Community College Moment

The Changing Classroom

Community College Moment

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Editors' Notes

In this fourteenth volume of *The Community College Moment*, contributors from ten colleges offer perspectives on "The Changing Classroom." Shaila Mulholland and Claudia Tornsäufer contextualize computer-mediated learning within the broader history of distance education. Erin Doran explores the relationship between new technologies and multiliteracies. Anne B. McGrail reports survey results on the digital evolution of the humanities, while Sandy Brown Jensen takes readers on a digital storytelling journey with students creatively defining themselves in relation to their educational pursuits. Less in the realm of technology but no less attuned to the cutting edge of change at community colleges, Casey Reid examines reform around completion rates and big data through the lens of hope theory, Polina Kroik explores the corrosive trend toward overreliance on part-time faculty, and A. Louise Warner shares lessons from Muslim women on practical and cultural aspects of wearing cloak and veil on campus. The front cover image, Hijab Lessons, reflects the latter topic in a snapshot taken by Todd Green during a Luther College study abroad fieldtrip to Europe. Completing the mix are book reviews about faculty learning communities and the history of writing instruction by Lyda Kiser, Diane Lerma and Stuart Brooks, fiction by J.S. Simmons, memoir by Dan Armstrong and Philos Molina, poetry by Peter Jensen, Ken Zimmerman and Jean LeBlanc, and visual artwork by Kathleen Caprario, Jerry Ross and Ellen Cantor. We hope readers find something within this year's *Moment* that they can take with them as they approach the ever changing classroom.

Russell H. Shitabata and Ben Hill, editors

Essays

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

– John Milton

Distance Education: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Considerations

Shaila Mulholland and Claudia Tornsäufer

Introduction

While distance learning, or online education, may seem to be a new phenomenon, in reality courses in which student and instructor are separated in time and space have existed for close to 200 years. Indeed, the concept of education at a distance grew dramatically when educational, community, and state leaders were increasingly providing educational opportunities to local communities and with the early development of community colleges in the mid- to late-19th century (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). With the development of correspondence education and various new technologies, teaching and learning functions of postsecondary institutions could expand beyond the buildings of the campus.

Most researchers have proposed that the advent of distance education coincided with the invention of new technologies such as the printing press, postal service, radio, television and internet (Holmberg, 1995; Moore and Kearsley; 1996; Casey, 2008). Schlosser and Anderson (1994) stated that the roots of distance education were more than 150 years old, while Moore and Kearsley (1996) referred to the origin of distance education in the United States as the beginnings of the correspondence courses offered in the early twentieth century.

The history of distance education has been divided into three generations: 1) correspondence study; 2) multimedia distance education; and 3) computer-mediated distance education (Sumner, 2000). The purpose of this article is to review the history of distance (or online) education and to explore how its development is changing the classroom. Growth in online instruction has impacted the ways in which students learn and faculty teach, giving rise to many strategies for maintaining the interaction typically present in the traditional classroom. The article will begin with a brief background on some key issues and questions surrounding the increase in distance education. Next, a historical perspective on distance education will be presented to highlight some of the significant changes that have occurred in delivering education at a distance. Close attention will be paid to contemporary challenges and issues encountered by educators within community colleges. The article is intended for faculty and educational leaders who can shape policy and practice to better support the successful persistence of all students seeking to attain educational and career goals, whether in the online or traditional classroom.

Background

Throughout the US and the world, online education continues to grow at all levels, including K-12. According to the report released by the Instructional Technology Council (ITC) in April 2012, growth in distance education enrollments at community colleges exceeded the overall growth in campus enrollments. The number of students taking at least one online course in the US grew substantially for the ninth straight year and now surpasses six million. However, participants in this ITC survey reported that distance education enrollments grew by 6.52 percent from fall 2011 to fall 2012. This pace was slower than in previous years (fall 2007 to fall 2008 saw a 22 percent increase), but the increase distance education realized stands out when compared with the overall 2.64 percent *decline* in student enrollment in higher education for the entire student population.

Over the past decade, enrollment counts in online courses at colleges and universities around the US have grown at a greater rate than overall higher education enrollment (Allen & Seaman, 2010). The number of students at degree-granting postsecondary and higher institutions taking at least one online course increased by 21% from the fall of 2008 to the fall of 2009. Over that same one-year period, total enrollment increased by only 1.2%. The nationwide political climate seems to accelerate the growth of online education.

For fiscal year 2012/2013, the majority of governors proposed additional budget cuts to core services in higher education to meet the continued fiscal difficulties of their states (Johnson, Oliff, &Williams, 2012). Most of the proposed cuts were beyond those already implemented and left educational systems with the colossal dilemma of offering effective education to an increased number of students with drastically reduced funds. In this context, Cohen and Brawer (2008) found that the "distance learning and technological infrastructure have been hailed as leading to potential cost reduction and great savings" (p. 173). Researchers found a variety of online education models that reduced the cost of education, for instance by reducing use of campus-based facilities (Moore & Kearsley, 2011; Chen, Lambert & Guidry, 2010).

According to Young (2011), 51 percent of presidents in postsecondary and higher education expressed a desire to expand their institutions' online course offerings. In their opinion, online courses offered the same quality learning opportunities as the more traditional instructional learning modalities, such as on-campus courses. Furthermore, the majority of college presidents pronounced the forecast that in the next ten years over half of postsecondary and higher education courses will be delivered fully online (Parker, Lenhart & Moore, 2011). Young concluded that the presidents' rationale for more online course offerings was to reduce the cost of education while allowing colleges to serve a larger number of students.

According to Twigg (2003) one approach most favored by institutions of postsecondary and higher education is keeping student enrollments the same while reducing the instructional resources devoted to the course. Twigg described institutions that increased student enrollments with little or no change in course expenditures by increasing the section size. In some cases, one faculty member, who had traditionally taught one section, handled several sections simultaneously with the help of a course assistant. Additionally, technology-assisted activities such as online automated assessment of exercises, quizzes, and tests can reduce the amount of time that faculty spend on the management of assessment. Twigg went so far as to suggest that instructors may also be able to eliminate duplication efforts by sharing course materials, such as online tutorials, with other colleagues.

Within community colleges, *course completion* (also referred to as *retention*) in online education is a growing concern among educators. Online learning enrollments have increased more quickly at community colleges than at four-year institutions in the past decade; however, according to Xu and Jaggars (2011) there remains a dearth of research on retention outcomes in distance education, specifically for community college students, and questions remain regarding the effectiveness of distance education in the community college setting. Moreover, the authors find evidence to suggest that students who are less academically prepared may struggle with online coursework. They concluded that online education in key introductory college-level courses (i.e., gatekeeper courses), as currently practiced, may not be as effective as face-to-face instruction at community colleges, and that to increase the retention and course completion outcomes for students, it may be necessary for institutions to invest substantially more funds and resources in developing and evaluating online courses.

Similarly, according to Summers, Waigandt, and Whittaker (2005) students' satisfaction with the learning environment is an important measure of their approach to learning and their learning outcomes. Student satisfaction applies equally to online students as it does to learners more generally (Palmer & Holt, 2009). Within the next ten years, more than 50% of postsecondary and higher education is expected to be delivered via online courses. However, 71% of American adults expressed hesitation to utilize online education (Young, 2011). If this trend continues, online education will deter educational accessibility to a large number of students. Therefore, it is imperative to identify and implement methods in distance education that will increase student retention.

Researchers (i.e., Summers, Waigandt, & Whitaker, 2005) have found that increased interaction leads to increased student satisfaction in online classrooms. According to Sumner (2000), distance education can be differentiated by technologies and communication approaches – either one-way (e.g., radio, television, etc.) or two-way communication (e.g., telephone tutoring, videoconferencing, etc.). Two-way technologies allow interactivity be-

tween the teachers and learners, as well as among learners (Bates, 1993). This distinction is an important one to consider for faculty. As Sumner explained:

> Interactivity involves the ability of the learner to respond in some way to the teaching material, and to obtain comment or feedback on the response, which considerably increases learning effectiveness. This interactivity, which can lay the foundation for the creation of the public space that enables communicative action, separates education from indoctrination. No amount of one-way technology can achieve such interaction. This distinction does not mean that there is no place for one-way technologies in distance education, but that they should supplement, not dominate, the distance education experience. The distinction between one-way and two-way communication technologies has implications for distance education far beyond the technological. (p. 271)

Sumners goes on to say that the distinction between these types of interactions also illustrates changes in understanding learning as a social process, and not solely as an *individual* matter. In other words, students learn "best by and with others" (Sumner, 2000. p. 272). With communication as the basis, social learning cannot occur in isolation.

Researchers have continued to examine strategies for maintaining instructional quality in the online environment, including the importance of using a variety of instructional methods to appeal to various learning styles and building an interactive learning environment that includes group work.

Historical Perspective on Distance Education

One of the earliest examples of distance learning on record was designed by Sir Isaac Pitman, an English educator, in 1837 (Holmberg, 1995). He taught students how to write in short hand through weekly lessons, which were sent to their home. These simple, practical lessons allowed anyone to gain valuable job skills even if they lived remote from educational institutions (Casey, 2008). In 1873, Anna Ticknow presented educational opportunities to women in the US through home study via correspondence courses (Nasseh, 1997). William Rainey Harper, who helped to establish the University of Chicago and Bradley University, served as the first president of both institutions. He was influential in the development of a correspondence program at Chautauqua, NY in 1885 as well as a key actor in the early development of the system of community colleges (Ratcliff, 1986).

It became possible for education to be delivered even further beyond the college campus with the development of the Cooperative Extension Service through the Smith Lever Act. Educational programs were offered through cooperative arrangements among federal, state, and local governments, as well as between researchers and practitioners, to provide a service to adults in the community, particularly farmers, homemakers and other "vocationally oriented people" (Charters, 1996, sec. 4). While Land Grant colleges and universities

were the primary institutions developing such educational programs, private universities soon realized that they too could contribute to providing educational opportunities for adults in their communities.

The evolution of distance education in the 20th century continued with live educational radio shows, which allowed students to experience immediacy and the voice of their instructors. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), over 200 colleges and universities were granted educational radio licenses between 1918 and 1946. Even though most radio courses were not college-level credit courses, Casey (2008) stated that "correspondence courses and instructional radio shows paved the way for distance learning opportunities through television technology" (p. 46). In 1934, the University of Iowa was the first university to utilize broadcast courses by television (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).

By the 1960s, the Educational Broadband Service (EBS), formerly known as the Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS), created a band of twenty TV channels available to be licensed by the FCC to local credit-granting educational institutions. It allowed institutions to deliver live or pre-recorded instructional television courses and shows to multiple sites within school districts and to higher education campuses (Reisslein, Seeling & Reisslein, 2005). Cohen and Brawer (2008) noted that distance learning increased in the 1970s with new technologies such as open-circuit television and reproducible media (e.g., cassette tapes, VHS tapes, laser disc). According to Casey (2008), "distance education flourished in the U.S. for several reasons: 1) the great distances of citizens from educational institutions, both geographically and socio-economically; 2) the thirst for education; and 3) the rapid advancement of technology" (p. 45).

With the emergence of the internet and increased access to bandwidths from private homes to the internet, the delivery of distance education videos via web-streaming has become more widespread and has replaced much of the delivery through ITFS/cable TV. The past two decades have witnessed the most rapid developments in distance education via the internet. Today, distance learning has evolved to online courses with multiple new delivery and instructional methods (e.g., web-based live meetings, virtual office hours, student blogs). Though debates surrounding issues related to distance education have not yet abated, more and more institutions, entrepreneurs, educators, and learners are embracing distance education with the aid of web-based information technologies. The development of distance learning via the internet coincided with the development of virtual campuses, particularly for-profit institutions, such as Capella University, Walden University and the University of Phoenix. Viewed from various perspectives, online education brings many advantages to postsecondary and higher education. Online learning facilitates opportunities to engage students who traditionally would not be able to pursue postsecondary

educational goals (Nasseh, 1997; Ratcliff, 1986; Casey, 2008), including students with disabilities, from rural areas, with children, serving in military service abroad and students who have full-time work or who seek international collaborations (Moore and Kearsley; 1996; Casey, 2008; Cohen and Brawer; 2008; Renes & Strange, 2011).

Former community college president and CEO Emeritus of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), George Boggs, pointed out that:

> … learning opportunities and services are now expected to be offered twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Distance learning technologies are erasing geographical boundaries, and competition for students is increasing. Community colleges are being asked to help bridge the "digital divide," and prepare students to live in an increasingly global society and economy. (p. 18)

Given increasing evidence that internet information and communication technologies are transforming society, online education will be the defining transformative innovation for higher education in the 21st century (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). Since online learners have access anytime and anywhere to formal and informal education provided by experts and peers, online education has radically altered the relationship of the learner to the teacher, to other learners and to the curriculum; giving rise to unprecedented new forms of interactions (Harasim, 1996).

Today, most online courses are based on asynchronous Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as CampusCruiser LMS, Blackboard, WebCT, Moodle, and Sakai. The California Community College System (one of the oldest community college systems in the nation) Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) defines this method of instruction as Delayed Interaction (Internet Based) and explains further that "the sessions are under the supervision of an instructor not available by line of sight using internet" (see Appendix of Data Element Dictionary, Management Information System Office, CCCCO, pp. 1-2). Hereafter, this instructional method was called "asynchronous" in alignment with other research in the field. In asynchronous online courses, students can review course material and complete assignments when it is convenient, usually within given time limits. Students read, review multimedia content, complete projects, post on the discussion board and take quizzes or tests. Other online learning resources that are used to support asynchronous learning include email, threaded online discussion boards, wikis, and blogs. Course management systems support online interaction, allowing users to organize discussions, post and reply to messages, and upload and access multimedia learning modules.

Contemporary Challenges

In recent years, many instructors have attempted to emulate traditional instructional methods in the online learning environment through the use of technologies that allow

two-way simultaneous interaction (Grant & Cheon, 2007; McBrien, Cheng & Jones, 2009). Distance education with simultaneous interaction offers opportunities for direct teacher-student contact. Hereafter, this instructional method was called synchronous in alignment with other research in the field. Shi and Morrow (2006) explained further that the instructor leads the learning and all learners are logged on simultaneously and communicate directly with each other. Synchronous software that is popular in educational settings, such as Centra, HorizonLive, Blackboard Collaborate/Elluminate*Live* (henceforth referred to as CCC Confer), Interwise, Adobe Connect, Webex and Wimba share several interactive characteristics. They allow students and instructors to communicate verbally in real-time, exchange chat messages through typing, upload PowerPoint presentations, transmit live video, use live closed-captions, create web-based recordings, surf websites together and/or share applications. Researchers have suggested that interaction in a synchronous online environment resulted in increased learning (Khajvinia, 2007). However, these arguments are more theoretical than empirically supported (Allen, Mabry, Bourhis, Tittsworth & Burrell, 2004). The existing studies assessed only a limited sample size across limited instructional environments in California Community Colleges (Adams & De-Fleur, 2006; Skylar, 2009; Enriquez, 2010).

One such study, by Enriquez (2010), examined the retention outcomes for two courses at a small community college in the Bay area that included the combined number of 25 online students and 30 on-campus students. All students were Electrical Engineering majors during 2008 and 2009. Enriquez used the virtual classroom space to develop a dual mode of delivery to reach students simultaneously online and in the classroom. He assigned identical homework, exams, projects, and other course requirements to both groups of students, establishing equivalency of content and rigor in both the online and on-campus formats. Enriquez demonstrated that the creation of virtual classroom space through the use of a synchronous learning environment reduced what Moore and Kearsley (1996) termed as *transactional distance*, which refers to the theory of cognitive space between instructors and learners in an educational setting. The synchronous environment, according to Enriquez, improved the quality of the educational experiences of the electrical engineering students in an online introductory electrical engineering course (circuit analysis). The analysis and conclusion of the study demonstrated that an online engineering course could be as effective as the traditional on-campus format. For this comparison Enriquez defined retention rate as the percentage of students who did not withdraw from the class, and hence received a grade of either A, B, C, D, or F. Success rates were defined as the percentage of students who received a passing grade (A, B, or C). The retention rates were almost the same with four students dropping from each group. The success rate of 80.0% was identical for the two groups. In summary, there were no statistically significant

differences in any outcomes between the online and on-campus groups. These results indicated that the online students learned as effectively as the on-campus students. These are noteworthy findings. Nevertheless, the small sample size and specialization area of the students limits generalization to larger populations. Further research in this area could help to identify educational strategies that are well suited for the online classroom environment. Research to investigate new approaches and pedagogy are needed from both the student and instructor perspectives to create an effective and quality learning environment. There is room for the development and/or improvement of instructional support strategies for community college students in the online classroom.

Conclusion

While access to college has been the major concern in recent decades, over the last years, college completion has led the national agenda. With so many online instructional modalities in American higher education, it is imperative to identify the best instructional and pedagogical strategies. Finding best practices in online education could prevent failing strategies from causing the apparent disparity between student retention rates in online courses versus face-to-face classes. Furthermore, it is vital to investigate a greater number of students in an array of subject areas with more demographic diversity over an extended period of time.

Identifying and choosing the conditions that foster student success in college has never been more important (Phelan, 2012). Zavarella and Ignash (2009) insisted that there is a need for choice in instructional format and delivery methods to meet students' needs in an online learning environment. As the discussion on asynchronous and synchronous online instructional methods continues, more data-driven assessments are needed to guide institutions, instructors and students in their choices of instructional methods. In light of the changing classroom, a better understanding of effective models of online delivery strategies that result in improved academic outcomes at community colleges is warranted.

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Hope Along the Pathways of Higher Education Reform

Casey Reid

Student success. Retention. Persistence. Completion rates. Acceleration. Modularization. Competency-based learning. Performance-based funding. These terms permeate the language of higher education reform right now with community colleges featuring prominently in the discussion. Nine years into my experience as a faculty member at a five-campus community college system, I am one English-faculty-member-turned-first-year-seminar coordinator thrust into the midst of these directional shifts. Over the last year, I have participated in a Complete College America-sponsored Completion Academy, the Lumina-sponsored National Convening on Higher Education Innovation Conference, and various state-level committees focused on overhauling course numbering systems, developmental education, and general education assessment. I assisted in writing my institution's Title III grants, which focused on changing how we approach first-year course delivery, developmental education, and student services, and was also made a co-chair for my institution's next Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation cycle because of my work with retention initiatives, retention and completion having been added as components of HLC accreditation.

Throughout these experiences, I have listened to keynote speakers, experts in change initiatives, and government administration officials, pondering what their ideas mean for my classroom. In Randy Swing's keynote at the 2013 Midwest First-Year Conference, he was clear: the era of big data is here, and another pilot or isolated initiative is not going to be enough to meet the new demands upon higher education.[1] The time has come for "disruptive innovation,"[2] a term borrowed from Mark Raynor and Clayton Christensen, and we in higher education need to be ready to embrace a radically different vision of what we do, a call that is not necessarily new but feels more immediate and pressing given President Obama's recent push to develop a college rating system by 2015 with the goal of tying financial aid funding to these ratings by 2018.[3] As someone hired to lead the types of initiatives to which Swing was referring, I came away feeling as I imagine my students often do after reading my syllabus: overwhelmed, disoriented, and unhinged.

Carrying these feelings and my emerging understanding of the larger picture of higher education, I returned to my developmental English classes and first-year seminar classes — the ultimate contact zones where so much is at stake between faculty and students within the context of learning, persistence, retention, and completion — wondering how

to refocus and answer the same question faculty before me have been working to address for years: what will I teach in class tomorrow?

Although it may not be capable of the sort of transformational change Swing and organizations like Complete College America and Lumina envision, *hope theory* has provided me some solace as I reorient myself and my behavior as an instructor within the quickly changing world of higher education. Positioned within the theoretical framework of positive psychology, hope theory includes the study of the goal setting and attainment process, which includes pathway thoughts and agency thoughts.[4] In C.R. Snyder's words, "Hope is the sum of perceived capabilities to produce routes to desired goals, along with the perceived motivation to use those routes."[5] The concept behind hope theory is simple: people who can set attainable goals, know what and who will be needed to meet the goal, cultivate and maintain motivation (a.k.a. agency) to keep them moving toward the goal, and negotiate obstacles that surface during goal attainment are more likely to be successful at meeting their goals. Within hope research, individuals are often categorized as "high hope," meaning they are able to use motivational thoughts and support systems to navigate obstacles and meet goals, and "low hope," meaning they struggle with pathway (motivational) thoughts and/or obstacle navigation and thus are less likely to attain their goals.[6]

What makes hope theory particularly attractive is that research suggests hope is malleable: a person's sense of agency and their perception of pathways toward success can be altered in ways that increase the person's overall hope and probability of attaining their goals.[7] Hope theory becomes even more attractive viewed within the context of research findings that suggest "students with high levels of hope get better grades and graduate at higher rates than those with lower levels, and that the presence of hope in a student is a better predictor of grades and class ranking than standardized test scores."[8] Given these findings and the ease of assessing students' level of hope with the 12-question Hope Scale,[9] colleges are beginning to use interventions based on hope theory to boost students' success in a variety of ways. For instance, when compared with students who had no intervention, students were more hopeful and reported more progress toward reaching a goal if they participated in 90 minutes of directed guidance in visualizing their goals, mapping out what it would take to meet those goals, writing about potential obstacles and obstacle resolutions, and processing how they would motivate themselves throughout the goal attainment process.[10]

After hearing Shane Lopez speak at a local university and reading his book *Making Hope Happen*, I became enamored with the possibilities hope theory presented for enacting transformational change within my classroom — change that I hope will manifest in more student learning and higher persistence, retention, and completion rates. I was not alone in my interest in hope theory, as counselors and several other colleagues at my

institution were becoming intrigued by hope theory after reading Lopez's work, so when I approached a staff member in charge of writing tutoring at my college about linking a section of first-year seminar with a developmental writing class, I was excited when she suggested infusing hope theory into the curriculum of both classes.

To this end, I developed or significantly revised all of the assignments in my lowest level developmental writing class. To begin the semester, students had to set goals for their classes, including writing-specific goals for my class, and college in general. Periodically throughout the semester, students returned to those goals through journal entries, noted their progress, revised the goals as needed, and considered strategies and resources that could help them meet their goals. I incorporated assignments that helped develop students' sense of agency, including having students write about and bring pictures to class of whatever motivates them to be in college and meet their goals. Most students discussed family members, while some projected into the future and talked about careers they hoped to obtain. In an effort to demonstrate to students that they do have the capacity to meet goals they set, I had students recognize past success in setting and meeting goals and identify and describe a time when they overcame an obstacle. As part of their exploration of past goals and obstacles, students were required to think about the people who assisted in the process and the motivation that kept them going.

Other assignments were meant to assist students in building the pathways component of their hope, including the people and resources necessary for surmounting obstacles and reaching their goals. Early in the semester, I reinforced the campus scavenger hunt required in the first-year seminar class and built opportunities for students to use those resources into the writing class, such as requiring students to interview a campus employee who could help the student meet their goals in college. I also had students describe a time when they did not meet a recent goal and come up with ideas to change the situation.

Throughout the class, I infused readings about basic components of hope theory to give the assignments context, using these readings as an opportunity to teach and practice academic reading strategies. I also brought stories from *This I Believe* to class to give students opportunities to practice applying their understanding of hope theory to others and other situations. Perhaps most notable of the *This I Believe* selections I used, Morris Mchawia Mwavizo's essay, "There is Always a Way Out," proved to be a perfect starting point for my students' understanding of hope theory: his first paragraph provides an excellent image of hope theory in action, and as we continued to read, we identified different components of hope theory in the context of the obstacles and set backs he encountered on his journey to become a writer.[11]

For the final individual writing assignment, the class read about how hope theory has been used at other colleges and wrote an essay giving specific suggestions to the col-

lege's administrators for what they could do differently to increase students' hope — and, concurrently, improve students' success. I was impressed with how well students' ideas aligned with both the agency and pathways concepts in hope theory and with what many researchers and policymakers are suggesting for higher education reform: accelerating developmental education coursework, pairing students with an advisor or counselor to give intrusive assistance, giving students a clear degree pathway with classes lined out for each semester, changing instructional strategies from primarily lecture-based to more interactive and engaging techniques, celebrating students' accomplishments and milestones — however minor — at the end of each semester, and connecting with students and letting them know that faculty and administrators appreciate that they are present and struggling to learn. "Followers — students, employees, congregants, citizens — all need hope," Lopez[12] writes, yet "Gallup research ... suggests that the vast majority of leaders do not spend enough time making hope happen," which speaks directly to my students' expressed needs.

The final assignment for the class was cultivated while having a class-wide brainstorming session, where I was working with students on suggestions for the administrators. I mentioned how the syllabus for most classes is not particularly motivating, and when the class erupted in nods and exclamations, I knew we had our final writing task for the semester: revise the writing class syllabus, as well as the first-year seminar syllabus to include more hope-based language and concepts. Again, students impressed me with their suggestions, which ranged from including inspiring quotes to including more information about campus resources to allowing students to write their goals into the syllabus as a sort of contract.

In the coming months and years, students' response to these hope theory-based interventions will be assessed through the lens of the kind of data that many want from higher education, data about their persistence and retention in future semesters, as well as their rates of transfer and completion. Fortuitously, the decision to use hope theory as a sort of theme for the class coincided with the decision to include Hope Scale questions in the beginning and end-of-semester surveys in the first-year seminar class, so changes in students' level of hope could be assessed, particularly as it relates to their agency and pathway thoughts.

For now, though, I already see benefits from my usage of hope theory. Notably, almost half of my students have dropped other classes (and, in some instances, all of their other classes) this semester, but they have remained enrolled and active in my class and the associated first-year seminar class, citing the connection they have made with me and my colleague and the hope-based work we have done as reasons for their persistence. When I challenged my students to write longer papers than the paragraph-length responses usually required in the lowest level developmental writing class and asked them to push themselves

to revise multiple times, they did. In fact, every student opted to write one to two-page papers and to revise two to four times, even when my comments called for rewriting and extensive revisions to content. These revisions have resulted in dramatically different writing than when my students began the semester and in my recommendation for the majority of the class to take an accelerated English class next semester that will allow them to complete two classes in a single semester.

Perhaps most importantly, though, my students have expressed on multiple occasions how important it is that they feel like I care about their success and how motivating my attention has been for their work and success. Again and again, they tell me they have more hope in both the traditional sense of the word and in the sense they have learned to understand through hope theory. Using Gallup survey research from around the world, Lopez says that when followers (in my case, students) have leaders who embody "compassion, stability, trust, and hope," the result will be "commitment, creativity, mutual trust, and engagement"[13] — four qualities that characterized my students' work and our interactions all semester.

Granted, these students self-selected to enroll in two classes linked by course content, so it will be difficult to accurately and reliably assess how their experiences compare with others. Regardless, my students and their responses to my hopeful curriculum overhaul have inspired me to re-envision my work in other classes and in the first-year seminar that I coordinate. Within both classes, I am revising course syllabi to include more hopeful language and hope theory-inspired concepts. In particular, I am making space in my syllabi for students to write their goals for specific assignment grades, attendance, and behavior. I am also including space for them to write down their motivation for completing their goals, potential obstacles that may impede their goal attainment, and resources and people who can assist them when problems surface. In addition to making my syllabi into living documents, I plan to incorporate time in class for students to set goals for the class and for each assignment, make it a priority to give feedback about goal progress, incorporate assignments that require students to connect with campus personnel and resources, take time to discover students' motivation and help students keep those motivating elements in mind, tap into that motivation as often as possible, tie assignments and activities to students' personal and career-related goals and aspirations, and make time for quick in class assessments to find out when students are struggling and assist them in coming up with ways to navigate obstacles and challenges. While I will certainly lose content delivery time with these new or slightly ramped up instructional choices, I believe they will be worth the gain if students can better articulate how my class relates to their goals, keep in mind their reasons and motivations for being in my class and in college, and make the kinds of connections with campus resources and personnel that Alexander Astin[14] and Vincent

Tinto[15] have demonstrated help students to stay in class and in college when they feel overwhelmed, disoriented, and unhinged.

My uses of hope theory may not accomplish all of the reforms that public officials, experts, and college administrators envision, but the theory does have the potential to give staff and faculty on the ground level of community college work concepts that easily merge with broader reforms. Within the landscape of higher education reform, I, like my students, need something to keep me motivated through whatever trials and obstacles may come with the new goals being set for those working in community colleges. Hope theory may make the path of enacting these reforms a little easier to navigate.

Endnotes

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[2] Ibid

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[12] Shane Lopez, *Making Hope Happen*, (New York: Atria Books, 2013), 177-178.

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Part-Time Faculty and the Changing Community College Classroom

Polina Kroik

One of the most significant and troubling trends in higher education has remained largely invisible to the public: increasing reliance on part-time faculty. Whereas in 1975 only 30.2% of faculty were part-time, today nearly 50% of higher education faculty are part-time and almost 75% are contingent (Monks; AAUP, "Inclusion in Governance").

Lane Community College falls within that trend. Currently at this well regarded, comprehensive community college in Eugene, Oregon, more than 60% of teaching faculty are employed on a "part-time" basis — though the term may be misleading as many part-time faculty work more than one job. Part-time faculty at Lane are paid about 30% less than full-time faculty for teaching the same courses, receive fewer benefits, and may share an office with four or more instructors.

Nationally, community college part-time faculty are typically accomplished instructors with advanced degrees and many years of experience. Yet their working conditions do not allow them to provide students the same level of mentorship and support as full-time colleagues. Part-timers spend less time on campus and often cannot see students outside of their designated office hours. Since they are employed on a term-to-term basis and are not paid to participate in governance activities, many have a tenuous relationship to their college and have little knowledge of degree requirements and campus resources. Such instructors find it difficult to offer students guidance and advice that may be crucial to their success (Street, Maisto et al.).

Recent studies on student success at community colleges identified meaningful and frequent interaction with instructors as one of the main factors determining transfer and graduation rates (Jacoby; Jaeger and Eagan). Such interaction is integral to the set of High-Impact Educational Practices (HIPs) which have been shown to increase student engagement and performance (Kuh). Learning communities and writing-intensive courses are examples of HIPS which have been implemented at Lane Community College. Learning communities, like most HIPs, call for a stable core of faculty who would develop a course plan and teach the material collaboratively. Though Lane has taken steps to promote stability within learning communities, most of the instructors for these courses are part-time and could lose their courses — and indeed their jobs — due to low enrollment. Unlike at many colleges, writing instructors at Lane are compensated for most of the labor-intensive activity of grading. Yet since many must teach on other campuses to make ends meet, part-time instructors are still limited in their ability to provide detailed and frequent feedback.

Though students may not know that most of their instructors are part-time, their college experience is shaped by the managerial model of "just-in-time" employment, and they feel its effects. As Street, Maisto et al. write in their report "Who is Professor 'Staff' and How Can This Person Teach So Many Classes," this model has become prevalent in U.S. higher education (4). Instead of allowing instructors to put together a yearly schedule, administrators wait until the very last moment to schedule classes. At Lane, a seniority system achieved through collective bargaining provides a measure of job security for veteran instructors. Yet most instructors can remember receiving a phone call from their department administrator two weeks or less before the beginning of term, offering a course section or announcing the cancellation of a class they had planned to teach. Most instructors agree that this does not provide sufficient time to prepare high quality course materials, or, in the case of a cancellation, to find alternative employment.

The effects of part-time employment on college faculty are clear and have been well-documented (Coalition on the Academic Workforce). It is not uncommon for part-time or adjunct instructors to rely on food stamps, food banks, charity clinics or other forms of government or non-profit assistance (Patton). Though Lane stands out in its financial support for faculty professional development, most recent PhDs become less eligible for full-time positions the longer they teach part-time. Part-time faculty usually teach the same introductory courses year after year, have little time for curriculum development and academic research, and few opportunities for meaningful collaboration with colleagues. Part-time instructors who have taught ten or more years see little recognition for their work and dedication. At Lane, these faculty have reached the top of the part-time salary scale and no longer receive raises. The administrative rationale for part-time employment as a means to maintain flexibility seems particularly hollow from the part-time faculty perspective, since they often teach the same course schedule for years on end. Since these faculty have few retirement benefits, they may have to work long past retirement age.

Students as well as instructors are shortchanged by the increasing reliance on part-time community college faculty. Part-time instructors at Lane often choose to prepare course materials on their own time, find alternative locations to hold office hours when shared offices are overcrowded, or otherwise shield students from the effects of their working conditions. Despite this, student complaints I have heard about instructors being distracted, over-reliant on technology, or unable to provide adequate advising are likely the result of this situation.

The employment of part-time faculty also has a powerful effect on the culture and structure of the college. Coming from a large public university where graduate teaching assistants were treated much the same as just-in-time hires, I was not surprised by the relative isolation I experienced during my first year of teaching. I was paid to teach a course or two

each term, and so, apparently, were colleagues with whom I had only cursory interactions. Yet the realization that this experience is the rule and not the exception, and that it is the product of our working conditions, is troubling. Though, of course, groups of faculty collaborate and exchange ideas, such instances among part-time instructors are the exception rather than the rule.

The ideology behind part-time employment goes against the ideals of communality and collaboration that Lane emphasizes in its curriculum and promotional materials. Unlike full-time faculty, whose commitment to the college is reciprocated in the promise of job security and adequate benefits, part-time faculty know that they are on their own. Lane administration relies on our ethical commitment to our teaching and to educational ideals. Yet ethical values and self-sacrifice can only go so far under conditions of economic deprivation. Though Lane has made some progress towards equity, the college would have to make a major structural shift in its employment patterns to align its practices and values. Such a shift would help forge an empowered and cohesive faculty that serves Lane's students while modeling values of collaboration, equity and inclusion.

A Brief History of Part-Time College Instruction

For many of us, it is difficult to imagine higher education without a high proportion of part-time and contingent faculty. In community colleges and public universities part-time or adjunct instructors and graduate assistants have been teaching a large portion of general education courses for over twenty years. In the last decade part-time faculty have become a clear majority at most institutions. Yet the reliance on part-time faculty has a specific and relatively short history, which is tied to global economic developments as well as the transformation of U.S. higher education. Reviewing this history reminds us that the present situation is neither "natural," as it sometimes appears, nor "necessary," as administrators may claim. The choice is not between adequate working conditions for faculty and affordable education for college students. It is one between an institutional structure that supports *both students and faculty,* providing sustainable quality education, and the current model, which shortchanges instructors and students alike.

Although part-time or adjunct instructors have taught at colleges and universities since the early decades of the 20th century, the history of contemporary part-time instruction begins in the 1970s. In the 1950s and 1960s the American higher education system expanded, opening its doors to an unprecedented number of young men and women. Though the expansion was partly due to the postwar economic boom, it was aided by an influx of government spending through the GI Bill, augmented financial aid programs, and defense-related grants. As late as 1975 only 30.2% of faculty in the U.S. were part-time and only 13% were full-time non-tenure track (Monks; AAUP, "Trends in Faculty

Employment Status.") Professionals, writers and intellectuals sought university positions because they offered a stable employment and income. Arguably, the university's postwar expansion also facilitated the entry of progressive and radical humanities scholarship onto college campuses during that time.

Yet as the baby boomers graduated in the 1970s and the country went into a long recession, the situation in higher education began to change. College attendance declined or flat-lined. The government enacted neoliberal policies, reducing funding for public education and forcing colleges to raise tuition. While it might be tempting to see the shift to part-time instruction as an inevitable outcome of these external pressures, the decision to restructure colleges and universities on the business model was the more significant cause for this shift.

Over the span of four decades, both private and public universities reallocated resources to buttress PR departments, augment Presidents' paychecks, and hire an army of administrators overseeing a variety of financial and promotional aspects of the college. In the seminal work *The University in Ruins*, Bill Readings documents the corporatization of Syracuse University, a large private university I attended as a graduate student. Undergraduate tuition at SU hovered around $50,000, and few students were awarded financial aid. Like the other universities, Syracuse had a successful sports team and poured millions of dollars into its athletic program. Graduate assistants in English received a stipend of about $10,000 to independently teach three writing classes during the academic year.

As the situation at SU suggests, the claim that colleges must replace full-time positions with underpaid part-time positions simply to keep their doors open is a fiction promulgated by administrators who believe that universities are businesses whose health can be measured by the size of their revenues. The true justification for the exploitation of adjuncts in private and public universities is not that it is necessary, but that it faciitates the application of university money to other expenses.

Despite the high proportion of part-time faculty in community colleges, these colleges have been more resistant to corporatization. Since community colleges rely almost entirely on government funding, here the increased reliance on part-time instruction was more of a direct response to economic exigency. Initially, the shift probably took the form of an expansion of the original function of these positions: to allow experts or professionals to share their knowledge. Since such instructors were thought to be employed elsewhere, their wages were nominal and they were not offered benefits or job security. Less explicitly — but likely just as frequently — part-time instruction was carried out by women who were not viewed as breadwinners. As decreased government funding forced community colleges to hire more and more part-time instructors, a sluggish economy and the outsourcing of jobs created a pool of candidates who were willing to work contingently and for low pay.

However, the fact that the percentage of part-time faculty did not diminish but continued to rise during times of economic growth, suggests that community college administrators and policymakers are now also following a business model. While administrators cite financial sustainability and the need to remain flexible in the face of fluctuating enrollment as reasons for employing part-time faculty, such arguments can easily be revealed as spurious. Despite the pay differential, employing multiple part-time instructors and contributing to their health insurance premiums does not result in a great deal of savings. Many part-time instructors have worked at Lane for a decade or more and in fact constitute the core faculty who reliably teach the same set of courses year after year. What the reliance on part-time instructors does achieve is a significant disempowerment of faculty, most of whom are treated as low-rung employees rather than independent professionals.

Quality Education and Just-in-Time Hiring

As business-led "reforms" in K-12 education show, the business model rarely improves student performance, and can have disastrous consequences for low-income and minority students. The most egregious failures occur when entrepreneurs and administrators attempt to implement "solutions" without consulting educators, or, as is more often the case, despite an explicit opposition. A similar "reform" movement has made its way into higher education. Instead of increasing funding and opening full-time positions, advocates, backed by corporations, are pushing for an increased use of technology in the form of MOOCs and online courses, the creation of bare-bones lower-cost degrees, and, most controversially, a two-tier tuition system.

These schemes are particularly troubling because they tend to be implemented in public colleges and universities that serve low-income and underprepared students. For example, San Jose State University piloted a MOOC for a developmental math class that showed poor results (Kolowich). The two-tier tuition system is being piloted in two California community colleges, where students now have to pay a premium to enroll in high demand courses (Fain). As studies have shown, and as instructors know from experience, the success of community college students largely depends on quality face-to-face instruction and mentorship. Neither of these plans increase student access to these resources.

While Lane Community College has resisted most of these trends, offering small face-to-face classes to all who wish to enroll, overreliance on part-time faculty undermines the College's mission of providing quality accessible education. The two practices that are most detrimental to the quality of education are just-in-time hiring and "at will" employment (meaning that instructors can be dismissed without cause). While the collective bargaining agreement protects most part-time faculty from these practices, administrators use loopholes and supposed scheduling exigencies to assign courses at the last moment or can-

cel sessions and effectively lay off faculty. These practices make it difficult for part-timers to adequately prepare their courses and create a permanent sense of instability. Instead of giving students their undivided attention, instructors must always be on the lookout for their next source of income.

As tuition rises in major state universities, community colleges remain the only truly public institutions of higher education. They are also unique in combining higher or continuing education with essential social services. For many of our students, the community college offers the only realistic path to upward mobility. While faculty employ a variety of pedagogies in engaging this diverse population, most agree that community college instruction requires a specific approach, grounded in an understanding of our students' educational backgrounds and goals. Just-in-time hiring and at will employment make it difficult to develop personalized pedagogies that would most effectively engage students.

This task is particularly challenging for newer instructors with no experience in community college teaching. I was such an instructor when I began at Lane. I received a phone call approximately two weeks before the beginning of Spring term, offering me a teaching assignment for one writing class. While I was grateful for the opportunity and had taught similar writing courses at a research university, I did not feel well-prepared. During the first week of class I had to scramble to fill out paperwork and collect classroom keys, and had to wait an additional week before I could log into the college computers. I had reviewed syllabi in the department office and made an appointment with the writing program coordinator to help plan my curriculum. Despite these efforts, the course I taught that term was not as effective as I would have liked.

As was often the case during the surge in enrollment Lane experienced after the recession of 2009, I was hired with a group of four or five instructors. The reason for hiring such a large number of part-time faculty was unclear, seeing that each of us usually taught only one course per term. I can only conjecture that since new hires can be let go at will, the administration had planned to offer continuing employment to just a few of us. During the first two years I was never sure whether the college would choose to renew my contract. Though I did what I could to improve my course plans and develop my pedagogy, I rarely felt as though I was part of the college. I spent much of my free time looking for work, or trying to figure out whether I needed to professionalize in a different field. Had I been employed full-time, I would have spent this time on campus, teaching and working with students, and I would have become a more effective instructor more quickly.

The reliance on part-time instructors who can be hired just-in-time and fired at will is part of a managerial model that approaches college education as a business enterprise. This model casts administrators and policymakers as those with the highest level of expertise and decision making prerogative. In this perspective, faculty are mere employees who

ought to conform to the managers' plans. This model stands in stark contrast to the one current at elite colleges and private secondary schools. These institutions invest in highly qualified faculty who play a key role in curriculum planning and governance. Schools and colleges that typically serve the wealthiest students rarely follow cost-saving trends like overuse of part-time instructors or overreliance on technology.

Though community colleges face financial limitations that elite colleges do not, we should strive to follow the best available educational models while resisting trends that prove to fail. As long as colleges continue to employ part-time instructors, they should do their best to make these positions steppingstones to full-time employment. Part-time instructors should be paid at a rate that would allow them to undertake professional development, and should be treated as full members of the faculty. At the same time colleges should invest in the creation of full-time positions and give priority, in hiring, to those with relevant teaching experience.

Even if Lane cannot convert most of its part-time positions to full-time ones in the short term, the college can provide better working conditions to its part-time faculty. Following both the language and the intent of the contract on assignment seniority, avoiding unnecessary part-time hires, and including part-time faculty in governance are good starting points. Having a stable, experienced faculty benefits students and the college as a whole. Such faculty can collaborate with their colleagues on curriculum development, learn about the courses student take in other departments, and gain knowledge about resources they can share with their students.

An ethical and equitable treatment of part-time faculty is also consistent with Lane's mission which emphasizes education as a path to upward mobility. Instructors who hold Master's degrees and PhD's yet are unable to pay their bills and have no better job prospects may find it hard to tell students that education will allow them to achieve their dreams. Lane, like other community colleges, prides itself on democratic forward-looking values. If these values are to continue to inform the education it provides, the college must also model them in its employment practices.

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Transformative College Teaching through Multiliteracies

Erin Doran

> Today, new technologies are influencing the social, political, and cultural contexts in which our texts are composed and shared. Since these technologies are influencing the development of individuals, institutions, and communities (and since individuals, institutions, and communities are shaping these technologies and their uses), it is essential for English educators to turn a critical eye toward the benefits and affordances; the limitations and liabilities of integrating these newer technologies into our teaching.[1]

Though the college composition curriculum ebbs and flows between trends such as expressivist and expository writing,[2] the general first-year composition is a standard part of the college core curriculum and has been since at least the 19th century.[3] Created as a means to bring students into academic discourse,[4] scholars such as Yancey note the perception of first-year composition courses to be “gatekeeper” courses for students who cannot master the skills of the academy.[5] Once a student completes this course, professors in other fields expect that students will come into their classrooms with mastery or at least minimum proficiency in the four Cs Yancey (2004)[6] identifies: “coherence, clarity, consistence, and (not least) correctness.” Students and college instructors expect composition to provide students with college-level literacy skills that arguably no other courses or disciplines are expected to provide.

The ability to write clearly is not only for students who intend on transferring to a four-year institution. A recent news report stated that employers are increasingly frustrated with job applicants who cannot effectively communicate through writing.[7] Some even go so far as to require writing samples from applicants with their applications.[8] In light of these criticisms of recent graduates, we should remain aware that all students who attend community colleges, regardless of the path they follow, should receive writing instruction that enables them to be successful in a variety of settings. Colleges should also integrate technology into their classes to bring a multimodal aspect to student writing. However difficult the task may be, Bickmore and Christensen remind us that a commitment to teaching students to write “means developing assignments and assignment sequences that actively engage students’ familiar practices, encourage them to develop new ones, and invite them to consider how the multimodal documents that emerge from their work and play might function in their lives and in the social settings in which they themselves circulate.”[9] In short, technology has the potential to connect all parts of a student’s life and build skills that transfer throughout these parts.

At the college level, Canagarajah observed an interesting divide between literacy education and composition scholars has emerged despite the fact that writing is a literate behavior.[10] They are separated by disciplines and informed by different traditions, histories, and epistemologies.[11] When English scholars discuss multimodality, they often refer to an end product or ways of constructing texts that use multiple or alternate modes.[12] Literacy scholars, on the other hand, speak of multiliteracies, a theory that "draws upon a range of new ideas about new literacies that have brought about by technological change and the globalization of new economics."[13] The difference between their concept of multimodality and multiliteracies is this: multiliteracies is a pedagogical approach in which the use and construction of multimodal texts is one part.[14] The research for community college instructors on the use of technology is incomplete without a framework for teaching that this approach provides. I argue that faculty and institutional leaders should reassess their concepts of the literacies needed to function and thrive in the 21st century and how multiliteracies can be implemented into college composition. Though I focus here on multiliteracies in composition, I also want to point out that this way of teaching has implications for instructors across disciplines.

First a note on terms: there are a variety of terms in the literature that relate to technology and writing. Composition scholars tend to talk about "multimodal composition." Others discuss the concept of "digital literacy."[16] Lankshear and Knobel's work on digital literacy shows that the term can be used in a variety of contexts.[17] For the purposes of this piece, I use "multimodal composition/text" and "digital writing" interchangeably and mean it to denote the process of using technology to create texts beyond the printed page.

Technology and Composition

Encouraged by calls to integrate technology by prominent scholars such as Yancey and Selfe, researchers are investing more time and energy to technology issues in the college composition class. There is certainly a perception that students are arriving to college as "digital natives," or students with seemingly innate technological skills.[18] However, Fraiberg observed that we do not have much research on rich descriptions of the construction of multimodal texts in the classroom.[19] This means that instructors may not have clear ideas on how to take on technology in the classroom and have some guidance on what that might look like in practice.

Selfe, arguably the most vocal advocate/scholar for technology in composition, notes the silence and antipathy she usually faced at national composition conferences when technology entered the conversation.[20] Selfe addresses the challenges of unequal access in her discussion on technology, noting that schools with large populations of students of color or poor students are less likely to offer their students the same access to technology

as their more resource-rich counterparts.[21] Though she does not make the distinct connection, these are the same students who are more likely to enroll in a community college for their postsecondary education. Some of these students probably represent those who Deil-Amen and DeLuca called the "underserved third," or students who are minority and low-socioeconomic status students who graduated from schools that provided inadequate college or workforce preparation.[22] With an awareness of this divide between access to technology, Selfe (1999) argues that to not pay attention to technology results in complicity in the maintenance of the unequal status quo.[23]

Nearly fifteen years later, technology in the composition classroom is not normative practice and the research does not point to a consensus on what to do with technology in the classroom, especially given that technology changes all the time. For instance, Moran's discussion of technology is clearly dated by now as he summarizes tools that are commonplace now such as email and online discussions.[24] More to the point, he writes that composition instructors are aware of the technology, but there was not yet a pedagogical strategy for using technology. As Takayoshi and Selfe (2007) point out, students in composition today are still asked to produce the same writing as their parents and grandparents.[25]

This is problematic because, as Grabill and Hicks suggest, technology has had tremendous effects on today's writing practices.[26] Technology changed how we produce writing as well as how writing is disseminated and the modes available to produce text. As these authors put it,

> When we put [all the changes] together, the ability to compose documents with multiple media, to publish writing quickly, to distribute it to mass audiences, and to allow audiences to interact with this writing (and with writers), challenges many of the traditional principles and practices of composition, which are based (implicitly) on a print view of writing, produced for only a teacher to read. The changing nature and contexts of composing impacts meaning-making at every turn.[27]

Grabill and Hicks succinctly tell us that technology's impact on writing pervades practice and pedagogy in numerous ways from creation to dissemination. Students' writing is no longer bound to their individual class and instructor.

Why is Multimodality Not Enough?

When Sullivan discusses multimodality, she provides a list of modes that move beyond printed text including Web pages, apps, and social networking.[28] However, some researchers have responded with concerns that technology and multimodality are used in classrooms without careful consideration of why and how they are used. Bazalgette and Buckingham write, "Our contention is that, in its popular usage, the concept of multimodality is being appropriated in a way that merely reinforces a long-standing distinction

between print and 'non-print' texts."[29] A web page or e-book replacing print text is not a meaningful use of technology; one mode is simply replacing another.

Goodfellow also addresses the confusion between digital literacies and the use of print texts in higher education. He contends that "digital" in higher education research generally refers to a student's skills and competencies rather than how technology becomes part of a student's sociocultural literacies and how students can use technology to make meaning out of their worlds.[30] Part of the tension in higher education with digital literacy is the (mis)perception that anything digital cannot be "academic."[31] Digital activities such as social media are perceived to be informal practices that take place outside of students' academic worlds.

What brings Goodfellow and Bazalgette and Buckingham's work together is their call for teaching students critical analysis through multimodal sources. This critical examination of sources includes a move beyond the surface of text and a consideration of who the texts were created for, who is left out or disenfranchised by a text, and what assumptions the author makes in the design. Design and analysis are two stages that critical literacy educators promote [32] and are often left out of higher education pedagogy.[33]

These researchers shed light on the fact that teaching with technology may be an incomplete practice. It is one thing to integrate technology to streamline tasks such as turning in papers or keeping in close contact with students via email in between class meetings. If we implicitly understand that technology is a key part of today's world and want to foster critical analytical skills in our students, why not use a pedagogy that brings together these two objectives?

Multiliteracies Pedagogy

A group of scholars collectively called the New London Group also recognized the need for reimagining our practices to fit the increased diversity in our classrooms and in the world, the evolving ways we communicate with one another, and the changing expectations of technology and literacy practices in the workplace.[34] Without major attention to these changes and solutions for addressing them, the New London Group expressed worry that social divides would only continue to grow.[35] As an effect, this group of scholars called for a new pedagogy they named "multiliteracies." Their pedagogy consists of four parts: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice.[36] Through these parts, instructors approach their students within their own sociocultural contexts, teach them how to critically analyze artifacts, and then guide them on how to transfer these meaning-making skills in other contexts or situations.[37]

Multiliteracies scholars such as Anstey and Bull reaffirm that the workplace literacies demanded of workers today have changed significantly over the last few decades. There-

fore, they challenge us as educators to think outside the normal, one-dimensional written words in order to draw upon different types of literacies in order to work with multimodal texts.[39] As students move beyond the written word as the primary means of communication, the work of Janks calls upon them to also consider the construction of texts (design), the underlying assumptions and power imbued within the texts, and then to redesign them to make them more equitable.[40] In short, we ask students to critically analyze texts by deconstructing them and reconstructing them in ways that are more just.

Goodfellow argues that sociocultural concepts of literacy and critical examinations of design are two parts that are missing in higher education.[41] In short, traditional approaches of college composition are no longer providing students with skills that literacy educators see as essential in today's world. A multiliteracies approach offers the opportunity to bring both of these parts into a community college classroom, enabling students to build skills that can work during their time as students and as they enter they workforce.

How Does Multiliteracies Pedagogy Change the Composition Classroom?

Multiliteracies, as Goodfellow states, should not be seen as a panacea to correcting any deficiencies in composition curricula or pedagogy without an examination of critical pedagogy.[42] Work such as Rowsell, Saudelli, Scott, and Bishop suggests that individual contexts carry their own particular challenges and needs, and there is no certainty that a multiliteracies approach will be successful in every situation.[43] However, the research on this pedagogy gives us as practitioners a compass from which we can choose where to go. In that case, what might multiliteracies look like in a community college composition classroom?

Research in K-12 settings gives us more examples for what multiliteracies pedagogy looks like in practice. For instance, Blady and Henkin describe the use of student-created multimodal texts on an anti-bullying project at a middle school.[44] Students created public service announcements with scripts they wrote, they wrote songs, and used video software to create their own short movies on the subject. The research on multiliteracies classes in college and university settings is not as rich as those in K-12 classes. However, there are some useful examples to draw upon.

Cooper offers an anecdote of his experience with multiliteracies teaching in a university setting.[45] In his college writing course, Cooper reframed his assignments so that students were developing websites for local non-profits in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Students received assistance with website design from students at a multiliteracies center available on their campus, and Cooper found that the amount of student writing was more or less the same as more traditional composition classes. Considering that some programs expect that students will produce a set number of pages of writing over the course of a semester, this

point is crucial. Reworking writing assignments to make them multimodal did not change the fact that students were still producing the same amount expected from other courses. Cooper readily admitted that implementing a multiliteracies approach to his course took a leap of faith and challenged his skills as an experienced composition teacher.[46] Students, even years after the course's conclusion, reported back how much they felt they learned in the course, including one student who pursued a career in advertising after graduation.[47]

Cooper used the multiliteracies center on his campus to provide some of the technical knowledge his students needed to build websites.[48] However, instructors should not be intimidated by misconceptions that using technology in their classrooms requires complex knowledge and skills that they do not have. Patrick introduces a way to teach audience perception by having students analyze their own Facebook pages.[49] Facebook may be a social media site that instructors are already familiar with, if not actively using, and one that can be easily learned for people who are not users. Patrick's lesson is a blend of critical theory and multiliteracies pedagogy by bringing together a digital source and an analysis of who students consider when they decide to create a post on Facebook.

Perhaps the richest description of creating a multimodal composition class using multiliteracies is from Bourelle, Bourelle, and Rankins-Robertson.[50] Their article is itself multimodal, published in an online journal that includes hypertext and video components. The authors reimagined a first-year composition classroom that included some traditional text-based writing but incorporated multimodal work, including a final digital portfolio. This article brings together many of the disciplinary frameworks of composition from organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English as well as muliteracies-based curriculum they developed. Along with providing student responses to the pilot study, the authors included one of their writing assignments as well as their grading rubric in the appendix.

Conclusions

Implementing technology, whatever the approach, is something that must be done with care. Bickmore and Christiansen write that allowing for multimodal writing required some changes to how assignments were evaluated and assessed.[52] Sullivan offers a useful discussion on evaluating experimental writing, which also includes multimodality, arguing that instructors have to be "prudent and imaginative" in their grading.[52] To be sure, retooling class assignments and expectations that allow for multimodality requires time, careful consideration, experimentation, and quite possibly a leap of faith. At the same time, multiliteracies offers a chance to bridge many of the goals and purposes of college and college writing courses: students can learn how to examine and critique sources and

improve their communication skills in ways that satisfy the demands of the world inside and outside college.

We know that technology is here and that its impact on the college classroom has been tremendous.[53] Yet instructors are still trying to make sense of this change, and research that offers clear guidance for pedagogy is lacking. The purpose of this article has been to address this gap by suggesting that multiliteracies pedagogy provides a starting point for thinking about ways to transform our practices to include technology. While research on multiliteracies is more developed at the K-12 level, the research offers strategies and lessons that can be modified for college-level work. I have focused on college composition as a site for implementing multiliteracies pedagogy, but the rise of technology affects instructors across disciplines and program areas. To that end, I encourage instructors from all areas to consider multiliteracies as a potential guide for transforming their teaching.

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National Survey of Digital Humanities in Community Colleges: A Preliminary Review

Anne B. McGrail

In 2013, I received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities Office of Digital Humanities for a project entitled, "Bringing Digital Humanities to the Community College and Vice Versa." In 2014, the white paper with project findings will be published on the NEH website here: http://1.usa.gov/1fCUoqa. One of the major activities of the grant was to develop and administer a national survey of community college humanities faculty to provide information for a strategic conversation about how best to support development of a community of practice in digital humanities in community colleges. For a definition of "digital humanities"— or "DH"— see Kathleen Fitzgerald's piece, "The Humanities, Done Digitally" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* which still serves three years after publication — rare in the world of DH (http://chronicle.com/article/The-Humanities-Done-Digitally/127382/).

The full text of the questions and an Excel file with the data collected are available on my blog here: https://blogs.lanecc.edu/dhatthecc/

My methodology was as follows. In June 2013, I drafted a set of survey questions based on the field as I knew it and gaps that I had observed in my engagement with the field. I posted it to a Google doc and solicited feedback directly from experts in the field of DH as well as colleagues I knew in the DH community. I also put a cold call for feedback out on Twitter with hashtags for digital pedagogy, digital humanities, community colleges and other key words and phrases. The program coordinator for the NEH ODH also consulted on the survey and offered suggestions. Finally, I discussed a revised draft with Lane Community College's institutional research director, who gave me some pointers about finding a balance between complete data and useable data and functionality. The resulting survey had 26 questions.

To distribute the survey as widely as possible, I used social media, emails, professional association listservs in history, philosophy, composition/rhetoric, the League for Innovation in the Community College, the Community College Humanities Association, the Two Year College Association, and direct appeals to officers of these groups. I also sent an email to faculty at my home institution. We received 185 responses from August to October 2013 with variations in numbers per each question. Below is a preliminary discussion and commentary on some of the survey results.

Q1 Familiarity

One thing I was curious about was what was already being done at CCs among faculty. How much were faculty using technology in their classrooms; did they consider this work "DH" or not, etc.? Results showed that the most common use of technology was student-production of multimedia artifacts: 67% of respondents reported familiarity with student productions of this sort. More than 50% were familiar with the use of technology to study human objects and culture (a key feature of humanities disciplinary inquiry) or the use of humanities methods to study technology.

Q2 Employee Role

Of the 166 who answered the question, 159 or almost 96% of respondents identified as faculty. Others were program directors and management.

Q3 Teaching Discipline

By far the largest number of faculty respondents taught courses in writing and rhetoric — with more than 43% or 72 respondents; 28% taught in humanities, 27% in literature, and 8% or 13 respondents in media studies/media arts. A few respondents were not on the list and so wrote in their disciplines: biology, GIS, and education disciplines responded.

Q4 Courses Regularly Taught

Since much professional development in digital humanities is at the graduate and primary-research levels, it was important to get a picture of our respondents' work life in the classroom. Respondents regularly taught first-year courses, either required (116 respondents or 74%) or elective (86 respondents or 55%). This was the largest contingent of faculty. Sixty-seven faculty or 46% did teach "special topics" classes or second-year courses; 20 respondents recorded that they taught professional development courses. My conclusion at this point is that faculty development must be designed with first-year required courses in mind if DH is to become prevalent at community colleges. While professional development opportunities such as THAT (The Humanities and Technology) Camps have become widespread, only one serves community college faculty specifically (planned for 21 October 2014).

Q5 Employment Status

Approximately 51% or 85 faculty were full-time at the same institution for more than 5 years; about 19% or 31 of those responding were full-time at the same institution for fewer than 5 years. Another 37 faculty or about 22% were part-time — about 14% from between 3 and 5 years and another 7% fewer than 5 years at the same institution. These results demonstrate a key flaw in much communication with part-time faculty: while nearly

70% of community college faculty are part-time or adjunct, only 22% of our respondents were part-time. So we are not hearing from enough part-time faculty. This is a structural limitation of the institutional reliance on part-time faculty.

Q6 Autonomy

With the question on course design autonomy, I wanted to understand the possibility of individual faculty developing their own infusions of DH, as I had done in the past 18 months. I know that many required courses at CCs use common textbooks and even common course calendars, and so I thought this might be a problem. About 62% reported complete or significant course design autonomy, with another 46% reporting some design autonomy. Only 16% reported little or no course design autonomy. This is encouraging for developing a DH community among these faculty, since DH methods require course redesign at some level.

• • •

Q9 Digital Divide: Students

I was interested in the so-called "digital divide" among students because I wondered how typical my own experience was. For this survey, I defined "digital divide" as the difference between those students who have access to technology through computers and other devices and data plans and those whose access is limited to classroom and lab access.

When attending the Digital Media and Learning conference in San Francisco in 2012, I noticed that presenters regularly commented how computers, data plans, devices, software and skills all represented economic obstacles to students. And in fact, just over 50% of respondents to this survey reported either a "pervasive" or "widespread" digital divide on their campus among students. Another 29% or 62 respondents found an "occasional" instance of it, and only 14 respondents or about 9% found a "rare" instance. This may change every year as computers become more prevalent and data plans become cheaper, but it's an ongoing consideration for any course redesign in community colleges.

Q10 Digital Divide: Faculty

When I put the survey questions up on Google Docs last June, I was really struck by the frustration expressed by part-time faculty about professional development opportunities at their institutions. So I worked to integrate issues of part-time faculty equity for professional development into the survey. For the purposes of this question, I defined the digital divide as follows: by "digital divide" we refer to a working environment that lends itself to developing and using digital competencies. This includes access to hardware, soft-

ware, tech support, adequately equipped office and classroom space, money and time for faculty development opportunities.

The question about the digital divide among faculty prompted the most pointed individual answer:

> • Part-time have access to shared computers, and digital classrooms, but that is all. There is no support for continuing education, and in fact, *any* support that was once offered, has recently been revoked due to keeping the hours paid, in any capacity, under 11, due to "Obamacare," per administration.
>
> • Oddly, it's mainly the full-time tenured instructors who are disconnected from technology use in the classroom.

A solid 67% of respondents did observe a digital divide among faculty: 29% saw it as a part-time/full-time faculty divide; 37% found that this divide was not due to part-time/full-time status. Given that a large majority (70%) of our respondents are full-time, this may not represent the part-time experience of the digital divide.

Q11 Online Components

A total of 71 respondents or 45% reported that they regularly teach online courses and have an online companion site for their face-to-face courses; 34 respondents or 22% reported that they don't teach online courses but have an online companion site for their face-to-face courses. Another 13% occasionally taught hybrid or online courses, and almost 21% said that they did not teach either online or hybrid courses. Again, we may have a skewed sample here, as the survey is online.

• • •

Q15 Meet Expectations for Faculty Staff Developement

About 70 respondents or 47% felt that their institutions were approaching their expectations for faculty and staff development through curriculum development grants, reassigned time, professional leave time, travel funds, sabbatical funds, relevant on-campus resources, etc. However, 34% felt their institutions fell below or far below their expectations for faculty and staff development. Only 19% said that their expectations were met. Thirty-seven respondents took the time to write individual responses/explanations. Here are some excerpts verbatim:

> • No funds or opportunities for adjuncts, but plenty of funds and opportunities for full-time faculty.
>
> • No funds for the part-time faculty who carry the bulk of our teaching load
>
> • Very unfocused allocation. We tend to fund a number of little projects that inevitably stall. It looks like we fund hobbies, not sustained infrastructure supported

research. No time release. Little travel funding. No IT support for anything outside the classroom, and even then IT support and currency is major impediment to doing DH-oriented anything.

• Workshops are offered but sometimes only once and at inconvenient times. Basic skill classes are mixed with advanced courses. It's hard for part time instructors to participate because workshops are often announced only a few days in advance, assuming a daily on campus presence.

• We are given funds to present traditional literary papers at conferences w/o question, but we would have to argue to get funds to attend a conference in which we would not present but learn from others who are DECADES ahead of our department in Digital Humanities.

• They will fund FULL TIME TENURE TRACK. That is all. They are less than 30% of the faculty.

• There are excellent opportunities, but we do not have any time built into our paid work to take advantage of them. I do not need to pay for them, but I lose time at another job when I spend time doing workshops.

• Little to no opportunities for part-time faculty who often have to teach elsewhere or have other commitments

• Gah. Deep despair.

• There is little or no travel funding.

• Staff and adjunct faculty have unreliable access to professional development opportunities.

Q16 Methods Used to Keep Current in the Field

While faculty's response to their institutions' efforts to support professional development was mixed or troubling, respondents' answers to this question suggests that faculty are engaging in many kinds of professional activities to keep current in their fields. With multiple answers allowed, and 160 respondents answering this question, 122 respondents or 76.3% said they learned from their colleagues — an important consideration for DH projects which often involve collaboration over time. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents also said they read journals and books in their fields regularly; 68% attended and presented at regional and national conferences. On-campus teaching workshops were also significant sources of professional development: 65% or 102 respondents attended them. Importantly, 66% or 105 respondents used what they learned in workshops in their cur-

riculum development. Almost 50% read journals and books on pedagogy, and 40% read about teaching and research on blogs. Nearly 36% use social media (e.g., Twitter) to keep current in their fields and in educational trends.

Q17 Conditions to Attend a Campus Workshop

Since the goal of my grant was to build a community of practice in DH at community colleges, I was curious to know what it might take to gather a group of community college educators together for a workshop. The definitional question about what exactly digital humanities is remains (see, for example, a recent article in *Inside Higher Education,* especially the comments section, here: http://bit.ly/1d33mox). Overwhelmingly, respondents felt that a strong understanding of the value and usefulness of digital humanities to their teaching was a critical condition for considering attendance at an on-campus workshop: of the 153 who responded, 76.4% or 113 chose this condition. Time released for the event was important for 44.6% or 67 of the respondents, and money for attending the event (a stipend) was critical to 42% or 64 respondents.

Q18 Conditions to Attend a Regional or National Institute

Money became more important for considering a regional or national institute such as those the NEH offers: 68 respondents or 46% said that money was critical, and 13% mentioned tenure/promotion credit as being a necessary condition. This question did not allow more than one response, so this was an interesting response. Several added "money and time are both necessary" in the "other/explain" column.

Q19 Interest in a Summer Institute?

The NEH has offered summer institutes on special topics for years, and recently has begun to support work in community colleges. The *Bridging Cultures* institutes, for example, are highly regarded and well attended, and represent a concerted effort on the part of the NEH to increase diversity and equity and cross-cultural understanding through pedagogy. When asked about respondents' interest in a similar week-long institute for digital humanities work, 65% were highly interested or interested in attending, and 22% were "mildly" interested. Only 11% were uninterested. Reasons were highly varied, and 28 respondents shared their opinions. A selection follows, verbatim:

- Because I am part-time faculty, the time that I am most likely to have more than two classes is during the summer term. It would be wonderful to attend a week long period with like minded peers, learning almost anything that would help students learn more effectively by encouraging digital literacy in the classroom.

- Normally my summer fellowships are for improving content. It would be interesting to have a week-long seminar/workshop to improve delivery.

• I can't say how valuable it would be to attend a summer institute to expand use of digital humanities methodologies in the classroom. I think digital tools will be essential for keeping classical humanities topics of enduring interest to 21st century students.

• I'm interested and I'm 50 w/ 25 years in the field. We need young faculty who already do and know this to help show us how. We've been hiring too many people in our own image of our selves (a 1970s "comp. & lit" model) to perpetuate the illusion that we're doing well. We've been living w/ our heads in the sand here at xxxx Eng/Com

Several other respondents offered reasons for not attending, from not wanting to travel during summers to needing to work summers for money and being too close to retirement.

Q20 Institutional Obstacles to Increasing DH Presence on Campus

Among the institutional obstacles to increasing DH presence on their campuses was a lack of clarity about the learning goals of "digital humanities" — a clarity that I contend will best emerge when community college faculty enter the conversation rather than letting the critical paths develop without their knowledge or input. Sixty-five per cent or 94 respondents wanted to know what DH is and why it's important. Sixty-eight per cent or 102 respondents felt that there was a lack of clarity about the difference between "digital humanities" and other kinds of technology on campus (e.g., the sentiment that "we already have computer labs and technicians"). Some (46%) felt that there was a lack of interest in what seemed to be trendy. A lack of commitment to supporting part-time faculty development was felt to be an obstacle to 35% of respondents. Lack of commitment on the part of administration to support new courses that are not directly related to job training was chosen by 23% of respondents.

Q21 Adequacy of Facilities for Digital Media Learning

The majority of respondents — 114 — found that the facilities for technology were adequate or highly adequate. However, there were some pointed critiques in the comments section:

• We have plenty of computer labs for math/science courses, but humanities courses do not have a designated computer lab or have minimal access to lab time.

• We have the technology. But not the expertise — least of all at the Administrative levels. Administrators seem to want to quantify everything w/a business model of efficiency of course delivery in mind, rather than genuine trust in faculty to use digital media to meet their learning objectives in ways that might be highly creative and

rewarding for and motivating to students (and therefore leading to higher rates of student retention and success) — though perhaps not "quantifiable" in the current Admin. matrix. Admin lacks a variety of "narratives" for imagining pedagogical uses of digital media — as do our older and young-but-old-school faculty.

• No Smart Board in my classroom, I teach Art History and still have to use an old Kodak projector for comparison images.

Q22 Familiarity with NEH Professional Developement

When asked about their familiarity with the NEH's professional development opportunities, 116 respondents were very familiar, quite familiar or familiar; however, nearly 25% were not familiar with them at all. Given how many respondents are full-time faculty teaching in humanities disciplines, this suggests that the NEH itself might expand its outreach to community colleges.

• • •

Q24 Familiarity with CCHA

While many were familiar with the Community College Humanities Association, 43% of respondents knew nothing at all about this national professional association. Given that so many respondents were full-time community college humanities faculty, this tells us that CCHA could expand its base. About 30% of respondents are regular attendees at events, which suggests that the CCHA is just one way to get the word out about digital humanities at community colleges.

Q25 Familiarity with League for Innovation in CC

While about 44% of those who responded had heard of the League for Innovation in the Community College or came from a League college, 39% were unfamiliar with the organization. The League has a lot of influence among administrators and can help set broad agendas for support of innovations such as DH.

Q26 Mechanisms for Development: An Open-Ended Question

Below is a selection of verbatim comments from respondents when asked what would be the most useful mechanism by which the NEH, the CCHA, the League for Innovation in the Community College, or other humanities organizations might support their development in the area of digital humanities pedagogy or research:

• Facilitate workshops that put me and my colleagues in touch with digital humanities experts and involve us in the ongoing conversation. Such facilitation would need to be supported by time off and/or monetary support (the latter depending on where such workshops were held).

- HAVE CHAPTERS IN EACH AREA AND EMAIL LISTS OR A PUBLICATION.
- If the League for Innovation is really of any value beyond a bragging right for college Administrators, it needs to be presented to humanities depts. and faculty as a serious means of prof. development for classroom teaching pedagogy in ENG/COM. NEH has established such a reputation.
- Either stipends for attendance, or webinars. Travel funds and travel time are the big obstacles.
- Offer 2-3 day conferences within driving distance and specific workshops/lessons easily transferable to my courses. Costs covered by my institution or free to veteran faculty.
- A CCHA National Conference seminar/presentation on the subject
- Short Webinars accessible from anywhere that give institutionally-recognized credit for faculty development. They should assume we know nothing, have knowledge of their target audience so its applicable to curriculum and be no more than 50 minutes in length.
- Funding. That is the bottom line. Faculty who WANT to be involved in CCHA are unable to attend conferences because of lack of funding. CCHA conferences are much more expensive than national conventions like the MLA or 4Cs, also. The registration fee is too high, the hotels are too pricey, the locations are often out of the way and require missing MORE work days just to travel to them (Louisville is a 15 hour one way door to door trip, in addition to the cost).
- I don't know if this is in their purview, but I'd need funds to spend time on any pedagogical development.

Drawing Conclusions

While designing this survey, I knew its statistical validity would be limited. I saw the questions themselves and the answers provided here as prompts for a national conversation more than hard data upon which to base policy decisions. If community colleges can respond to the concerns raised here and elsewhere, and begin to join the conversations already occurring in classrooms at four-year colleges and at research institutions, museums, libraries and archives, a national community of practice could emerge and influence the future of digital humanities. There has yet to be a community college moment in digital humanities, but it is coming soon.

Art

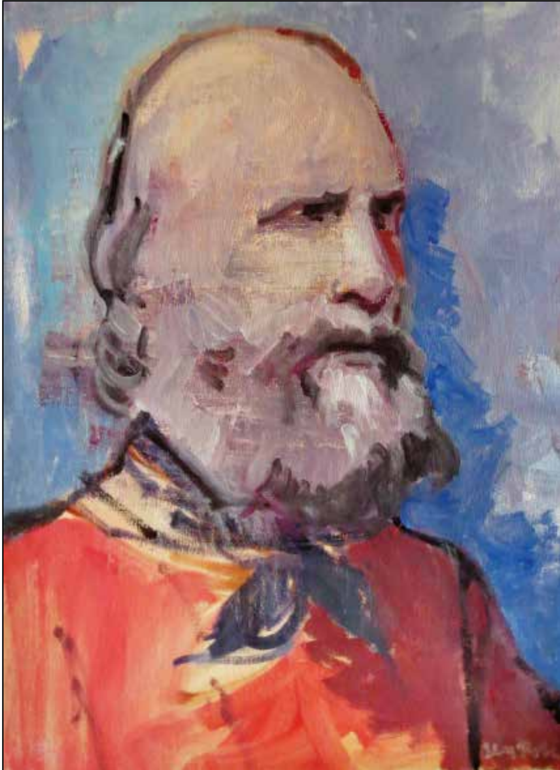
They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

– Andy Warhol

Storm Dreaming

Kathleen Caprario
mixed media on collage paper

Portrait of Garibaldi



Jerry Ross
oil on canvas

Anita Garibaldi

Jerry Ross
oil on canvas

The Vendor

Jerry Ross
oil on canvas

Snow Geese, Winter Rim, Summer Lake Refuge

Ellen Cantor
digital photography

Poetry

The need for change bulldozed a road down the center of my mind.

– Maya Angelou

Double See Sandpipers: rondo redoublé

Peter Jensen

for Sandy, Cheryl & Tom at Gray's Harbor

A flock of sandpipers flies by tan,
flips over like sloops and turns all white
and soars straight up, tacks tan again,
then spins, goes white in rainy light.

We wade along the soaking edge
of an airport runway in the rain.
We find a point to sit on in the sedge,
and a flock of sandpipers flies by tan.

I track them with binoculars
hoping to shed a little light
on how they steer like feathered stars,
flip over like sloops, and turn all white.

They disappear against the sky,
bright and invisible in the rain.
Just as I wonder if they're low or high,
they soar straight up, tack tan again.

Do they signal, or do they think
as they all swirl up in one flight?
I follow their flock until in a wink
it spins, goes white in rainy light.

Envoi:

I've lost them in the silver light
like sweet beliefs that now are gone.
Suddenly, they swoop to my sight:
that flock of sandpipers flies by tan.

Wallowa Lake

Peter Jensen

These mountains take us back back back in time;
This lake reflects that sky and alpine glow.
A touch of peach smudged in with green of lime
Makes me see time at least a two-way flow.

A Nez Perce beader Maynard dazzles us
With his seed beadwork and fine design.
Ursula LeGuin points out to Molly Gloss
How his blue water beads do (fish) define.

Here gray of mountains meets the pink of sun
As daylight fails, and birds record the loss
Of a prime summer day's warm profusion
Of delights and light's decline into night's dross.

Here stood Chief Joseph (in this lakeside park),
And that thought makes me wish for kinder dark.

Last Splinter

Ken Zimmerman

The fire needs to be lit
in the chilly, late summer night.
When I come back to the room hundreds
of tiny memories cling to my palm
from holding the wrong kind of bark.
One at a time I pull them out,
but an hour later something's
still bothering me. I rub
the arch of skin between my thumb
and forefinger as if craving
the sting of this last, invisible
splinter, the sudden imposition
of experience, which cannot be
argued with or wished out of existence.
Is this wisdom, stuck in my skin,
nagging, persistent, annoying,
a chill the fire can't chase away?
I think of walking home that night
in the rain, the flashlight's beam
a weak circle of yellow on the soaked dirt,
my shirt stuck to my back and your
last words in my ears. It took
this long for me to learn what you meant.
That our bodies are hard masters. For them
we sweat and sleep, twin betrayals
of illness and pain repaid
with the whisper of skin against skin,
the rich taste of red wine
on the back of the tongue. Finally
I turn my hand to the right
angle of light and find it,
silhouetted there. Knowing
sweetness is in the release, I wait
another moment, then grasp between
fingernails and slowly pull it free.

Carpenter Ants

Ken Zimmerman

This old house has already stood longer than it should:
second-hand at its start, built from old-growth fir felled
and milled for a barn in Goshen, then the barn torn down,
the wood salvaged and dragged here, re-cut
and hammered together again. And though I fend off
the rain with black tar and plastic, though
I tack back shifted roof shakes and replace
the rotted porch boards, I know it must someday fall.
Every night I see carpenter ants on the kitchen floor.
They come craving sweetness and salt, carrying off
the crumbs I've left to sweep up in the morning.
They take only what they need. That's not why
I kill them. But they tunnel into the floor,
boring through joists and beams. They work on wood
like rust does on metal. I can hear the steady grinding
all night long. There must be something like them
in our blood. Past forty the body starts to sag, timbers
shift and separate, earth piles up around the foundation.
Though I crush every one I see, there are more.
There is no going backward, no winning this war.
Tiny wrens nest in one hollowed out wall. Their chicks
chitter and beg, fluttering half-formed wings.
My cat caught their mother. I woke up to feathers
scattered across the floor. The male bird brings worms
though the knothole entry, working hard all day.
He scolds from a branch above the compost pile,
where worms are thickest, the cat skulking nearby.
Carpenter ants burrow into wood like worms
turning the soil. Everywhere I turn decay breeds abundance; life
thrives on rottenness and death! I'm telling you the truth.
This old house will fall, be bulldozed into a pile,
burned, plowed under, the ashes feeding new trees.
Life loves death. I must say it again. Life loves death!
For my old age, though, I will build from stone.

The Origin of a Persona Poem

Jean LeBlanc

On the night of April 10, 1997, I stood in my front yard, watching the sky. The Hale-Bopp comet was a little more than 120 million miles from Earth, a spectacular view indeed. A crescent Moon, only three days from new, reflected a little nighttime sunlight into the sky, but not enough to overwhelm the comet to its right or countless stars behind, many of which I could only see with binoculars. The area of Moon in shadow caught a dusting of light reflected by Earth itself, and through my binoculars I observed how the inner edge of the bright crescent faded unevenly into the dark full globe. As on Earth, no sharp line divides night and day; there is Moon dusk and Moon gloaming on that textured surface.

A satellite in Earth orbit had transmitted images of a huge solar flare that was now whooshing its way toward Earth. Astronomers in the Northeastern United States pointed out that conditions might be near-perfect for observation of the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights. I was hoping to see this grand display of solar energy dancing with the outer layer of Earth's atmosphere. Watching for the Northern Lights in northwestern New Jersey, I realized, was a good definition of "optimistic." But the comet was visible, a visitor from unknown realms.

More than ten years later, I read Henry David Thoreau's journal entry of October 1, 1858. "The big-bodied fisherman asks me doubtingly about the comet seen these nights in the northwest, if there is any danger to be apprehended from that side! I would fain suggest that only he is dangerous to himself." That passage mixed with my memory of Hale-Bopp, and a poem began to take shape. When I give workshops on persona poems, I talk about the importance of grounding the poem in one's own experience, even though the words may seem to be those of the assumed persona. Could I mingle Thoreau's experience with my own; could I transport my imagination back to 1850s Concord, Massachusetts, and come up with a plausible Thoreauvian interior monologue?

Time is everything and nothing to a poet. Poetry is time travel. I could go back to 1850s Concord; I could bring Henry to 1990s New Jersey. It is the poets' version of "We are not alone."

Thoreau Ponders Donati's Comet, October 1858

Jean LeBlanc

Came out after dark to see the comet.
What clearer symbol do we need
of the chasm that partitions fact from truth?
It is hurtling towards the sun, whipped
around the solar system by gravity.
It is standing still in the night sky, making
the moon, the very stars look swift beside.
So then. If we cannot agree on what we see
with our own eyes, what hope for us?
What hope for love, peace, honesty,
faith, loyalty, accord of any kind?
As I see it, we have two choices.
The first, to pare our senses down
to what immediately concerns us,
like the cat intent on the mouse
in the wainscoting, hearing nothing else.
The soft voice of his mistress with a treat
is lost to him, as would be a hundred sparrows
nipping at his tail, when his reality is all mouse.
The second, to let our senses open up,
turn outward like a flower. Imbibe the rain,
and say we drink the ocean's tears.
Watch a hawk take wing, and say
that we have flown like that ourselves,
and could again, should we so choose.
Look from a comet streaked across the heavens
to our own house, and see through the glass
the glow of candles, and in those tiny flames,
recognize ourselves, bearers
of light and warmth and hope,
aglow, too soon extinguished,
but with every possibility between.

Fiction and Memoir

The world changes in direct proportion to the number of people willing to be honest about their lives.

– Armistead Maupin

The House on Pleasant Street

Dan Armstrong

I suppose it all started because Mr. Chapman, the apartment manager, chided me once too often. I had gone digging among a few decorative plants in front and along the side of the building, imitating Grandmother's weeding of flower beds at her house some five blocks down the street from where we lived. It wasn't the first time. Mr. Chapman often took exception to things that Jim and I did. Those liberties we took as small children when playing outside and exposed to his critical scrutiny. Years later, I encountered his kindred spirit in countless films by W. C. Fields. You know, "Go away kid, ya bother me." Delivered out of the side of Fields' mouth, often accompanied by a clown's kick to the seat of the offending child. Anyway, under his breath, between the lines, one way or the other, Mr. Chapman always seemed to be delivering that line. So, finally, the apartment had come to represent tyranny in the highest form. And Grandma's house the Promised Land. Where a boy could do all manner of ... well, boy things. Beyond the watchful eye of grumpy Mr. Chapman. So it would be to grandmother's house I'd go. And in a fashion that announced to the world that I'd have no more curbing of my independence. My inalienable right to dig, shout, run or make like an Indian if I liked. Yes, Grandma's house was the Promised Land. And I would strike out for it the very next day.

This was to be an unauthorized visit, of course. One without the benefit of adult supervision. So early that spring morning in 1948 at the age of four, I dressed myself quietly before Mom woke up and struck out for Grandma's, not bothering about breakfast. I had walked there with my mother and my brother Jim several times, so I knew exactly how to get there. The day was sunny with a little morning chill in the air, but the robins were bouncing over grass and pavement, and brown squirrels were intent on squirrel business up and down the tree-lined sidewalk. I had no trouble walking the five or six blocks to her house, unaccompanied through all the cross streets along the way. As I approached the house, I saw her on the porch, shaking a small rug over the side. I was sure she'd be glad to see me. The house itself seemed glad. It was a white frame house, much in need of fresh paint, but with a grandmotherly wooden porch instead of the three cold, cement steps down to the cement walk in front of our apartment building. As I turned up the walk to her porch, she finally saw me. And, yes, she was certainly surprised. But it was an alarmed surprise as she, no doubt, calculated all those cross streets between her house at 1635 Pleasant and our apartment building at 1111 Pleasant.

Once I was in the house, a hurried phone call to my mother informed her of my surprising excursion, communicating very clearly just how harrowing it had been and how

unnerved Grandma was. I sat listening at the kitchen table, swinging my dangling legs from the too-tall kitchen chair, eyeing the wooden backscratcher that hung from a hook on the kitchen wall. Wondering what the claw at the end of the handle was meant to do.

Spring passed and in early summer I had my first overnight at Grandma's. A chance at even greater, more complete freedom. But that first night, the dark, brooding truth of Grandma's house struck me for the first time. This was not actually the land of milk and honey after all. Or if it was, the milk had turned sour. For the Sacred Heart ruled at 1635 Pleasant Street. A cheap reproduction of the suffering Christ hung in a wooden frame on the hallway wall, his heart exposed and bleeding where his shirt should have been and encircled by a crown of thorns, his face a study of pious stoicism. Over the course of numerous overnights that summer, it was always the last thing that I saw in the glow of the nightlight before falling asleep in the hallway daybed that Grandma always made up for me. And the first thing I saw upon waking in the mornings. In the hours between, the Sacred Heart disturbed my dreams considerably. Later, when I was old enough for catechism classes at Little Flower, then St. Thomas, I was inducted into the "mysteries" of the Church. The mystery of the Trinity. The mystery of transubstantiation. And many others. There was no shortage of mysteries to be initiated into. But no one ever explained the central mystery that troubled my early childhood under the ghastly rule of the Sacred Heart: Why did Jesus not show any signs of suffering, only a disappointed stoicism, in the face of such torment? And most importantly, what did he do to deserve this fate? Grandma's house suffered horribly under the tortures of the Sacred Heart.

My only release from the fears generated by the bleeding Christ was the photograph on the living room wall of Uncle John B., who I was told was my godfather. Whatever that was. In the photo John B. looked out at me with a warm and reassuring smile, wearing a United States Air Force uniform, complete with a Captain's hat, neatly knotted tie, and crisply ironed shirt, exactly where a shirt should be. A brave heart. A certified war hero. At least to me. And a kind of talisman: a magical charm against the terrible power of the Sacred Heart, who lived right around the corner on the wall across from my daybed. Before going to bed at night or shortly after waking in the mornings, I sometimes stole into the living room, standing expectantly before John B., seeking the courage to face the beating, bloody Heart in the next room before bedtime or to chase away the traces of a bad dream from the night before. But sometimes the power of John B. was not sufficient to protect against the terrors of the Sacred Heart or some other phantom of the night. Such was the case on the night of Aunt Minnie's visit. My first experience of Grandma's strange sister.

Bedtime that night was no different from those before. Grandma pulled up the shade on the window next to the daybed, allowing a soft glow from the corner street lights to fall into the room. Then she made up my bed. Tucked me in. Said her 'good nights.' And

turned on the night light that clearly illuminated the Heart, my constant companion in that dim hallway. I hovered between sleep and wakefulness for a while, then drifted into a slumber that on this night was surprisingly untroubled. John B's magic was holding sway. Then, the slightest noise began to worm its way into my sleeping ear. "Teet, teet, teet, teet." Pause. "Teet, teet, teet." Pause. "Teet." My eyes blinked open, turning to the unshaded window overlooking the brick walkway that ran along the side of the house. There in a circle of faint light on the window was a face beyond the protective powers of John B. In front of the face, a bony finger tapped on my window pane, while the mouth was stretched tight and teeth bared to produce staccato 'teets' in sync with the tapping finger. All this to get my attention. For what reason, I had no idea.

My attention to the face froze me to my bed, paralyzing the survival instinct to shriek and flee. The face floated in the window, unattached to a body, cake-powdered into a ghostly, off-white mask. Absurdly large burnt-orange circles of rouge cut into the cheeks, crowding between nose and ear on each side. A thick smear of deep red lipstick was slathered beyond the borders of the lips, which seemed to have a life of their own. The eyes, scariest of all, were overhung with pencil-line eyebrows and seemed foreign to the face that displayed them. Thick mascara was caked onto long lashes so that the eyes more resembled two hairy spiders that had slowly crawled up the face, coming to rest under the penciled eyebrows that impeded their progress onto the forehead. Then the spiders shuddered and blinked. I held my breath, staring into the place where the eyes should have been.

"Let me in, Danny," a muffled voice commanded through the thick panes of glass. "It's Aunt Minnie. Grandma's locked the front door."

Strange to say, I have no memory of Aunt Minnie from my childhood other than her appearance at my window in the dead of night. Grandma must have let her in, so she must have visited at least briefly on that occasion, and perhaps on others when I was visiting. Even stranger, I have no memory of my grandfather in that house on Pleasant Street, even though I often spent days and sometimes over-nights when I was four. I knew I had a grandfather that came with the house, but I never saw him that I can recall. I do remember his workplace. It was a small, weather-beaten trailer in the back yard where he made false teeth. I never saw him there either actually. I did, however, see the handiwork of his profession. A set of teeth placed on a shelf in the window of the trailer, where my eyes were riveted whenever I went into the back yard. Even at four I could easily imagine the rest of the skull that surrounded those teeth. A constant reminder of death slipped into whatever play was to be had in that weedy backyard. Even an innocent stroll along the brick walk that ran from the back of the house to the rusty gate at the far end of the yard, passing the Trailer of Teeth approximately halfway along, was a march past the Grim Reaper.

Luckily for me, I had John B. to protect me against the terrors of the Teeth. Not his photograph from the living room, much less the actual, living John B., whom I did not meet until I was much older. No, but a rusty old red Irish mail that I named John B. and which was my constant companion in the back yard. Like a prisoner let out for exercise every afternoon for an hour or so, I would be ushered by Grandma into the back yard to exercise on my Irish mail. In the late 40s you could still find these toys, often left over from the 20s or 30s, though tricycles and bicycles far outnumbered this evolutionary offspring of railroad handcars used by crews to repair tracks.

The Irish mail as a child's toy was propelled by pulling and pushing on a large T handle while steering with your feet. Some were made mostly of wood with only the moving parts made of steel or even iron in the case of very old ones. Some were made almost entirely of metal. Mine was of the latter sort, down to the rusty concave metal seat made to conform to small bottoms, all metal except for the rubber tires on the wheels for a smoother ride. You'd squat low to get onto the vehicle, a bit like you would with a modern day recumbent bicycle, and ride very low to the ground. Keeping balance and staying upright was not an issue since the Irish mail had two front wheels and two back wheels, the back being larger than the front. Coordinating the movements between legs and arms was hard at first but became easy after a little practice. The only danger came from the construction of the Irish mail because once in motion, the T bar never stopped going up and down, and if you were going fast, let's say down a hill, it could hit you in the nose if your coordination was off. With the John B., however, the path I rode along the brick walkway was flat. The only real danger was from the Trailer of Teeth.

The John B. gave me command of the backyard from one end to the other. Repeated runs up and down the walk eventually led to an extraordinary merging of boy and machine, flesh and blood with metal and rubber. The tee bar was an extension of my torso, and the front wheels became my feet. In the course of a few weeks, the John B. and I became one. And the cause into which the John B. was enlisted was simple: to allow me to run the gauntlet. To muster my courage and ride past the trailer while looking directly at the teeth in the window without swallowing my tongue or wetting my pants. My very first attempt ended in abject failure. As I slowly approached the trailer, averting my gaze, I suddenly turned toward it when I rode past, my eyes locking onto Grandpa's false teeth. The effect was electric. The John B. went into adrenaline overdrive and we raced to the end of the yard, crashing into the rusty gate, bonking my head on the T bar as I came to a sudden stop. It was not easy to explain the lump on my forehead to Grandma later that day, but I resolved to recommit myself to the Cause before leaving the yard that day and submitting to her remedy of a foul smelling salve to reduce the swelling. And in the course of another day or so (and numerous runs past the trailer), I finally succeeded, spending the

rest of the summer whenever I visited the house taking victory laps, riding past the trailer with much bravado, the cheering crowd swelling the heart of the returning war hero. Just like John B. in the photograph, who lived just around the corner from the Sacred Heart.

It was at the opposite end of the house, Grandma's front porch, where I found a more reliable haven from the dreadful specter of the Sacred Heart. A grandmotherly porch if ever there was one. The central feature was a wooden porch swing, very old unpainted slats forming the seat and back, hanging from two chain-link cables anchored to the porch ceiling overhead. It was on the porch, protected by a roof that reached well into the front yard facing Pleasant Street, that I could sit in blissful attention, sometimes with Grandma, while summer storms spilled and spent themselves. They would start with a quickening wind and the sweet smell of approaching rain mixed with dusty heated air, gather rumbles of thunder then cracks of lightning that rattled my teeth, build to a crescendo of downpouring rain driven in heavy sheets whipped by gusting winds, and peter off into the sounds of raindrops dripping from the nearby sycamores and the gurgling of water emptying from the gutters and drainpipes along the front of the porch.

It was also on the front porch that we would sit mutely, swinging together, as Grandma snapped peas or peeled apples for the evening meal. And it was there that the active life of the neighborhood revealed itself and made me feel welcome. Sometimes, early in the afternoon, old black Billy would slowly ride his horse-driven wagon up the quiet street, announcing in a loud voice, "Rag man a comin'!" welcoming us to add to the growing pile of castaway clothing anything we no longer needed. Other days it might be to sell us the bright red strawberries heaped into crates stacked behind him as he sat at the reins calling out, "Straaaawberries, strawberries!" Life on that porch was always good, even when it was scary during what Grandma referred to as "electrical storms."

Except that it wasn't always so good on the porch. An event sometime in July, I'd estimate, put an end to the idea that anywhere at Grandma's was truly safe. It happened one afternoon while I sat out a summer storm, intense even by Indianapolis standards. The storm had raged for a very long time, filling the street with a river of water that overwhelmed sewers much too narrow to drain the developing flood. The street was deep under water, the sidewalks on both sides had disappeared, and the water on the lawn was nearly up to the bottom step of Grandma's porch. But I felt happy, safely marooned on a comfortable island, surrounded by a magnificent expanse of water in every direction. And over the course of the next hour or so, I was restored to the mainland. The waters slowly receded as the sewers caught up with the demand, leaving only a muddy shine on the street: water mixed with dirt, fallen leaves, the residue of motor oil and exhaust fumes, and perhaps some droppings left behind from Billy's horse that had passed through earlier that

afternoon. Then it happened. Or did it? Perhaps this memory is merely a feverish dream under the baleful influence of the Sacred Heart.

Dream or real, I remember a loud, heavy smash of metal on the street and a city bus sliding and grinding to a halt on its side, its rounded top facing directly in front of me, the top tires still spinning in the humid air. Followed by the jingle and off-key music of coins dropping onto metallic surfaces inside the bus. And then Grandma running out the screen door onto the porch, screaming hysterically. I don't remember her words, but I understood them. She was terrified that somehow I'd been hurt, or worse, by the crash that she'd heard from the back of the house where she had been working in the kitchen. And her terror ran through me like lightning through an ungrounded rod. I had witnessed without trauma a horrific bus accident. But Grandma's hysteria utterly unnerved me, destroying the sanctuary of her front porch.

Her fear. That is often what Grandma, as sweet and loving a woman as you'd ever hope to meet, passed on to me in a hundred ways. But nothing in my visits to her in the late 40s came close to the terrifying power of a real-life drama that played out on her radio over the course of an entire day, a terrible news story that she listened to with an intensity that pulled me completely into *her* listening. Except for that one day in the summer of '48, listening to the radio as a child was always a source of immense pleasure and imaginative delight. I was profoundly drawn to the comedy and adventure that radio afforded a small boy in the late 40s and early 50s: *Abbott and Costello, Lone Ranger*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *The Life of Riley*, *Gang Busters*, *Amos 'n' Andy*, *Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy*, *Inner Sanctum*, *The Great Gildersleeve*, and dozens of other radio comedies, dramas, Westerns and assorted amusements. But precisely that: amusements. Stories, characters, voices that carried me to happy places, or occasionally scary places (i.e., *Gang Busters* and *Inner Sanctum*) with stories in which any tensions, fears, or threats were neatly resolved in the course of half an hour.

The story that played out for an entire day on Grandma's radio that suffocating summer day, imprinted from ear to inner eye as only radio could do, was as far from amusing as it could possibly be. It began as a news bulletin about a terrible accident involving a little boy who had fallen into a shaft of some sort, where he became stuck deep under ground and was running out of oxygen. The story was covered live at the rescue site and developed into a daylong account of the little boy's ordeal. This drama also played out at 1635 Pleasant Street with Grandma serving as a kind of backyard chorus, punctuating the developing events with comments and emotional interjections. While short on wisdom and insight, her commentary more than adequately amplified the dreadful emotions inherent in the boy's ordeal and the heroic efforts to rescue him. All this played out within my earshot, mostly in the backyard, where I could listen to the radio turned up so that Grandma could

hear it through the open kitchen window while weeding the flower bed in the backyard. I listened and occasionally, mournfully eyed the John B. parked off to the side of the brick walk with a broken axle.

My memory of that day is short on factual details, but long and deep on emotional recall of the evolving impact of what I heard over the course of the day. My memory of events began late morning or early afternoon in the backyard as I dealt with the double whammy of suffocating heat and the calamity that had befallen the John B. My ear, not yet tuned to the radio playing through the kitchen window, did, however, pick up Grandma's muttered response to the breaking news bulletin. "Oh, dear Lord, have mercy! Oh, my my!" It wasn't just the words but the depth of feelings communicated that tuned my ear to the developing horror. The next fragment of memory was of the news coverage itself later in the day: a five-year old boy has been trapped in a pipe deep underground, and rescuers are furiously digging to free him. I could easily imagine that, and my own struggle with the suffocating heat of the day further intensified my identification with that other little boy, caught in a deadly battle to catch any breath at all. I could see the beads of sweat forming on his face. Grandma said nothing but groaned in deep sorrow, and I didn't need an interpreter to translate the import straight to my fast-beating heart.

At some point, mid-afternoon perhaps, I heard Grandma's reaction to some further reported development, picked up from the radio that I had managed with some effort to tune out. This time her reaction was not muttered half under her breath but sent to an unseen listener near the flower bed she'd been tending: "Oh, dear, what will happen to that poor little boy!" I immediately plugged into the radio coverage to glean the basic facts: a parallel tunnel that the rescuers have dug to reach the boy has caved in, and that tactic has been abandoned. The growing hopes for the boy are dashed. I could see him clearly now, buried deep underground, terrified, tortured by the knowledge that some mistake he'd made put him into his grave before he died.

Sometime later, we learned that the boy's body had been retrieved, how I do not know, but the ordeal had ended. Or just begun? The last comment I remember from Grandma on this terrible day forced me to look at the awful impact of the catastrophe on the boy's parents, something I had not been able to imagine for myself: "How will that boy's parents ever go on!" This was almost worse than what happened to the boy himself. Even at that age, I understood that he was out of his suffering. But his parents' suffering was just beginning. And it would never end until they too died.

That terrible day of the little boy's death was the last day I visited Grandma at her house. At the end of the summer, my family moved away from the apartment on Pleasant Street to a new house on the other side of Indianapolis. Grandma largely disappeared from my life after that. And the house on Pleasant Street vanished as well. I only saw her on

brief visits at either Christmas or Easter organized by my father to "see Mom," annual pilgrimages to Beech Grove, a suburb on the south side where she lived with my father's oldest sister and her family. It was there that I saw my grandfather for the only time that I remember. One Easter we were visiting in the basement apartment of my aunt's house where Grandma and Grandpa stayed. As I stood in the middle of the main room, a combination living room and kitchen, I suddenly heard convulsive coughing off to the side in an adjoining room, and turned to see my grandfather sitting up in a bed in a sparsely furnished room, then leaning over the edge to spit phlegm onto newspapers placed on the floor around the bed.

It is the first time that I remember even being aware that my grandfather was seriously ill, and looking back I now realize that he had long been a semi-invalid, hidden away for some reason on my visits to the house when I was a small boy. A ghost, whose presence I felt but whom I never saw. One among the other ghosts that haunted that house. My summer of visits to the house on Pleasant Street had begun with dreams of boyhood freedom but brought me, by the end, much deeper and often darker things.

World Literature Class Reading Assignments

Philos Molina

I

I was reading Virgil's *Georgics*, I, 359-380, the third time, when I saw her walking by the bus station. Mesmerized by the poem, I had missed the bus twice earlier and was waiting for the last one going out of the station. I almost missed it again.

The first and second readings left me intrigued, not just by the theme and the beauty of Robert Ferris' translation, but by the poem itself opening with words that were like a window to a world that had not existed for centuries, that perhaps never did, and yet could seem so real, as if present without the ravages of time, and yet its own world.

It described people as capable of navigating the rough waters of life — no melodramas or victimization. There was not a sense throughout the poem of either helplessness or entitlement. It assumed that people could see the signs the gods have left in nature to guide their lives with dignity and determination. Those signs were simple events in nature, nothing complicated that could be used as an excuse to ignore or misunderstand:

The warnings of the moon in its monthly round
What it might mean when the wind suddenly dies …

It goes against physical determinism by turning the argument inside out. Humans, for the poet, do not face nature blindly. Nor is Nature the adversary that conceals its meaning. It is rather like a scroll of ancient wisdom open for the attentive soul. Though people live in a context determined against the human spirit, they know *that,* and it makes their freedom meaningful:

No storm comes on without giving you a warning.

Even a peasant girl, whose name we will never know, could see in insignificant objects around her the divine signs strewn all over nature:

The young girl at spinning sees the signs
Of what it is that's going to happen soon:
The oil in the lighted lamp sputters and sparks;
There is a building of putrid fungus on the wick.

Then I saw a shadow on the moldy sidewalk. There, in front of me, as if springing out of a poem stood the most simple and beautiful woman, wearing tight jeans over her callipygian figure and a white cotton blouse of many layers that unsuccessfully, it seemed, tried to conceal her small round bosom. Her black long tresses flew with the rhythm of a mild, cold autumn breeze, and through every thread wafted, as through a thick bosk of aspens, the delicate redolence of daily showers, like the rain of forgotten summers.

She shivered with the elegance of cherry oak leaves gliding toward the ground. There were so many things to say at once of her face: her nose like a determined bowsprit wounding the insolent wind, her eyes like two moons reflected in a peaceful lake, her ears attentive to the timbre of the falling evening, and her body floating like a lean Chundan Vallam, the Indian beaked-boat built from instructions in sacred books, in the vastness of the sunset and hills still covered with firs and cedars.

I realized then that language was an impediment. And with unrehearsed speech, I abruptly babbled: "You are the most beautiful poem I have read three times this afternoon." She leaned close to my ear and whispered: "As it should be." Then she kissed the top of my bald head and gently slapped my cheek twice and flew away, like a solitary bird, going South in the middle of November.

I did not see *that* coming …

II

Love, as Propertius (50-15 B.C.) declares, is "intractable, whatever it is" (II, 4, 14). He was already an adult, by ancient Roman standards, but the definition is ridiculously juvenile — though, as Fernando Pessoa once warned us, all poems of love are ridiculous.

Propertius' first book of *Elegies* is a beautiful creation of poems in honor of the love of his life, Cynthia. The name immediately makes one suspect a pseudonym. This is, of course, pure speculation, but poets use this technique to exercise their god-like creative prerogative, sometimes out of conceit, but mostly as simple playfulness. The very word "poet" derives from a Greek word for maker, creator. But the technique can be used for more practical purposes, of course: as when the poet woos someone else's woman.

Though love is intractable, Propertius left in his poems a way for us to understand the number love makes on people. In the early chapters, the poet sees himself as a servant under the power of love in "devotion and service" (*fides and benefacta*, I, 1, 16). Love is spontaneous, free of schemes (I, 1, 36) and certainly not dull (I, 1, 17). No make-up is necessary: love forgives everything, even facial defects. He considers Cynthia at the same level of historical beauties, though the standards are suspiciously low: "In fact I am sure that you do not count yourself inferior to those women: if a girl finds favor with one man, she is adorned enough" (I, 2, 25).

Out of this limerent poet's lips, we hear memorable romantic lines such as: "You alone are my home … you are my every moment of happiness" (I, 11, 23, and 24), a line that Sean Connery made famous in *The Russia House*, even though the Scot did not credit the Roman poet. There is also this verse that can only come from a virgin: "Cynthia was my first, Cynthia shall be the last" (I, 12, 20), though, of course, any lover intoxicated with emotions tends to blur the lines of time and memory.

He considers love above military prowess, and even wealth: “For who rejoices in wealth if Love smiles not on him?” (I, 14, 15) This is strange for a Roman, of course, or sheer rhetoric, for Romans loved both. Such is his naïveté that he believes that Love will defy Charon, the ferryman of the underworld, to cross the river of death without paying the obolus due: “There, whatever I shall be, I shall always be called the shade that belongs to you: the might of love crosses even the shores of death” (I, 19, 6-10), a line that reminds us of *The Song of Songs*, although his imagery owes more to Greek mythology than to Hebrew poetry.

Back in the land of the living, things tend to take a different course. By the second book, the tone is sober. Though he still uses the slavery metaphors, he now sees their emotionally unadorned meaning: Love is an unbearable servitude. It was servitude before, for sure, but now the labors of love are a burden. His verses are no longer spontaneous expression of joy: the poet can only commiserate about his condition. At this point the healthy thing to do would have been to look for some type of therapy — religion, for the lack of options, that many of his contemporaries used assiduously for romantic purposes. But Propertius exhibits throughout the whole collection of poems a type of agnosticism that rarely or never has been studied properly, the type that dispenses with religious explanations on the basis of romantic self-absorption.

He compares himself to a fish living out of water and love is not the joy it once was. With more resignation than romance, he can confess like man asphyxiating: “Love may be put off, but is never got rid of” (II, 3, 6). There is no consolation anywhere; he even wishes his misery to his enemies (II, 4, 17). Where a loved man would forgive his enemies his errors, now the poet callously punishes others with his.

He calls his Cynthia unfaithful and agrees with the gossip: “Cynthia, mighty beauty; Cynthia, flighty slut.” A strange development has occurred: the aesthetic standards have gone up, the moral ones down. And so has poetry, for Propertius’s verses are no longer to immortalize Cynthia, but to make her pale in horror. Jealousy has taken over the joy of love, and the poet suspects men even under women dresses (I, 6, 14). Love has become paranoia and a whole array of mental illnesses. The poet has gone from one extreme of the spectrum to the other: same intensity, different literary output.

In the end, Propertius has confirmed Borges’ simple dictum about another snubbed lover, Dante, no less: “To fall in love is to create a religion with a fallible god.” (Jorge Luis Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, 300).

III

I read a poem by Poh Chu-i (772-846) this evening. "No man is without madness," he said. His was poetry, mine just words. They are to me like colors inside hollow shells of ink, choreographed explosions of sound. Their vibrations, when pronounced, draw pictures that one can feel and almost catch between inept fingers; when written, they evoke hidden harmonies in every stroke, even in the squiggles of unwanted characters. I hang notes of new words on the wall of my apartment and, if my soul is attentive, I see openings like windows where there were none. Soon the walls are filled with papers of all sizes, each one irradiating new colors and humming new sounds. Some times they wave like mountain forests in the fall, as when a cold wind gracefully dances over the motley leaves. With some luck, their murmur will make it to my hands, like those leaves of early autumn gliding down to the gelid ground. Most times they fly like a dole of mourning doves, rest in my throat, and chirp endlessly for no reason.

I am truly mad.

For Bill Woolum

The Basis of an Important Friendship

J.S. Simmons

Dot McGrath stands in her kitchen, draining her beer glass, remembering the mouthy patient in whose tapioca pudding she spat.

"Ain't like that one no more'n she liked me," she mutters. "Damn Cracker."

She snickers. The memory, all-told, is a deeply satisfying one.

Against the smooth glass and remnants of foam within it, her dry, lined hand looks like a hunk of paperbark maple. McLean was good, as far as that went with any job obtainable by a plain-faced girl, dark as Dot was.

Because the sigh vents without her permission, she chuckles, surprised. She's not nostalgic. Still, the geriatric psych ward was fine, mostly. Sometimes, for example, a veteran became lucid for long enough to get cute — like old Mr. Mullens.

• • •

"Dot," he'd wheezed, "You remind me of my sweetheart in the CSH outside Inchon."

"Quiet, you." She'd smiled a little.

"She was black and pretty too." The old man winked, chuckled and then hacked wetly until he lost his breath. He was quiet for a moment, but managed finally to gasp, "One of the good ones."

She knew what that meant, but it was the best any of them could manage. What did they know better?

• • •

Across the hall, Marie Bittle lays in bed, all the blankets and most of the sheet fallen to the floor, the flat yellowed pillow soaked with perspiration. Marie is in great pain. The telephone is far away, in the living room.

Last night, she drank a glass of Metamucil and ate a hardboiled egg. Gas burgeons in her stomach. In her intestines, there is blockage so compressed and desiccated it is immune not only to the effects of laxative fiber, but to stool softening suppositories as well. The day is bright and crisp, by the look of light and sky through her bedroom window, sadly closed. A breeze would be nice. She has a fever, which means something bad. A vague memory tells her that when constipation produces an elevated temperature, severe trouble has arrived.

For nine hours Marie has passed in and out of consciousness, remembering and dreaming at once, recollections taking on a bright sheen of significance, vivid colors, ringing sound — sailors so handsome they glowed just sitting on their barstools, songs so sweet they made dancing feel like getting married.

• • •

Three days ago, driving home to Concord from her sister's in West Roxbury, she stopped at an intersection and waited while a gaggle of colored boys crossed in front of her. One, tall, wearing puffy sneakers and giant athletic clothing, paused in the crosswalk to answer his little telephone. He fiddled with his baseball cap, which still dangled its tag, and he glanced at her before sauntering on.

"Move along," she sneered. "Boy."

He'd looked at her. Had he heard? Her window was half down; maybe she'd spoken too loud. She closed the window, leaned on her horn, filliped her hand at the windshield in a shooing gesture, and gunned the engine.

• • •

It wasn't right, she knows, but it was great fun, and she wonders, *How did every last one of them turn so insolent*? Yes, that's the very word. It seems to Marie they've all lost their sense of perspective — or of their place. She thinks about the beautiful land, the democracy, the airplanes, the free welfare cheese — free food! With the abundance and handouts, she wonders how they can be so ungrateful.

The gas swells again in her abdomen. It wants to push through, but it can't, so it hurts and makes her nauseous.

• • •

Dot has fetched, poured and half drunk another beer. It should be her last. In fact the one before should have been the last. Her diabetes could flare up. She's not going to bother testing the blood sugar. It's up by a little, okay. Under control though. Dot is an RN. Or was, before she retired. And it wasn't all that long ago, neither.

"The General" they used to call her, because the way she did her job forced everyone else to do it that way too. *The right way*, she thinks. She'd overheard them, the young ones. Y*ou do things right*, she thinks, nodding to herself, *they stays done*. So the sugar is under control. The recliner is comfortable and warm. It's sure a pretty day out too. Sun shining, fluffy clouds like she used to stare at when she was little. A thud in the hallway distracts her.

"What's this fussing?" she mutters. It's not much of a struggle to stand.

Through the peephole, Dot sees a white lady, about her own age, dressed in pajamas and an open robe, leaning against the doorframe. Nice pajamas, plush robe, but still, looks like a white lady in some kind of desperate spot.

"'Magine that," she turns back toward her recliner.

It's not much of a knock. Papery knuckles chafe Dot's heavy door, rather than hitting it. If she had got back to the recliner she wouldn't have heard. But she does, and she is

already curious, or tipsy enough to hear it on out. She opens the door and looks the white lady in the eye, chucking a fist against one tilted hip.

Marie cannot think what to say, she's taken aback by her neighbor's black skin. She's certain she heard mailbox scuttlebutt that her neighbor across the hall was a real nurse, not an orderly or attendant, a real nurse. But this is a negro.

"Yes?" Dot sees; this white lady is sick, yellow as a fading bruise.

Air catches in Marie's throat as she tries to push the words out. Sweat beads on her forehead, runs. Standing is an effort.

"I heard you were a nurse, miss. I need help," she says. And though it is difficult, Marie understands it is also necessary to add, "Please."

"Sure enough you do, *Miss*. When's a last time you had a B.M?"

She takes Marie's hand and leads her to the lavatory, where there is, as in all the subsidized units occupying the first floor, a bench seat installed in the bathtub. The robe and pajama bottoms must come off, but Dot allows that the top can stay on; it won't interfere, it'll make this white lady less afraid — a little — and Dot is feeling suddenly generous. Again taking Marie's hand, Dot helps her in, directs her onto her knees, so she can relax and lean forward, her arms and chest resting on the molded plastic bench. In the cabinet under the sink there are neoprene gloves and a tub of Vaseline. She will disimpact the patient, then administer a quick enema. Her voice is firm and gentle.

"This going to hurt a little," she says. "Try to relax and it'll hurt less. You going to feel better real soon, 'kay, honey?"

Marie tries not to cry. A few silent tears seep through and hit the bench. And then it is over.

Afterward, when each is washed, dried, and dressed again, they exchange names. They shake hands, wary because for each of them this is the first time they have ever in their long lives — Dot's 79 years, Marie's 72 — touched the hand of a woman not their own color. Dot invites Marie to drink a glass of beer and sit on her creamy beige sofa, which is, Marie says, the exact same color and model as her own.

Life in the C.C.

For what it's worth: it's never too late or, in my case, too early to be whoever you want to be. There's no time limit, stop whenever you want. You can change or stay the same, there are no rules to this thing. We can make the best or the worst of it. I hope you make the best of it. And I hope you see things that startle you. I hope you feel things you never felt before. I hope you meet people with a different point of view. I hope you live a life you're proud of. If you find that you're not, I hope you have the courage to start all over again.

– Eric Roth

With Cloak and Veil at a Community College

A. Louise Warner

First Connection

The classroom was long and narrow, with three rows of ten desks and a small space for the teacher to stand at the front. Something was different about the noise the students were making, as they waited for class to begin. I was expecting Spanish-speakers and a handful of people from Asia. Not this ESL class — almost everyone seemed to be from the Middle East. There was a line of young women just in front of me in the first row. They wore muted grey and tan cloaks that covered their bodies from shoulder to shoe. They wore veils of different styles covering their hair, foreheads and faces. The only parts of their bodies that I could see were their eyes and their hands.

As the morning wore on, the women in the cloaks and veils drew my attention again and again. If I asked a question that anyone could answer they raised their hands first. If I asked students to work in groups they called me over. "Teacher!" they would say, with respectful but insistent inflection, as if under great pressure. "Is this ... correct? What about ... this? Why do you say ... this? Why not ... this?" When I announced the break, their classmates chatted, stood, and drifted away. Not the students with the cloaks and veils. "Teacher!" they said. "Can you teach us ... this? How do you say ... this?" They stayed where they were, demanding more and more English, until the break was over and class began again.

Besides the electric energy of their demand for knowledge, the peculiar part was my sense that I could tell what they were feeling by looking only into their eyes. Understanding, relief, frustration, curiosity, humor, warmth, irritation, and pleasure seemed to cross their eyes, reflect into mine, and pass to make room for the next emotion. I thought I saw as many as twenty emotions flicker through their faces in as many minutes.

This confused me and made me wonder. If I covered my mouth, my face and my body, would I be able to communicate? Did I perceive them accurately? Why were they dressed this way in school? Was this part of being Muslim? Were they allowed to travel and work outside their homes? What were they going to do with the English they were so hungry to learn?

My Saudi Guides

My first thought was to read books. I searched the net for background knowledge. I found there was a wide variety in clothing styles worn — raising more questions. I sought out Jennifer Ferro, Lane Community College Faculty Librarian/research diva, who whipped together an impressive list of sources. I started to read — a cold plunge into a

complex discourse. I didn't want an academic answer. Even if I found one, how could I trust it? What's written in books about my own culture and my gender role bear little relationship to my actual experience. How could books capture the experience of these students, especially given the state of Muslim/American relations today?

I wanted answers to specific questions: How do these women feel? What are these clothes that they wear? Why do they wear cloaks and veils in school? How does this impact their studies? Dean Cathy Lindsley and ESL Instructor Christine Seifert helped me find answers, by helping me invite Muslim women students to educate me.

I am deeply grateful to the women who volunteered to be my Muslim cultural and religious guides[1] — for their patience, kindness, warmth, humor, passion for cross-cultural understanding and their willingness to share their lives and beliefs. They wish me to be clear with my readers that there are wide variations in women's experience, depending on the country they live in, the Muslim sect they belong to (Sunni, Shia), their personal beliefs and family traditions. My guides are Sunni Muslim women from Saudi Arabia. Their lives differ significantly from the lives of many Turkish and Egyptian women, for instance. What follows is one view of Muslim women's traditions, but there are many, many others, and the clothing they wear is different from country to country.

There are other messages, too, that my guides want to share with readers: "It is wonderful to have class with multiple cultures, and to learn from other cultures in the classroom." They "enjoy the honest curiosity of people about their clothing. It is an honor to explain their clothing to their wonderful teachers and classmates."

Asking these basic questions revealed layer upon layer of answers and more questions: When we see them wearing cloaks and veils, what do we think and feel? If we react the way we do because we value freedom, which freedoms are we holding most dear? Could our outsider view of their lives be accurate, if it means contradicting the views they hold? How do our reactions impact their learning?

I'm glad I asked.

What the Guides Wear to School

When they are out in public, my guides wear a loose outer garment called an abaya. The abaya covers their full body, including arms and legs.[2] The full-length coat or cloak seem like the closest Western relatives to this garment.

In Saudi Arabia they wear black abayas. On the Arabian peninsula, black is traditional. Why black? My guides say it's elegant (sounds like the ubiquitous Western "little black dress"), and it's practical (doesn't show stains). Black keeps them cooler in intense heat:[3] temperatures in Saudi Arabia can reach 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit). It also

covers their body shape. One of my guides showed me the abaya she wears in hot weather: made of a synthetic, lightweight fabric that is silky and breathable.

For life in the Western world, though, my guides chose abayas in neutral earth tones, like grey and tan. Before they came to the U.S., friends warned them not to wear black, because black clothing makes Americans fearful and nervous. The religious tradition does not dictate the material, weight, style or color of the abaya or the veil (hijab or niqāb).

Feeling mischievous, I ask: If not black, why grey and tan? Why not wear a bright color, like red? The answer, from a guide who is laughing infectiously and inspecting my office as if she had a magnifying glass in hand: "Already I am always under a microscope. If I wore red, people would follow me everywhere and stare at me! Wow! Crazy!"

Westerners often assume, incorrectly, that the abaya is the equivalent to what we wear in a classroom. This is only an outer garment, to be worn when male strangers are present. My guides wear modern clothing underneath, like mine, except more fashionable. To demonstrate one guide pulls up her abaya so I can see her leopard-skin leggings! Peeking out from the hem of their abayas? Colorful running shoes. I see iphone photos of one of my guides and her friends without outer garments — chic women wearing modern clothing in every color and style. When I meet a guide at her home with her family, her long hair is uncovered and she wears casual and stylish modern clothing — much nicer and more attractive than mine.

When they are out in public my guides also wear a head covering called a hijab. The hijab is like a scarf or shawl that covers the head and neck. The colors of their shawls vary, but they are muted, such as light grey or tan.

This is another adaptation my guides made to Western life. At home they prefer to wear the abaya with a niqāb, a cloth that covers their heads, necks and their faces, leaving only their eyes exposed. One of my guides tried to wear her niqāb when she first arrived in Eugene. She changed to the open-face hijab style after a week, because Americans had difficulty communicating with her. People here seemed to assume that she couldn't talk, or wouldn't talk, and were uncomfortable around her. She found this alienating and frustrating, so she switched to another version of the veil that leaves her face uncovered. This is a version that seemed, for several guides, more appropriate for life in America.

Why the Guides Wear Abayas with Veils Here at Lane

In Saudi Arabia these women do not need to wear abayas and veils[4] in school, because their educational system is divided by gender. They wear the abaya and the niqāb to travel to school, and then take it off when they enter school and attend classes. The other students and teachers are women, for the most part. At the university level in Saudi Arabia, male instructors in some majors appear on screen, with female teaching assistants who

manage the classroom and work directly with students. If a student has difficulty with the material, she meets with the female assistant. Male instructors teach in person in some disciplines, such as Medicine.

At Lane, though, we have both male and female students, staff and faculty, so we are seeing women wearing the abaya and hijabs or niqābs in class and around campus.

My Saudi guides insist that their decision to wear the abaya and a veil is a religious one. They explain that as observant Muslims they choose to follow the traditions established in the Qu'ran.[5] My guide refers me to an ayah (verse) of the Qu'ran, titled Surah al-Ahzab 59 (33:59), to teach me about this tradition: "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused…"[6]

When I first saw this ayah, a guide showed me a different translation on her iphone. That translation said the garment was to protect women from being "recognized" or "annoyed." What do these words really mean? I learn that the first part is about not attracting the sexual attention of males beyond her family circle. The second is about protection from harassment, sexual assault and rape. "Men can't tell your age, your size, or your beauty: who you are is a mystery." People ask: "Why keep wearing this when we have police today? An answer: "The Qu'ran is eternal — it cannot be crossed out or changed. God did not say, 'Stop doing this when there are police!' This is God's solution to protect women...I do not believe I need to wear this only for my protection. I wear this also for my God."

Following this interpretation of the Qu'ran, then, the guides wear their outer garments whenever they are in the presence of strange men. At home, with male relatives (grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers, sons…),[7] and when they are just with women, they don't wear abayas and head coverings. They started wearing the cloak and veil at puberty.[8] When they reach menopause they can stop.

"It is true that my abaya covers my face and body, but it doesn't cover my brain and my heart," a guide writes.

How Clothing Impacts Their Education

Everywhere they go, some people stare. Following their religious tradition, intended to deflect attention from them, they wear clothing that makes them highly visible here. This is very different from what they are used to at home, and it feels uncomfortable.

As Americans will do, people at Lane talk to them about their clothing, offering their own political wisdom. "One [college employee] asked me if I knew this clothing had been banned in France, and told me soon they are going to ban it here too." People ask questions, like "If someone is wearing a veil can I talk to them? How do you eat? Do you sleep with this on?" To the guides, it doesn't feel like people really want to know the answer to

these questions.[9] It seems like the people asking are trying to poke fun at their culture and their religion. People seem to have a fixed stereotype in mind — the uneducated and oppressed Muslim woman.

Some of these microaggressions[10] are not micro at all. I hear the story of a Lane student riding the bus in Eugene wearing a niqāb covering all but her eyes. Another passenger jumped at her, jabbing both hands in her face, saying "Boo!" The student, new to English and Eugene, was deeply frightened. She had no way of knowing if this would lead to an actual assault. Putting myself in her track shoes, I would have been anxious about the other passengers — what would they do if an American continued to assault a Muslim woman, verbally or physically?

This spotlight on Muslim women on campus has intensified just recently with the release of the new movie "Wadjda." This movie was made by the first female filmmaker of Saudi descent. It describes the quest of a young girl to ride a bicycle, and her father's marriage to a second wife.

My guides are passionately critical of this movie. They are tired of defending themselves against the picture of Muslim women and culture that it portrays. "I ride a bicycle! My friends ride bicycles! I have pictures of this — I can prove it!" says one of my guides, incensed. The bicycle plot and the marriage plot are both allegorical, in her view, but since the movie is aimed at Westerners, people outside Saudi Arabia cannot tell where allegory begins and fact ends. The movie perpetuates the stereotype of their lives, they say. Yet some Americans, and even teachers use the film as new proof that these Muslim women's view of their own lives and culture is false.

Looking in from the Outside

When it comes to comments on your identity and your culture, it matters who's talking. It's clear that the criticism of Saudi culture presented in the film, which my guide sees as coming from outside Saudi Arabia, stings.

I once heard that a person at Lane described me as a "fish out of water," adding that because she/he had lived in New York she/he knew "people like me." This is not the worst anyone has said about me, but really, whom was the speaker thinking about when she/he said there were other "people like me"? Would that be people like my great-grandmother, daughter of the American Revolution, who moved to Eugene in 1920? No, this must be people like the other side of my family, the Lithuanians and Romanians — the ones that arrived on much later boats.

Why does my radar even pick up such a weak signal? Because often when non-Jewish Oregonians refer to "people from New York" it's a way of tagging someone as Jewish without sounding racist — as if there are no Oregonian Jews, or as if all Jews come straight

from New York. This was an outsider who seemed to be making assumptions about my identity, my cultural heritage. Maybe the speaker was joking. Intent doesn't matter much if it's an outsider talking.

The guides' impassioned defense of their religious practice, and the open community conflict over their values raised new and deeper questions.

What We Feel When We See Cloaks and Veils

I ask: "Why is it so hard for Americans to talk to a woman who is wearing a cloak and a veil?" Americans say things like: Just looking at her brings up strong emotions in me. I feel frightened for her. Seeing her makes me uncomfortable. I feel like she's under someone's control. I'm worried about her. It's hard to talk to her because her mouth is covered. I don't know if she can talk back. I can't see her emotions or if she's smiling. I don't know what I can say to her...

What Does Each of Us Bring to the Experience?

People near me hint that I am failing to see and appropriately respond to the oppression of Muslim women. I wonder: Why is my reaction so different?

It wasn't always so. I first heard a Muslim woman speak about her religious beliefs in 2001. As the "war on terrorism" ramped up, my rural Oregon peace group became worried about how Muslims might be treated in our community. Looking for fresh perspective on the "clash between Islam and the West" playing in the media, we invited the one Muslim family that lived in our county to come over for a friendly neighborhood potluck and to share their Islamic beliefs.

The mother of this family, a librarian at our tiny community college, was Egyptian-American. The hijab was at the center of her recent experience as a Muslim mother in our small town. Before September 11, 2001, she and her daughter were active Muslims, but neither wore a veil. After September 11, her daughter, then in elementary school, began hearing people say derogatory things about Muslims. This young girl decided to let people know she was Muslim — showing pride in her religion and her heritage — by wearing a hijab. To double the number of veiled Muslim women in the county, her mother donned a veil as well. Some people in town responded by spitting on her daughter in the street.

Our group listened with sympathy and respect, offering neighborly support to the beleaguered family.[11] From the discussion later, though, I don't think anyone, including me, was much convinced by the mother's claim that the Qu'ran protects women's rights and that as a Muslim woman she was treated as an equal. I don't remember the whole talk, but I do remember the precise moment when she described how men and women pray separately.

She lost me. I am a former teacher of Law, U.S. History and Government, and I sometimes practice civil rights law. My American brain instantly jumped to the words of United States Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren in Brown vs. Board of Education, in the unanimous 1954 case striking down segregation based on race in the American public schools:

> Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group...We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.[12]

When I heard debates about whether Saudi Arabia should allow women to ride bicycles or drive I felt a similar jolt: these are rights to travel. Riding a bicycle, to me, is what driving is to most Americans — sacrosanct. Hands on handlebars I feel ... free. What would life be like without a bicycle?

Why, then, does my Muslim guides' positive account of their lives now seem credible, when it didn't have much impact ten years ago? Two reasons. First, and probably foremost, the Muslim female students' attitude towards learning in the ESL classroom in my "Teacher! Teacher!" experience, and the attitudes of my guides have earned my respect and made an indelible impression. One guide tells me that Allah (God) wants all people to be educated and to use their education for the benefit of others. My guides are serious, highly intelligent and dedicated young women with long-range goals that reflect this aim. This gives me hope for our future.

Second, after 2001 I spent several years working for, and with, low-income survivors of economic discrimination and gender violence, here in Lane County. Some facts:

• Nearly 1 in 5 U.S. women (18.3%) in the United States have been raped.[13]

• More than 1 in 3 U.S. women (35.6%) have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner.[14]

• In the U.S., recently divorced women are more likely to live in poverty than recently divorced men.[15]

• Women make 77 cents for every dollar men make in the U.S.[16]

When a guide explains that some 1,400 years ago the Qu'ran gave women the right to divorce, to child support, and to alimony, it now seems every bit as radical as our Muslim neighbor claimed. (As a woman raised on *Pride and Prejudice* I think: Read it and weep, Jane Austen!) When Muslim women tell me they are choosing their destiny, and that they choose to wear cloaks and veils for religious reasons, I find it less comfortable, now, to sit in judgment on the freedoms of women in other countries.

Which Freedom and Whose Freedom?

Does it seem ironic that Muslim women have to change their religious practices so as not to make Americans uncomfortable? How high is the First Amendment on our list of priorities, today?

A guide asks: "A woman in your country can walk around practically naked ... and a man can wear a skirt on campus ... Why can't I wear a veil that covers my face?" A guide writes: "Freedom means full respect and acceptance for different people with their cultures, beliefs and dress code ... Different beliefs means different lifestyles — different than the American lifestyle, but not necessarily wrong."

The Danger of Fearing Strangers

Fear is an emotion that gets mentioned often when Americans react to Muslim customs. Fair enough. The impulse to feel afraid in the presence of strangers runs deep in human brains. When someone put anthrax spores in the U.S. mail, the government spent an estimated $5 billion on security procedures, based on fear that the enemy was a foreign terrorist group (strangers).[17] Was this fear well founded? Years later, the F.B.I. closed its investigation after its prime suspect committed suicide. The suspect was an American biodefense expert working in a U.S. government lab where anthrax was made in order to develop vaccines.[18]

Maybe fear of strangers protected human hunter/gatherers eons ago, but it's downright dangerous now. To manage and survive global threats like climate change, and energy and food scarcity, we need to share information and work in teams with people who are different from us. In micro-environments we know that a diverse working group is more effective. Yet we seem unable to get past the brain's automatic impulse to suspect people who look different.

As we become more at ease, one of the guides shares that before she arrived at Lane she had heard that Americans hate Muslims. (Proof: the war in Iraq.) I agree with her that Muslims are treated as strangers in the U.S. I add that my grandparents were strangers in the U.S., too.

So here we are, Muslim women and American women, observing each other across a boundary. Looking at us as if I were on the Muslim side, I can see that we non-Muslim American women are not following God's path. This life is not long, one of my guides explains, and when it's over, there are only two possibilities. I pray that you will find God's path. Looking around at our American agnostic side, I notice we are focusing on the way we live in this life, brief though it will be. Maybe that's what this comes down to: eat your cake now or save it for later.

Our Impact on Their Learning

I agree with the guides: it is a tremendous gift to be at Lane where I can learn from other cultures in the classroom and on campus. I especially like my new building, which includes the ESL department. My hallway offers a respite from the Caucasian uniformity that is Oregon's shameful historical and political legacy.

Muslim women come to this college to learn, not to be judged. We know from research that whether students feel respected and welcome has a huge impact on their ability to learn. With the gift of diversity, then, comes a duty to respect our students and safeguard their learning. Message for the Stone Age brain: these women may be yesterday's strangers, but they are tomorrow's friends.

Notes

[1] They have chosen to remain anonymous. The reasons for this will become clear as you read on.

[2] The abaya is different from the burqa (burka) which Afghani women wear. The burqa covers the body from head to toe and includes a face covering that women see out of but doesn't reveal their faces.

[3] I couldn't figure this out, but found it confirmed in The Physics That Explain Why You Should Wear Black This Summer in the online science journal io9 (http://io9.com/5903956/the-physics-that-explain-why-you-should-wear-black-this-summer). Black material prevents clothing from reflecting your considerable body heat back onto your skin, which keeps you cooler than white. Favorite comments on the io9 article: "I guess those folks who live in the desert know what they are doing after all." And: "(W)hy do the dudes wear white and the chicks wear black? Author's reply: "Because the chicks are smarter?"

[4] From here on I'll use the word veil to mean either niqāb (covering the whole face except the eyes) or hijab (leaving the face uncovered).

[5] The Qur'an, sometimes also spelled Koran and Quran in English, is the central holy text of Islam, which is the faith of Muslim people.

[6] The Qu'ran, Arabic text with Corresponding English Meanings, Abulqasim Publishing House (1997) (Al-Muntada Alislami). The term "outer garment," bears this footnote: "The jilbab, which is defined as a cloak covering the head and reaching to the ground, thereby covering the woman's entire body."

[7] I tried to figure out which male relatives were covered by this rule but it seemed there were differences in family traditions and variations depending on comfort levels with the individuals involved. For some, males in the husband's family, like brothers-in-law, were considered strangers. For others, these male relatives were family.

[8] from the onset of menarche

[9] For a humorous look at the predicament that Muslim women find themselves in, read 9 stupid questions you hear when you wear hijab by Tooba Zaheer, The Express Tribune Blogs (http://

blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/8554/9-stupid-questions-you-hear-when-you-wear-hijab/).

[10] "Microaggression usually involves demeaning implications and other subtle insults against minorities, and may be perpetrated against those due to gender, sexual orientation, and ability status." Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microaggression).

[11] In a cruel twist of fate this family left rural life for Portland, only to suffer more serious violations of their civil rights. The father, Brandon Mayfield, was an American-born Army veteran and lawyer who converted to Islam when he married. According to the federal Inspector General's report (http://www.justice.gov/oig/special/s0601/exec.pdf), the U.S. government imprisoned him for two weeks, including secluding him for 22 hours a day, after the FBI mistakenly identified him as the Madrid bomber, ignoring the conclusion of the police in Spain that his fingerprints were not a match. According to Mayfield's civil rights attorney, Michele Longo-Eder, the FBI based its suspicions about Mayfield on several flimsy grounds, including the fact that he drove back and forth to a mosque and that he advertised his legal business in the Muslim Yellow Pages. The FBI later issued a rare apology (http://www.nbcnews.com/id/5053007/#.Uunr-Pb9r7d).

[12] Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansaset al., 347 U.S. 483, 494-5 (1954) (1955).

[13] National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010 Summary Report, Executive Summary, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Nov. 2011, p. 1 (http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_executive_summary-a.pdf).

[14] Ibid., p. 2.

[15] Elliott, Diana B. & Simmons, Tavia B., Marital Events of Americans 2009, American Community Survey Reports, US Census Bureau, August 2011, p. 19 (http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acs-13.pdf).

[16] Bassett, Laura, Women Still Earned 77 Cents On Men's Dollar In 2012: Report, Huffington Post, 9/17/2013, quoting US Census Bureau statistics.

[17] Buonamano, Dean, *Brain Bugs.* New York: Norton, 2011. 139-140.

[18] "Amerithrax Investigative Summary." *Amerithrax Documents*. United States Department of Justice, 19 Feb. 2010 Web. 11 Mar 2014 <http://www.justice.gov/amerithrax/docs/amx->

An Unexpected Journey: A Digital Storytelling Case History

Sandy Brown Jensen

"Don't be satisfied with stories, how things have gone with others. Unfold your own myth."
– Rumi

Call to Adventure

Our heroine was sitting in her fourth floor office at Lane Community College only occasionally distracted by the drama of a storm cloud versus late sun wrestling match over the Science Building in the distance. She had her Mac open to the school email program and was doing her best to stay focused on the scrolling banality of in-house news items.

And, not to remain indefinitely in the "third person, romantic heroine," I did a double take when I saw a notice:

> *Dream Big* faculty, please let students know about a scholarship opportunity with the Achieving the Dream consortium of community colleges. In a three minute video, students are to address the question, "What is my dream job, and how is my college helping me achieve it?" Contact: Jennifer Steele

That's how it is when you hear a call to adventure: one minute you're minding your own; the next minute the storm clouds part, the sun shafts through and clears a new and unexpected space in your brain. We were three weeks into the new term, and my boss, Brad Hinson, had charged me with "rolling out digital storytelling." As Archimedes teaches us, "Give me a place to stand, and a lever long enough, and I will move the world." The trick with moving the world is getting a handle on it — I had been looking for a handle, and here it was. I e-mailed Jennifer right away to offer my coaching services to students who wanted to make a digital story for the competition.

The Journey Begins: Gathering Allies

I wasn't the only one to hear the Dream Big Scholarship Call to Adventure. Campbell tells us that "the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration ... which ... amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts ... no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand" (51), and this curtain rang up initially for Jennifer, Brad, and me, and then the students who came and told their stories, and then, before this adventure was over, the president and the entire campus had heard the call to digital storytelling via the Dream Big Scholarship adventure in an exciting conflagration of events.

On Asking the Right Question

One rainy afternoon in 1985, I sat in a wooden pew at the front of the historic Methodist Church in Santa Monica listening to Joe Campbell retell the story of Parsifal and his quest for the Holy Grail. The version of the Grail story he used was by Wolfram Von Eshenbach (1170-1220), a German knight and poet.

In this telling, our hero Parsifal meets up with Anfortas, the Grail King, whose lands are waste and infertile because of a wound he has. Parsifal's job, which he initially fails to do, is to ask the right question, "Whom does the Grail serve?" The Grail is portrayed either as a stone (which Jung says symbolizes the soul), or a cup, widely held to be the feminine principle, and is, at any rate, something which "brings everyone what their heart most desires." Because he has been taught by his mother that it is rude to ask questions of strangers, Parsifal fails to ask the one question that would have healed the king and restored the land.

Twenty years later, Parsifal gets it right. He re-encounters Anfortas and asks, "Whom does the Grail serve?"

Answer: "The Grail serves the Grail King," which is beautiful code for the inexhaustible creative forces of each person's life when they are in service to their higher, better, "royal" selves. Everything always hinges on asking the right question; Anfortas is healed, the land is renewed, and Parsifal becomes the new Grail King.

So, what is the right question here? My offering to my community is the practice of digital storytelling. In my own way, I consider digital storytelling to be a magic cup, an overflowing Grail. For me, there is only one central question to ask: "Whom does my Grail serve?" It serves my students, my community. The passionate practice of teaching *anything* revivifies the barren land and brings new hope to the people.

Excerpts from "An Unexpected Journey Field Notebook"

Oct. 3, 2012 Bump in the road — I am a faculty technology specialist, and "faculty" means I help faculty technically, not students. When Jennifer got excited about setting up a four week digital storytelling workshop to help students target the Dream Big Scholarship, I thought I better ask my boss, Brad, about taking on the project. His attitude was, "Roll digital storytelling out to the campus using any means possible." Problem solved, and my allies were gathering around this project like iron filings around a magnet.

I reserved a computer lab and started beaming announcements out; however, the real problem was the shortness of time. The scholarship deadline was Nov. 13. I needed at least four weeks with the students, which left a two-week advertising cycle (and worst of all, the monthly deadline for the student newspaper had already passed).

Naturally, I was worried. Jennifer and I had built it — would anybody come?

Band of Brothers

Oct. 17, 2012 I stood in front of the instructor's console on our first Wednesday trying not to look anxious as one by one three men came in to take the workshop.

Nick was an average-looking white male who looked quite ordinary when viewed from the right, but when he turned his head, the left half had the intricate map of a rose and dark blue birthmark. It was not disfiguring but marked him in the way distinct facial tattoos might mark some other person.

Ricardo was a good-looking Hispanic man with a quiet smile and an aura of deep reserve. His dark eyes were cautious but bespoke a rock-solid work ethic.

Titus was a six foot seven, very blue-black African man from Cameroon with a full head of dreadlocks and a thousand watt smile.

These were none of them boys out of high school; these were three adult men stepping up to a scholarship opportunity.

We sat in a circle and had a meet and greet. I turned on the overhead computer projection unit and took them through a quick orientation to digital storytelling. I showed them my first digital story made at the Center for Digital Storytelling called "How I Became a Teacher," emphasizing for them the use of first person voice-over as a primary feature of digital storytelling. I showed them how I created my own media by including images of my own illustrated journal pages. I told them I believe there is invisible power in creating with your own media. Later, I was to read Pahl and Rowell's ideas about how "artifacts bring in everyday life. They are material, and they represent culture. In our work, we wanted to link literacy, multimodality, and material culture" (3). To me, this is eminently sensible for so many reasons having to do with the way objects and home-grown media express specifically who the storyteller is in a way that random Google searches for pretty filler images can never do.

We went next to the Center for Digital Storytelling's YouTube channel and watched another digital story called "Fences." I talked about structure and asked them to identify "the turn" or the gimbal upon which the meaning of the story revolves and finds its balance.

Once I had established our working definition of digital storytelling, I took them to the "Dream Big" site where two students had already posted their entries. Both were talking directly into the camera with no effort at digital storytelling. I could see the light dawn on my student's faces that if this was going to be the caliber of competition, they might have a very real chance at winning these scholarships.

That was enough screen time. Time to dive deep. I rolled up the screen and started to talk about Joseph Campbell, the Hero's Journey, and the cosmogonic round. I started from memory, "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of super-

natural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his or her fellow humans." I drew the circle of that great journey on the whiteboard and used Luke Skywalker from *Star Wars* as my exemplar. I explained how in their own stories, the journey structure would help them. When did you first hear the call to adventure? Who helped you at Lane Community College? What has been your Road of Trials? Have you had a meeting with The Goddess, a woman who guided you onto the right path? When did the power of apotheosis enter you and tell you for certain you were on the right track to your dream job?

All three listened intently, resonating I hoped, with the idea that they were each a hero on their own great journey toward their "dream job" or "bliss," as Joseph Campbell said of one's calling. I laid Campbell's master plan out for them as it had been laid out for me.

Now it was time to write. I gave the prompt, "In what ways have you been a hero in the journey toward your dream job?" Everyone wrote for twenty minutes. The silence in the computer lab coalesced into a fast-moving, deep-pooling river of thought.

Nick's Story

Nick said he was from Chicago. He had been well if complacently employed when the bottom fell out of the economy, and overnight he was out of a job and set adrift. He descended into a cycle of depression, alcohol, smoking, and hard scrabbling. It seems his girlfriend acted as guardian goddess — like Athena with Odysseus — and lit his way to Oregon and Lane Community College. Here at LCC, art instructor Tom Madison ignited a lost passion for art, and with Tom's help, Nick was admitted to the Graphic Arts Program.

Nick's digital story is called "From Shadows." He begins, "Mental illness has haunted my life since I was eleven. That year, my parents divorced, and years of dark secrets cascaded into my mind." He says he has always battled depression but fought back with his art.

He says, "I was the lucky one. My sister succumbed to drug addiction and bi-polar disorder," which he illustrates with an agonized portrait of a woman in a piece of his own art.

Nick's early story features joblessness, and, as he puts it, "a failure to thrive." He "floundered in different jobs, different cities," until his hopes for a stable life were falsely raised by a job as a theatre manager, which he lost in a corporate buy-out. Nick's entire first twenty-plus years are enlivened, in this telling, only by his occasional art-making. He says, "Something drastic was needed to move my life out of shadow into the light of something new."

The turning point in Nick's story comes with his soul cry, "Oh, to finish what I had started so many years ago! To find a life of joy, a career to challenge me!"

Nick's story moves swiftly from Philadelphia to Lane Community College where he is inspired and mentored by Tom who encourages Nick to develop a portfolio of art, and he is admitted to the Graphic Arts program with a new focus on art as a career path.

Another of Nick's artworks featured in his video is a repeated image of a child looking down, it very much echoes Nick's video self-portraits of him looking down as if into the shadows of the digital story's title. He says that through art and with the agency of Tom's mentorship, he has "seen a bright light," but he is not yet looking up into it.

In an insightful study of how some images that artists produce become "source images," that is, images that reflect the dynamic soul or self evolving through a lifetime, art educator and counselor Sandra G. Shuman observes:

> An image reflects the varying aspects of the self as these potentially have evolved, are evolving and could evolve over time .... In its capacity to reflect so many differing aspects of our being, the image is multifaceted; in its power to connect the past and and present with the future, the image is multidimensional. (74)

My own intuition identifies the downcast eyes as a childhood response to family "shadows" that Nick is now bringing into his creative future as a graphic artist.

Nick's journey is truly heroic in so many ways because the shadows of his early family experiences started him off deep in a dark place. He was already on a Road of Trials before he ever woke up and realized there was a Call to Adventure to be heard and answered as a way up out of the darkness. His Initiation has been a rough one and profoundly psychological, as his art shows. As an an artist, though, he was sensitive to the moment when a teacher's words lit a lamp that led Nick to the "elixir of life," which for him is a way to always drink at the life-sustaining well of a creative life in art. He's found the Grail and now is determined to serve it, "The journey made me see the shape of my life; I can see now where it was leading me."

Into the Woods with Titus

After class, everyone expressed thanks and excitement. Later, I sent them all an e-mail: "The one thing every hero knows is that courage is more important than talent."

Oct. 24, 2012 Titus and I had worked on a couple drafts over the ensuing week by email, so his script, too, was ready for my editing pencil. My work with their scripts was to tighten sentences and reduce the word count to around 400 words. I was careful not to interfere with any of their major word choices or story turns in writing. I might discuss something with them, but I would never change language on the page because that is a power site of their own. Titus was glowing with pride and excitement, and when 6' 7" Titus turns on the wattage, you know you are in the presence of joy.

After I had read Titus's first thousand-word draft, I went online to learn more about him. Titus had been quite a celebrity in world pop music and dance. He had a speaking role in Spielberg's film *Amistad*. He won the John Lennon Songwriting Award, and with the help of an investor and mentor, he became a celebrity. He had certainly been to the mountaintop, as Martin Luther King would have said. "Wait," I thought to myself, "what is this guy doing at 'Last Chance College'?" There had to be something missing from the glowing story he had written out for me at such length, and that something must be someone standing in the shadows at the turning point between Titus's Hollywood life and his quiet student life in Eugene.

I asked him about the story he hadn't told. He had been embarrassed to do so, he said, and ashamed because there was, indeed, a man whom Titus had thought was his personal angel who financially ruined Titus, his family, and his performance entourage. In grief and at loose ends, it was Titus's American wife who took the initiative to change the fate of her family.

At last, Titus had the whole story down on paper in a script that still needed to be trimmed of a full minute, but he was radiant with joy at having been able to finally say the pivot point of pain and move the story of who he is becoming forward.

Titus begins his story, "Journey to the Rhythm of Life," by highlighting his uniqueness as a tribal man from rural Cameroon. His parents wanted him to be a doctor, but, he says, "I loved the arts." He includes occasional orienting images to his story, such as a map of Cameroon and an image of tribal women on a dirt road; however, most of the digital story is voiced over footage of him on stage dancing his story. It is an original, autobiographical choreography, although the viewer doesn't necessarily understand that. The movements are at times closely tied to his story and other times the connection serves more to underline how differently he thinks and creates as an African dancer and musician than Westerners are used to doing.

In his digital story, Titus says he left home at age sixteen, suffered depression and homelessness before being discovered by the touring U.S. National Ballet and being swept up as a Hollywood celebrity.

Titus says in his story that he once thought the word "Hollywood" literally meant "Holy Place," but he and his family and entourage were betrayed by a man who had presented himself as a mentor. Titus's American wife enrolled in the Eugene Waldorf School teacher training program, and they came to Oregon. Titus focused on a class in College Success where he learned to change his internal, emotional stance toward the betrayal from "victim" to "creator."

Titus clearly has already been through more than one Hero Journey, and the one that catapulted him to celebrity status was crossed by a classic encounter with a Trickster figure,

a man who presented himself as an "angel" in order to trick Titus, made "the Fool," for financial gain. This painful lesson haunted him, Titus told me, until he created a digital story that placed the trickster in his small place within Titus's larger life narrative.

Belly of the Whale

Ricardo didn't show up to the week two workshop.

I think it was an exciting, engaging workshop for all of us as we began to hear and record stories. I went over storyboarding and media collection, and next week we're on to iMovie! This is a small group, but there is the intensity of shared creativity amongst us that I love. Ricardo kept in touch with me via e-mail and sent me a story for approval and feedback but never came to another workshop, nor did he ultimately finish a digital story.

Last week, Nick recorded his story, and I didn't see him again until much later. At this point, I had no idea whether or not he would finish and submit his digital story (he did). A new man, Jose Flores showed up and seemed to be deeply engaged, but I never saw or heard from him again.

Then no one came to the week four workshop. That was a dark moment for me, what Campbell calls a Belly of the Whale moment when you feel locked in a dark place. Campbell says:

> The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died. (90)

There was no way I could force attendance at my workshops, and, in fact, a colleague had taken over the computer lab in an accidental double-booking, so I had a cold and lonely, locked-out feeling. I felt that not only had the workshops failed but that I no longer had a project for my class and that everything that seemed good to eat had turned to dust and blown away between my fingers.

But it turned out this whole competition workshop concept had a mind and shape of its own. Campbell reminds me, "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where she must survive a succession of trials" (97). Curiously, that is very much what the next couple weeks felt like, fluid and ambiguous.

On Nov. 5, after my writing class, two thirty-something young women came forward with iPads and wanted to know all about the Dream Big competition. Annie and Jody then met with me after class about three times. I gave them lessons in iMovie for iPad; we hashed over the Hero's Journey and how that applied to women. I ended up going over to

Annie's house for last minute video editing and helped with moving her final video online.

Annie especially loved all my Hero's Journey talk and kept saying, "That is so amazing!" Later, she said to me, "I totally got it! I want to take that Hero's Journey class from you. When do you teach it?" I had to break it to her that she *was* the class!

Flash Forward: Annie's Story

Annie McKenny right away understood that the Hero's Journey is about overcoming the obstacles in life.

She sets the stage by saying that after high school she became a party girl rather than going to college. Eventually, she sobered up, straightened out, got married and had two kids. She held a variety of jobs that didn't require a college education and is currently a hair stylist.

Digital storytellers are always encouraged to locate and dramatize "The Moment" when they have the insight to change their lives. Joe Lambert says, "To help storytellers find this moment, we ask a series of questions, 'What was the moment when things changed?" (35) Annie locates that moment when she sat down to help her nine-year old son with his fourth grade homework and couldn't do it.

This motivates her to apply to Lane Community College, where she says her ambitious dream is to become a neurobiologist. But currently, she is happy to be able to sit down and study at the same table with her nine-year old son, an image she returns to.

Annie "got" how the Hero's Journey structure shapes even the shortest of digital stories, and she "got" how classically her life fit the shape of the journey. Once held hostage by Dionysus, god of our internal drives to drink, do drugs, and general partying, she now appears to be growing into a wise, intellectual Athena as well as caring mother.

Return

After class on Friday, I worked again with Annie. Titus came up and said he had finished his digital story and would send me a private link for my feedback. Nick emailed me the link to his completed story. By noon on Tuesday, the deadline, I had three students who had completed their digital stories and posted to the competition.

Conclusion

In his discussion of the "Return" cycle of the Hero's Journey Campbell asks:

> How teach again ... what has been taught correctly and incorrectly learned a thousand thousand time, throughout the millenniums of mankind's prudent folly? That is the hero's ultimate difficult task. How render back into light-world language the speech-defying pronouncements of the dark? How

> represent on a two-dimensional surface a three-dimensional form, or in a three-dimensional image a multi-dimensional meaning? ... The work of representing eternity in time, and perceiving in time eternity, cannot be avoided. (218)

This heroic work is, as I experience it, the work of the digital storyteller artist and teacher. The students who found that their paths brought them one way or another into my studio each knew in their own hearts, inside the context of their own journey, the "speech-defying pronouncements of the dark." Nick struggles to represent that meaning on a two-dimensional surface in his art; Titus in three-dimensional dance; Annie's passion is to investigate the inner workings of the human brain, seeking that multi-dimensional understanding in the intricate folds of gray matter that appear to be the seat of human consciousness.

In making digital stories, each has captured to date that flash of "eternity in time"; they are on the next stages of their life journeys.

And as for the Herculean task I was given to "roll out digital storytelling at Lane," the voices of the students through their digital stories did much of the work for me. At the end of the term, I presented the Digital Storytelling Project to the Faculty Council, including our President, deans, and over fifty faculty who enthusiastically applauded the screening of student stories.

I also led a five week faculty/employees digital storytelling workshop with every student finishing her story successfully, each deeply moved by the story of the Hero's Journey, the progenitive intimacy of Story Circle, and the creative fire of bringing it all together on the screen of dreams.

As I enter a season of quiet and planning for next term, T.S. Eliot informs my thinking: "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

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Reviews

Pessimists are usually right and optimists are usually wrong but all the great changes have been accomplished by optimists.

— Thomas L. Friedman

Book Review

Developing Faculty Learning Communities

Lyda Kiser

Knowing that faculty in community colleges face the challenge of teaching a variety of learners, from the developmental student to high achievers, editors Susan Sipple and Robin Lightner have compiled *Developing Faculty Learning Communities at Two-Year Colleges: Collaborative Models to Improve Teaching and Learning* to promote the use of faculty learning communities (FLCs). The editors and contributing authors see FLCs as a way for faculty to investigate and overcome learning problems in the classroom while also being a cost effective way to promote innovations in teaching with goals of increasing student persistence and improving student outcomes.

According to the editors, "Teaching excellence and engaged learning are the foundation of the two-year college mission"(1), resulting in a need for high quality professional development. Chapters by practitioners who have engaged in FLCs on their campuses provide examples and lessons learned. These support the editors' themes of FLCs as a viable faculty activity and an opportunity to engage in scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

In his forward to the book, Milton D. Cox points out that an important component of this engagement is the ability to make connections. The editors reinforce this point through the background information provided on FLCs, the selection of authors and FLC experiences, and the practical application of what has been learned through FLC development. This is further supported by specific information on costs related to FLC creation and implementation at two-year colleges.

Lightner begins the volume with information on collecting evidence about what is effective in establishing a scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) at a college, which she believes is the ideal first FLC. Lightner makes a case for colleges to begin with an SoTL FLC so the message is clear to all participants and all those watching the FLC process that the purpose of the FLC is to improve teaching and learning.

The remainder of the book reflects FLC experiences of faculty in several institutions and FLC formats addressing a variety of teaching and learning concerns, including peer reviews of scholarly teaching, course redesign, enhancing connectivity with adjunct faculty, self-regulated learning, critical thinking, design thinking, studio learning, transfer of learning, first-year student success, learning technology, building a teaching commons with four-year faculty, and composing a balanced faculty. Each chapter presents a different method of incorporating FLCs at a two-year campus, guided by scholarly research. Most

chapters include appendices with examples of rubrics, questionnaires, report forms, and evaluation criteria. These resources provide evidence to support statements in the chapters and provide the reader with examples for use in developing FLCs.

For faculty and faculty developers at two-year colleges, this book provides a clear, insightful, and positive look at the impact of FLCs. The experiences of the nineteen contributors present a variety of experiences and outcomes, without glamorizing the effort or minimizing the work required and the potential barriers. Each chapter presents a different method of incorporating FLCs onto a two-year campus, and scholarly research that was the foundation of the choices made by that particular institution. The editors use this method to give the work of the FLCs a firm standing in scholarship and provide the reader with a road map to follow in creating an FLC program immersed in scholarship focused on teaching and learning.

An emphasis of this book is that connections are the key to positive change on campuses. This includes connections within departments, across employment types (full-time and adjunct, administrator and faculty), between divisions, and between institutions. FLCs are a low-cost form of professional development that has significant impact. Most of the examples involved little expense for the institution or participants. None included stipends for participants. Instead, they focused on the opportunities to publish or present findings, build portfolios to be used for promotion evaluation, or attend conferences as motivation for continued participation.

The editors have created a manual that faculty and faculty developers can use to replicate FLCs at their institutions. They have done this while maintaining a focus on the connections that are necessary for successful learning and collaboration, as well as the foundation of SoTL and viable faculty activity for two-year colleges. This book should be read by anyone who is considering establishing an FLC related to teaching and learning.

Developing Faculty Learning Communities at Two-Year Colleges: Collaborative Models to Improve Teaching and Learning, Susan Sipple and Robin Lightner, Editors. 2013, Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, ISBN-13: 978-1579228453

Book Review

Basic Writing at Yale and Harvard

Diane Lerma

As the title suggests, *Before Shaughnessy: Basic Writing at Yale and Harvard, 1920-1960* presents a historical view of the two foremost prestigious institutions of higher education. In effect, Kelly Ritter traces the roots of basic writing courses in America. This gem of a book is well-written and reader friendly, a must read for anyone teaching developmental writing courses. Ritter highlights Yale and Harvard in an engaging manner – not in a timeline format. The reader will find themselves commiserating with students who are stigmatized as a result of being underprepared at such formidable universities and may either chuckle or be aghast at the outlandish terminology for basic writing students used in this time period. I refer specifically to terminology that asserts that developmental students are suffering from some type of cognitive melanoma that attacks their writing capacities.

The author begins with her own diverse teaching experience at three four-year campuses: University of Illinois in Chicago, University of Michigan, and Southern Connecticut State University, describing the discrepancies among "basic" writers and writing programs at these institutions. This echoes the sentiments of Mike Rose, whose citations are peppered throughout her book. Not all students and writing curricula are created equal. Interestingly, Ritter categorizes her students in four strata: highly competent, minimally competent, linguistically underprepared, and fundamentally deficient.

Ritter wonders: With all the diversity among the students, what is basic about them? Who are they? What role does the social history of the institution play? Why do the courses vary among institutions? (7). The impetus for this book is the lack of germane research that precedes Mina Shaughnessy's work in the 1970s.

An excerpt from James Berlin's *Rhetoric and Reality* states that Yale introduced a non-credit course in the 1920s referring to the underprepared students as the "Awkward Squad." Incidentally, the term Awkward Squad comes from a British origin that means "clumsy, inexperienced or insubordinate" (80). It also was used in the military branches in America referring to soldiers who needed more training. Ritter reveals Yale was no exception when it came to underprepared students. Such remedial classes focused on correcting spelling, punctuation, and "gross mistakes." This is quite revelatory because this reader was not aware that underprepared freshmen even existed at this time.

Harvard's president in 1939 declared "prescribed work" for first year students who had an inability to write fluently. As a result, college presidents across the nation followed his example (8). Harvard is regarded as the birthplace of English Composition, and remedial

classes were offered from 1920 to 1960. Although Yale did not list its remedial courses in public documents, Harvard did list them in its course catalog. Readers will be chagrined by phrases such as "faculty hopelessness" and "special" students because most faculty only wanted to concentrate on lofty topics. *Before Shaughnessy* uncovers a historical truth that at least 25% of freshman students from elite preparatory schools like Andover and Exeter needed remedial instruction. The attitude at Harvard was that these students were "fixable." After all, Harvard men were groomed to be leaders and policy makers. As such, the university accommodated underprepared students as long as they showed "ability and character."

Ritter aims the spotlight on Mina Shaughnessy's definition of "basic" as underprepared rather than deficient and shifts blame to the educational experiences of the student instead of blaming the student entirely. The term "basic" is traced back to Shaughnessy who successfully fought to replace such negative connotations as remedial students and boneheads. Prior to Shaughnessy, basic writing courses were referred to as hospital sections.

Ritter cites leading authorities in basic writing, such as David Bartholomae and Patricia Bizzell, who support Shaughnessy's work and champion accommodation of the underprepared student. Not surprisingly, Shaughnessy also drew critics, such as Jean Gunner and Joseph Harris. Harris reminds the reader that Shaughnessy claimed to have found basic writers as an untapped group when, in actuality, this was an established field of study (34). The reader can appreciate the fairness Ritter brings by representing both proponents and critics of Shaughnessy.

If the reader waits expectantly to encounter quotations from Mike Rose, Ritter does not disappoint. For example, Rose echoes Shaughnessy's philosophy of "that which is considered remedial at one campus is standard at the next" (40). Additionally, Rose offers the origin of "remedial" from a medical term of the 1930s meaning mentally deficient, and thus, remedial courses were labeled "sick sections." In terms of relegating basic writers to pre-college level courses, Mike Rose is quoted from an excerpt in *Language of Exclusion:* "they sit in scholastic quarantine until their disease can be diagnosed and remedied" (91).

In Chapter 3, "Before 1960 – The Rise of the Boneheads*,"* Ritter succinctly identifies that underprepared students resulted from an influx of freshmen after WWI. Remedial students in the 1920s were identified as lacking intelligence and skills (53). By contrast to today's pedagogy, the school of thought at the time was to keep remedial students away from the mainstream students to avoid contamination. Readers will be amused to learn that in the 1931 edition of the *English Journal* Susie Rabourn suggests basic writing students need a quiet atmosphere to quell their restlessness. Ritter points out in this

chapter that the influx of WWII veterans returning to school were described as "special." Although their classes were labeled "hospital English," they were mature and appreciative. The 1946 edition of the *College English* journal remarked that faculty should accept that remedial English students are here to stay.

Ritter concludes her research with Chapter 6, "Looking Forward, Looking Back: Locating Basic Writing Today." She aptly notes that basic writers come from all economic levels and geographic locations and identifies a "great divide" between high schools and higher education, whereby high school students are too often taught to conform and to write to appease their instructors. This reviewer found it refreshing that Ritter points out there is no standard definition of college-level writing. Moreover, the author is against labels like "special" students and suggests doing away with such ability classifications altogether. Such was the work to which Mina Shaughnessy dedicated her life.

Ritter contends that remedial students always have been around and will be in the future. According to Ritter, this population is in need of advocates and must not be segregated from the college community. This reader favors the Writing 1-2-3 system Ritter endorses because it diminishes the stigma of "remedial" and "basic."

A weak area in *Before Shaughnessy* is the scarcity of memos and other correspondence from period professors. Perhaps Ritter could have added a few more graphics from Harvard's *Crimson Review* and other artifacts from Yale. The four visual aids provided by Ritter are interesting, but left me wanting to see more (107). One graphic she includes is an example of a faculty referral card for students who performed unsatisfactorily in English due to spelling, grammar, or unclear expression of ideas.

From a historical perspective, Kelly Ritter's book makes a positive contribution to the field of basic writing. Overall, it is easy to understand and interesting to read. Therefore, I enthusiastically recommend *Before Shaughnessy: Basic Writing at Yale and Harvard, 1920-1960* to the academy.

Before Shaughnessy: Basic Writing at Yale and Harvard, 1920-1960, Kelly Ritter. 2013, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, ISBN-13: 978-0809329243

Book Review

Remixing Composition

Stuart Brooks

In *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy,* Jason Palmeri argues that multimodality has been a part of First Year Composition (FYC) since the grand old masters like Elbow and Berlin began trotting the boards in the '70s. He presents the case that multimodality is neither new nor scary, but that it's something that all of us English teachers can, and do, embrace. In grounding his concepts so thoroughly in the history of composition, Palmeri creates a space for presenting viable uses of new technology in the classroom and contends that the English classroom is uniquely suited to provide instruction in the uses of new media. Palmeri offers new ways in which to use technology, but does not provide specific how-to's for empowering students' production. Community college teachers should read this book because it provides historical and theoretical backing for what we already do, and provides great justification for expanding our use of technology in writing programs. And it's a good read.

Palmeri invokes the shadow of Elbow by stating that being multimodal can be as simple as asking students to read their texts aloud. Says Elbow, "Reading your words out loud stresses what is important: writing is really a voice spread out over time, not marks spread out in space. The audience can't experience them all at once as they can in a picture; they can only hear one instant at a time as with music" (as quoted in Palmeri, 55). By bringing in the Father of the Process Movement, Palmeri validates the concept of multimedia as an instructional practice. Here Elbow speaks about audience, placing himself squarely within the process movement, and validates writing as a modality on par with art and music.

In contrast, Palmeri takes exception to Berlin's rejection of expressivist and cognitive approaches. Palmeri argues instead that "Our goal should not be to choose one pedagogy over another, but rather to consider how we can recombine them — remix them — in ways that enable us to develop a more nuanced and complex view of what it means to teach composition in the contemporary digital moment" (15). In presenting his central point in opposition to one of composition's grand masters, Palmeri trades upon the ethos of Berlin to validate and valorize the position that multimodality comes from somewhere, is here to stay and will be a staple of FYC for years to come.

Remixing Composition can serve as a valuable tool in departmental discussions on the need to expand digital media capabilities. For instructors, Palmeri offers several examples of technology-rich student assignments, like making flash movies, or using digital sound recording for editing purposes. Most of these sound too technical for my 50-year-old

brain. I worry that my students will be more tech-savvy than I am, which could be embarrassing. However, an example that caught my attention was Palmeri's method for generating ideas on a narrative essay. He sends his students out on campus with a digital camera, tells them to sit in one spot, and then take pictures of everything they see for an hour. The students then come back, download their images and begin to look for a story. Are the two people fighting in the Quad related? How? What started it? How is the matter resolved, or is it? Students are asked to cull out all of the pictures not related to the main narrative until they have a visual storyboard. Then they go back and write an alphabetic story, either in captions for the pictures or as a stand-alone text, enriching what they have seen. I see this as a great way to stimulate creativity, and I am eager to try it in my next class.

The flaw in *Remixing Composition* is that it mostly does not address the concept of production. The word does not even appear until page 157, where Palmeri states, " … we must remember that rhetoric is first and foremost a *productive* art" (emphasis in the original). It may well be that production was overemphasized in early writing on composition, but in swinging so far towards process the field is forgetting that without a product there is nothing to edit or revise or process. At some point students have to actually write something. Palmeri does not do enough to explain how multimodal pedagogies can be invoked to overcome resistance. As is common, Palmeri presents a lot of great, fun things to do with good students, but offers little in the way of motivating struggling students.

What Palmeri does well here is that he writes in a conversational style that makes difficult concepts easy to understand. There is a lot of theory, but none of it is overbearing or oppressive, making *Remixing Composition* a great source of accessible information, and a great tool for situating multimedia in the tradition of FYC. Today's students are device rich; most have smart phones capable of producing the flash movies and digital voice recordings, Palmeri discusses. Rather than banning cell phones, shouldn't we use them as a tool of instruction?

In clearly situating multimodality in the FYC tradition Palmeri points us towards the next wave of composition instruction while keeping us firmly rooted in our history. It will be interesting to see the direction he takes in future works. Perhaps he can provide more practical knowledge now that he has established his theoretical credentials. A practical workbook written in Palmeri's clear, accessible style would be a boon to people who struggle with technology but want to be as close to the cutting edge as possible. For now, we can look to *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy* for confirmation that the past is linked to the future, and the future is in good hands.

Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy, Jason Palmeri.
2012, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, ISBN-13: 978-0809330898

Contributors

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Stuart Brooks is a PhD candidate in Rhetoric, Composition and Pedagogy at the University of Houston. He has taught Basic Writing and Composition in five different community colleges in the Houston/ Galveston Bay Area. He hopes that receiving his doctorate will allow him to focus on just one institution.

Ellen Cantor, newly retired Lane English instructor, has had cameras ever since her father loaded up her 4-year-old hands with his wartime, tank-heavy Argus C3. She now packs a downsized SLR-type camera and big lens on her travels, while looking for birds and riding the buses of Ecuador.

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Anne B. McGrail received a National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Humanities Start-up grant in 2013. She became immersed in the "DIY" and maker ethos of digital humanities, and infuses all her courses with methods, tools and projects adapted from the dazzling resources available on the web. Her professional goal is to bring digital humanities to community colleges and vice versa.

Philos Molina, from El Salvador, is an Enrollment and Financial Student Services advisor at Lane Community College since 2005.

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Casey Reid is an English faculty member who coordinates the first-year seminar program and faculty professional development at Metropolitan Community College in Kansas City. When she isn't trying something new in her classrooms, she enjoys biking, hiking, and chasing her three rescued dogs around her neighborhood.

Jerry Ross was born in Buffalo, New York. Influenced by the I Macchiaioli and verismo schools of Italian painting, Ross has won art awards locally and abroad and has twice been an artist/scholar in residence at the American Academy in Rome.

J.S. Simmons was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1969, raised in Jamaica Plain. He fiddled around and did nothing much for a longish time, went to college in his thirties, earned an MFA, and now teaches Writing 115, 121 and 122 at Lane Community College, in addition to writing stories.

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A. Louise Warner received her masters in teaching from Western Oregon University, a doctorate in law from Boston University and a bachelor of arts degree from Yale College. She teaches Reading and other subjects in the Adult Basic and Secondary Education department and has been teaching at Lane since 2010.

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School's Out! Peguche, Ecuador

Ellen Cantor
digital photography