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The Value of Storytelling in a Multicultural Foundations Course

Deirdre Cobb-Roberts, Associate Professor

I absolutely love teaching and regard the opportunity to engage students in critical intellectual discourse and transformational learning as an important privilege and responsibility of the professoriate. It is my philosophy that we are all active knowledge constructors. The construction of knowledge is an on-going process for both student and professor. As a professor, it is my belief that effective teachers are themselves continuous learners involved in on-going professional development activities in order to remain current in the research- based literature of the field.

Personally I view myself as a catalyst providing a foundation of theories and facts, from which to launch students

on their educational journey. I am cognizant that it is often difficult to encourage students to play an active role in their learning. In an effort to build an environment that supports individual knowledge construction, I continuously investigate ways to reduce the feelings of discomfort my students may experience, or to at least make that discomfort productive. I simultaneously promote among my students academic excellence, patience, compassion and flexibility in relation to the diverse perspectives presented and shared by students and the professor in class. Narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is a method that allows and encourages experiences to become the focal point of educational research. As I seek to foster the inner

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Fostering a Positive Classroom Learning Environment

Cheryl Ellerbrock, Assistant Professor

Fostering a positive classroom learning environment necessitates that we pay close attention to the ways we cultivate a sense of safety, care, belonging, and civility in our classroom. In this article, I share a multifaceted approach I use in both small and large classes as well as undergraduate, graduate, and mixed-level classes to create such an environment. This approach includes activities that focus on establishing rules and communication guidelines, building relationships, promoting cooperation, and encouraging self-reflection.

Establish Rules and Communication Guidelines

At the inception of each course I engage students in a dialogue about rules and the ways rules may promote a sense of

safety, care, belonging, and civility in the classroom. This conversation leads to the co-creation of list of three to five well-defined rules that serve as guiding expectations for all members of the class. To accomplish this, I have students engage in a classroom meeting where they collaboratively discuss in what ways rules are necessary for a society, what kinds of rules may be important in a university classroom, and what rules they want in our course. Once a list of rules is generated, I ask the class to come to an agreement on the definition of each rule and how each rule will be reinforced. We then vote on the rules. My role is to ensure that each rule supports the development of a positive learning environment and to enforce the rules throughout the semester, when necessary.

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researcher in my students I utilize narratives and storytelling as a pedagogical tool.

As a child growing up I was constantly hearing the message “don’t tell stories, always tell the truth and the truth shall set you free!” This mantra was a constant at home, in school and in the community. It was a value which was highly regarded. Now in my adulthood and professional life I find that I am engaged in constant, storytelling—how ironic! Further, I encourage storytelling, our versions of personal truth, in my courses.

Storytelling, personal narrative, autoethnography, critical ethnography in the multicultural foundations classroom is a strategy that I employ to engage students on multiple levels. I see our narratives as a pathway to understanding more about ourselves, others, and how we interact with the world. The experiences that are shared and analyzed, via stories, are powerful and can be empowering. Students initially react in a variety of ways to communicate their dismay at the lack of academic rigor in storytelling. “Why do we have to listen to another story, it’s not empirical data, where’s the evidence, where’s the rigor?” This resistance and questioning moves the course from the static and safe environment to the “unsafe”, humanizing, experiential and dissonance evoking class. One student noted the following about the course:

“I am a better human being after taking this class. This class is not easy for students or educators; the reading requirement aside, there is an emotional component that cannot be overlooked... Dr. Cobb-Roberts is there with us facilitating in that calm and understanding, non-judgmental way...setting the example in the true sense of multicultural education.” (EDF 6883 graduate student)

Students are expected to read the literature and make real world connections. Recently, I began the session by asking the class to tell me what they thought about the reading...from the heart. They began with the theoretical framework, findings and implications of the study. That was not what I wanted from them at that point. I wanted to know how they felt about what they had read, what thoughts and experiences resonated with them and if the material was relatable in any way.

This approach has the ability to revolutionize one’s teaching. Using personal narrative as a lens through which to share experiences of education helps to center the individual telling her/his story. Although, some will find this method disconcerting as it is the story of one and cannot be generalizable. It is a story of one and that narrative is authoritative and dominant and often

presents a counter to the socialized and accepted traditional stories of schooling, education and justice.

Students enter the university and my courses with unique life perspectives, experiences and academic goals. My role is to assist them in the journey of linking prior knowledge to new information, by connecting personal perspectives to outside viewpoints. This joining together the shared process of learning is what many assert as the purpose of higher education and cultivating critical thinkers.

I will continue to strive towards the goal of encouraging and preparing students to meet current and life-long challenges and opportunities through a variety of means, two of which include

“My storied approach opens doors, crosses borders, and seeks to build bridges with those unlike ourselves...”

student-centered teaching and constant self-reflection. I am committed to providing access through equity, excellence, and example. My philosophy is to model what you expect from your students; thus I engage in story telling as well. I tell

multiple stories of my truth while connecting to and analyzing the literature. This approach allows the material to come alive and hold meaning beyond theoretical frameworks and triangulation.

My storied approach opens doors, crosses borders, seeks to build bridges with those unlike ourselves and ones we perceive to be most like us, and encourages critical self-reflection of ourselves. So to my parents, colleagues and students...telling stories “ain’t” so bad after all, at least from my perspective.

Dr. Deirdre Cobb-Roberts is an Associate Professor of Social Foundations in the College of Education at the University of South Florida. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the history of American higher education, multicultural education, and social foundations of education.



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Additionally, at the beginning of each course I teach interpersonal communication skills, as it has been my experience that not all students have the understanding and/or tools necessary to effectively talk with one another in a caring and civil way. During the first few class sessions, I have students preview Johnson and Johnson's (2009) communication principles and co-create their own list of communication guidelines. For each statement my students create (e.g., I find strength in others' viewpoints) they come up with a non-constructive statement (e.g., I search for weakness in others' viewpoints). These non-constructive statements are also discussed in detail. Students vote on their guidelines and receive a copy for their records. All members of the class, myself included, are expected to follow these guidelines throughout the semester. In fact, I've had students remind me of the guidelines when I mistakenly violated a statement!

Build Relationships

To help build relationships, I arrange students into small heterogeneous groups (no more than five students per group) called Learning Circles to enhance a sense of belongingness and function as caring communities within the larger classroom environment. In each Learning Circle, students are encouraged to create their own group identity and work together as a team to facilitate the professional growth and academic achievement of all Learning Circle members. Learning Circle members work collaboratively to better understand class readings, analyze and synthesize course topics, engage in class activities, and make presentations. Each Learning Circle member also selects a study buddy who provides additional support during the semester. Throughout my teaching career, I have used Learning Circles with classes as small as 12 and as large as 100.

Promote Cooperation

I have found that cooperative learning helps promote an environment where all members of the class are invested in each other's learning. It is important to note that cooperative learning is not group work. Rather, it is a structured teaching method that consists of a series of elements essential to its success, including positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing. I frequently use cooperative learning activities in all my courses, especially Jigsaw. Jigsaw is a more complex, yet popular, cooperative learning activity that allows students the opportunity to take on the role of teacher and learn from one another. I place students into groups called home teams. In these groups, students analyze the topic of study and decide on the subtopic they want to investigate. Expert teams convene based on each subtopic and an assignment is given to each group to help guide their time together and master the topic. It is expected that all experts will report back to their base team and teach what they learned.

At the conclusion of this process, all students learn all topics through either researching and teaching their own topic to their base team peers or learning about other topics from their base team peers. To extend this activity, base teams can integrate the information learned and create a final project that exemplifies their combined understanding.

Encourage Self-Reflection

I believe an essential element in fostering a positive learning environment includes providing students opportunities for self-reflection and the development of a deeper level of understanding of and respect for oneself and others. I frequently use an activity adapted from the National School Reform Faculty I call Circles of Comfort. In this activity, I have students draw a diagram of three circles (one inside of the other). Students label the inner circle "Comfort," the middle circle, "Risk," and the outside circle "Danger". I then suggest a personal, social or academic-related topic/situation (e.g., teaching in a high poverty school) and ask students to think about aspects of that topic/situation that makes them comfortable, those that are more risky, and those they perceive as dangerous. For those that are risky and dangerous, I ask students to think about why they feel this way. After students fill in their diagram, I ask students to reflect on a series of questions such as, "What will it take to move some of your statements from risk or danger to comfort?" I've also had students create a step-by-step plan based on this question.

In my classes, a multi-faceted approach with activities that focus on establishing rules and communication guidelines, building relationships, promoting cooperation, and encouraging self-reflection helps foster a positive learning environment where my students experience a true sense of safety, care, belongingness, and civility. Cultivating this type of learning environment is not easy to do but is well worth the effort.

Dr. Cheryl R. Ellerbrock is an Assistant Professor Middle Grades/General Secondary Education and is co-editor and co-author of Talking Diversity with Teachers and Teacher Educators: Exercises and Critical Conversations Across the Curriculum (NY: Teachers College Press, 2014).



Part 2: Using Eportfolios in Higher Education

Cynthia Patterson, Associate Professor

In my first article for *Faculty Voices* (Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2014), I discussed the link between the new Florida Board of Governors “performance-based funding” and “competency-based education,” and I promised that in this follow-up article, I would link these trends to the place of reflective learning practices in higher education, especially in the context of using eportfolios.

Like “competency-based education,” eportfolios are not new in higher education. The two go virtually hand-in-hand. Again, we can look to the example of Alverno College (Milwaukee, WI), which adopted their “eight abilities” (competencies) in 1973, to include: 1) communication; 2) analytical/critical thinking; 3) problem-solving; 4) valuing; 5) social interaction; 6) global responsibility; 7) effective citizenship; 9) aesthetic response. While the use of portfolios pre-dates Alverno, Alverno launched its “Digital Diagnostic Portfolio” (DDP) tool in 1999, using funds from a Title III grant (Alverno College web site, “DDP History”).

In the chapter two literature review of her Alverno College dissertation on eportfolios, Linda Ehley points out that portfolios, defined as “selections of representative work,” have been used in higher education for years, but primarily by those in the art disciplines, as a way of showcasing visual artifacts. The discipline of education, in particular, spread the use of portfolios in higher education, and with the advent of electronic files, eportfolios gained in appeal beginning in the 1990s (Digital Portfolios: A Study of Undergraduate and Faculty Use and Perception of Alverno College’s Digital Diagnostic Eportfolio, Diss.: Alverno College, 2006: 31).

I first began teaching with portfolios at George Mason University’s New Century College, or “NCC,” <<http://ncc.gmu.edu/>> in 1998, using print portfolios. Students enrolled in NCC’s integrative studies degree programs submitted end-of-course portfolios for every NCC course they completed, so by the time graduation arrived, students were quite competent at preparing portfolios to be shared with potential employers. I brought the concept of portfolios to my new position on the USF Lakeland/Polytechnic campus upon my hire in 2005, specifically to the exit writing course for USF’s senior Information Technology students, ENC 4260, “Advanced Technical Writing.” The first semester I incorporated eportfolio tools, I broke the class of 24 students up into three workgroups, and each group pilot-tested a different eportfolio system, Chalk-and-Wire (used by many Education departments), Webfolio4, and Taskstream. After usability testing, assessment, and end-of-semester presentations by student groups, the students and I concluded that Taskstream would be the best tool to use because of its “user-friendly” WYSIWYG (“what you see is what you get”)

design. At a price-point of only \$25/semester, it also seemed a bargain for students, particularly given the tool’s capability for downloading and sharing eportfolios.

But if one of your concerns is keeping student textbook prices (and other required tools) down, then the Canvas eportfolio tool is another option to consider. While the tool lacks some of the slick design features of some other proprietary eportfolio tools, students (and faculty!) can assemble a reasonably attractive eportfolio that can be shared with potential employers – or in the case of faculty members, might replace the paper-and-binder mid-tenure and tenure and promotion process.

The Canvas eportfolio tool can be accessed through the Canvas learning management system (LMS), via the Settings link in the navigation tab in the upper right hand corner.

I like to use an eportfolio structure based on the “competencies” that I teach in my Advanced Technical Writing class. The structure includes a space for a “reflection of academic learning” piece (I provide a guiding prompt for this piece), a space to list collegiate coursework, and a space to provide both a narrative of learning in each of the competencies and “artifacts” (sample student work) demonstrating those competencies. Additionally, students provide both an in-line version of their resume/CV, and a downloadable .pdf version as well.

My advice to you is to simply “play around” with this tool, and I suspect you will be able to imagine a way that you can utilize it in your own classes and programs. If you’d like to explore other eportfolio tools, I suggest you visit this fairly comprehensive alphabetical listing of available eportfolio tools:

<<http://epac.pbworks.com/w/page/12559686/Evolving%20List%C2%A0of%C2%A0ePortfolio-related%C2%A0Tools>>.

Dr. Cynthia Patterson is an Associate Professor, and the Undergraduate Coordinator for the English department. She completed the Faculty Technology Integration Institute (FTII) on the USF Lakeland/Polytechnic campus and served as an FTII faculty mentor for four years before joining the Tampa campus faculty.



The Global Citizens Project: Everything You Always Needed to Know

Karla Davis-Salazar, Associate Professor; Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Do you teach courses with a global or cross-cultural focus? Do you conduct international research? Do you work with local communities? Are you interested in aligning your courses or academic program with USF's Strategic Plan? Do you think students need a global perspective? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you will want to learn about the USF Global Citizens Project and the opportunities available to faculty.

The Global Citizens Project is a university-wide initiative aimed at preparing our students to succeed in a global society. What is a global citizen? A global citizen draws on a host of abilities and understandings to engage meaningfully with diverse people, places, events, challenges, and opportunities. Those of us who incorporate an international, global, or cross-cultural focus into our courses individually contribute to students' development of these global abilities and understandings. But how explicit are we in this? Do our students understand that when they learn about colonialism in a history course or population dynamics in a statistics class, that a foundation for understanding contemporary global issues is being set? And for those of us who might not incorporate a global perspective into our courses, should we? We know that the kinds of competencies necessary to be successful in today's global society cannot be learned in one course, let alone one class session. So how are we connecting our courses with others to reinforce students' global abilities and understandings? Perhaps most importantly, what are the abilities and understandings of a global citizen? The Global Citizens Project addresses all these questions and more.

Through many formal and informal conversations with faculty and students over the past year and half, the Global Citizens Project has defined three primary global competencies with six accompanying student learning outcomes within the area of global citizenship. By incorporating these learning outcomes into our courses, we can "globalize" our curriculum and explicitly connect courses across departments and colleges. Wouldn't it be nice to know that the engineering student in your anthropology course found your course useful? Or that your chemistry program was relevant to the humanities? A shared set of global learning outcomes infused throughout the undergraduate experience can do that. By incorporating the learning outcomes of the Global Citizenship Project into our curriculum, we can also align our courses and programs with USF's Strategic Plan, since goal #1 is to prepare "well-educated and highly skilled global citizens." Think how valuable it would be to have evidence that you as an individual, or your department as a whole, contribute directly to the university's mission and goals! Finally, by globalizing our

courses, we can have a Global Citizens course attribute attached to the courses in Banner, which will enable students to count them toward the Global Citizen Awards being developed to reward their participation in global activities. SCH anyone?

So how can you benefit from the Global Citizens Project? Working with the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence, the Global Citizens Project will soon offer workshops, course redesign cohorts, faculty learning communities, and an Adventures in Global Topics lecture series. Two faculty developers will be hired specifically to lead these faculty development opportunities. With their guidance, you will learn how to craft global learning outcomes and accompanying assignments, how to connect your courses with others, how to map your courses and programs to the Strategic Plan, how to assess your students' global competencies, how to navigate the certification process to get the Global Citizens course attribute, and much more.

Mark your calendars—the Global Citizens Project and all the opportunities associated with it officially launch in the fall of 2015.

Please check out the website at <usf.

edu/gcp> to learn more (the About and Faculty sections will be of most interest to readers of this newsletter), and of course if you have questions, feel free to contact me at karladavis@usf.edu or 974-4051. As director of the Global Citizens Project, I look forward to working with you!

Dr. Karla Davis-Salazar is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Her current interests lie in pedagogy, curriculum development, and assessment, among other higher education issues, especially for undergraduate students. As part of these interests, she developed and now directs USF's Global Citizenship General Education Program, which provides students with a globally focused general education curriculum culminating in a significant study abroad experience.



Fostering Student Media Literacy: USF Library's New DMC

Maryellen Allen, Assistant Director for Instructional Services



In fall of 2014, the USF Tampa Library unveiled its first-floor renovation, which included a new space devoted to student multimedia production. The new facility, known as the Digital Media Commons (DMC), had its roots in a smaller, experimental space called the Digital Learning Studio. This facility proved to be so popular among students that when talk of the first floor renovation became a confirmed plan, space was set aside for an expanded multimedia center with thoughts toward the creation of a collaborative area complete with high-end workstations where student can create multimedia projects for class assignments.

Media Literacy and the Library's Mission

Academic libraries have long been the primary advocates of and leaders in information literacy education. Traditionally, information literacy is defined as a set of skills that foster the ability to assess an information need and further locate, evaluate and apply the information in ways that effectively satisfy that need. For many years, libraries concentrated predominantly on the types of print-based information found in books and journal articles. But as electronic communication mechanisms enabled by Internet technologies have matured, libraries have been confronted with the reality that information increasingly comes in a wide variety of formats other than traditional print. What's more, learners must now identify additional strategies for locating and effectively using this information while being able to synthesize or repackage it into these various formats. Thus, libraries have extended their missions to include media literacy, often defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms. Much of the need to educate students in this area is driven by pressures from the marketplace as employers demand these skills from graduates, often using them as basis for determining which graduates they hire and which ones are passed over.

A number of articles published over the past two years consistently cite the ability to communicate, analyze and interpret information, and interact proficiently with computer applications as a few of the most sought-after skills that employers are looking for in new college graduates. Media literacy touches on all of these to some degree. The media literate student has the ability not only to absorb and critically analyze complex information in a variety of formats, but he or she possesses the skills necessary for repurposing and repackaging that information in order to effectively communicate in whatever medium is required. Critical thinking skills, along with the ability to analyze and synthesize new content, not to mention the knowledge required to effectively employ the software programs needed to construct such messages, all coalesce in the media-literate student. By teaching these skills and fostering media literacy among USF students, the DMC is poised to have a significant impact on student success.

Transforming Curricula

The opportunities the library has to interact with students in order to impart media literacy skills depends heavily upon the course curricula and the assignments students are tasked to complete. Transforming curricula from a lecture and paper-based model to a more multimedia-based pedagogical approach is the challenge we face. By nature, a problem or project-based instructional strategy that incorporates assignments with multimedia elements promotes higher-order thinking in the learner. These concepts, introduced by the well-known educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom, have been often cited and advocated by instructors as a means of establishing learning goals. Many educators are familiar with Bloom's six levels of the cognitive domain that comprise his well-known taxonomy. The most effective instructional approaches strive to provide a foundation of lower-order learning goals (recalled knowledge)

in order to build, or scaffold learning to guide students into the higher-order domains of analysis, evaluation and creation. Such strategies seek to facilitate knowledge transfer and retention on a long-term basis. But more often than not in the higher education arena, we still find the most common pedagogical approaches are primarily recall-based, requiring the learner to simply memorize facts or identify terms. Perhaps some measurement of student comprehension is provided through summative assessments like multiple choice tests or essays, but still a large portion of students are not meaningfully engaged with the material, or being asked to go beyond simple recitation to true synthesis, application and creation which require higher, critical thinking skills.

The goal of the Digital Media Commons is to help faculty make that jump from a recall-based set of student learning expectations to a more analytical or even creation-based one where students use what they have learned to solve a new problem, propose an alternative solution to an existing problem, or combine previously learned concepts and ideas in such a way that a novel means of communication results. The final outcome of such a strategy may manifest in a short video, such as a public service announcement or brief documentary, an interactive web page, an infographic, an online multimedia exhibit, or even a combination of a few of these. When successful, this type of student-centered learning fosters a more substantial and enriching learning experience for both students and faculty.

Working with the DMC

Faculty members who choose to work with the DMC can expect to receive support in all stages of assignment development and implementation. The DMC's interim coordinator, Maryellen Allen, offers nearly ten years of experience with instructional technology and instructional design. Her goal is to provide students with the opportunity to engage more fully with the instructional material by providing opportunities to take ownership of the learning process using multimedia technologies. At the same time, the DMC can relieve the instructor of the responsibility for serving as the technology or design expert. Nearly any paper-based assignment can be turned into a multimedia assignment with a bit of forethought and planning. Typically, it is best to plan one semester in advance of the roll-out of the new assignment. Faculty wishing to consult on the transformation or creation of a multimedia assignment can contact Maryellen via email at mallen@usf.edu.

Available Equipment and Services

The DMC provides students with most of the equipment and software that they would need to complete a multimedia project from start to finish. The library provides video cameras of various types, tripods, and audio recorders for students to check out for up to three days. Upon returning, the students can use one of 30 high-end computer workstations within the DMC to edit, compose, or put the finishing touches on their video, graphical, or

web-based project. The DMC workstations offer both Windows and Mac platforms (15 of each), complete with the Adobe Creative Cloud software that students can use free of charge. Several highly-skilled student workers are available at various times during the DMC's hours of operation to assist students in learning and using the often complex software applications needed to produce their projects. Students are responsible for all of the equipment they borrow, and will be billed for any loss or damages that are incurred while the equipment is under their care. Additionally, all students will be required to undergo a brief training session for each piece of equipment they borrow prior to check-out. For more information on available equipment and services from the Library's DMC, consult our website: <http://www.lib.usf.edu/digital-studio/>.

Maryellen Allen is currently serving as the Assistant Director for Instructional Services and the Interim Coordinator for the Digital Media Commons at the USF Tampa Library. She has earned an M.A.L.S. in Library and Information Science from USF and a M.S. in Instructional Systems Design from Florida State University. Ms. Allen came to USF in 2012 from the University of Alabama where she worked with the design, delivery and assessment of online degree programs.



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Teaching Online—Lessons Learned

Jennifer Cainas, Instructor

Over the years I have employed many different techniques to engage students in class, even in a mass lecture of 400-500 students. I deliberately sought ways to involve the students in learning accounting, even if they had no intention of being accounting majors. I use fun, made-up company examples to illustrate my point (Cainas Cookies was born), utilize clickers during class as quiz questions (to encourage students to attend and talk with other students), and employ a “think-pair-share” technique when having students solve problems during class. So, when the dean asked me to develop an online class for the Principles of Managerial Accounting course, I was quite frankly against the idea. Most of my students are freshman and sophomores, and I felt that many would not be engaged or have the discipline to complete the amount of work required of them to do well in this class.

Although I am still teaching the same material, I really had to re-think how I delivered it. I normally lecture with my live classes twice a week for 75 minutes and have kept their attention by fun examples that students can relate to. A 75 minute lecture would be absolutely tedious if it were online! I would be bored listening to myself, and I LOVE accounting!

For anyone converting a “live” class to an “online” class, here are a few things I have implemented that you might find helpful.

1. Setting Clear Expectations: Let’s face it – students often register for online classes because they assume an online class is “easier.” I have found that expectations need to be completely spelled out during the first class period. I require students to attend the first day of class in order for me to take attendance, discuss the syllabus, and stress to them (in person) how important it is to keep up with the material even though they are not required to attend each week. I tell them that the class average last semester was 20 points lower than the average in the face-to-face class, and it grabs their attention! Although my class average for the online class was still slightly lower this semester, it was much closer to the average of my live class.

2. Lecture Format: The beauty of a live class is that students will interact with you. They will ask questions, nod their heads when they seem to understand, and even laugh at some of my jokes! When I converted the class to an online format, I really had to think about a student’s attention span when just watching a lecture with powerpoint slides and hearing my voice. I decided to break my lectures down into several small clips, ensuring none of my lectures were longer than 15 minutes. I require the videos to be watched in sequence, though, which is easy to do through Canvas.

3. Student Engagement: Although this can be more challenging

in an online format, I do think it can be accomplished in an online setting. I know that some professors will require blog postings or online discussions that are graded. I didn’t feel this would work well for accounting, because I am teaching students basic concepts of accounting and related computations that they will need to be able to apply on an exam. There is not much to discuss! I utilize Blackboard Collaborate extensively, scheduling reviews every two weeks to ensure students have an opportunity to ask questions in a “classroom” setting. This semester I require that students attend a minimum of 5 review sessions, with points attached to their attendance. Because it is difficult to find a good time for all students, I try to vary the days and times I offer these to hopefully provide options for all students. And, I record each session so that students are able to watch the session even if they were not able to participate. I find students are actually grateful for my “periodic check-in” with them, and attendance is definitely up this semester.

4. Frequent Evaluations of Performance: Rather than rely mostly on exams, I do require students submit homework online each week. I grade the homework mainly for effort, but it requires them to “keep up.” I require homework assignments be turned in the same time every week (Fridays at midnight) to eliminate the confusion of having various due dates and times. I also make sure to grade their homework and post any comments within a few days after I receive the submission, so that they receive immediate feedback and their grades are always up to date. I feel it’s extremely important to give the online students more frequent feedback, so they will hopefully seek help early if they are having difficulty.

My development as an online instructor is continuing to evolve, but I hope some of my “lessons learned” can help some of you that might be converting your traditional classes. If you have any questions, feel free to email me at jmcainas@usf.edu or call me at 813-974-6519.

Jennifer Cainas, Instructor II, is the Pender Newkirk Teaching Fellow for the Lynn Pippenger School of Accountancy. She has received numerous teaching awards, including being awarded the “Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award” for the University of South Florida several times.



Dream Big

Kimberly Fields, Instructor

The goal of enhancing student success needs to be accomplished not by lowering the bar of our expectations, but through the encouragement of excellence with additional support and motivation. “Dreaming big” is some of the best advice I was ever given. How often do we apply that to the courses we teach? We all have to cover content, and there are many ways to accomplish that goal in any course. The bigger question is: should my students get more out of a course than just the content? If so, what can I do to facilitate and make time for additional activities?

Take a moment to consider what understanding or growth you want your students to develop as a result of taking your course. This may be a list of learning objectives for each chapter, but it can be much more than that. Consider what your students would need to do to prove that they have achieved your goals. What type of activities or tests of skill could they show you? The type of activity depends on the course, your objectives, and the number of students.

Large classes are a particular challenge because they limit one-to-one interactions and quickly produce unwieldy amounts of grading. How do you grade over 500 of these student projects in one term? The good news is that there are peer grading options available on Canvas. By posting a rubric and a few examples, students know what criteria they are being judged on and can analyze their own performance before submitting the assignment. By using peer grading, students also get to see other perspectives, analyze, and learn from anonymous classmates’ work. Canvas will help you randomly assign peer grading and keep track of all the results. Each of my students does five peer reviews so that everyone has an opportunity to see a variety of material. Canvas can also break the class into groups so students can get practice with teamwork and cooperation.

Do you ever wish you could be there when your students are grappling with the toughest aspects of the course? Create classroom activities for students to help guide them through problem-solving, applications, and the synthesis of their understanding. I also utilize the Wiley online homework system to provide students with questions with immediate feedback each week. During class, I typically utilize i>Clickers to monitor individual student responses and get real-time communication of how well they understand the questions posed in class. Having gradable interactions in class helps keep students focused and engaged on the discussions at hand; however, the exclusive use of multi-choice and numerical answers makes it difficult to promote the higher levels of learning.

Then, the next question becomes: If class time is spent questioning reaction outcomes, making concept maps, and

focusing on higher levels of learning, how can you transmit all the content they need initially? I partially flip the class by putting some of the information on Canvas and upload content modules to supplement the course material. Students appreciate the ability to work ahead and see material further in advance. Not only do they have more time to practice before exams, but they can also learn at their own pace and stop or rewind at any time. By increasing the flexibility of their study schedules, this type of format is helpful to the students who play sports, and the increasing number of students who work either part or full time.

Keeping the modules in the same order of presentation avoids confusion, so I keep the format the same: a worksheet or notes they can print, a short video, a PDF section of text, a short quiz, and a discussion forum. The worksheet and notes give them practice problems and an outline to work through. Students are best reached in short bursts, so topical videos are fairly short PowerPoints (10 minutes). They each already have full-access to the text through the Wiley online homework system; however, many students don’t read the text within the Wiley interface. I attach the relevant section of text as a PDF into the module. If the video isn’t crystal clear, then they can review that portion of the text before they take the quiz. The quiz that follows examines their ability to apply the pattern they learned in the notes, video, and text. I give them three tries to get the correct answer and they get immediate feedback each try. They are also able to discuss the quiz on the forum for hints to guide them the next time around. There is no reason they shouldn’t all be able to get very high scores on these quizzes, but the bigger goal is that they understand why the answer is correct, are encouraged by a successful experience, and are ready to confront tougher examples in class.

Kimberly B. Fields is an Instructor in the Department of Chemistry. She joined the USF faculty in the summer of 2012. Currently, she is serving as an instructor for Organic Chemistry II.



USF FIT Program: A Win-Win for Exercise Science Students and Employees

JoAnn M. Eickhoff-Shemek, Professor & Kaylee Couvillion, Graduate Assistant

My first attempt with service-learning was many years ago at my former institution – the University of Nebraska at Omaha. After realizing the many positive outcomes of service-learning for both our students and community partners in Omaha, I felt it was important to provide our Exercise Science (ES) students here at USF with similar experiences.

Since 2005 when the USF FIT program began, it has become an integral part of our ES capstone course -- PET 4088 Individualized Fitness/Wellness Programming. This past fall semester, I taught this class with the assistance of Kaylee Couvillion, a Graduate Assistant in our ES program.

The USF undergraduate ES program accepts 30-35 students (cohort model) in the fall of their junior year. The students enroll in PET 4088 in the fall semester of their senior year after completing 12 professional development courses in the fall, spring, and summer of their junior year (e.g., exercise physiology, biomechanics, fitness testing/prescription). The real-world experience provided in PET 4088 helps our students connect theory taught in our courses with practice and also provides them with an opportunity to enhance important skills (e.g., teaching, interpersonal communication, time management) essential for their internship the following semester and future professional jobs.

Designing the FIT Program

Major objectives of the FIT program include helping our students realize the importance of (a) teaching clients proper form/use of equipment as well as principles of safe exercise (e.g., warm-up/cool-down, progression/monitoring intensity), and (b) following safety standards published by professional organizations when designing/delivering exercise programs. The community partner for the FIT program is different than in a typical service-learning course which is often a community agency/organization. For FIT, we recruit USF employees -- faculty and staff members in our College of Education who we refer to as our FIT clients. The students, in pairs, are assigned to a FIT client. In fall 2014, we had 32 students and 16 clients. Clients pay \$30/each to enroll in the program which covers program expenses including a fitness booklet they each receive, *Physical Fitness: Guidelines for Safe and Effective Exercise*. The FIT program involves several phases throughout the semester:

1. Pre-activity screening of FIT clients
2. Training of ES students to learn how to properly teach exercises using the equipment in our Campus Recreation facility
3. Students conduct an initial interview/consultation with their

FIT client

4. Students conduct pre-fitness assessments (e.g., fitness variables such as cardiovascular endurance and body composition) and prepare a report to share with their client
5. Students provide personal fitness training sessions for their client twice per week in the CR facility for 8 weeks (one session during class time and one outside of class)
6. Students conduct post-fitness assessments of their client and prepare a report indicating improvements from pre-fitness assessment scores
7. Students give oral presentations in class describing the exercise program they designed for their client explaining and citing ES theory/research used in the design
8. Celebration for participants (students share the post-testing report with their client) and students prepare a FIT Program Summary for their Professional Portfolios

Although we evaluated student performance throughout all phases, grading the assignments related to Phase 5 was the most labor intensive. We used detailed rubrics to grade written exercise plans (e.g., listing/description of all exercises to be taught in each session) and reflection forms (e.g., an evaluation of each session) prepared each week by the students. This weekly feedback was important for the students as they progressed with their client and valuable to us to help ensure the exercise plans were safe and effective.

Evaluating the FIT Program

Formally evaluating service-learning projects and publishing the results is an effective way for faculty members to demonstrate an integration of their teaching and research. The USF FIT program was formally evaluated with the results published in two journals several years ago. In fall 2014, we conducted an informal evaluation to obtain both student and client feedback. Student feedback regarding their learning was positive and evident in students' comments like the following:

"It was all wonderful! I am very appreciative of the experience, and I feel [more] ready to conquer my internship and future endeavors."

The objectives of the client evaluation were to determine how well our students performed from their perspectives and to obtain additional feedback about the program. The ratings they gave our students were positive and included comments like the following:

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Publish or Perish: Support for Being a Productive Scholar

Robin Brooks, Postdoctoral Scholar

Continuing its commitment to faculty success, ATLE launched a new Faculty Learning Community (FLC) for the 2014-2015 academic year, the “12 Week Faculty Writing Group.” This FLC aids faculty members with transforming their research into publications by providing them with the space and support to tackle the sometimes daunting task of simply writing for an academic audience. The goal is for faculty members to have an article ready to submit to a journal by the end of the process.

ATLE sponsored two cohorts of faculty from multiple disciplines across USF, including but not limited to English, Sociology, Education, Nursing, Pharmacy, Aging Studies, and Music. Each cohort consisted of twelve members who were partnered during the first session so that they could have the support of not only the wider group but also an individual partner who could assist them more closely with writing accountability. The pairs decided the terms of their partnership based upon their individual needs. For instance, some pairs decided to read each other’s work to assist with revisions, while others agreed to set specific weekly goals concerning their projects. The partnering strategy was particularly useful because faculty members were at various stages of their projects: some were revising completed drafts of their articles, submitting abstracts to journals, and working on different types of projects. Also, a few of the group members were departmental colleagues doing collaborations and used the FLC for uninterrupted time together.

Before the first session, ATLE provided group members with a copy of Wendy Belcher’s *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks*. The text was quite helpful, as it acted as a guide for the

structure of the FLC and presented practical information for producing winning publications. Throughout the semester, faculty members met every week for an hour and a half in a conference room in the USF Tampa campus library. The beginning of each session was spent discussing a chapter from Belcher’s book. During this time, FLC members also shared experiences encountered along their publishing journey. Some expressed feelings about rejection and offered useful tips about how to deal with this inevitable part of writing for publication. After discussion of the chapter, the pairs went to separate areas of the library and worked on their articles. By the end of the semester, a number of the FLC members had submitted articles to several journals and some were already working on second manuscripts. Surely, the benefits of this campus-wide faculty writing group are far-reaching, as it promotes community-building and research productivity among USF faculty.

Dr. Robin Brooks is a Provost’s Postdoctoral Scholar in the Department of English at USF. Her primary areas of research and teaching are in 20th and 21st century African-American, Caribbean, and American Multiethnic literature.



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“This program was just what the doctor ordered! It changed my life by putting me on the path to wellness. I am very grateful.”

As the comment directly above reflects, FIT clients over the years have experienced many health benefits associated with regular exercise – both physically and mentally. Each year, our FIT clients have shown improvements in the fitness variables measured. Because of these many benefits, some of our clients are regular participants enrolling in FIT the last several years. Their support of our program and students is much appreciated. We are proud to say that the USF FIT program is a win-win for both students and employees.

Dr. JoAnn Eickhoff-Shemek is a full professor in the Exercise Science program at USF. She served as the founding coordinator of the USF undergraduate Exercise Science program from 2003 – 2012.

Kaylee Couvillion is a Graduate Assistant in the Exercise Science program. She teaches physical activity courses and also assists faculty with teaching undergraduate courses in exercise science.



Submissions

Faculty Voices is a scholarly publication that is written by and for faculty at the University of South Florida (USF). It is published by USF's Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE). Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty, whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This publication represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing USF community. *Faculty Voices* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at atle.usf.edu. Please send your submissions to atle@usf.edu.

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