learned as much or more in the course as expected? Were students satisfied with their interactions and learning in the HyFlex course? and How connected did the students feel to the learning community?

After conducting a literature review, the instructor chose the HyFlex Model. The 2009 Hanover Research revealed criteria to adopt a HyFlex course design. The criteria included the consideration of factors such as how the course promoted learner choice in the course participation modes on a regular basis, how the course design provided equivalent learning activities in each participation mode, and how the course was technologically accessible to students.
The HyFlex Model provided the students in the courses the opportunity to select how
they wanted to participate in class. The adult students were returning to school later in
life, held jobs, had to balance coursework with caring for families, or were former
members of the military embarking on new careers. Trying to coordinate other
responsibilities with school was hard for them. This challenge led the instructor to
rethink how and where to deliver course content to meet the needs of this growing
sector of adult students.

The process began with the instructor redesigning the instructional content and
activities to meet the needs of students participating both in class and online. The
curriculum design was equivalent sets of activities selected so that student learning
could be effective in either participation format. Based on Beatty’s (2010) research, four
factors were considered when implementing the HyFlex Model. The factors were as
follows:

Learner Choice: Provide meaningful alternative participation modes
and enable students to choose between participation.
Equivalency: Provide equivalent learning activities in all participation
modes. Reusability: Utilize artifacts from learning activities in each
participation mode as learning objects for all students.
Accessibility: Equip students with technology skills and access to all
participation modes.

The instructor began implementing the HyFlex Model in Fall 2013 when teaching the
same course in both an online as well as an on-campus format. The online course was
designed to accomplish the same goals as the on-campus course in a different
modality. Having one instructor teach both sections provided the opportunity to bridge
the gap between the modalities of instruction.

The participants in this study consisted of 186 undergraduate and graduate students
enrolled in nine ACED courses from Fall 2013 to Spring 2015. The instructor
redesigned the courses to integrate online and face-to-face approaches to instruction.
Following Beatty’s HyFlex model, the primary goal for this study was to provide students
with attendance options. Specifically, the live attendance options made available to
students in this HyFlex model were face-to-face (traditional) attendance and
synchronous online attendance. The course was structured so students could choose
how they wished to attend class; no requirements were imposed on how often students
attended online or traditionally. For example, students could attend completely face-to-
face, completely online, or some combination of the two.

The HyFlex model was introduced on the first day of lecture, during which
attendance methods and technological implementations were outlined. Student
assignments included readings, learning activities, discussions, and projects. A
frequent feature of the HyFlex model was small-group engagement and collaborative
work, which called for team meetings, conducted virtually or in person. Because the
HyFlex model is a conceptual framework—not software—it was easily implemented
using VSU’s existing course management system and online course infrastructure. The
Center for eLearning supports VSU-collaborative students with troubleshooting support
for technology-enhanced courses using BlazeVIEW, an integrated learning platform and
Blackboard Collaborate, web conferencing tool.
Findings

In order to assess student feedback, end-of-semester surveys were used to ask students about their participation preferences, satisfaction with their learning with the HyFlex course design, and how connected they felt to the learning community. Students were asked to respond to how they wanted courses delivered. Chart 1 presents the results of student participation preferences.

See Chart 1 Preference for Course Format

Of the 186 students surveyed, 18 percent preferred the HyFlex design; 26 percent, blended; 44 percent, fully online; 10 percent, face-to-face and 2 percent, undecided.

The results indicate that students prefer a flexible delivery model. The HyFlex Model allows students to choose their own mix of participation modes, either in-class or online, on a weekly or topical basis (Beatty, 2012). In the HyFlex course design, students can choose to attend face-to-face, synchronous class sessions or complete course learning activities online without physically attending class (Beatty, 2010).

Students were asked you rate if they felt as though they had learned as much or more than expected in the course using the HyFlex Model design. Ninety-five percent of the students surveyed indicated they strongly agreed or agreed to learning as much as they expected. Chart 2 presents the results.

See Chart 2 Learned As Much or More Than Expected

Students were asked to evaluate how connected they felt to their peers and instructor. Results indicated that 94 percent of the students surveyed felt connected to their peers and 96 percent felt connected to their instructor. Chart 3 presents the results.

See Chart 3 Engagement with Peers and Instructor

Lim (2004) explored the connection between the engagement of learners in online environments and their subsequent level of success. He identified several factors including course design, faculty, and technical support that affect online student retention. Research finds that students who report feeling a personal connection with their instructor also indicate higher levels of engagement. As highlighted by Bates and Bates and Poole (2003), “teaching is the creation of opportunities that facilitate learning. Learning is essential a social process, requiring communication among learner, teacher, and others. This social process cannot effectively be replaced by technology, but technology can facilitate and even enhance it.”

Discussion

This case study points to a number of critical issues about implementing the HyFlex Model in ACED and raises questions for further study. First, adjustments to teaching strategies are necessary to use this delivery format. Second, researching and developing courses with flexible formats takes time and requires new ways of thinking about curriculum development. Third, schools have to improve their IT support and build strong network infrastructures; instructors have to coordinate with students and other faculty and be willing to implement and use new technology; and most importantly, students themselves have to take greater responsibility for their own learning process and educational outcomes.

Training, technical assistance, and resources will need to be provided before other ACED faculty members embrace the HyFlex Model in the Adult and Career Education Department. Errington (2004) study found that beliefs of university teachers could have
a significant impact on the success of flexible learning innovations. He argues that the infrastructure for the adoption or rejection of flexible learning innovation exists at the level of beliefs of instructors.

Overall, implementing the HyFlex model into the ACED courses by this author provided students with an opportunity to explore how they learn best. Adults need a range of flexible design and delivery options that recognize the time constraints facing people who work, have family responsibilities and are trying to upgrade their skills to be more competitive in the labor market and improve their standard of living. According to Yusuf (2009) flexible delivery offers learners with a myriad of choices as to how they want their learning experiences to occur. These myriad choices can meet the diverse learning styles, preferences, and needs.

Conclusion

Learners need flexibility and the HyFlex process provides this flexibility. With this flexible approach, ACED can serve more students and meet their learning needs while maintaining high levels of educational quality. Four themes emerged in this case study:

- Adult learners need flexible learning so they can balance study, work, family, and other commitments.
- The HyFlex course design acknowledges that learners have different needs and preferences concerning participation in the instructional environment.
- The HyFlex course design encourages students to study when and where they are able to do so.
- Educators of adult learners are actively encouraged to find effective and flexible delivery models to provide all students with more convenient access to quality learning experiences than is possible with traditional on-campus offerings alone.

References


Beatty, B. (2012). HyFlex course design: The advantages of letting students choose the blend. 9th Annual Sloan Consortium Blended Learning Conference & Workshop.


**Chart 1**

*Preference for Course Format*

![Chart Image]
Chart 2
Learned As Much or More Than Expected

Chart 3
Engagement with Peers and Instructor